



**Webster**  
UNIVERSITY

**Vienna**  
Private University

2022

2023

**Webster Vienna Private University**

**Annual Accreditation Report**



Vienna  
Private University

# WEBSTER VIENNA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

for the academic year June 2022 to May 2023

(reporting period: June 1 to May 31)

Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria

Submitted on March 27, 2024

By the University Council of the Bildungsvereins für die Freunde  
der Webster University (St. Louis, USA)  
and the Executive Board of WEBSTER VIENNA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

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# 1 Development

Webster Vienna Private University (WVPU) is a private university that concentrates on student mentorship and teaching excellence bringing research in the classroom combining it with practical real-life skills. Through robust support services for its students, small classes, and an overall student to faculty ratio of six, the university works diligently to help students achieve individual excellence, preparing them for success and career advancement.

With the start of the fall semester 2022, WVPU welcomed students back to full, on-site classes following two years of pandemic and international crisis. With almost 400 students joining just over 100 classes, the campus once again came alive with the noise and excitement of a university learning environment. The 2022-2023 period was marked by important achievements, the highlights of which included the successful completion of another round of six-year institutional accreditation, the development of new programs based on a market study concluded the previous year, and high impact public visits by leading scholars and diplomats.

## **WVPU accreditation extended for the fifth consecutive time**

The university received its fifth consecutive reaccreditation, reaffirming the quality of its education and operations as part of the Austrian and European higher education landscape. While the accreditation was conditioned on the delivery of further reforms and plans, the reaccreditation affirms the strides the university has made since its founding.

Initially established in 1981 as Webster University Vienna, WVPU was accredited as one of the first private universities in Austria in 2001. It received reaccreditation in 2006, 2011, 2016, and once again in 2022, this latest reaccreditation lasting until 2029. The accreditation, awarded by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research is based on the recommendations of the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria). WVPU's continued accreditation confirms WVPU's reputation of delivering rigorous, high quality education to generations of students. Since its founding, WVPU has educated more than 4,200 students from over 70 countries, alumni of whom hold high positions in the corporate, political and academic worlds.

Guided by the standards and requirements set by AQ Austria and a commitment to fulfil the requirements necessary to maintain Austrian accreditation, WVPU began undertaking a comprehensive overhaul of its constitution, policies, and practices, most importantly guaranteeing the involvement of all stakeholders, especially the University Senate and the Student Government Association. One of the most important requirements was to detail plans and budget necessary to establish doctoral programs rooted in and reflective of the university's research strengths. The university began the work on an initial proposal on how and when it intends to introduce its doctoral program as well as an associated financial plan to deliver to the accreditation authorities in the next academic year (2023-2024). AQ Austria identified several areas that need improvement, mostly pertaining to governance related matters, in particular the role of the University Senate, students, and other stakeholders in key decision making. In listing its conditions, AQ Austria required the reforms and further detailed and or revised plans to be submitted in two tranches, one in 12 months and the other in 24 months. Recognizing the significance and interconnectedness of the requirements, the university plans to deliver its reforms and responses by the 12 month deadline and will be able to report in greater detail in the 2023-2024 report.



## **Market study leads to new program developments in the field of IT**

Building on the findings of last year's market study, the university developed new computer science programs and began the process of seeking accreditation in Austria. These programs are highly relevant to the university's key markets and guarantee that WVPU can provide its students with the skills and competencies demanded in job markets. Indeed, STEM and data related programs are also central to the future of the workplace and digital skills are in high demand across all industries and almost all functions. Programmers and security experts are highly sought after to develop smart solutions, manage and protect critical systems from a wide range of threats and address the rising importance of artificial intelligence.

Introducing technology-oriented programs is an important step in modernizing WVPU's degree programs. It capitalizes on decades of distinction in IT education earned by Webster University in the United States and builds on Webster's strong reputation for generating business, political, and social leaders by adding outstanding computer experts to our roster of future alumni. It will also expand and enhance the university's research and teaching profile, particularly new avenues of research that cross traditionally distinct disciplines, while growing career opportunities for students through corporate partnerships, internships and practicums. In brief, the introduction of IT programs at WVPU opens a new world of opportunities for the university and its stakeholders, but most importantly its students.

The university initially submitted its application for two bachelor degree programs (IT Security Systems and Software Engineering) on December 20, 2022 and then a revised version on March 28, 2023. On May 9, 2023, an expert team consisting of Univ.-Prof.in Dr. Gabi Dreö Rodosek, Professor for Communication Systems and Network Security, Bundeswehr University of Munich, Univ.-Prof. DI Dr. Alexander Egyed, Head, Institute of Software Engineering, Johannes-Kepler University Linz, Mag.DI DDr. Florian Skopik, Thematic Coordinator of the Center for Digital Safety & Security, Austrian Institute of Technology, DI Dr. Thomas Dietinger, Head, Staff Unit for Change Management and Implementation, Technical University Graz and MSc Fjolla Hasani, student expert (Software Engineering) at TU Graz and representatives of AQ Austria conducted a site-visit at the WVPU campus in Vienna. The university received the experts' report in August 2023, which falls outside the scope of this report, but will be reflected in detail in the next report.

## **New certificate speaker series brings students face to face with diplomats**

As part of its ongoing focus on diplomacy and international organizations, WVPU launched its undergraduate Certificate in Diplomacy and International Organizations (CDIO) in fall 2022, developed in the previous year. The new (50 ECTS) certificate can be taken alongside any of the university's undergraduate degrees and develops expertise in fields relevant for careers in international organizations, diplomacy, global corporations, and internationally active NGOs. With a focus on the functions, processes, and operations of international organizations and diplomacy, students learn techniques of negotiation, strategies of communication, and competing forms of governance as well as vital insight into contemporary international affairs.

It also provides a much needed and rare venue for students to engage with and network among with practicing experts. As part of the program, WVPU's International Relations department hosted monthly events bringing in ambassadors, heads of missions, analysts, military experts, and UN and related agency officials. Known widely among students as the pizza and diplomacy sessions, the Global Governance & Diplomacy Public Speaker Series is a featured aspect of WVPU's CDIO program and quickly became a regular feature of campus life. As part of the program, the university welcomed 10 ambassadors, two heads of mission, and multiple experts from international organizations.

## **WVPU celebrates the Class of 2023**

Conferring degrees upon nearly 100 graduates from more than 30 countries, the university celebrated the class of 2023 during its commencement ceremony at the historic Hofburg Palace in Vienna May 13, 2023. With more than 500 family and friends present, students received awards and accolades for their accomplishments. This year three students earned the honor of being valedictorians: Fatlinda Demiri-Idrizi, Faris Kamal, and Camila Maria Zamora Gonzalez. In speaking to her colleagues, Demiri-Idrizi brilliantly summed up the WVPU experience:

“We have come from different backgrounds and cultures, and yet we have found a common bond in our pursuit of knowledge and growth. We have faced challenges, but we have also experienced triumphs. We have laughed together, learned together, and grown together. And through it all, we have become a family.”

Melanie Smith (M.B.A. '13) vice president of the Webster Vienna Alumni Chapter, presented the Alumni Association Awards, which went to Mathilde Tanholdt Samson for Student Leadership outside of the classroom. Faculty members Anthony Löwstedt and Andrea Gaal received awards recognizing their outstanding performance in integrating diversity into their teaching. Bradley E. Wiggins received the Excellence in Teaching award, an honor bestowed by colleagues in the University Senate; and students voted to award Marco Bocchese and Seth Weiner with Teachers of the Year honors.

### **Chibo Onyeji awarded 2023 Bronwyn K. Mitterecker Memorial Alumni Award**

Established in memory of Bronwyn Mitterecker, who dedicated over a decade of service to Webster Vienna as director of admissions and alumni coordinator, The Bronwyn K. Mitterecker Alumni Award honors WVPU alumni who have made exceptional contributions to the community through their field of voluntary service or profession. This year, the award went to Chibo Onyeji, Ph.D., a WVPU alumnus. A member of Webster University Vienna's inaugural class, Dr. Onyeji graduated in 1982 with a master's degree in economics and finance. Recalling the time, he noted, “As a member of the first graduating class of Webster Vienna, it is an incredibly humbling experience to be back on the commencement stage more than 40 years and a full career later. I appreciate my alma mater Webster Vienna for recognizing my efforts.”

