

# Challenge EU

## European University Alliance



OCTOBER 2024

ISSUE No 02



# UNIQUE: TRINATIONAL MASTER'S PROGRAM IN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHED



Hochschule Offenburg, FHNW School of Business, and EM Strasbourg Business School have jointly celebrated the launch of the new trinational Master's degree program in Sustainable Business Development in the 2024/25 winter semester.

The program, uniting three countries, three languages and three universities, offers a unique platform in Europe for training future experts and executives to tackle the challenges of a sustainable and networked economy.

The Master of Science program is aimed at students from France, Germany and Switzerland who already have a first degree. The combination of theory and practice, as well as intensive exchange between the three institutions, provides students with interdisciplinary and intercultural skills that prepare them for an international career in the business world.



# Two new degree programs address the megatrend of digitalization



The digital healthcare industry is constantly growing in Germany. Since the 2024/25 winter semester, HSO students in the new Bachelor's degree program of Digital Health are learning to manage and actively shape digitalization and the future healthcare system.

Graduates will be able to design innovative digital health applications, such as diagnostic tools or patient portals, and drive their development and implementation. They may assume management responsibilities for digitalization in hospitals, care centers, medical practices, start-ups or health insurance providers.

Another innovative program at HSO addressing digitalization is the Digital Public Management and Consulting Bachelor's degree program, which will be offered in cooperation with Kehl University of Applied Sciences and the IT service provider Nagarro from the 2025/26 winter semester.

The demand for digital services in public administration in Germany is enormous. Graduates of the new degree program will be able to actively shape and moderate the required change processes. Knowledge of change management, user experience and innovation management will be as important as digitalization and administration skills. Nagarro will contribute concrete use cases from practice; the company is also funding an endowed professorship for the program.

# From Research and Transfer: Innovation project strengthens SMEs



For around two years now, the EU-funded innovation project Zukunft.Raum.Schwarzwald. has been supporting small and medium-sized companies in the Southern Upper Rhine region in collaboration with Hochschule Offenburg. The project makes it easier for companies to access the programs offered by scientific institutions in the region; it helps arrange contacts, provide individual consultations, and establish funding programs.

The first participating companies confirm the positive effects and valuable support they have received from the Zukunft.Raum.Schwarzwald. initiative. The flagship project increases their innovation and competitiveness, thus securing the long-term economic future of the region as a whole.



# The 2024 Club Afternoon: discovering our associative activities



As it does every year after the start of the new academic year, ECAM LaSalle's Engineering Students Association (AEI) organized a club afternoon on the Lyon campus. The aim of this event is to recruit new members and showcase the school's wealth of associations, particularly to new students.

Nearly 40 of the school's clubs and associations were on hand to present their activities in the form of stands: sport, ecology, art, innovation, culture... There was something for everyone! The day was also an opportunity for students to discover the range of activities available on campus. And for those who don't find what they're looking for, it's the perfect opportunity to give free rein to their creativity by considering the creation of new clubs.

During the afternoon, several clubs staged demonstrations of their activities: ping-pong games, dancing, roundnet matches and presentations of their prototypes: robotics club, H2 Eco Innov club, EFST club and more.

The event also enabled many students to find projects to get involved in. Involvement in community life brings real added value to their academic careers, developing key skills such as entrepreneurial spirit and collective responsibility.

# LabECAM\* takes part in the 49th Leeds-Lyon Symposium



In early September, INSA Lyon's Laboratory of Contact and Structural Mechanics (LaMCoS), in collaboration with the Laboratory of Tribology and Systems Dynamics (LTDS), recently organized the 49th Leeds-Lyon Symposium on Tribology. This internationally renowned event was held in Lyon and brought together numerous experts to discuss advances in the field of tribology. Discussions covered a wide range of topics, including mechanical modeling, materials, friction, component failure, rheology and much more.

The symposium, one of the most important events in the field of tribology, attracted over 350 researchers, academics and companies to discuss the latest scientific advances and future challenges in the sector. Over 100 scientific presentations and some 50 posters provided a comprehensive overview of current research.

During the event, 4 ECAM LaSalle professors and 2 doctoral students gave scientific presentations on their research in this field.

