

Webster
UNIVERSITY

Vienna
Private University

Annual Report

2024 – 2025



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Governance Structure

The following governing bodies were active in the fiscal year 2024–2025:

General Assembly (ex officio membership as officers of Webster University)

- Dr. Elizabeth J. Stroble, PhD, Chancellor (June and July 2024)
Dr. Timothy Keane, PhD, Chancellor (as of August 2024)
- Dr. Julian Z. Schuster, President
- Nancy Hellerud, J.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs
- William Donovan, Chief Financial Officer

Supervisory Board of the Bildungsverein für die Freunde der Webster University (St. Louis, USA) acting as the University Council of Webster Vienna Private University (hereinafter: “University Council”)

- Dr. Ryan Guffey, PhD, Director General for Global Campuses, Webster University
- William Lynch, MFA, Professor Emeritus from Webster University
- Richard Ryffel, Executive Director of Business Leadership and Professor of Practice, Mitch Daniels School of Business, Purdue University, and Weidenbaum Center Senior Fellow
- Dr. Stefan Zapotocky, Chairman of the Board of Directors at RPR Private Foundation Vienna (Chairperson)

Executive Board of the Bildungsverein für die Freunde der Webster University (St. Louis, USA) and of Webster Vienna Private University

- Dr. Johannes Pollak, Rector (Chairperson until October 2024)
- Dr. Samuel R. Schubert, Associate Director
(Vice-Chairperson/Secretary until October 2024; Chairperson as of November 2024)
- Mag. Nora Binder, Head of Human Resources/Career Services
(Vice-Chairperson/Secretary as of November 2024)
- Mag. Michael Postmann, Head of Finance and Administration (Treasurer)

During the financial year 2024–2025, the University Council fulfilled its responsibilities under the law and the Articles of Association, holding four regular meetings (June 19, October 16, 2024; January 22 and April 9, 2025). Representatives of the Works Council and the chairperson of the University Senate attended the meetings without voting rights. The University Council reviewed and discussed the quarterly reports on the university's business and financial position. It examined and authorized the annual report and financial statements for fiscal year 2023–2024 and the changes and performance agreement between the Executive Board and the University Council as well as the budget, personnel and investment plans for the fiscal year 2025–2026.

During the academic year 2024–2025, the Advisory Board consisted of 12 prominent leaders in Austria who advise the university's Executive Board on how to strengthen the competitiveness of the institution. They play a vital role in ensuring that Webster Vienna Private University graduates are among the best prepared to succeed in the 21st century. Their dedicated engagement enhances the university's visibility and reputation throughout the region and across a diverse set of business, cultural and educational communities.

- Dr. Walter Schön, Chief Executive Officer, Schoen Aerospace Trading & Consulting
- Mag. Markus Brenner, Managing Director of Brenner & Company
- Mag. Michael Edelsbrunner, Country Executive, Citibank Europe plc, Austria Branch
- Mag. Liane Hirner (CPA), Member of the Managing Board, Vienna Insurance Group
- Ing. Rudolf Kemler, Senior Partner, Roland Berger GmbH
- Prof. (FH) Dr. Christian Kreuzer, Managing Director, EY Advisory Services and Managing Director Austrian Controller Institute
- Mag. Gernot Mittendorfer, MBA, Member of the Management Board, Erste Group Bank AG
- Mag. Patricia Neumann, CEO of Siemens AG Austria
- Philippe Roodhooft, Executive Vice President Middle East and Growth Projects, Borealis
- Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Mag. Friedrich Rödler, Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Erste Group Bank AG
- Biljana Weber, Senior Director Business Applications, Microsoft ERP and CRM
- Dipl.-Ing. Martin Winkler, Country Manager Austria, ORACLE

Foreword By The Executive Board

The 2024–2025 academic year stands as a testament to Webster Vienna Private University's enduring capacity for progress, renewal, and academic distinction. It was a year defined by institutional resilience and scholarly achievement, and one that saw WVPU strengthen its position as a research-led university committed to mentorship, teaching excellence, and the integration of rigorous inquiry into every aspect of the academic experience.

The reaffirmation of WVPU's institutional accreditation by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research represents both an achievement and a responsibility. It confirms the success of the reforms undertaken in recent years, enhancing participatory governance, codifying faculty research standards, and ensuring student representation in decision-making, while also affirming the university's place among Austria's most enduringly accredited private institutions. This achievement, alongside Webster University's continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission in the United States, underscores the institution's global recognition for quality, integrity, and educational excellence.

Building on this foundation, WVPU continues to strengthen its identity as a research-led university. To deepen this environment and embed inquiry across all programs, the university has begun preparing a transition toward a multi-year performance-agreement culture. Working within longer evaluation horizons that align teaching and service with research objectives, external funding, and scholarly outputs provides a strong framework for sustained academic excellence and sets the foundation for WVPU's next leap forward in the years to come.

Concurrent with these efforts, the university advanced the development of a PhD program fully embedded within its research profile, which focuses on the analysis of economic and socio-political change within a comprehensive multi-level framework that ensures thematic coherence, methodological rigor, and practical relevance for policy, industry, and society. WVPU faculty examine global governance and institutional transformation, organizational and technological innovation, and behavioural and identity dynamics, with communication, digitalization, and artificial intelligence connecting these levels. The PhD in Economic and Socio-Political Change, planned for introduction in 2027, is anchored in this framework through five multidisciplinary clusters addressing global power shifts, organizational and technological innovation, new patterns in economic and social practices, changing social and individual identities, and the impact of AI and digitalization on governance and society.

Beyond the doctoral initiative, 2024–2025 was a year of substantive program development and refinement. The progress of the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science program with an emphasis in AI, the advancement of our Psychology Department through new research leadership, the development of the Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) in Comparative International Business Law, and preparations to revise the graduate International Relations program with a strong focus on security studies that matches the needs of contemporary world politics, together reflect a coherent and forward-looking academic strategy. These initiatives position WVPU to meet the demands of a global knowledge economy that values critical thought, technical competence, and ethical leadership in equal measure.

Our achievements are also reflected in the vitality of our community. Record enrollment figures, steady financial growth, and a growing culture of faculty-student research collaboration attest to a thriving university driven by shared purpose. Across disciplines, our faculty advanced scholarship with international reach, while students actively engaged in conferences, co-authored publications, and contributed to meaningful research projects. The breadth and depth of these activities reinforce WVPU's commitment to academic excellence grounded in mentorship and the pursuit of knowledge that matters.

This year, WVPU continued to serve as a convener of public dialogue, hosting prominent diplomats, scholars, and leaders from government, academia, and industry. These events remind us that universities serve a vital role not only as centers of learning but also as catalysts for civic engagement and intellectual exchange.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our faculty and staff for their professionalism, creativity, and unwavering commitment to our students, to our students for their intellectual curiosity and global perspective, and to our alumni, partners, and stakeholders for their continued confidence and support.

The many achievements of 2024–2025 stand as a direct result of the dedication of WVPU's faculty and staff. They cultivate and sustain a university environment in which teaching and research are inseparable and in which excellence is nurtured. Through their collective efforts, each member of our community advances WVPU's mission and strengthens its contribution to society.