Dr. Onyeji, a development program specialist and civil rights campaigner is widely known for his efforts on promoting growth, wealth creation, and employment in African countries having worked with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) as well as the African Development Bank Group (ADBG) and The OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID). Between 1999 and 2011 Dr. Onyeji was a frequent lecturer at the University of Vienna

For eleven years, Onyeji was a visiting faculty at the University of Vienna where he taught courses such as the economics of migration and economics of nutrition in developing countries. His resume is filled with great assignments and achievements including a research post at the Center for Advanced Decision Support for Water and Environmental Systems (CADSWES) at the University of Colorado from where he joined the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) to advance his work on the climate change impacts on economic development in Africa. Dr. Onyeji is also well known for civil rights efforts having served as the First Vice President of European Network Against Racism (ENAR) from 2007-2010, then as its President from 2010-2013. His leadership contributed to the European Parliament's adoption of an EU Framework for Roma Inclusion and an EU Resolution on the Fundamental Rights of People of African Descent in Europe.

This year's commencement speech was delivered by Andreas Treichl, chair of the ERSTE Foundation, who honored the accomplishments of the 2023 graduating class with a moving speech that passionately insisted that graduates don't just work to make money, but rather discern the purpose behind what they do and, most importantly, find work that they truly love. Through his 10 year tenure, he successfully transformed Erste into the largest retail bank in Central Europe, significantly expanding its client base from 600,000 to over 16 million across the region. As Chair of the ERSTE Foundation, he has worked diligently to promote economic fairness and opportunity, allocating the foundation's dividends toward social and cultural projects within its region.

## **Analysis**

In its enduring pursuit to better the quality of the education it delivers to its students, WVPU made major progress in the 2022-2023 period. Following two years of crisis defined by war and pandemic in Europe, the university experienced a significant uptick in new undergraduate enrollments. Receiving its fifth consecutive reaccreditation affirmed the efforts of the university's reform process of the previous accreditation period and confirmed its strategy to both strengthen its existing programs on one hand while developing new programs to attract an entirely new pool of students and research activities on the other.

With regard to the introduction of new STEM programs, particularly the university's efforts to establish new computer science programs by capitalizing both on market demand as well as its parent university's decades-long expertise in the field, the university received the expert's report in August 2023. While the timing of the report falls outside of the scope of this report, it is important to point out that in early 2024 the university would withdraw its application for two programs and instead work toward submitting an application for a single program in computer science with emphases on specialization modules instead. While the university had originally wanted to welcome its first cohort in fall 2024, plans had to be pushed back to fall 2025. The university expects to focus a great deal of attention on the matter of successfully accrediting a computer science program in the 2023-2024 period. The introduction of STEM programs at WVPU is an essential component of the university's strategy moving forward. Beyond the evident advantages of tapping a new pool of students and meeting market demand, added computer science faculty will expand and enrich the university's research environment by furthering quantitative, data-oriented approaches, and expanding the internal knowledge base necessary to support projects involving computer science knowledge, including artificial intelligence and big data.

Likewise, the initial attractiveness among students of the certificate in International Organizations and Diplomacy as well as the associated courses and programs that bring students face to face with presently active experts and ranking professionals requires further expansion. This year's experience verifies the university's strategy to provide opportunities for our students to meet directly with ranking representatives. Among those were the ambassadors of Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Canada, Colombia, Nigeria, Iceland, India, Italy, Mexico, Sweden and Ukraine as well as members of the Austrian department of defence and the Vienna based international organizations. In so doing, WVPU provided valuable networking opportunities to its students. The enhanced interest both by students and others in the international community in Vienna indicate strong support to reform the university's graduate program in international relations with a focus on the professional practice of diplomacy, security affairs, and statecraft, topics that will take on added importance in the future and provide the university with the opportunity revive one of its oldest, yet stagnant graduate programs.



## 2 Governance structure & organization

The following governing bodies were active in the fiscal year 2022-2023:

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

- Dr. Elizabeth J. Stroble, Chancellor
- Dr. Julian Z. Schuster, President
- Nancy Hellerud, J.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Richard Meyer, 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”)

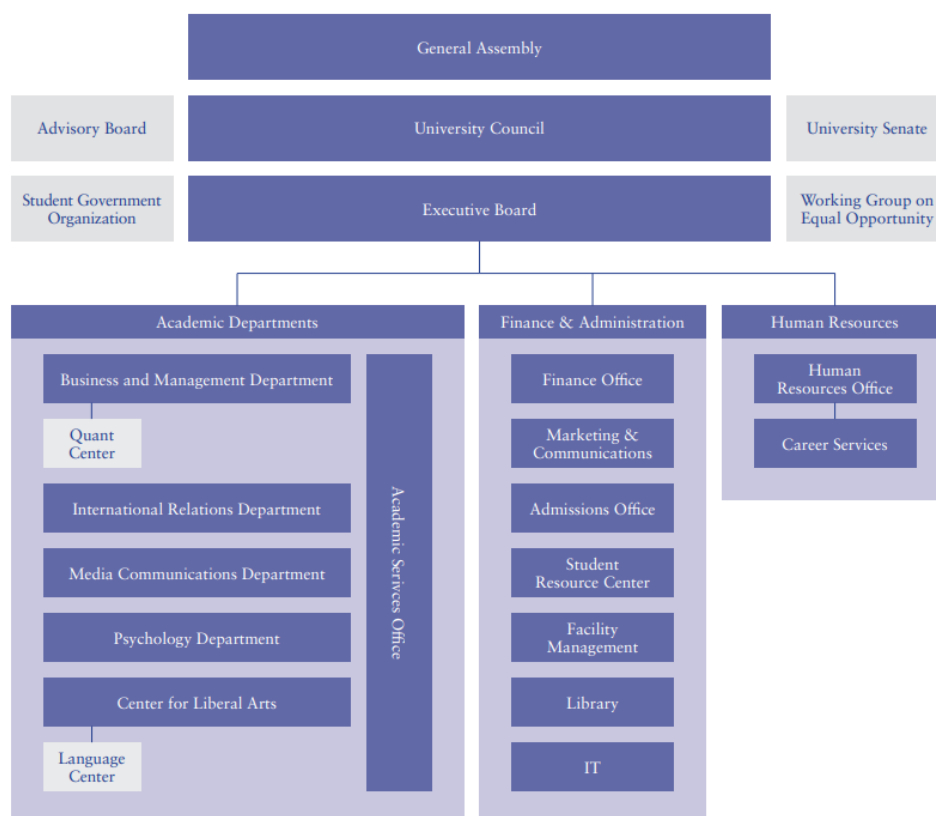
- Ryan Guffey, PhD, Director General for Global Campuses, Webster University
- Dr. William Lynch, Professor Emeritus from Webster University
- Richard Ryffel, Executive Vice President and Managing Director Wealth Management at the First Bank in St. Louis and
- Dr. Stefan Zapotocky, Chairman of the Board 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)
- Dr. Samuel R. Schubert, Associate Director (Vice-Chairperson/Secretary)
- Mag. Michael Postmann, Head of Finance and Administration (Treasurer)

WVPU is guided by the principle of subsidiarity. It is logically tiered 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 (EB), consisting of the Rector (chairperson), the Associate Director, and the Head of Finance and Administration. It engages university stakeholders in the formation and implementation of university policies, processes, and programs. In matters of academics, strategic development, and quality management, 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 Executive Board 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.