\*ECAM LaSalle research center on mechanical transmissions



# A look back at the first Lasallian integration seminar



The first edition of the integration seminar was a highlight in the induction of new students. Inspired by the school's founding Lasallian values, these two half-days aimed to offer a unique experience of cohesion.

Designed by two experienced coaches, the specificity of these two sessions lay in the fact that they were led and facilitated exclusively by school staff - teachers, but also administrative colleagues - specially trained for the occasion.

For the students, the seminar was an opportunity to reflect, to get to know each other, to share their experiences in small groups, and to plan their future at the school.

This integration seminar is part of an overall process of reflection and self-improvement. At the end of their course, in their final year, students will be invited to take stock of the objectives they set themselves on arrival. They will learn about the wishes and projections they had imagined years earlier and draw valuable lessons for their future careers.

Through these various highlights, ECAM LaSalle continues to implement its Lasallian educational project, paying particular attention to the human formation, fraternity and commitment of its students.

# New cross-border master programme in Sustainable Business Development



Fachhochschule  
Nordwestschweiz



Opening ceremony for the new degree programme on 20 Sept. 2024

The FHNW School of Business has launched the new trinational master programme in Sustainable Business Development in cooperation with the Hochschule Offenburg and the EM Strasbourg Business School. This degree programme unites three countries, three languages and three universities, offering a pan-European unique platform for training future specialists and managers who face the challenges of a sustainable and networked economy.

The trinational degree programme "MSc in Sustainable Business Development" is aimed at students from Germany, France and Switzerland who already hold a first university degree. Through the combination of theory and practice, paired with an intensive exchange between the three universities and partners in business, the students are taught interdisciplinary and intercultural skills which prepare them for an international career.

With the new degree programme, the FHNW School of Business is sending out a strong signal for the cross-border cooperation and training of management staff who are prepared to shape the future sustainably.

**Find out more about the Master Programme here:**  
**Master in Sustainable Business Development**  
**(trinational) | FHNW**



# FHNW Rover Team wins international competition for space robotics



Fachhochschule  
Nordwestschweiz



Complex challenges, intelligent robots, highly motivated teams of students and top-notch engineering – these are the ingredients of the European Rover Challenge, a renowned international competition for space robotics which takes place every year in Poland.

An interdisciplinary team of students from the fields of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and information technology as well as computer science developed, as part of a student project over two semesters, a Mars rover which can navigate in rough terrain, perform scientific experiments and carry out technical maintenance tasks, as well as an autonomous drone which provides new views of the Martian landscape.

What is the secret of success? The team sees practical training at the FHNW as an important factor: “We provide both theoretical knowledge as well as a lot of hands-on experience”, says Tim Ecknauer, team leader of the FHNW Rover Team. “We are very grateful to our sponsors and also especially to our study programmes for their enormous support – without them our success would not have been possible.”

## **Find out more about the FHNW Rover Team here:**

[FHNW Rover Team takes the win in international competition for space robotics | FHNW](#) (in German)  
[Blog – Blog FHNW Rover Team](#) (in English)

# RECTOR OF THE LATVIA UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES IRINA ARHIPOVA INAUGURATED IN A SOLEMN CEREMONY



On September 18, the Latvian University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU) held the inauguration ceremony of the rector, professor Irina Arhipova, where she gave the solemn rector's promise. During the inauguration, the rector received a chain of office, which symbolizes the responsibility and duty she undertakes towards the university and the country of Latvia. The event was attended by foreign and domestic guests, as well as university students, teaching staff and employees.

Professor I. Arhipova was elected to the position of rector on May 22, 2024 and has been performing her duties since July 1. She is the 17th rector of the university.



# LBTU organizes the European Night of Scientists "Science for a healthier, safer and happier life"



LBTU will introduce the European Scientists to the world of a sustainable future during the night and will allow us to understand what we can do differently today in order to live healthier, safer and happier tomorrow with various research demonstrations.

Mobile emission measurement systems for automobiles, robotic platforms that replace manual work and do not cause harm to the environment, as well as virtual reality solutions are the everyday life of LBTU engineers, which visitors will get to know. You will also be able to learn about the use of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), terrestrial (terrestrial) laser scanning, digital tachymeters in the implementation of various geospatial tasks, as well as drone technologies.