Vienna, October 15, 2025

Dr. Samuel R. Schubert, Mag. Nora Binder, Mag. Michael Postmann
Members of the Executive Board



Management Report

Overview of strategic focus and institutional progress

Webster Vienna Private University is a private university focused on student mentorship and teaching excellence, integrating research-driven projects into the classroom and combining academic theory with real-world, practical skills. Established in 1981 as Webster University Vienna, WVPU was accredited as one of Austria's first private universities in 2001 and has since been reaccredited five consecutive times (2006, 2011, 2016, 2022). By emphasizing critical and analytical thinking, problem-solving and both theoretical and applied knowledge, WVPU equips its graduates to navigate complex professional environments and contribute meaningfully to their respective fields. Small class sizes, a student-to-faculty ratio of 6:1 and comprehensive support services continue to support the university's mission of fostering individual academic and professional excellence.

The 2024–2025 academic year was marked by both institutional progress and leadership transition. Following the departure of Rector Dr. Johannes Pollak in November 2024, an international search for a new rector was initiated. In accordance with the university's governance framework, leadership passed to Dr. Samuel R. Schubert, who, together with his colleagues on the Executive Board, guided the institution toward a model of collective leadership that ensured continuity, stability, and progress across all strategic and operational areas.

The changes were both significant and effective. Among the year's notable achievements were a substantial growth in student numbers, the successful unconditioned reaffirmation of institutional accreditation, sustained financial strength with a solid operating margin, strategic faculty recruitment aligned with emerging research clusters and the sharpening of the university's research identity, high-profile public engagements with leading scholars and diplomats, progress in program development and revision, including the advancement of WVPU's planned PhD program, and heightened morale across all academic and administrative units.

Institutional Accreditation

In Spring 2025, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research reaffirmed Webster Vienna Private University's institutional accreditation, confirming that all previously established conditions have been fully met. WVPU's accreditation is now secured through 2028, underscoring the university's continued delivery of quality education and effective operations. It also maintains full institutional accreditation from the U.S.-based Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The conditions set by AQ Austria during the prior reaccreditation process, which focused on enhancing stakeholder involvement and developing a PhD program, led to significant reforms at WVPU. These included constitutional changes, strengthened academic autonomy through new Senate policies, formalized student participation in governance and minimum research output targets for faculty. These measures not only addressed AQ Austria's recommendations but also advanced WVPU's long-term strategic goals, including the forthcoming development and accreditation of its first doctoral program.

Development of PhD program

In response to feedback from the Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance, WVPU has concentrated its efforts on fostering an integrated research environment encompassing all existing programs. Significant progress has been made by the PhD Program Committee, which has defined the program's focus on Economic and Socio-Political Change—an inclusive, interdisciplinary theme that aligns with Webster's mission and builds on the university's faculty strengths. The program will be structured around five multidisciplinary research clusters: (1) Great Power Shifts and Changing Global Orders, (2) Organizational Change and Innovation Dynamics, (3) New Patterns in Economic and Social Practices, (4) Social and Individual Orientations and Identities Under Change, and (5) AI, Digitalization, and Their Impact on Economic, Social, and Political Structures. These clusters serve as the organizational foundation for research output, collaboration, and funding strategies.

The program's structure and core components, including coursework, have been conceptualized and an Advisory Board has been assembled to support the program's development. The Advisory Board will focus on employability and review the PhD program application as it advances toward AQA accreditation. Recruitment of new faculty is ongoing and strategically aligned with the research clusters to ensure the long-term viability and success of the program. All milestones are currently on track.

Advancement of Bachelor Program in Computer Science

Continuing from last year's launch of the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science program development, WVPU has taken significant steps toward advancing the initiative. Dr. Peter Roth was appointed Head of Department and Program Director, bringing expertise in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. Currently employed part-time, he is expected to transition to full-time by early 2026 and is already actively engaged in research, including a grant proposal in edge AI. The program, which offers emphasis tracks in AI and cybersecurity, underwent a site visit by AQ Austria in Spring 2025, resulting in conditional accreditation. It is expected to welcome its first full student cohort in Fall 2026. These developments reflect continued progress in expanding WVPU's STEM offerings and further position the university to meet evolving global workforce demands.

Expansion of Psychology Research

WVPU welcomed Dr. Gerulf Rieger to its Psychology Department. An expert in sexual arousal and orientation, he brings extensive research experience and will enhance both teaching and research at WVPU. The university is supporting Dr. Rieger with the addition of a new research lab incorporating state-of-the-art technologies focused on combining physiological and psychological approaches to studying sexual arousal and orientation.

With over 4,550 citations and a strong record of publicly funded research published in leading journals, Dr. Rieger also serves as Associate Editor for a top sexuality research journal. Holding advanced degrees in Biological Anthropology and Personality Psychology, his expertise supports WVPU's interdisciplinary Psychology program, which emphasizes scientific inquiry and communication skills.

Development of Law Program

WVPU is developing a new Law program with a focus on comparative legal systems and applications in international and corporate contexts. Rather than preparing students for traditional legal practice, the program is designed to equip graduates for roles such as in-house corporate counsel and other positions where legal expertise intersects with business and global affairs. The curriculum will emphasize areas like international law, corporate finance and business law, building on WVPU's existing academic strengths.

The LLB is scheduled to launch in Fall 2026, with an LLM to follow. Multiple entry pathways are being developed to ensure accessibility and flexibility for a broad range of students. Program planning is on track, with curriculum design, staffing and infrastructure actively progressing.

BSBA Curriculum Revision and Management Program Teach-Out

In 2024, WVPU implemented significant updates to its undergraduate business programs to better align with current industry demands and academic standards. The Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) was modernized to include new specialization tracks in Marketing, International Business, Entrepreneurship and Human Resource Management. These specializations provide students with focused expertise while ensuring a strong foundation in systemic thinking, problem solving, business communication, interpersonal skills, technology literacy, ethical reasoning and global and cultural understanding. The revised curriculum enhances subject-specific depth, increases requirements in economics and mathematics/statistics, integrates contemporary topics such as digitalization and data analytics and introduces a first-semester course, Foundations for Business Success.

As part of this transition, the three Management (BA) programs are being phased out. No new students were admitted to these programs after December 31, 2024 and the final teach-out will conclude by June 1, 2026. Current students may complete their existing degrees or transfer into the updated BSBA program, which incorporates much of the Management curriculum in its new structure. The consolidation streamlines academic offerings, reduces redundancy and ensures all graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge to thrive in today's evolving global business environment.

Financial Success

WVPU continues to build on its record of financial stability and growth. Following a strong year, the university exceeded its financial targets, driven in part by higher-than-anticipated student intake during the Spring semester. Both revenue and projected profit have surpassed expectations, reflecting the sustained demand for WVPU's academic offerings and the effective alignment of operational planning with institutional goals. With continued enrollment growth and prudent financial management, WVPU remains well-positioned to deliver strong results in the years ahead.

Enrollment Success

WVPU experienced another outstanding year in enrollment, welcoming 617 students to campus — the highest number since 2011. With over 500 students enrolled in Austrian-accredited programs, the university reached its strongest numbers in this category since 2018. The incoming class included just over 190 new degree-seeking students, marking the largest intake since 2013 and continuing a multi-year trend of growth. In addition, 104 study abroad students from across the Webster network attended courses in Vienna — WVPU's highest number in over a decade. This sustained growth, particularly at the undergraduate level, reflects WVPU's rising reputation and reinforces its strong retention rates. As a tuition-based institution, this momentum supports both the university's academic mission and its long-term financial health.



“

Our greatest achievements often come wrapped in the quiet sacrifices made by those we love and by those who love us fiercely in return...to everyone here, students, families, friends, faculty and staff, thank you for making our students' achievements possible.