Figure 1: Organizational chart



In the academic year 2022-2023 the University Senate consisted of the following members representing the different constituencies:

- Dr. Jozef Bátor, International Relations Department

University Senate Chair & Representative for the Constituency: Employed Faculty

- Ms. Lara Jenko, Student Government Association

University Senate Vice Chair & Representative for the Constituency: Students

- Dr. Anthony Löwstedt, Strategic Communication Department

Representative for the Constituency: Employed Faculty

- Dr. Monika Mokre, International Relations Department

Representative for the Constituency: Adjunct Faculty

- Nermin Podžić, MA, Head of Marketing and Communications (from January 22)

Representative for the Constituency: Employed Staff

During the academic year 2022-2023, the **Advisory Board** consisted of 14 prominent leaders in Austria who advise the university's Rector 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. Michael Edelsbrunner, Country Executive, Citibank Europe plc, Austria Branch
- KR Dipl.-Ing. Rudolf Hamp, Vice Chairman of the Supervisory Board, HTI High Tech Industries AG
- 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
- Norbert Lessing, General Manager, Hilton Austria
- Mag. Gernot Mittendorfer, MBA, Member of the Management Board, Erste Group Bank AG
- 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
- Mag. Monika Stoisser-Goehring, Chief Financial Officer, AT&S
- Biljana Weber, Senior Director Business Applications, Microsoft ERP and CRM
- Mag. Dr. iur. Matthias Wechner, Member of the Executive Board - SORAVIA Equity, Chief Executive Officer - ADOMO Holding
- Dipl.-Ing. Martin Winkler, Country Manager Austria, ORACLE

### **3 Degree programs and teaching**

#### **3.1 Major developments and analysis**

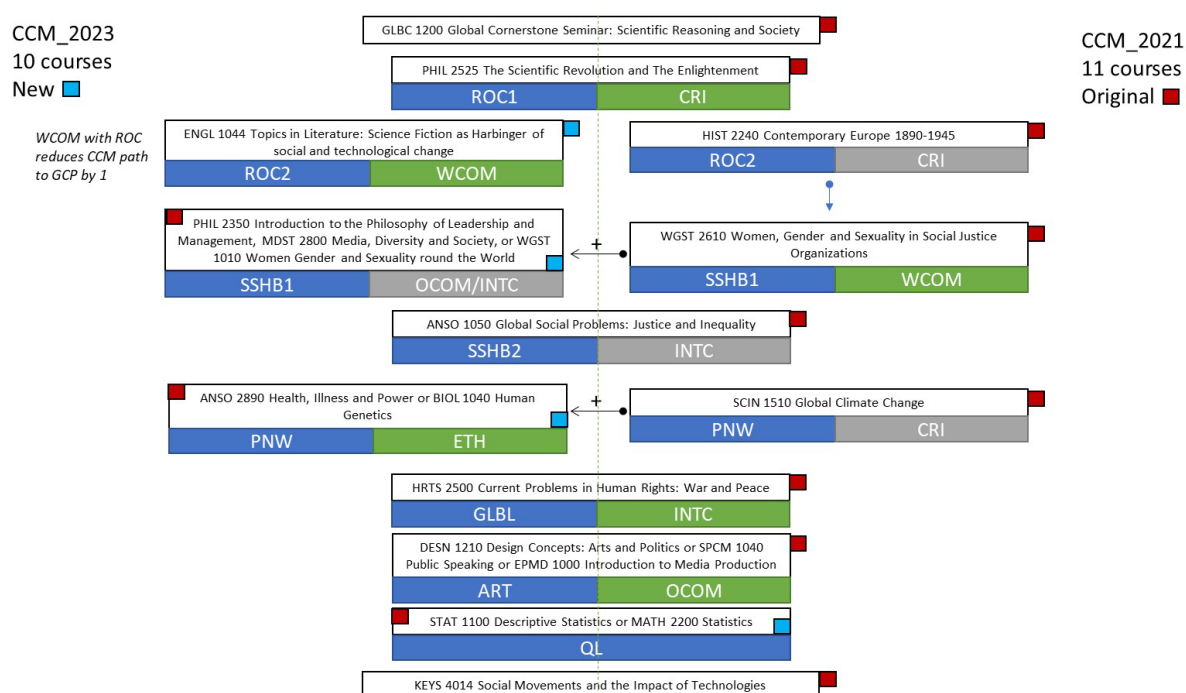
There were four major developments with regard to programs and teaching in the reporting period. First, the university began preparing to submit an application for new STEM programs in computer science. Second, the university began reviewing existing degree programs for necessary revisions and modernization as part of its regularly scheduled quality assurance processes and the core curriculum module was revised based on inputs from students and the need to accommodate future STEM programs; and finally, the university introduced its internal undergraduate Certificate in Diplomacy and International Organizations.

Building on the findings of last year's market study, the university developed new computer science programs and began the process of seeking accreditation in Austria. STEM and data related programs are central to the future of the workplace and digital skills are in high demand across all industries and introducing these technology-oriented programs is the next step in modernizing WVPU's degree programs. It will also expand and enhance the university's research and teaching profile, creating new avenues of research that cross traditionally distinct disciplines, while growing career opportunities for students. Work on developing the program involved a broad spectrum of stakeholders within Webster as well as among its external stakeholders. After initially submitting its application for two bachelor degree programs (IT Security Systems and Software Engineering) in December followed by a revised edition in March the university welcomed an onsite visit of a team of AQ appointed experts. The university received the expert's report in August 2023, which falls outside the scope of this report, but will be reflected in detail in the next report.

With the start of the 2022 academic year, WVPU returned to full on site classes, putting the disruptions of the pandemic behind. While special exceptions remained in place for our Ukrainian students, students were excited to return to the classroom and the difference in atmosphere among faculty staff and students was palpable. With everyone present, student representatives joined the university senate and the rectorate in reviewing its academic programs. Those efforts led to internal discussions about the future of several programs based on student numbers and overall attractiveness. While no programs were slated to be cancelled, both the graduate programs in Marketing as well as International Relations and the undergraduate program in Strategic Communication were identified as areas of concern. Meanwhile, there were several courses of the Business Administration and Management programs that were identified as needing revision or replacement. The university expects to revise those programs introducing up to 5 or 6 new courses and swapping them with out-of-date components of the curriculum as well as address the future of the graduate program in Marketing in the next academic year (2023-2024).

The Common Core Module (CCM) was reviewed and modified in fall 2022. The latest version from January 2023, called CCM-2 introduces an alternative set of options geared toward and required for students who will be studying in one of WVPU's future computer science programs. Students retain the option to opt-in to the CCM-2, remain in CCM-1. The CCM is a uniform set of courses (in the original CCM-1 version - 12 course at 72 ECTS and in CCM-2 – 9 courses @ 54 ECTS in total) plus a tenth statistics course that is planned for integration in all STEM curricula designed to introduce students to the many lines of inquiry, modes of thought, and forms of individual and collective action essential to contributing to scientific advancement and positive social change. The CCM provides all undergraduate students, regardless of their respective degree program, with a shared foundation in the various theoretical principles, problem-solving skills, and practical competencies essential to engaging with some of the most pressing social and scientific problems of our time. It delivers on the university's promise to educate global citizens by ensuring that all undergraduates receive similar exposure and training in areas vital to their success as students and in life.

Figure 2: Common Core Module



Original CCM (CCM-1), Fall 2021	Revised CCM (CCM-2), Fall 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GLBC 1200 Global Cornerstone Seminar: Scientific Reasoning and Society*</li> <li>2. HIST 2240 Contemporary Europe 1890-1945</li> <li>3. PHIL 2525 The Scientific Revolution and The Enlightenment</li> <li>4. ANSO 2300 Social Movements: Economy, Labor and the Future of Work, PHIL 2350 Introduction to the Philosophy of Leadership and Management</li> <li>5. ANSO 1050 Global Social Problems: Justice and Inequality</li> <li>6. WGST 2610 Women, Gender and Sexuality in Social Justice Organizations</li> <li>7. ANSO 2890 Health, Illness and Power</li> <li>8. SCIN 1510 Global Climate Change</li> <li>9. HRTS 2500 Current Problems in Human Rights: War and Peace</li> <li>10. DESN 1210 Design Concepts: Arts and Politics, SPCM 1040 Public Speaking, or EPMD 1000 Introduction to Media Production</li> <li>11. KEYS 4014 Social Movements and the Impact of Technologies</li> <li>12. STAT 1100 Descriptive Statistics</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GLBC 1200 Global Cornerstone Seminar: Scientific Reasoning and Society*</li> <li>2. ENGL 1044 Topics in Literature: Science Fiction as Harbinger of Social and Technological Change</li> <li>3. PHIL 2525 The Scientific Revolution and The Enlightenment</li> <li>4. PHIL 2350 Introduction to the Philosophy of Leadership and Management, MDST 2800 Media, Diversity and Society, or WGST 1010 Women Gender and Sexuality Around the World</li> <li>5. ANSO 1050 Global Social Problems: Justice and Inequality</li> <li>6. ANSO 2890 Health, Illness and Power or BIOL 1040 Human Genetics</li> <li>7. HRTS 2500 Current Problems in Human Rights: War and Peace</li> <li>8. DESN 1210 Design Concepts: Arts and Politics, SPCM 1040 Public Speaking, or EPMD 1000 Introduction to Media Production</li> <li>9. KEYS 4014 Social Movements and the Impact of Technologies</li> <li>10. STAT 1100 Descriptive Statistics or MATH 2200 Statistics</li> </ol>

Finally, the University introduced its internal undergraduate Certificate in Diplomacy and International Organizations (DipIO) in fall 2022. The certificate enables students to deepen their knowledge and expertise in fields relevant for careers in international organizations, diplomacy, global corporations, and internationally active NGOs. Students who successfully complete the 9-course, 50 ECTS program are assured to be able to summarize, classify and explain the systemic characteristics, processes and relevance of diplomacy and IOs in the past and today, differentiate and evaluate the role and interests of various actors in diplomacy using a multi-level system of analysis, and distinguish and execute real-world tasks through appropriate procedures.