Food scientists, on the other hand, will discover the secrets of a sustainable future by experimenting with food and discovering the connection between cuisine and science. The research trip will be full of impressions: from protein denaturation and changes in heat treatment, colors in food products, carbohydrate dextrinization and gelation to chemical volcanoes, lava lamps and colored milk. In addition, the beginning of healthy food does not lie in the kitchen, but in the soil and its reactions, which agricultural scientists will allow us to look into the world. LBTU landscape architects, social science researchers, veterinary medicine scientists and many others will also present the results of various sustainability studies.



# LBTU membership the Baltic sustainability festival "Impact Day" in Tallinn

impact  
day.

10-12 October  
2024 | in Tallinn  
& virtually

4000+ attendees.  
150+ speakers.  
60+ EXPO booths.  
20+ countries.



From October 10 to 12, Tallinn, Estonia will host the largest Nordic and Baltic impact and sustainability festival "Impact day", where entrepreneurs, public organizations, policy makers and interested parties who care about the implementation and implementation of sustainable solutions are invited to participate. This year LBTU is participating for the first time as the creator of the festival, which will present its contribution to creating a better and more sustainable future to festival visitors.

At the "Impact Day" sustainability festival, the most successful ambassadors of sustainability from the Nordic and Baltic countries will take the stage, who will share their experience and provide new knowledge to others, how it is possible to change the direction and principles of activities of organizations and institutions in various fields, so that they achieve sustainability goals. Among them will be LBTU scientists who will tell how research and its results can help entrepreneurs and how it can improve the quality of life in society.



# POLAR RESEARCH AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS IN FOCUS AT THIS YEAR'S POLAR LAW SYMPOSIUM



This year's theme for the conference is: "Implementation of international minority and domestic law at the national level" and "Governance, resources, security, and jurisdictional issues in the circumpolar area".

Two of the Keynote Speakers at the conference are Professor S. James Anaya at International Law at the University of Colorado and Åsa Larsson Blind, Vice Chair of the Saami Council, which is the Sámi's joint cultural policy and political institution and operates in Norway, Sweden, Russia and Finland.

In her speech, Åsa Larsson Blind emphasizes, among other things, the necessity of implementing Sámi rights and self-determination in the Nordic countries.

— We still need a serious discussion about how the application of the Sámi's self-determination should take place. In practice, none of the countries respect the Sámi people's right to self-determination, and the Sámi today have very limited influence over land, water and natural resources in the Sámi areas. This is necessary for many reasons, not least in view of the climate crisis and the green transition that is taking place.

She is supported by S. James Anaya, who has written extensively on international human rights and issues relating to indigenous peoples, and has especially looked at how to implement international minority and indigenous legislation at the national level in different countries linked to self-determination, among other things.

— It's about basic human rights, the same rights that apply to everyone should also apply to indigenous peoples, he says and continues:

— What we also have to relate to today, which is one of the core issues of our time, is how we get the green transition to take place, while at the same time we need to preserve and protect our natural resources from a long-term sustainable perspective. Here, the indigenous peoples' holistic and relational approach to the world around us has a lot to teach us all, not least regarding the climate crises. We are all dependent on new technology and the raw material it requires to function. At the same time, we must respect each other's way of life, where a new kind of conservation model needs to be used at both national and local level to make this work long-term.

## More about the Polar Law Symposium

The conference starts with a Welcome reception in Jamtli's open-air museum on the evening of September 23, followed by a full conference program on September 24-25.

[Read more about the program for the conference here](#)

# Integrating Sustainability in Guiding at Cultural Heritage Sites: An Experimental Approach



This project aims to identify, experimentally test, and promote the adoption of sustainability-oriented guiding practices at cultural heritage sites. The project is empirically grounded in the community of Järvsö, specifically at the Stenegårds Cultural Heritage Centre.

One of the most distinctive features of tourism as an industry and a social phenomenon is its contrast with everyday 'normal' life. Being away from home, 'on vacation,' is often perceived as an extraordinary experience where tourists may behave in ways that diverge from the norms of their daily lives. This presents a problematic inconsistency between people's values and their behavior as tourists, resulting in harmful impacts.