—Dr. Samuel R. Schubert, Associate Director

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Graduation 2025

On May 17, Webster Vienna Private University conferred degrees upon 79 graduates during a commencement ceremony held at the historic Hofburg Palace. Faculty, staff, family members and friends gathered to honor the accomplishments of the 2025 graduating class. This year's graduates, representing 27 countries, are now the newest members of the Webster University Alumni Association.

Undergraduate valedictorian Tobias Michael Gerber and graduate valedictorian Olga Zolotareva provided the student addresses. Associate Director Dr. Samuel R. Schubert provided welcome remarks, while Alexandra Deubner of Career Services served as this year's master of ceremony.

Stefano Cantini and Melanie Smith of the Vienna Chapter of the Webster University Alumni Association presented the Alumni Association Awards.

The Bronwyn Mitterecker Memorial Alumni Award for voluntary service recognizes significant impact and service of an alumna or alumnus to the betterment of society in line with WVPU's mission and vision. The award was created in memory and honor of Bronwyn K. Mitterecker, who worked for Webster Vienna Private University for more than a decade serving as Director of Admissions and as Alumni Coordinator. This year's awardee was Allison Snowden, MA '10, MBA '18.

The recipients of the 2025 faculty awards were Katrin Kristjansdottir and Gerulf Rieger (Diversity in Teaching) and Nikolaos Antonakakis and Isabella Sarto-Jackson (Excellence in Teaching). Teachers of the Year awards went to Marco Bocchese (Faculty) and Stefan Vogel (Adjunct Faculty).

The Webster Vienna Alumni Association Leadership Award recognizes a student who has exhibited distinguished leadership during their years at Webster and has shared their talents with their department, the student body and surrounding community. This year's awardee was Mamiza Francisca Chongo Mucanheia.



The Bronwyn Mitterecker Memorial Alumni awardee, Allison Snowden, MA '10, MBA '18



The Webster Vienna Alumni Association Leadership awardee, Mamiza Francisca Chongo Mucanheia

H.E. Arad Benk delivers address to the class of 2025

Reflecting WVPU's international outlook and commitment to global dialogue, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Arad Benk , Chief of Cabinet of the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, delivered the 2025 commencement address at the Hofburg Palace. A distinguished Austrian diplomat and scholar, Dr. Benk has devoted his career to advancing European cooperation, conflict resolution, and international engagement.

He began his service at the Austrian Foreign Ministry in 1998, holding positions in the Balkans Division and the United Nations Department, and later served in postings in Bonn, Pristina, Bucharest, Brussels, and Tel Aviv. His ambassadorial appointments included Latvia (2015–2016) and Georgia (2016–2020), where he was Austria's first ambassador to the country. From 2020 to 2022 he headed the Ministry's Vienna Headquarters Department, and from 2022 to 2024 he represented Austria as Ambassador to Ukraine before assuming his current role as Chief of Cabinet.

Dr. Benk holds degrees in political science from the University of Vienna, advanced qualifications from King's College London, and postgraduate studies at the College of Europe in Bruges. His extensive diplomatic and academic experience made his address particularly resonant, underscoring WVPU's shared values of internationalism, critical inquiry, and service in the pursuit of peace and understanding. In his remarks, he called upon graduates to lead with conviction, curiosity, and compassion, qualities that reflect WVPU's commitment to academic excellence, ethical leadership, and global engagement.



H.E. Ambassador Dr. Arad Benk

Student mentorship, teaching and service

At WVPU, scholarly mentorship and a strong commitment to integrating teaching and research ensure that students engage with the most current knowledge in their fields. Coupled with personalized support services, this fosters an academic environment that nurtures each student's potential, equipping them for success both academically and beyond.

The combined efforts of 83 faculty members (15 permanent faculty members and 68 adjunct lecturers) across 4 departments and 13 accredited degree programs educated 617 students on campus through 204 publicly scheduled courses awarding more than 29,000 ECTS in the 2024–2025 period. In addition, 17 students took 12 independent or directed studies under the direct supervision of 8 faculty (including adjuncts) while 79 students (29 graduate and 50 undergraduate) undertook theses supervised by 13 permanent faculty members.

WVPU offered in the 2024–2025 period eight undergraduate and five graduate degree programs accredited in Austria and the United States, the former extending validity to all member states of the European Union. One graduate program, Finance (MSc) was in the process of being taught out as the university continues to streamline its roster of program and plans to add new ones in the coming years.



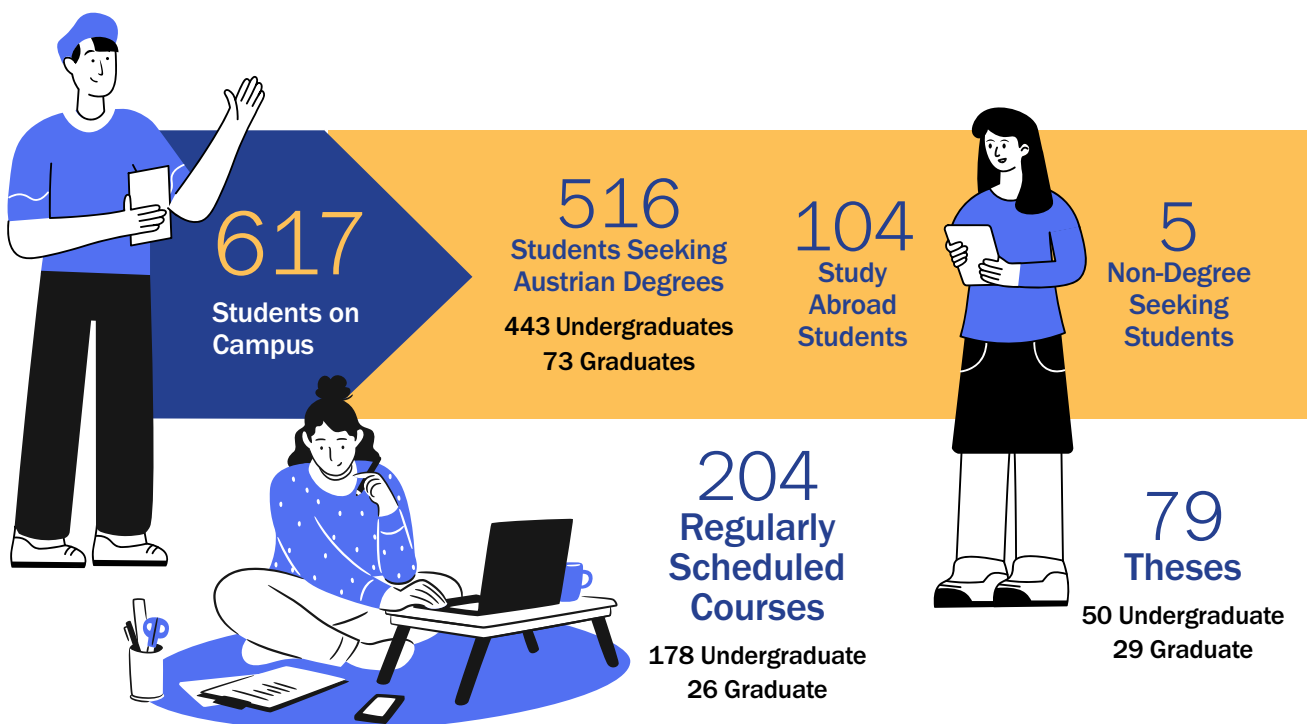
Accredited Degree Programs available at WVPU

Undergraduate

Business Administration (BSc)
Management (BA)
Management with an emphasis
in International Business (BA)
Management with an emphasis in Marketing (BA)
International Relations (BA)
Media Communications (BA)
Psychology (BA)
Strategic Communication (BA)

Graduate

Finance (MSc)
Marketing (MSc)
Master of Business Administration (MBA)
International Relations (MA)
Psychology with an emphasis
in Counseling Psychology (MA)



With average class sizes of 21 for undergraduates and 8 for graduates and a student to overall faculty ratio of 6.4, WVPU boasts one of the best environments for student success and makes it a highly attractive choice for current and prospective students alike.