The required courses for the certificate include HIST 3100 Diplomatic History (6 ECTS), INTL 3700 International Organizations (6 ECTS), POLT 2100 Model U.N. (3 hours), POLT 1550 Introduction to Political Argumentation and Debate (6 ECTS), INTL 3290 Politics of International Economic Relations (6 ECTS), INTL 3030 Advanced Studies in International Law (6 ECTS), INTL 2610 Advocacy, NGOs and Civil Society (6 ECTS), INTL 4600 IR Seminar: Diplomacy of Global Actors (3 hours), and INTL 1200 Careers in History, Politics and International Relations (2 ECTS). Each of the courses, which would normally constitute a free elective and are not required in any other program, cover various aspects related to functions and operations of international organizations and diplomacy including negotiation techniques, international communication and global governance, as well as expert insight into key issues and regions of world politics, providing practical experience where the acquired expertise and knowledge can be used in real-world context. As home to dozens of international organizations, Vienna regularly hosts high-level diplomatic events and negotiations on various global issues, and numerous globally active enterprises and NGOs have their base here. The DipIO certificate harnesses both on the academic expertise available



within WVPU and the practice-oriented resources available in the city. Many of the courses involve guest lectures from experts and practitioners working with IOs and/or in diplomacy while some are co-taught by faculty from the respective departments. At the beginning of the reporting period, 10 students from various programs announced their intent to pursue the certificate. In the next reporting period, we will be able to assess the success and attractiveness of the program with regard to completion rates. Students who complete this pre-selected set of free electives not otherwise required for their degree program, will receive a certificate of recognition for their effort.

## Programs

WVPU offered in the 2022–2023 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 undergraduate program, Media Communications (BA), and one graduate program, Finance (MSc) were 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	Graduate
Business Administration (BSc) Management (BA) Management with emphasis in International Business (BA) Management with emphasis in Marketing (BA) International Relations (BA) Media Communications (BA) Psychology (BA) Strategic Communication (BA)	International Relations (MA) Psychology with an emphasis on Counseling Psychology (MA) Finance (MSc) Marketing (MSc) Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Each of the university's programs meets the knowledge, skills, and autonomy/responsibility standards of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)<sup>1</sup> and the respective Austrian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels VI<sup>2</sup> and VII<sup>3</sup> for Cycles 1 and 2, Bachelor and Master degree programs. WVPU guarantees that the criteria for the accreditation of all its degree programs remain intact through a series of continuous measures and systemized processes that involve university management, departmental leadership, and the University Senate.

The university's eight bachelor programs focus on imparting advanced knowledge in the respective discipline through the application of a critical understanding of a diverse set of theories and underlying principles, building advanced skills to demonstrate a mastery of specialized subject matter, the ability to solve complex, unforeseen problems as they arise, as well as to manage complex projects, take responsibility for decision-making in changing contexts. Incorporated into each of the university's undergraduate programs is the Common Core Module which guarantees that all undergraduate students, regardless of background, share common knowledge and skills with regard to scientific methods training (WVPU's Methods Roadmap), global citizenship and the relationship between science

<sup>1</sup> The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area provides descriptors for three cycles agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process. (<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page>).

<sup>2</sup> See [https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NQR\\_Infoblaetter\\_Deskriptoren6.pdf](https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NQR_Infoblaetter_Deskriptoren6.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> See [https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NQR\\_Infoblaetter\\_Deskriptoren7.pdf](https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NQR_Infoblaetter_Deskriptoren7.pdf).

and social change. These additional requirements ensure that every student who completes an undergraduate degree at WVPU carries with them the university's values, receives rigorous methodological training, and exits with a keen understanding of their role as global citizens.

In terms of classes, the university offered 213 regularly scheduled courses in the academic year 2022-2023. Undergraduate class sizes averaged 18 students while graduate classes averaged 7 (see distributions below), which were within the range of expectations and evidence of WVPU's USP of small classes. Coming on the heels of the previous year's slight decline, the expected performance on par with pre-pandemic years is illustrative of the university's success in mitigating the negative retention losses associated with COVID and the war in Ukraine.

Figure 3: Students per graduate course

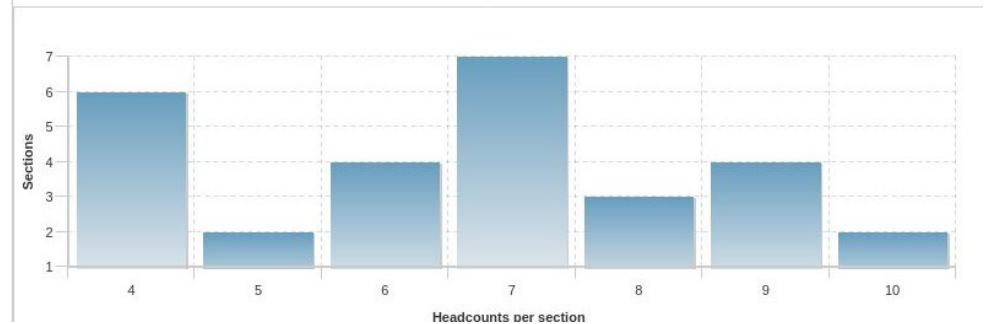
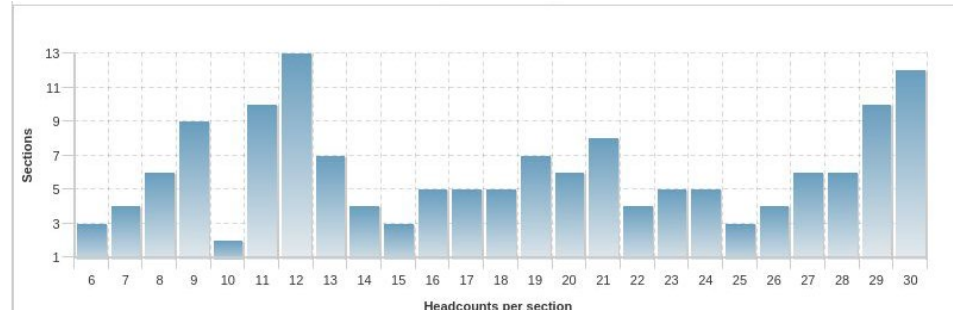


Figure 4: Students per undergraduate course



Another 17 courses were run as directed studies (similar to independent studies one-on-one with professors) by 12 faculty supervising 23 students excluding the university's English preparatory program and its 35 students. Our employed faculty supervised 104 theses, which falls within expectations for annual thesis coverage. Importantly, the number of directed studies and students needing them declined significantly from the previous year which is an indication that course and enrollment planning have improved over previous years.

WVPU scientific employees (status-track faculty and lecturers) taught 73% of all courses by ECTS including thesis projects. As the table below illustrates, the overall balance between employed scientific staff and adjunct faculty in WVPU continues to improve on previous years in favor of permanent scientific staff.

SHARE OF COURSES (ECTS) TAUGHT BY EMPLOYED SCIENTIFIC STAFF AND ADJUNCT FACULTY IN 2022-2023					
	Overall	BM	IR	MEDC	PSYC
Employed Scientific Staff	73%	50%	80.7%	52.4%	58.5%
Adjunct Faculty	27%	50%	19.3%	47.6%	41.5%

Austrian private university law requires that permanent faculty cover all core subject area. For reporting purposes, 'covered' means that a permanent faculty member teaches at least one occurrence / section of a course, thereby covering the subject matter. As presented below 'offered' refers to the number of distinct courses classified as core subject areas. The actual coverage and offered number of courses classified in this manner is, of course, greater than the figure listed as offered.