Consequently, a key issue related to on-site learning is the perception of heritage site visitation, and tourism in general, primarily as a leisure activity focused on socializing and entertainment rather than education. However, learning and enjoyment are not mutually exclusive, and the primary challenge for destination managers is to facilitate cognitive and affective learning in an engaging manner. This can involve creating a sense of discovery and fascination, appealing to multiple senses, and providing visitors with the freedom to choose from a variety of experiences.

As the tourism sector is often dominated by small and micro-entrepreneurs, there is typically a lack of resources and expertise to monitor and mitigate negative tourist impacts. Promoting both cognitive and affective education through sustainability-oriented guiding represents a relatively low-cost adjustment that can help heritage sites mitigate negative impacts on-site and influence visitors' long-term sustainable behaviors.

Stenegård cultural heritage site is one of Hälsingland's main tourist attractions, drawing many visitors every year. On-site tour guiding, besides conveying information about the heritage site, has the potential to co-create a heritage experience and influence tourist behavior towards more sustainable practices.

The diverse setup of Stenegård is comparable to many cultural heritage centers in Sweden, making the cultural guiding practices developed there applicable to other similar destinations. Therefore, effective interpretation towards sustainability at cultural heritage sites, transforming them into spaces of experiences learning, is the central focus of this project.



# Young people with intellectual disabilities must be full members of society



Härnösands  
kommun



Mittuniversitetet  
MID SWEDEN UNIVERSITY

Young people with intellectual disabilities (ID) have poorer conditions for good health, participation in society and to influence their lives. Researchers from Mid Sweden University have investigated how participation and influence for young people with ID can be defined, applied, assessed and strengthened.

In the research project IDE project that Mid Sweden University carried out together with Härnösand municipality, answers were sought and methods were tested to strengthen participation and influence for young people with ID in the future.

Now it's time for the final conference and Marie Norgren, special needs teacher at adapted elementary school 7-9b at Gerestaskolan in Härnösand, answered some questions about how she experienced the project.

## **Why do you work with democracy and participation for young people with IF?**

It is included for all students, regardless of school form, to work with democracy issues. The Photovoice method aims to strengthen the individual's participation and possibly achieve some kind of change that can contribute to a higher quality of life. It can be a challenge for us as staff, partly to capture the students' thoughts and perspectives and to explain the conditions for democracy. Photovoice gives the students the opportunity to express what they think is important and important to them, then it is an experience that it can be easier to influence and implement changes in the school but usually more difficult when it comes to society in general, outside school hours.

## **What is the main contribution of this research project?**

We as staff have tried to enable and find adaptations for our student group with IF and based on the students' conditions, we have tried to implement the method in a few different areas. Working with photos as a form of documentation is common in school, especially for young people with IF. Something that the project has added is that we now start more from the students' perspective when we document in the activities. They have been involved in taking photos according to their ability, but all have been able to express what is important to them by making choices of photos in the documentation of their school life, which has strengthened their self-esteem.

## **How has the collaboration with the researchers worked?**

Good, they have been responsive both with the students and us staff. We have had continuous follow-up during the project.

## **How will you continue to work with participation and influence in the future?**

We have gained methods and tools both when it comes to documenting and making the students' development visible to themselves. We will use and perhaps develop these further in different ways.

**ChallengeEU**

# The new academic year started at SEEU: Induction week started for the freshmen



UNIVERSITETI I EVROPËS JUGLINDORE  
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ НА ЈУГОИСТОЧНА ЕВРОПА  
SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY



On September 16, 2024, South East European University (SEEU) officially began the new academic year, 2024/25. A traditional welcoming ceremony was held, particularly for freshmen, where Rector Acad. Prof. Dr. Abdylmenaf Bexheti greeted the new students, welcoming them into the SEEU family. He encouraged the students to fully utilize the university's resources and reassured them that academic and administrative units, including his office, were open to assist with any information or support they may need.

Rector Bexheti emphasized the unique strengths of SEEU graduates, particularly in technical, technological, and linguistic skills, which make them highly competitive in the job market, both locally and internationally. He highlighted that SEEU alumni are employed across various sectors in the country, including public institutions, NGOs, international missions, and private companies, due to the valuable skills they gained during their studies. He encouraged the students to embrace the opportunities ahead and prepare themselves to be global citizens, ready for the challenges of an interconnected and united Europe.