Student-Faculty Ratio
6.4

Average Undergraduate Class Size
21

Average Graduate Class Size
8



Collaborating with Leaders in Academia and Industry

At WVPU, students learn in a dynamic environment where academic excellence meets real-world opportunity. Beyond the classroom, they gain robust support through co-curricular and extracurricular activities led by faculty, industry experts, and institutional partners. Our adjunct faculty includes accomplished entrepreneurs, executives, researchers, and public service leaders who ensure students stay ahead of industry trends and emerging best practices.

Through interactions with distinguished experts from top universities, research centers, multinational corporations and international organizations, students gain valuable networking opportunities and practical insights. Courses often feature high-profile speakers who bring cutting-edge perspectives to the classroom: renowned scholars, corporate CEOs and diplomats.

Experiential learning is a cornerstone of the WVPU experience. Students visit multinational headquarters, the United Nations, Vienna-Based International Organizations (VBOs) and take part in high-level meetings at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). These immersive experiences, paired with our rigorous academics, prepare graduates to succeed and lead in an ever-changing global landscape.

Alumni

On September 19, 2024 more than 100 attendees, a significant increase from past years, gathered at WVPU for the 16th Webster Vienna Alumni Symposium. During the event, alumni, students, faculty, staff and external guests came together to socialize and engage in timely discussions on leadership and the growing importance of emotional intelligence in today's world.

Titled “Leadership and Emotional Intelligence,” the event convened a distinguished panel of experts who explored how emotional intelligence shapes effective leadership across sectors. Speakers included Mag. Patricia Neumann, CEO of Siemens AG Austria; Dr. Marc Mehu, Professor of Psychology at WVPU; Lydia Goutas, Senior Partner at Lehner Executive Partners; Eliot Mannoia, MBA, Founder of BrandKarma; and Antonija Pacek, M.Phil, Head of Innovation Practice at GSA and Faculty at WVPU. The panellists examined how leaders can use emotional intelligence to drive innovation and inclusion, while also warning of its potential misuse in manipulative or unethical ways. They also reflected on how emotional intelligence can complement technology, including AI, in building more adaptive and human-centred leadership practices.



Career services and support for students

This academic year, Webster Vienna Private University continued to organize a diverse range of events, workshops, and collaborations to support students and graduates in their career development. These initiatives provided valuable insights into industries, recruitment processes, and career paths, while also fostering networking opportunities and professional readiness.

October	Austrian Airlines Career Excursion & Lunch	Students visited the AUA headquarters, toured the offices, and gained insights into the recruitment process and dynamic work environment.
	Career Calling Fair	WVPU's Career Services connected with leading companies in Vienna, strengthening ties for future internships and events.
November	Erste Bank Career Event	Representatives introduced students to company roles, recruitment insights and direct networking opportunities with employees.
	Diplomatic Careers Talk with Prof. Dr. Michael Reiterer	The former EU Ambassador to Korea shared personal perspectives on diplomatic career paths.
January	Vision Board Workshop	Led by Alexandra Deubner, this mentoring workshop helped participants define goals and foster stronger connections.
February	Henkel Career Lunch & Factory Visit	Students explored company culture, job opportunities and recruitment practices, followed by a guided tour of Henkel's Vienna production facilities.
March	Coca-Cola HBC Austria Career Lunch	Talent Acquisition representatives shared insights into roles, recruitment and networking opportunities.
	Assessment Center Training	Trainer Christiana Mitcheva guided students through group exercises and role plays to simulate assessment center experiences.
April	IAEA Career Event at the Science Fair	HR representatives presented internship and scholarship opportunities as well as advice on joining IAEA.
	Photo Day	Students benefited from professional headshots for application documents.
February – May	Careers in History, Politics and International Relations Guest Lecture	Provided students with tailored career tips and guidance in international relations.

Mentoring Program and Student Awards

Webster Vienna Private University's "Dare to Grow Together" Mentoring Program continued its successful run during the 2024–25 academic year.

In May 2025, Webster Vienna's Career Services Team and the Webster Vienna Alumni Association hosted a farewell event on campus to celebrate the achievements of 46 members of the 2024–25 mentoring program. Melanie Smith (MBA '14) from the Vienna chapter of the Webster University Alumni Association welcomed attendees.

Janette Donner, an International Atomic Energy Agency employee and President of the Women in Nuclear IAEA chapter, delivered the keynote address. A panel discussion moderated by Alexandra Deubner, Senior Career Service Officer, featured mentors and mentees sharing their experiences. The event concluded with the Student Life Awards, hosted by Associate Director Dr. Samuel R. Schubert and Student Resource Center Officer Jennifer Sowerby.

Since its launch in 2021, Webster Vienna's mentoring program has been instrumental in helping students explore career paths, develop skills and build confidence for professional success. The university remains committed to fostering a supportive and enriching environment for both students and alumni.



EmpowerHer with U.S. Ambassador to Austria

On September 4, Webster Vienna Private University hosted the kickoff and closing event of the EmpowerHer transatlantic initiative, organized by the American Chamber of Commerce in Austria in partnership with the U.S. Embassy. Launched in 2023 at Webster Vienna, EmpowerHer is dedicated to advancing women's empowerment in the business community, emphasizing the positive impact of equal opportunities and gender diversity in leadership.

The event attracted a distinguished audience of executives, mentors, mentees and professionals committed to closing the gender gap. U.S. Ambassador to Austria Victoria Reggie Kennedy served as the guest of honor, offering inspiring remarks on the initiative's origins and the ongoing need to promote women's economic empowerment. Ambassador Kennedy highlighted that including women in senior leadership roles benefits organizations and society at large but acknowledged that progress is a long-term effort, describing it as "a marathon, not a sprint." She also praised Webster Vienna's campus as "a little slice of the US here in Vienna," underscoring the university's important role in fostering transatlantic collaboration.

Nathalie Karré, author of "Der Power Effekt," also addressed the audience, emphasizing the importance of leaning into one's strengths to achieve life goals and affirming that investing in women leads to success.

The EmpowerHer program includes two key tracks: ConnectUS, a networking initiative that brings together up to 80 professionals from various industries to build connections and support gender equality and MentorUS, which pairs aspiring female leaders with experienced Austrian business executives for guidance and support.

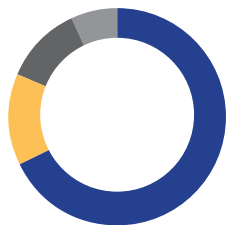


Students

The university attracted 194 new students (170 undergraduates and 24 graduates) in 2024–2025 and produced a graduating class of 79, all but 5 of which earned Austrian accredited diplomas valid throughout the European Higher Education Area.

WVPU's student body is both diverse and dynamic. Among the 617 students who enrolled in classes on campus in 2024–2025, 88% were undergraduates and 12% were graduates. More than half of all WVPU degree seeking students (59%) were enrolled in one of four undergraduate or three graduate programs in the areas of Business and Management. Another 12% were seeking degrees in International Relations, 10% in Psychology and 6% in Strategic Communication or Media Communications.