CORE SUBJECT AREAS COVERED/OFFERED		
	covered	offered
Business and Management	21	21
International Relations	15	16
Media Communications	7	10
Psychology	13	18

As the above table indicates, there has been improvement regarding the coverage of core subject areas by the university's permanently employed faculty. The most progress has been made in the department of Business and Management. The improvement resulted primarily from addressing issues at the programmatic level looking at the core subject area offerings. Still, the role of external lecturers is very important at WVPU. Our students also gain access to leading experts in their respective fields both from a scholarly and practical perspective. Outside lecturers from industry, research institutions, and leading universities combine their efforts to produce a vibrant and intellectually challenging experience for our students and play a crucial role in bringing real-life expertise, practical skills, and a network of opportunities to our students. WVPU adjunct faculty include leading entrepreneurs, executives, and researchers with expertise in finance, marketing, and manufacturing as well public service keeping our students up to date with latest industry standards and practices.

In addition to the classroom experience, students are also supported by faculty and university partners in co-curricular and extracurricular activities. While many of our courses include renowned guest scholars, corporate CEOs, and diplomats, others include multiple site visits to company headquarters, the United Nations offices, and meetings of international representatives at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In summer 2022, WVPU launched a new summer program that included two packages of courses combined with co-curricular activities and attracted students from around the world. These included packages of courses with titles such as "Let's talk about sex!" in which students examined sexuality in the city where Sigmund Freud founded psychoanalysis and placed sexuality at the center of psychological thinking or "Vienna: City of Culture" where students experienced Vienna's rich cultural life first-hand through interactive, excursion-based courses and learned German.

WVPU also offers student focused programs aimed at improving opportunities for its students once they complete their studies. For example, WVPU's Mentoring Program pairs soon to graduate students with successful alumni from around the world. This year's WVPU Mentoring Program "Dare to grow together" lasted from October 2022 to May 2023 and supported our soon-to-be graduates with their career development, helped increase their knowledge and build skills for future goals and success. For our EEU

students, the university organized a special briefing with the Delegation of the European Union to the International Organizations in Vienna on career opportunities in diplomacy and with the European Union, ultimately leading to internship opportunities for our students. Finally, as part of a Careers in International Relations Course – a key component of the new certificate in Diplomacy and International Organizations - representatives of UNIDO, the IAEA and several international NGOs presented on career opportunities throughout the fall of 2022.

## **3.2 Students**

### **3.2.1 Major developments and analysis**

Scholarly mentorship and a commitment to the indivisibility of teaching and research in its classrooms guarantees that WVPU's students learn the state-of-the-art in their respective fields. Supported by personalized services for our students, WVPU thus provides an academic culture that brings out the best in our students preparing them for success in life. The combined efforts of 81 faculty members (19 permanent faculty members and 62 adjunct lecturers) across 4 departments and 13 accredited degree programs educated 469 students on campus through 213 publicly scheduled courses awarding more than 18,600 ECTS in the 2022-2023 period. In addition, 23 students took 17 independent or directed studies under the direct supervision of 12 faculty (including adjuncts) while 104 students (22 graduate and 86 undergraduate) undertook theses supervised by 15 permanent faculty members.

The most significant developments of the reporting period can be summed up with student and classroom activity returning fully on site and in person for the first time in two years.

### **3.2.2 Number of students, first-year students and graduates in the reporting period**

WVPU's thriving culture of scholarly mentorship is imbued with the indivisibility of teaching and research in its classrooms and supported by personalized services for our students. It is an academic culture that brings out the best in our students preparing them for success in life.

WVPU's student body is both diverse and dynamic. Among the 437 students who enrolled in classes on campus in 2022-2023, 82% were undergraduates and 18% were graduates. More than half of all WVPU degree-seeking students (63%) were enrolled in one of four undergraduate programs.

Residential students at WVPU in 2022 – 2023 [comparative figures from the previous year in brackets]:

<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>NEW</b>	<b>GRADUATES</b>
Undergraduate	359 [352]	111 [93]	79 [53]
Graduate	78 [97]	28 [35]	30 [32]
All	437 [449]	139 [128]	109 [85]

Undergraduate Programs/Students	
Degree Program	Head Count
Business Administration (BSc)	102
Management (BA)	17
Management with emphasis in International Business (BA)	55
Management with emphasis in Marketing (BA)	37
International Relations (BA)	74
Media Communications (BA)	5
Strategic Communications (BA)	19
Psychology (BA)	46
Undecided	4
WVPU Undergraduates Enrolled on Campus	359
WVPU Undergraduates Studying Abroad	0
Webster Study Abroad Undergraduates @ WVPU	60
Total Undergraduates Enrolled at WVPU	419

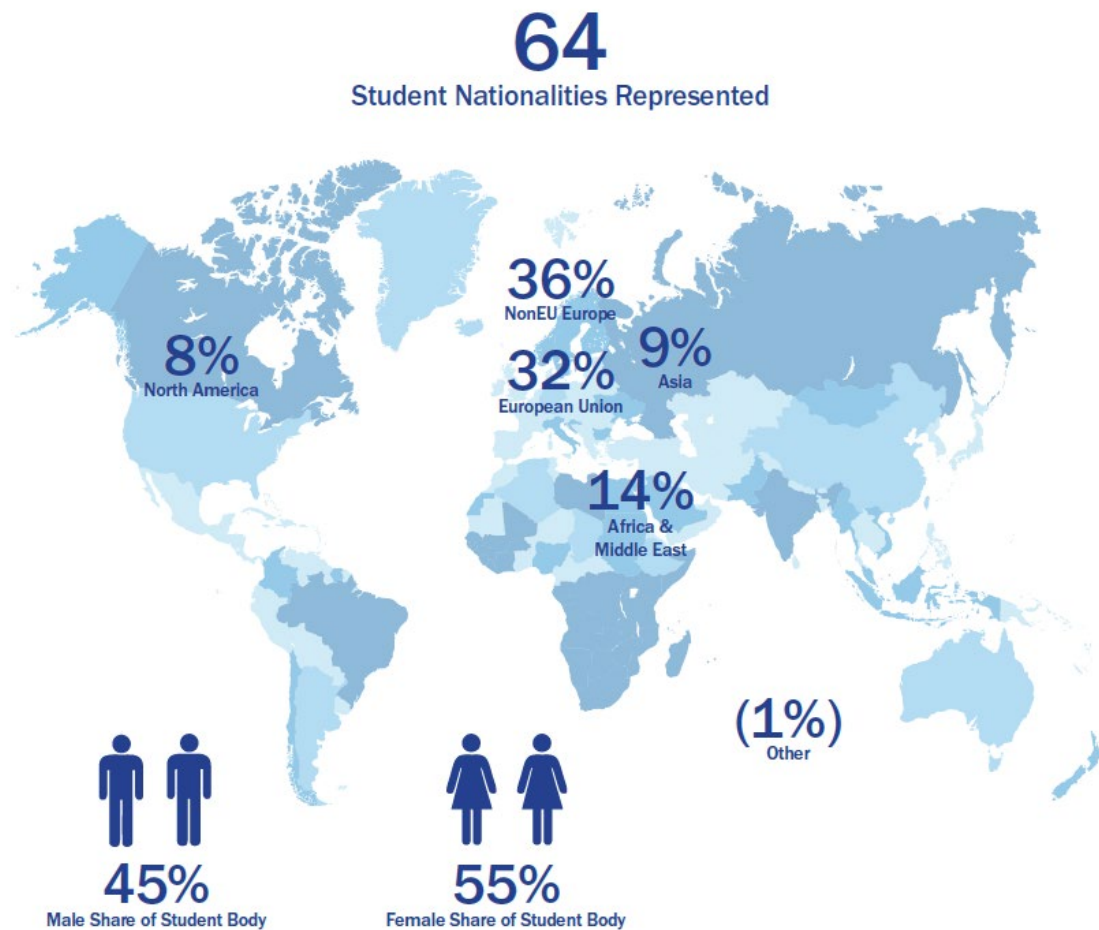
Graduate Programs/Students	
Business Administration (MBA)	25
Finance (MSc)	4
Marketing (MSc)	8
International Relations (MSc)	21
Psychology with an emphasis in Counseling Psychology (MA)	20
WVPU Graduates Enrolled on Campus	78
WVPU Graduates Studying Abroad	-2
Webster Study Abroad Graduates @ WVPU	1
Total Graduates Enrolled at WVPU	77
Totals Programs/Students	
Total WVPU Students (Seeking Austrian Degrees)	437
Total WVPU Students enrolled on campus	496

In addition to our residential student body, WVPU traditionally is a highly attractive destination for student mobility. In addition to our residential student body, WVPU traditionally is a highly attractive destination for student mobility. Following a pandemic year that prevented the attendance of any study abroad students, WVPU was able to welcome 61 students from across Webster University's global network and Erasmus. One graduate student from the Vienna campus spent a semester abroad.