The president of the SEEU Student Parliament and Association, Mevlan Ademi, also addressed the freshmen, advising them to make the most of their time at SEEU. He reminded them that the years of study will pass quickly and encouraged them to build new relationships and gain valuable experiences that will benefit them throughout their student journey and beyond.

In a parallel event at SEEU's Skopje Campus, new students were welcomed by Prof. Dr. Veland Ramadani, the director of the Skopje Campus, alongside the Student Parliament president. The ceremony mirrored the welcoming held at the Tetovo Campus, providing the same motivational messages and guidance.

As part of SEEU's Orientation Week, the university offers a range of activities to help new students adjust to university life. Freshmen receive comprehensive guidance on SEEU's infrastructure, including how to obtain their student ID cards, compile their class schedules, and navigate university resources. Additionally, they are introduced to their student advisors and other administrative services to ensure they have a smooth transition into their academic careers.

Overall, the welcoming event served to motivate and inspire the new students as they embarked on their university journey, reassuring them of the support and opportunities available to help them succeed during their time at SEEU.



# Artificial Intelligence in the focus of SEEU staff training



UNIVERSITETI I EVROPËS JUGLINDORE  
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ НА ЈУГОИСТОЧНА ЕВРОПА  
SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY



From September 3rd to 5th, 2024, South East European University (SEEU) organized its annual staff development and training program, with this year's theme focused on "Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Higher Education: Opportunities, Challenges, SEEU Response." The event was designed to engage all university staff, addressing both the opportunities and challenges AI presents in academic settings.

The Rector of SEEU, Acad. Prof. Dr. Abdylmenaf Bexheti, opened the event by reflecting on the steady growth and achievements of the university over the years, highlighting key successes at institutional, national, and international levels. He pointed out the progress made by SEEU and emphasized the ongoing challenges faced in the higher education sector.

A key address was given by Dr. Paul Foster from Montana State University--Billings, USA, who has been associated with SEEU since its early years. He offered insights into the university's development over time, comparing its state at its inception to its current progress. His perspective underscored the significant evolution SEEU has undergone in its academic and operational frameworks.

The training sessions primarily focused on the integration of artificial intelligence in the teaching process. Participants explored the initial steps SEEU has taken in adopting AI for educational purposes and examined strategies for its effective and ethical use in classrooms. The aim was to equip faculty members with the knowledge to navigate AI's potential impact on pedagogy, curriculum design, and student engagement.

Moreover, the event covered topics related to research and institutional changes, particularly those aligned with the European University Association (EUA). Faculty members were introduced to the latest trends in AI and higher education, as well as updates on research projects and collaborations. The workshops included discussions on improving SEEU's community engagement efforts, especially in activities that have a commercial and promotional impact.

To ensure the staff was actively involved in refining teaching practices, individual faculties held workshops focused on addressing key areas for improvement. These workshops were driven by student feedback from course evaluations, ensuring that the insights gathered from students were used to enhance the educational experience.

The third day of the training was dedicated to team-building activities, including hiking and a picnic, providing an opportunity for staff to strengthen their connections and unwind after the intensive training sessions.



# MVDSI Welcomes Delegation from Middlebury Institute of International Studies



UNIVERSITETI I EVROPËS JUGLINDORE  
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ НА ЈУГОИСТОЧНА ЕВРОПА  
SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY



During March, 2024, Max van der Stoel Institute (MVDSI) at the South East European University (SEEU) hosted students and their mentors from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS).

The study visit to the Balkans is a part of one week immersion course on Nationalism and the Formation of New States in the Balkans within the MIIS course study program providing students first hand experience on the social, political and economic dynamics in the region.

During their stay at SEEU students were able to meet with the faculty members, researchers of the MVDSI and attended an interactive panel by local speakers discussing themes related to the course topic.

This study visit was designed and led in close collaboration among three faculty members, all of whom are Fulbrighters. Drs. Anne Campbell and Phil Murphy from the Middlebury Institute, alongside Dr. Veli Kreci from the Max van der Stoel Institute at SEEU.

MVDSI is strongly committed to further collaboration with US universities through scholarly and student exchanges while building stronger institutional partnerships.