Credit Hour Distribution



- **59%** Business and Management
- **12%** International Relations
- **10%** Psychology
- **6%** Strategic Communication or Media Communications



79
Graduating
Class of 2025

Almost
1,800
Graduated
Since 2010

Around
4,500
WVPU Alumni

Undergraduate Programs

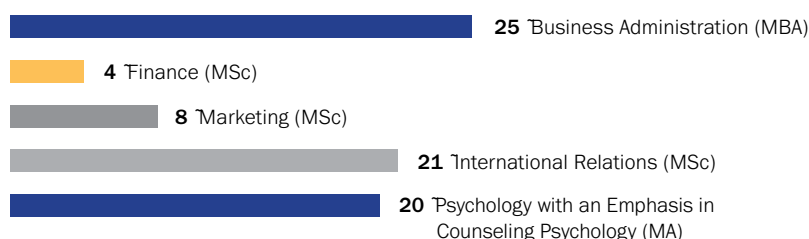


- 359** WVPU Undergraduates Enrolled on Campus
- 0** WVPU Undergraduates Studying Abroad
- 60** Webster Study Abroad Undergraduates at WVPU
- 419** Total Undergraduates Enrolled at WVPU

437 **Total WVPU Students**
(Seeking Austrian Degrees)

496 **Total WVPU Students**
enrolled on campus

Graduate Programs



- 78** WVPU Graduates Enrolled on Campus
- 2** WVPU Graduates Studying Abroad
- 1** Webster Study Abroad Graduates at WVPU
- 77** Total Graduates Enrolled at WVPU

In addition to our residential student body, WVPU traditionally is a highly attractive destination for student mobility. WVPU was able to welcome 104 students from across Webster University's global network and Erasmus.

WVPU also offers one of the most diverse student bodies that can be found at any university. The 2024–2025 student body brought together students from 61 countries around the world, speaking 49 languages. Women constituted 55% of our student body.

61
Student
Nationalities
Represented

55%
Female Share
of Student Body



45%
Male Share
of Student Body



Student Research and Scholarly Engagement

Student-faculty research collaborations highlight the institution's commitment to academic excellence and applied learning. Through close mentorship and rigorous scholarship, students contribute to cutting-edge research and present their work at leading academic conferences, strengthening WVPU's vibrant research culture.

In Business Administration, Prof. Maria Madlberger and undergraduate student Mykhailo Yesaulov co-authored a paper presented at the 27th International Conference on Enterprise Information Systems (ICEIS 2025). Their systematic literature review explores how big data and AI impact customer responsiveness, service quality and operational efficiency in the service sector. Based on 70 peer-reviewed studies from 2014 to 2024, the paper reveals significant short-term benefits but notes the long-term strategic effects remain underexamined. It calls for future research focusing on underrepresented industries and the human-technology interface in data-driven environments.

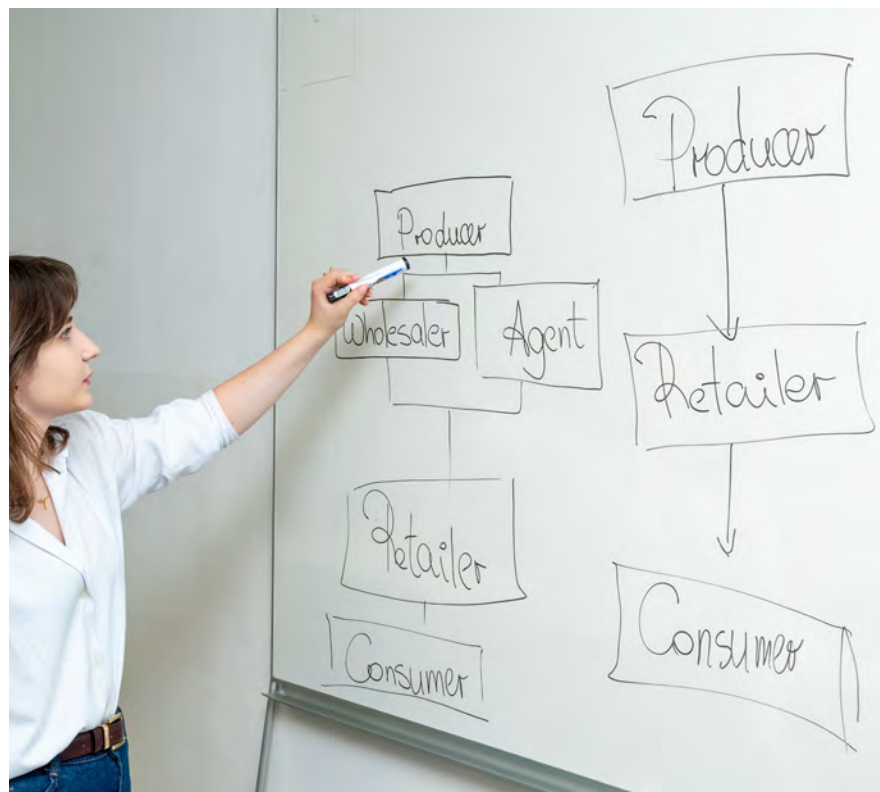
In Management, Prof. Pernille Eskerod partnered with undergraduate Kaung Khant Min to present research at the 10th International Scientific Business Conference LIMEN 2024. Their systematic review of advanced digital simulations in higher education demonstrates that simulations enhance strategic thinking, teamwork and motivation more effectively than traditional methods, while addressing key challenges such as simulation design and instructor facilitation.

International Relations faculty and students also engage in impactful research. Prof. Jozef Bátorá and graduate student Naira Arutyunova co-authored a chapter on international volunteers in the Ukraine conflict, published in a Routledge volume. Drawing on 29 qualitative interviews, their analysis contrasts governmental narratives with volunteers' actual motivations, offering novel insights into this complex phenomenon.

Assistant Professor Anatoly Reshetnikov's upcoming book chapter on interpreters' and translators' roles in international relations benefitted from the assistance of WVPU undergraduates Harrison Mavric and Mariia Ovcharenko. The chapter critically examines the history and contemporary agency of language professionals in diplomacy and international institutions.

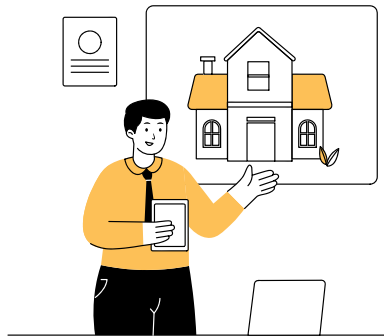
In Strategic Communications, Dr. Anthony L. Wstedt and alumna Natalia Hatarova co-presented their paper on transcultural communication ethics at the International Communication Association Conference 2024 and published a related article in the *Journal of Media Ethics*. Their collaborative research proposes minimum and maximum values as a foundation for transcultural human rights communication.

These examples underscore the importance of collaborative research at WVPU, fostering innovation and preparing students to contribute meaningfully to their fields.