WVPU offers one of the most diverse student bodies that can be found at any university. The 2022-2023 student body brought together students from 64 countries around the world, speaking 64 mother tongues. Women constituted 55% of our student body.



Figure 5: Nationalities and gender distribution among students



### 3.2.3 Ratio of full-time scientific staff to students

The combined efforts of 81 faculty members (19 permanent faculty members and 62 adjunct lecturers) across 4 departments and 13 accredited degree programs educated 469 students on campus through 213 publicly scheduled courses awarding more than 18,600 ECTS in the 2022-2023 period. In addition, 23 students took 17 independent or directed studies under the direct supervision of 12 faculty (including adjuncts) while 104 students (22 graduate and 86 undergraduate) undertook theses supervised by 15 permanent faculty members.

With average class sizes of 18 for undergraduates and 7 for graduates, and a student to overall faculty ratio of 5.4, WVPU boasts one of the best environments for student success and makes it a highly attractive choice for current and prospective students alike.

Figure 6: WVPU in numbers



### 3.2.4 Average study period

During the academic year 2022-2023, undergraduate students successfully completed their studies in 45 months on average (in previous reporting period 42). Graduate students finished their programs in 33 months on average (previous year: 34 months).

### 3.2.5 Drop-out-rate

Central to the success of the university is its ability to retain its youngest students. WVPU performed well in this area with 74% of freshmen who entered in 2022-23 returning for classes in 2023-24.

During the academic year 2022-2023 the number of students who left our university on their own initiative or who were dismissed due to insufficient performance was 9% for undergraduates and 15% for graduates.

Dropout rate 2022-2023 [comparative figures from the previous year in brackets]

Dropouts	UG	GRAD	ALL
Stopped	30* [41]	11 [8]	41 [49]
Dismissed	4 [5]	1 [0]	5 [5]
Total Students	359 [352]	78 [97]	437 [449]
Drop-Out-Rate in %	9 [13]	15 [8,2]	11 [12]

\* including 6 students who graduated with US diploma only

### 3.2.6 Participation in mobility programs for students

WVPU holds student mobility in high esteem and strives to make as many opportunities for our students to experience other cultures as possible to achieve the goal of developing our students into global citizens. Webster University worldwide boasts an extensive study abroad program which allows students to study abroad through three-week faculty led experiential courses, two-month terms, and four-month semesters or for a full academic year consisting of two consecutive semesters (fall and spring). The Webster University study abroad network consists of Webster University campuses or partner institutions in Asia, North, South and Central America, Europe and Africa. To encourage students to study abroad, Webster University offers the Webster World Traveler Program (WWTP) in which the institution sponsors the students travel costs up to 1,000 USD to reach their study abroad destination outside of Europe. WVPU is also an Erasmus+ partner institution since 2018, through which our students can study at six partner institutions within the European Higher Education Area. Likewise, the university hosts students from other Webster University campuses or key partners, US-based institutions party to its Webster International Network of Schools (WINS) or through WVPU's Erasmus+ student mobility partnerships.

As the world continued to manage the situation around the global COVID-19 pandemic, mobility worldwide has to some extent resumed, however, not all programs or destinations were re-opened. WVPU along with the St. Louis Office of Study Abroad continue to evaluate the safety of every mobility destination to guarantee the wellbeing of the students participating in a study abroad program.

In 2022-2023, WVPU hosted 59 undergraduate students, and an additional 2 through the ERASMUS+ program. Of the 61 students, 3 came from other Europe-based institutions, 14 from our Webster campus in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and the remaining from the United States. Eight WVPU students experienced a

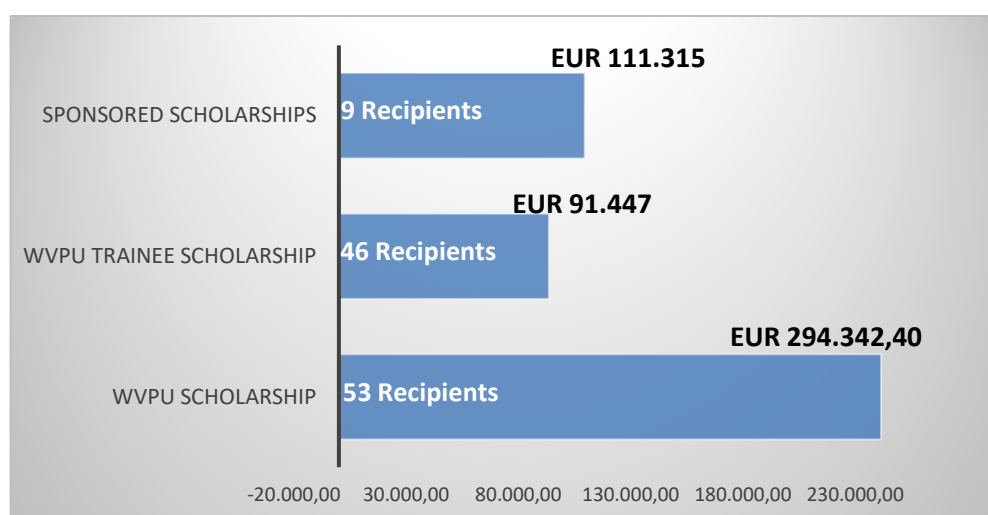
semester or summer term abroad: seven undergraduate students went to our Webster campus in Geneva, Switzerland, while one other undergraduate student took the semester to experience student life at Webster's campus in Leiden in the Netherlands.

### 3.2.7 Scholarships granted or arranged by WVPU

WVPU students have several options available to finance their studies, such as scholarships, student loans, sponsorships, U.S. Federal Aid, Veteran Benefits for U.S. Military Veterans and Dependents, and others. WVPU provides comprehensive information about the university's finance processes to its students including information about the individual registration and payment options, educational expense, and tax reimbursement as well as financial aid and scholarship programs.

In 2022-2023, 139 students benefitted from the extensive scholarship program. In total, 25% of WVPU's entire student body were supported financially with scholarships [last year, 108 students, 21% respectively]. The total amount of scholarships awarded to the students including WVPU Training, WVPU Partial and sponsored scholarships was 497.104,40 euros.

Figure 7: Scholarship recipients



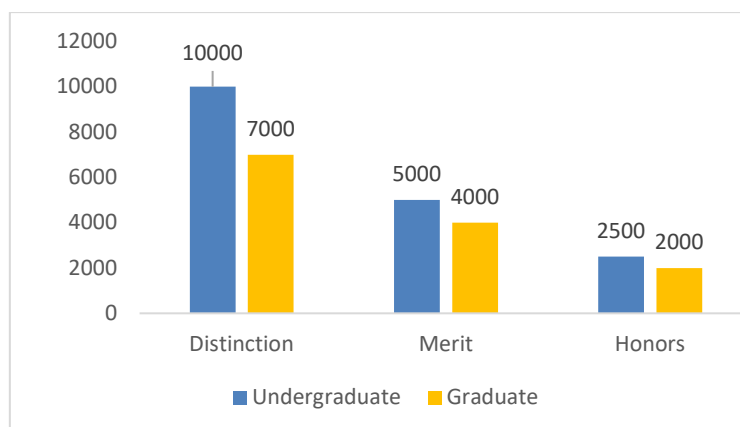
These scholarship opportunities play an important role in the recruitment of new students to WVPU. All scholarships are awarded based on exceptional academic achievement and financial need. Scholarship students must prove continuous academic success to continue in the scholarship program until they complete their studies.