# Universidade Europeia receives top rating from A3ES



The result is the fruit of continuous work over the last few years and reflects the quality mission in all areas of Universidade Europeia, which culminates in an evaluation process that is also very rigorous and demanding.

The external evaluation highlights the Universidade Europeia's "educational offer [which] is very much in line with the institutional value of innovation, especially with regard to the experiential learning model and the investment in distance education". The CAE was "impressed by the emphasis placed on the educational experience of students, as well as evidence of excellence in certain areas."

The reaccreditation for the maximum period and without conditions by A3ES highlights the active contribution that Universidade Europeia has been making to society over the last 10 years, fulfilling its role in teaching, research and the transmission of knowledge with high quality standards.

"This evaluation is a historic result for Universidade Europeia. In the context of a university with only 10 years of existence, as such, this milestone is an achievement for everyone and reflects the quality of our path, highlighting the exceptional performance of everyone involved in the Universidade Europeia's mission," says the rector, Hélia Gonçalves Pereira, adding that "Universidade Europeia's academic model is a crucial element in the success of our project".

This evaluation confirms that, despite the enormous challenges facing education, we are certainly on the right track."

The institutional evaluation, carried out by A3ES every six years, is an instrument for the continuous improvement of the national higher education system, covering all the various institutions (public and private, polytechnic and university). The process began with the self-evaluation report, followed by a visit from the External Evaluation Commission (CAE) in November 2023. Institutional evaluation, provided for in the Legal Framework for the Evaluation of Higher Education, is designed to assess each institution in the various aspects in which it carries out its activity: educational, scientific and cultural projects; the solidity of the training offer; the integration of students in the teaching, research and knowledge transfer processes; the promotion of scientific research; the degree of external cooperation and internationalization; and resource management.

# EUROPA EDUCATION ANNOUNCES SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION OF ITS EDUCATIONAL PROJECT IN PORTUGAL



The new facilities are part of the Oriente Green Campus, managed by Norfin SGOIC and owned by a real estate fund on behalf of Orion Capital Managers, with which a long-term contract has been signed.

The new campus has 17,000m2 of space for classrooms, laboratories, a cafeteria, a library, social areas, study and simulation areas. Thanks to its innovative environment, it will provide students with an ecosystem of knowledge and creativity that will promote experiential learning through the use of the latest technologies applied to education.

The project to expand and reorganize Europa Education's campuses in Portugal stems from the Group's commitment to academic excellence and its students. New facilities are being incorporated which, together with the existing ones, will strengthen the presence of Europa Education's institutions in Lisbon and facilitate the full implementation of the unique and differentiated Academic Model that characterizes the educational Group.

"This new space is more than just a state-of-the-art, modern and avant-garde infrastructure; it is the materialization of a qualitative leap in the field of innovation, quality and dynamism in the teaching and learning experience that the institutions offer students. The building will be a key element in driving not only the project in Portugal, but also the development of higher education as a whole," said Carlos Bertrán, the Group's general manager in Portugal.

For his part, Henrique Rodrigues da Silva, COO of the Norfin Group, says: "We are very pleased to have an educational establishment with an international dimension, as is the case with the Europa Education group."

In the same vein, Gauthier Renaud, Partner at Orion Capital Managers, which represents the shareholder of the Multusos Oriente Fund, owner of the Oriente Green Campus, explains: "The Fund is thrilled to welcome Europa Education's new university campus to the Oriente Green Campus."

The new campus, combined with the unique and distinctive academic model of Europa Education institutions, means a major step forward in higher education in Portugal, offering an innovative, high-level educational project in line with international best practice.

The current campuses of Quinta do Bom Nome, Lispolis and Santos, in Lisbon, and IPAM in Porto, will be joined by the Oriente Green Campus, also in Lisbon.



# First Friendships and Adventures Behind the Students



The Adapciak, an orientation camp for incoming students of the University of Warmia and Mazury (UWM) in Olsztyn, has come to an end on the UWM campus. Organized by the University Student Council, the camp's main goal is to help new students integrate and ease their transition into university life.

"For several years now, the majority of participants in the orientation camp have been veterinary and medical students. We want them to leave here with smiles, new friendships, and less fear of starting their studies. That's why we organize Adapciak!" said Iwona Pająk from the University Student Council.