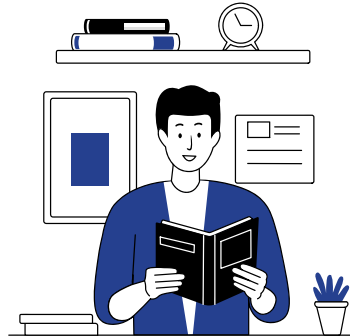


Faculty research

The integration of research and teaching at WVPU was also evident in our faculty's scholarly achievements. In the 2024–2025 academic year, faculty members secured three grants totalling just over €231,000, participated in 33 renowned academic conferences with full papers or comparable contributions and published 38 scholarly works – including 15 peer-reviewed journal articles, 10 book chapters, one book and three conference proceedings – alongside nine reviews, magazine pieces and newspaper articles.



17
**Professors
&
Lecturers**



38
**Scholarly
Publications**



33
**Conference
Papers or
Presentations**

WVPU faculty continued to gain international recognition for their scholarship. Many served as reviewers or editors for leading journals such as the *European Journal of International Relations*, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *Journal of Sex Research* and *Journal of Media Ethics*. Others reviewed for granting bodies such as the Evaluationsagentur Baden-Württemberg, Germany (EVALAG), or served as jury members at EUCYS 2024 (European Union Contest for Young Scientists). WVPU faculty also regularly publish in leading journals, including the *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, *Brain Sciences*, *Applied Economics Letters*, *European Security*, *Advances in Strategic Management* and the *Journal of Neuroscience Methods* as well as with major publishing houses such as Edward Elgar Publishing, Routledge and Springer.

Research Highlights

Marc Méhu, Associate Professor of Psychology, joined the successful Horizon Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions project MASKED (*Motor health and semiotic function in the kinesthetic expressivity of neurodegenerative disease*). This research uses biosemiotics to better understand and potentially diagnose neurodegenerative diseases – particularly Parkinson’s disease – through the study of facial expressions and other kinesthetic behaviors. The project brings together a network of researchers from Europe and North America.

Gerulf Rieger, also Associate Professor of Psychology, researches human sexuality and orientation. Supported by a six-figure grant from the American Institute of Bisexuality and the W. S. Boston Trust, he established the *HuSexLab* at WVPU. There, he studies sexual arousal and tests groundbreaking non-invasive methods for measuring levels of arousal and excitement. His work has broad implications for understanding the development of differences between and within the sexes, how individuals perceive themselves and others and the biological and social contexts influencing human sexuality.

Jozef Bátora, Full Professor in the Department of International Relations, hosted an international workshop on *Central and Eastern European Actorness in International Relations*. Attended by IR scholars from leading EU universities (with discussants from Austrian institutions), the workshop examined the role of Central and Eastern European EU member states in global politics and the factors shaping their international actorness. The resulting papers will be published as a special issue of the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. The event was supported by the City of Vienna.

In the Business and Management Department, Associate Professor Menbere Workie, Assistant Professor Boris Fišera and Full Professor Nikolaos Antonakakis published a joint paper titled *Beyond Competitiveness: Is Productivity Everything?*. Using a panel dataset of 62 countries from 2007–2019 and the local projections (LP) approach, they examined the predictive power of competitiveness – approximated by the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) – and productivity for economic growth. Their findings indicate that higher financial development, institutional quality and certain cultural traits help explain the divergence between productivity and competitiveness in advanced economies.

Making a difference through public outreach, partnership and dissemination

At WVPU, a strong commitment to hosting thought-provoking events and fostering public dialogue ensures that the community engages with timely global issues and diverse perspectives. Coupled with a supportive academic environment, these events inspire critical reflection and broaden horizons, involving international authoritative guests and engaging participants in meaningful discussions on complex issues.

Honoring a Legacy: Remembering Elizabeth Chopin

With deep respect and enduring gratitude, we mark the passing of Dr. Elizabeth Ann Chopin, who served as Director of Webster University Vienna from 1988 to 1999. Dr. Chopin, who passed away on January 5, 2025, was the first woman to lead a university in Austria, setting a milestone of visionary leadership and academic integrity.

A graduate of St. Louis University Law School, she brought exceptional legal and scholarly insight to her role as Professor of Business Law. During her tenure, she transformed Webster Vienna into a globally connected institution grounded in academic rigor and community spirit. Colleagues and alumni remember her as a pioneering leader, generous mentor, and unwavering advocate for student success.

Dr. Chopin's vision and dedication laid much of the foundation upon which the university stands today. In 2007, Mag. Reinhard Ortner endowed a visiting professorship in her name, which for nearly two decades has brought distinguished scholars in business, international relations, psychology, media, and the arts to Webster Vienna. This enduring legacy ensures that her commitment to scholarship and international dialogue continues to enrich our academic community.

Dr. Chopin's influence lives on in the students she mentored, the faculty she inspired, and the institution she helped shape. Her example will continue to guide and inspire generations to come.



WVPU hosts Ambassador Victoria Reggie Kennedy and Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin for a discussion on “Leadership and the U.S. Presidency”

On November 18, Webster Vienna Private University hosted one of the most well attended events in its history, drawing more than 200 participants. Due to demand, overflow rooms were opened and connected via video conference so additional guests could follow and join the conversation. Organized in partnership with the U.S. Embassy and held at the Embassy’s request as a symbol of our enduring cooperation, the event featured two exceptional leaders: U.S. Ambassador to Austria Victoria Reggie Kennedy and Pulitzer Prize winning presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin.

Ambassador Victoria Reggie Kennedy has served as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Austria since 2022, with a focus on transatlantic engagement, youth outreach, and the advancement of women. Doris Kearns Goodwin is a Pulitzer Prize winning presidential historian whose works include *No Ordinary Time* and *Team of Rivals*, which informed Steven Spielberg’s film *Lincoln*. Her 2024 book, *An Unfinished Love Story*, blends memoir and history to revisit the 1960s through archival materials from her late husband, presidential adviser Richard N. Goodwin. In their conversation, the two analysed the lessons history offers contemporary leaders and assessed the political and social implications of the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

Associate Director Schubert introduced the discussion, which examined how historical models of presidential leadership illuminate contemporary democratic challenges, including legitimacy, crisis management, polarization, and the role of values in public life. The event affirmed WVPU’s role as a convening platform for timely, globally relevant dialogue and underscored the university’s commitment to connecting scholarship, diplomacy, and civic engagement.



Quo Vadis America? The Global Consequences of the 2024 U.S. Election

On November 20, WVPU hosted a faculty-led roundtable entitled “Quo Vadis America? The Global Consequences of the 2024 U.S. Election,” organized by the International Relations Department in collaboration with the Central European University. The discussion was moderated by Associate Director Dr. Samuel R. Schubert.

Participants included Erin K. Jenne, PhD, Head of International Relations at CEU and author of *Nested Security*, and Dr. Bradley Wiggins, Head of the Strategic Communication Department at WVPU. The conversation examined the implications of the 2024 U.S. election for transatlantic relations, European security, alliance politics, and global governance, with particular attention to information integrity and strategic communication in a polarized environment.

The event advanced WVPU's commitment to convening timely, globally relevant dialogue and to cultivating analytical skills that connect academic inquiry with contemporary international affairs.



WVPU Hosts Vienna International Science and Engineering Fair

Webster Vienna Private University hosted the 2025 Vienna International Science & Engineering Fair at its Palais Wenkheim campus on April 26. The event welcomed over 140 young scientists and engineers from international schools across Austria and the surrounding region, celebrating innovation and scientific curiosity.

Organized in collaboration with the United Nations Nuclear Young Generation, the Vienna Chapter of the Institute of Nuclear Materials Management and Women in Nuclear at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the fair provided students a unique opportunity to explore science and engineering through hands-on projects.