#### Types of WVPU scholarships

- Webster Vienna Training Scholarships (awarded on a semester basis): aims to give all students the opportunity to gain valuable skills outside the classroom. These training opportunities are available to all students, and recipients are chosen through a transparent process. Students support a faculty member with his / her research or assist staff members in relevant administrative departments, e.g., in the library, computer lab, in an academic department with a workload similar to a 4-8 ECTS course across 14 weeks. The scholarship is offset against the tuition fees depending on level and effort required as well as the workload hours per week: For undergraduates, the discount is between EUR 1.005,00 and EUR 4.020,00 while for graduate students, the discount is between EUR 1.185,00 and EUR 4.740,00 per semester.

- WVPU Partial Scholarships (awarded annually): Students receive a reduction in course fees from 10% to 50%. The requirement is a total GPA of 3.0 to 3.5 depending on the type of scholarship. A committee of representatives from relevant departments selects the recipients of these scholarships. There are three different levels for the amounts awarded per academic year:

Figure 8: Amount awarded in 2022-2023



- WVPU Excellence Award is awarded to highly deserving undergraduate students after their first year at Webster Vienna Private University. The students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.8 to 4.0 to receive this award. 2 students were awarded with this scholarship and will receive the discount of EUR 2.500 and EUR 5.000 per semester for three years.
- Scholarships from external sponsors (awarded annually): The prerequisite is an overall GPA of 3.0 to 4.0 depending on the sponsor's specifications. In 2022-23 Borealis and the City of Vienna covered 40% to 100% of the tuition fee for 9 students. A committee of representatives from relevant departments selects the recipients of these scholarships.
- In addition, the university also supports Webster alumni with a Webster Vienna Second Degree Grant for their second degree at the university by waiving 20% of their tuition fee during their degree. The Webster Vienna Legacy Tuition Grant is a program that provides a 10% reduction in tuition for new incoming students whose sibling or parent (core family) currently attends WVPU or graduated from any of the Webster University networks of campuses. A 5% reduction in tuition applies to extended family members (aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, etc.).

In 2022-23 WVPU credited the Second-Degree Tuition Grant to 14 students (since August 2020 the eligible student receives a graduate tuition fee discount of 20%). 17 students received the legacy grant (5% or 10% of the tuition fee).

On top of the 108 students receiving scholarships, 14 students (4,9 % of the total student body) financed their tuition fees with US annual state loans and VA benefits in the total amount of EUR 309.105,40.

### 3.2.8 Tuition fees

The total amount of tuition fees depends on the number of courses taken per term and semester, the sequence in which the courses are taken and the course availability. One course usually corresponds to 6 ECTS for undergraduates and 7,5 ECTS for graduates but can vary from 2 to 15 ECTS. The textbooks are included in the tuition fees.

## **Bachelor's degree**

During the academic year 2022-23, full-time students taking between 12 and 18 ECTS per semester were charged a "flat fee" of EUR 10,650.00 per semester. Any additional credits beyond that equaled EUR 670 per credit.

Part-time students (up to 22 ECTS per semester) as well as students during the optional summer term paid EUR 1,980 per course in tuition.

The total tuition fee for a 120-credit bachelor's degree course ranged between EUR 85,200 and EUR 80,800, for full-time and part-time students respectively.

## **Master's degree**

- Most course fees at the master's degree level are for 7,5 ECTS courses including textbooks.
- The tuition fee for one course equaled EUR 2,370 (EUR 790 for 3 ECTS)
- The estimated total program fee for the Master in Finance, Marketing, International Relations and the MBA (excluding prerequisites) equaled EUR 28,440 for 36 ECTS.
- The estimated total program fee for the MA in Psychology equaled EUR 37,920 for 48 ECTS.

### **3.3 Faculty and staff**

#### **3.3.1 Major developments and analysis**

WVPU continued to make progress in professionalizing its human resources operations and attracting internationally oriented professionals. The university's diverse, international roster of personnel and externally contracted lecturers and visiting professors (from more than 30 countries) requires that it provides a constructive, supportive work environment to perform and excel. Despite major progress since introducing reforms in 2016, WVPU still fields a small body of permanent faculty who concentrate mainly on research but continue teaching and supervising theses. The permanent faculty (excluding the Rector and Associate Director) are distributed among four academic departments (Business and Management, International Relations, Media Communications, and Psychology) covering the core subject areas of the degree programs, advising students, and supervising theses. The university's personnel plan for the next years foresees continued growth among the scientific staff, including the addition of faculty to deliver a PhD program as well as for a new program in computer science and sees such development as a key success factor for the future. The development and promotion of university staff, enhancing the skills and increasing the responsibilities of the scientific and administrative personnel is essential for the efficient and professional functioning of the university.

#### **3.3.2 Scientific staff**

During the academic year 2022-2023, WVPU employed 21 [previous year 22] permanent faculty, all with an employment level of at least 50%, 2 of them being on maternity leave. They are listed in Appendix 1 with their characterizations and classifications. In addition to the faculty, WVPU employed 8 scientific support staff. Scientific staff attended numerous external and internal professional development activities respective to their fields. The academic year saw significant improvement in the area of scientific support staff, who were deeper integrated into departmental and program planning in particular related to activities surrounding the preparation of the re-accreditation application.



### 3.3.3 External scientific staff

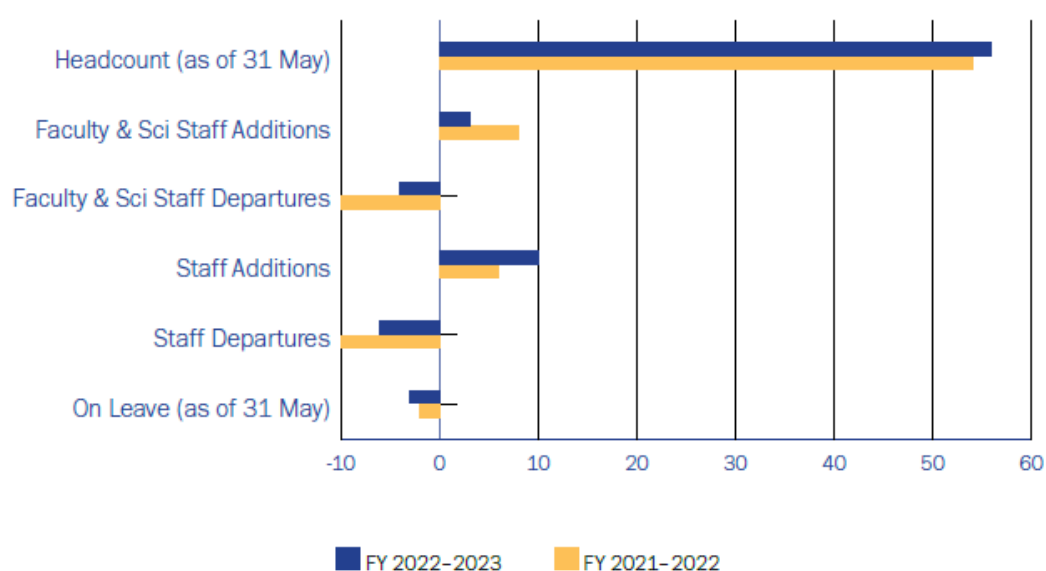
External lecturers play an important role in all universities and WVPU relies on them to bring up-to-date real-life experience into the classroom. Often beneficiaries of annual teaching excellence awards decided by the students, their quality and commitment are some of the most essential resources for the success of the university. During the academic year 2022-2023, WVPU employed 60 [previous year 71] external lecturers also called adjunct faculty members. They are listed in Appendix 1 with their characterizations and classifications. Adjunct faculty are individuals contracted for course instruction on a limited basis for the duration of the course, including all final assessments, and who teach in their specific fields of demonstrated expertise. For the duration of their assignment, adjunct faculty are invited to participate in relevant activities and programs of the respective academic units. Depending on the level of the course assignment, adjunct faculty hold an advanced degree in their field of expertise or equivalent tested experience in real-world situations relevant to the discipline in which they teach. Such credentials may include, but are not limited to pertinent certifications, years of advanced work experience, and publications.