During the four-day camp, participants had the opportunity to explore the campus, get to know their faculties, and learn about student rights and responsibilities. The program included a bonfire for integration, theater workshops, activities at the Faculty of Animal Bioengineering (including a sheep ultrasound demonstration), and 3D printing workshops at the Faculty of Technical Sciences.

Professor Mariola Grzybowska-Brzezińska, Vice-Rector for Human Resources and Financial Policy, also met with the students. She emphasized that university life is not only about education but also about developing passions and discovering talents.

On the last day, participants visited the Nicolaus Copernicus Hall at Olsztyn Castle and explored the attractions of the Old Town. They also took part in a campus-wide scavenger hunt, and the event concluded with a Glam Party.

# UWM introduces the captivating world of science and art



Once again, the University of Warmia and Mazury (UWM) invited the residents of Olsztyn and the surrounding region to celebrate the Olsztyn Days of Science and Art. Thousands flocked to Kortowo to participate in a variety of engaging workshops, lectures, and demonstrations.

## **A showcase of discovery**

The 22nd edition of the event, organized by UWM's Center for Science Promotion and Innovation "Kortosfera," kicked off on September 26. With exhibitions, workshops, VR displays, and fire safety demonstrations, the campus was bustling with activity.

## **Inspiring curiosity**

According to UWM's Vice-Rector for Science, Prof. Jakub Sawicki, the event plays a crucial role in fostering public interest in both science and art, offering a wide array of opportunities for all age groups. As he noted, "It's a time to inspire curiosity, broaden horizons, and discover new passions."

## **Hands-on experiences for all ages**

From microbiology expeditions to chemistry experiments and fire rescue demonstrations, visitors had a chance to engage with science in interactive ways. Many schools from the region, including primary and secondary institutions, took part, making the event a memorable educational experience for students.

## **"Kortosfera" – a never-ending source of fascination**

Kortosfera continued to impress with its rotating exhibitions and hands-on activities. Whether it was first-time visitors or regular attendees, the science center offered something new for everyone, making it a hub of learning and excitement.



# A RESEARCHER FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WARMIA AND MAZURY USES WASTE TO PRODUCE BIOPOLYMERS



UNIVERSITY  
OF WARMIA AND MAZURY  
IN OLSZTYN



The replacement of synthetic polymers with biopolymers would have a significant environmental impact. Prof. Justyna Mozejko-Ciesielska from the UWM Faculty of Biology and Biotechnology has been working for years on producing biopolymers using microorganisms. She developed a concept of using industrial waste to create valuable bioproducts.

## **Where did the idea of using bacteria to produce biopolymers come from?**

The concept originated during my PhD studies, when I realized that bacteria have a great capacity to produce application-worthy compounds. My focus was on finding bacteria capable of producing polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA), a type of biodegradable and thermoplastic biopolymer. Since producing these biopolymers is expensive, I proposed using industrial waste in bacterial cultivation. My first success came when I discovered that bacteria could grow and produce biopolymers in media containing post-production vegetable oils.

## **Given that waste disposal is costly, what was the main goal of your research?**

The primary goal was to develop a process for producing biopolymers using bacteria that could utilize waste from the agri-food industry, thereby reducing the costs of bioplastic production. This aligns with the circular economy concept, as it turns waste into raw materials. In addition to oils, I used glycerol fractions from biodiesel production and dairy by-products, all of which were effectively used by bacteria to produce PHA.

## **What bacteria are we talking about?**

I focus on bacteria like *Pseudomonas* from wastewater treatment plants, which are unique in their ability to metabolize waste. I've also worked with extremophilic bacteria from foreign collections, such as *Halomonas alkaliantarctica* and *Paracoccus homiensis*, that show promise in producing biopolymers from waste products.

## **What are biopolymers like, and where can they be used?**

PHA can be processed into biodegradable food containers, disposable utensils, and even medical materials. Short-chain PHA resembles plastic wrap, while medium-chain PHA can be compared to adhesive tape and may have medical applications, such as drug carriers or wound dressings.

## **What are your future research plans?**

I aim to scale up biopolymer production and investigate molecular mechanisms to improve the efficiency of microbial PHA synthesis.