The 2025 theme, “Innovations to Improve our Community”, inspired nearly 70 projects addressing sustainability, public health, infrastructure and education. Participants showcased creative technological solutions with real-world impact, competing for awards such as Innovation for Good and Design Creativity. A diverse panel of expert judges offered valuable feedback, while the IAEA hosted “Science Rooms” featuring presentations by young professionals.

WVPU is honored to support this inspiring event that encourages young minds to pursue science and engineering. By fostering global perspectives, critical thinking and interdisciplinary collaboration, Webster Vienna prepares its students for dynamic international careers where engagement with scientific and technological challenges is essential.



Photos by Hannah Shaffer

Bringing Global Expertise to Vienna: Visiting Scholars Marianne Schmid Mast and Thomas Oberlechner

Dr. Schmid Mast, an authority on nonverbal communication and leadership effectiveness, engaged the WVPU community through dynamic workshops and lectures that examined how subtle interpersonal cues impact leadership and organizational success. Her research, which integrates rigorous psychological science with practical leadership strategies, provided students with valuable tools to enhance communication skills, influence and leadership presence across diverse cultural and professional environments. The interaction with Dr. Schmid Mast underscored the critical role of interpersonal dynamics in management and organizational behavior, aligning with WVPU's focus on preparing students for global leadership challenges.

As part of its commitment to academic excellence and interdisciplinary dialogue, Webster Vienna Private University hosted two renowned scholars during the 2024–2025 academic year under the prestigious Dr. Elizabeth Chopin Endowed Visiting Professorship: Dr. Thomas Oberlechner, a leading expert in financial psychology and Dr. Marianne Schmid Mast, a celebrated figure in the fields of communication and leadership psychology.

Dr. Oberlechner's work bridges economics and psychology by exploring the emotional and cognitive factors that shape financial decision-making. During his time at WVPU, he delivered insightful lectures and seminars focused on how psychological biases and emotions influence investor behavior and market dynamics. His expertise offered students and faculty a unique perspective on financial markets, emphasizing the importance of understanding human behavior beyond traditional economic models. These sessions encouraged robust academic discussions and expanded interdisciplinary approaches to economic phenomena, highlighting the relevance of behavioral finance in today's complex financial landscape.

The Dr. Elizabeth Chopin Endowed Visiting Professorship has been instrumental in bringing leading voices in social sciences to Webster Vienna's campus, fostering a vibrant academic culture enriched by global perspectives. This year's visiting scholars have contributed significantly to the university's mission to blend theoretical rigor with applied learning, equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed for success in an interconnected and rapidly evolving world.



Dr. Schmid Mast



Dr. Oberlechner

Focus: Faculty Mobility

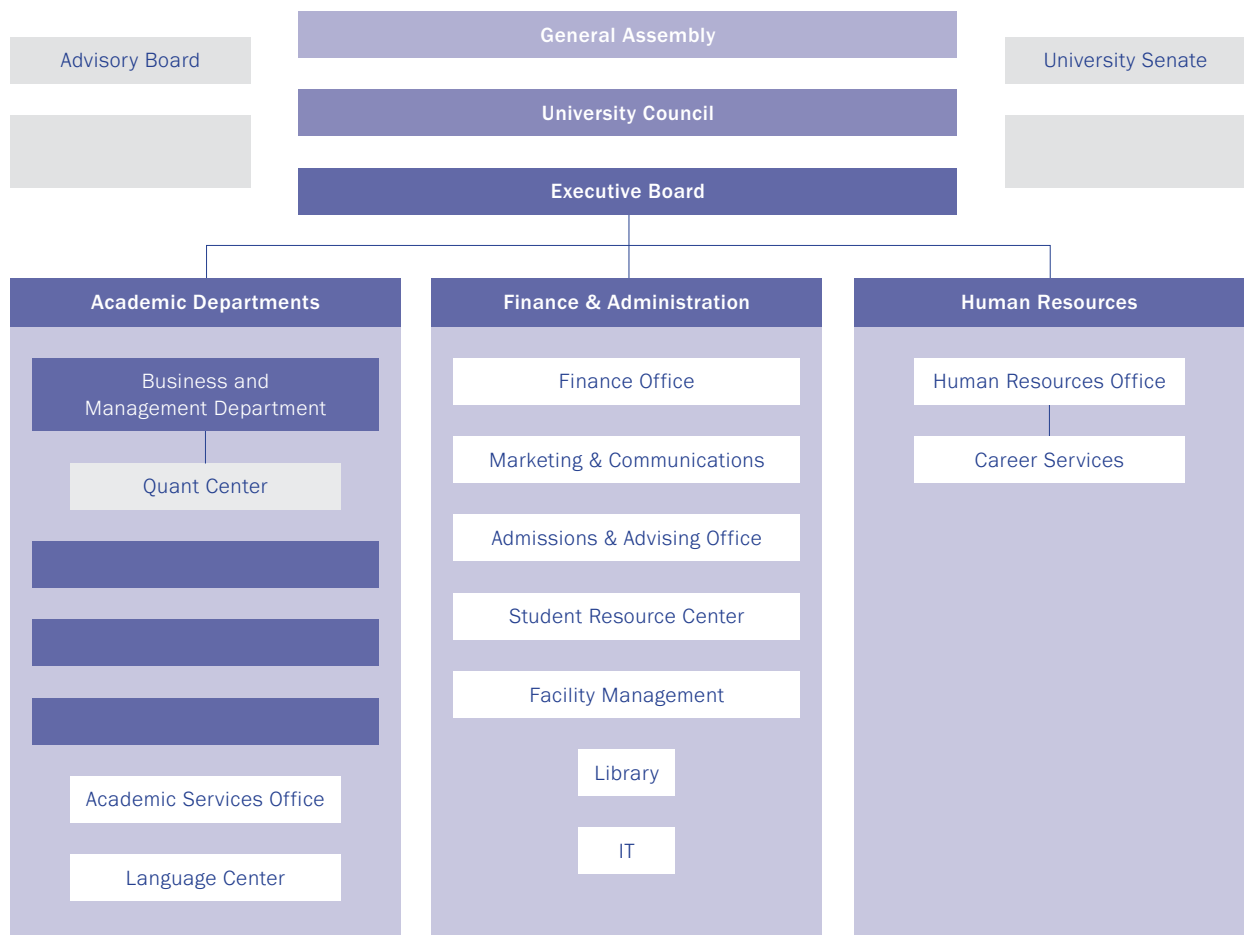
Prof. Pernille Eskerod participated in another Erasmus+ mobility in May 2025 on Digital Escape Rooms in Education. The training was organized by ELTE PPK Faculty of Education and Psychology, Budapest, Hungary which is one of the most prestigious and internationally well-regarded Hungarian university. The professional development measurement further fostered her year-long ambitions in and research on student engagement in higher education.

Dr. Boris Fišera was a guest lecturer at the Zeppelin University in Friedrichshafen, Germany. He was invited by the highly esteemed Prof. Jarko Fidrmuc. He connected this lecture with a research trip, strengthening his connections to the Zeppelin University.



Administration

WVPU is guided by the principle of subsidiarity. It is logically structured, placing the General Assembly (GA) at the top, under which serves the Supervisory Board acting as the University Council (UC), which in turn monitors the management of the university in the form of the Executive Board (EB). This structure put into place in 2016 creates two layers of autonomy in the university's governance structure. The university is led by an Executive Board, consisting of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a treasurer. It engages university stakeholders in the formation and implementation of university policies, processes and programs. In matters of academics, strategic development and quality assurance the Rector and Associate Director work closely with the University Senate, which represents the interests of faculty, scientific support and administrative staff and students. Equally important, the EB receives vital inputs from important university stakeholders including its Advisory Board, University Senate, Working Group on Equal Opportunities (WGEO), Works Council and Student Government Association. The university's operations are further organized according to function with academics (teaching and research) on one side and administration, including all supporting units and business components on the other.



As part of its institutional re-accreditation process (2022–2028), the university made minor revisions to its constitution pertaining to governance including measures ensuring student participation at all levels of the university's organization and planning. We also introduced measures, policies and processes to codify the participation of all internal interest groups in decision-making processes, particularly by strengthening the decision-making role played by the University Senate in processes for the development and revision of new degree programs, academic policies and the appointment and promotion of faculty.

Investments

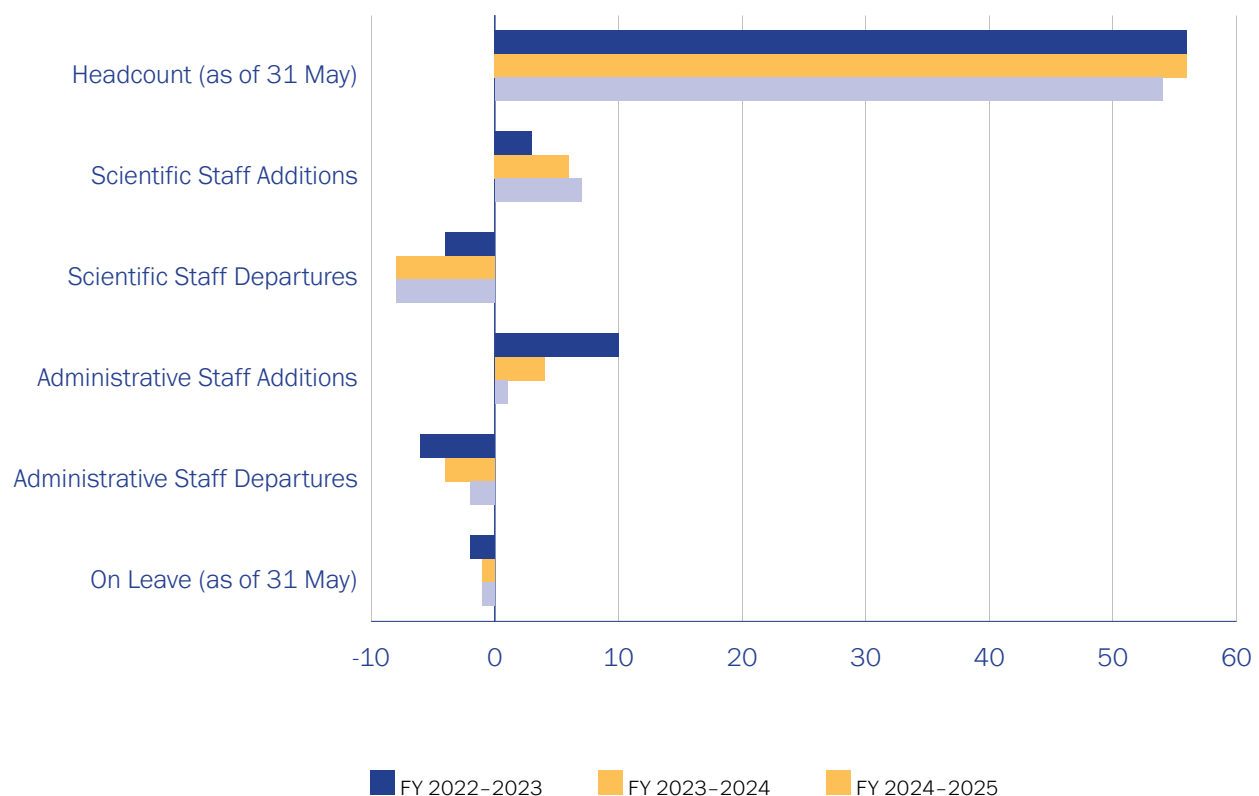
In the 2024–2025 fiscal year, WVPU invested €99,000 in IT equipment and furniture and fixtures. In the meantime, management has held off on investments in the neighboring building at Praterstrasse 21, awaiting the General Assembly’s decision regarding its future utilization.

Personnel

WVPU is squarely focused on providing our students with a world class education delivered by a highly professional roster of faculty and staff. At the close of the 2024–2025 period, WVPU employed 54 individuals (Full-Time Equivalent 47.9) plus one employee on maternity leave. This compares to 56 individuals (Full-Time Equivalent 49.2) plus one employee on maternity leave at the close of the previous year. The university hired 8 new employees in the fiscal year from June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2025, adding 7 scientific staff, including Faculty and Scientific Support Staff (4 female and 3 male) and 1 administrative staff (1 male). In keeping to our commitment to deliver the state-of-the-art in our classrooms, we also contracted 68 qualified experts from across the public and private sectors to teach courses throughout the year.

As with any thriving environment, we also had to bid farewell to ten of our employees who took on opportunities elsewhere, among which included two administrative (2 male) and eight scientific staff positions (2 Faculty appointments, 6 Scientific Support Staff; 6 female, 2 male).

Figure 1:
Comparison of employment (fiscal years 2022–2023, 2023–2024, 2024–2025)



Outlook

WVPU enters 2025–2026 on the strength of a successful year. As we continue the transition toward a collective leadership model under the Executive Board, we are seeing stronger alignment across departments and improved morale across academic and administrative units. This momentum sets a strong basis for the next phase of growth.

We look forward to another year of record-breaking enrollment and new student intake, supported by robust pipelines, improved conversion, and sustained retention. This growth will reinforce financial performance and provide the scale needed to deepen our research profile.

We will formally introduce a new evaluation framework for faculty that anchors multiyear performance agreements and annual research plans. In parallel, we will work with the University Senate to adopt a quantitative model for assessing publication output, aligning teaching and service with research objectives, external funding, and documented scholarly results.

The PhD in Economic and Socio-Political Change will be further developed and prepared for submission in December 2025. Work will focus on finalizing curricular structures, consolidating the five research clusters, and recruiting additional faculty to ensure depth of supervision and research leadership.

Looking ahead, WVPU's faculty are projected to deliver strong scholarly output over the next three years, strengthening the university's position as a leading research institution in the analysis of economic and socio-political change.

Program development will continue across priority areas. We will advance new graduate offerings in Psychology and in International Relations with a focus on security studies, prepare revisions to existing programs, and develop and submit a new undergraduate program in Law. We will also finalize preparations to introduce Computer Science with an emphasis in artificial intelligence, positioning the university for the first full cohort in Fall 2026 and for future growth in STEM.

To support expansion, WVPU will advance plans for the adjacent property to accommodate enrollment growth and increased research activity. Targeted faculty recruitment will deepen internal research excellence, expand capacity in the clusters, and position the university to capitalize on recent research achievements.

We will also strengthen alumni development and university advancement. Priorities include renewed alumni engagement, external fundraising for scholarships, and strategic partnerships that broaden access for students while supporting faculty research and experiential learning.

In consultation with AQ Austria, and in collaboration with colleagues in St. Louis and stakeholders in Vienna, we will revise the university's primary documents to codify sustainable governance and robust quality assurance for decades to come. These measures will prepare WVPU well for the next institutional accreditation cycle in 2028 while sustaining our commitment to teaching excellence, student mentorship, and impactful research.