### 3.3.4 Headcount in 2022-2023

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 2022-2023 period, WVPU employed 56 individuals (FTE 50.27) plus three employees on maternity leave. This compares to 54 individuals (FTE 49) plus two employees on maternity leave and two on leave at the close of the previous year. The university hired 13 new employees in the fiscal year from June 1, 2022, to May 31, 2023, adding three scientific staff (2 female and 1 male) and ten administrative staff (5 female, 5 male). In keeping to our commitment to deliver the state-of-the-art in our classrooms, we also contracted 60 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 six administrative (5 females and 1 male) and four scientific staff positions (1 Faculty, 3 Scientific Support Staff; 4 female, 1 male).

Figure 9: Comparison of employment (fiscal years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023)



### Overview of all entries and exits at WVPU during the academic year 2022-2023:

ENTRIES	
<b>Administrative Staff</b>	
Junior IT System Engineer ; from October 1, 2022 IT System Engineer	June 13, 2022
Admissions Officer	August 1, 2022
Front Desk und Event Officer	August 16, 2022
Junior Admissions Officer	September 1, 2022
Advising and Enrollment Officer	October 1, 2022
HR Officer	October 1, 2022
Junior Marketing & Communications Officer	November 7, 2022
Facility Officer	January 1, 2023
Admissions Officer (maternity leave replacement)	February 1, 2023
Junior Student Account Officer	May 15, 2023
<b>Scientific Staff</b>	
Research Assistant, PSY Dep (limited contract for project assignment)	September 1, 2022
English for Academic Purposes Instructor (temporary position)	September 12, 2022
Research Service Officer	March 1, 2023
<b>Faculty NO ENTRIES</b>	

EXITS	
<b>Administrative Staff</b>	
Admissions Officer	June 24, 2022
Admissions Officer	July 31, 2022
Senior HR Officer	August 31, 2022
Student Resource Center Officer	September 4, 2022
Head of Facility Management	December 31, 2022
Jr. Student Account Officer	April 15, 2023
<b>Scientific Staff</b>	
English for Academic Purposes Instructor	June 30, 2022
Research Services Officer	November 15, 2022
Research Assistant, PSY Dep (limited contract for project assignment)	November 30, 2022
<b>Faculty</b>	
Lecturer in Psychology	December 31, 2022

### 3.3.5 Documentation of appointment procedures of professors in the reporting period

The recruitment procedure for an Assistant Professor of Counselling started in March 2023 and was concluded during the academic year 2023-2024 (September 2023).

Appendix 2 contains a copy of the job announcement which was distributed electronically in relevant media.

### **3.3.6 Measures taken to support young academics and staff development**

WVPU continued with measures to support academics and to foster staff development in recent years. Starting with this academic year we introduced a regularly budgeted program for professional development equally allocated per person. This approach was combined together with a new focus on disseminating opportunities for staff and faculty development and mobility through Erasmus+. In the case of the latter, much of the year was dedicated to promoting opportunities and raising awareness with the goal that in the next reporting period there will be several instances of staff taking advantage of available Erasmus + funds.

Mobility being seen as an important component of development, the university has access to additional external funds, in this case Webster's Leif J. Sverdrup Global Teaching Fellowship, to foster mobility among young academics. For example, Eva Zedlacher, an assistant professor of management, spent a term at Webster University's campus in Accra, Ghana where she was able to expand her research collecting data on the effectiveness of a training film called "Schaunichtweg Training" - a project supported by WVPU and the Chamber of Labor of Lower Austria that aims to understand, bring awareness to and lessen workplace bullying. There she worked with staff and faculty from Nigeria, the Central African Republic and Burkina Faso learning about organizational behavior and work attitudes in different African countries.

While on the administrative staff side, the university holds bi-annual feedback meetings between supervisors and their staff, the university further reformed its performance agreement process with faculty toward the second half of the reporting period. Responding to the need to address organization and planning around research and teaching activities, the Rector's office took up the task of holding performance agreement negotiations for the next academic year directly with each individual faculty member rather than at the department level. In so doing, the Rector provides specific guidance, particularly for the younger faculty, on how to prioritize their activities targeting achievable publication plans as part of a multi-step process toward applying for prestigious early stage grants.

WVPU monitors its faculty performance in the classroom through an online student course evaluation. The digital, thorough, and anonymous course evaluation system provides instructors, department heads and management with critical student input to assure the quality of the courses and create a solid basis for future enhancement in the programs. Students complete the evaluations online at the end of each course. The results of the evaluations are available to every faculty member. These reviews are monitored regularly by academic department heads and used both for purposes of assessment as well as course assignments and re-hiring of external faculty. The evaluations are used for the curricular planning process, instructor assignment and assessment, and faculty performance agreements, forming part of the body of knowledge for short term and long-term course and program development. In addition to the regular course evaluation system, WVPU conducts an additional new instructor course evaluation. This evaluation takes place in week 3 of the first course taught and provides lecturers with tangible and specific indicators as well as comments that they can use to change the content and/or form of teaching for the rest of the term or semester.

WVPU recognizes both faculty and adjunct faculty members who demonstrate teaching at its finest. Various teaching awards are presented to the faculty at the WVPU commencement ceremony. Each year, students vote for the Teacher of the Year. In 2022, this distinction was awarded to two colleagues Dr. Marco Bocchese, Assistant Professor of International Law and Dr. Seth Weiner, an adjunct faculty

member who teaches components of the university's Core Curriculum Module. The Senate selects a colleague based on his/her/their course evaluations and regarding creativity and effectiveness in teaching. This year, the Excellence in Teaching award was presented to Bradley E. Wiggins, Associate Professor of Media Communications and Head of the Media Communications department.

### **3.3.7 Measures for gender equality**

WVPU believes that diversity and inclusion help cultivate academic excellence and continuously strives to eliminate the under-representation of women wherever present. It ensures equal working conditions and equal access to all means and opportunities in the areas of infrastructure, financial resources, and remuneration. Thus, all its employees undergo mandatory training in sexual harassment, and the university requires that all communication (internal and external) occurs with respect to the values of the Webster community and cultural sensitivities of its members by avoiding national, racial, ethnic, or religious slurs, acts or words of gender bias or sexual harassment, intimidation, insults, or innuendo, and ad hominem attacks toward any individual. In December and April the university organized two separate diversity training workshops; one for supervisors and another for all employees.

WVPU began reporting annually on the status of equal opportunity employment and affirmative action (EOE/AA) in 2017 providing information about e.g., the distribution of gender, nationalities, part-time or full-time employment and initiatives in diversity and inclusion. In March 2017, the University Senate established the Working Group on Equal Opportunities (WGEO) consistent with the procedures outlined in the Constitution. The WGEO subsequently composed and submitted the WVPU Affirmative Action Plan for Managing Diversity and the Advancement of Women (AAP), which was adopted by the Executive Board in May 2019. Since then, the university has expanded its organization of internal workshops, panel discussions, and other relevant activities, increased its participation in external workshops, expanded opportunities for part-time employment and flexible hours, and instituted a system of mandatory training in sexual harassment for all employees.

WVPU encourages faculty of all departments to integrate the topic diversity and gender in research and teaching. WVPU's course offerings underline the importance of gender and related social equity topics throughout its curriculum. Beginning with the commencement ceremony of this reported period, WVPU introduced a new award recognizing faculty who most successfully integrate diversity in their teaching. The very first recognitions went to faculty member Dr. Anthony Löwstedt, Assistant Professor in the Media Communications department and Andrea Gaal, an adjunct faculty member in the Business and Management department.

Gender topics and the treatment of gender issues are central components of a WVPU education. Related modules are present in almost all of its syllabi, regardless of discipline. Not only does the university encourage faculty of all departments to integrate topics related to diversity and gender in research and teaching, it requires that all undergraduate students take courses that explicitly cover gender and diversity matters as part of the Core Curriculum Module.

Among its courses, half of the Core Curriculum courses are specifically dedicated to or fully integrate related research including:

1. WGST 2610: Women, Gender and Sexuality in Social Justice Organizations, which examines contemporary issues related to gender and sexuality in the foundation and leadership of social justice organizations and specifically, focuses on female activism and on how gender differences are constructed, maintained and challenged in social justice organizations.

2. ANSO 1050: Global Social Problems - Justice and Inequality, which shows students how to analyze the way race, class, and gender affect individual life chances and structure social problems and looks closely at gendered violence and discrimination.
3. ANSO 2300: Social Movements - Economy, Labour and the Future of Work, which has a multiple modules dedicated to unpaid and gendered work, and “reproductive” labor.
4. GLBC 1200: First-Year Seminar - Transdisciplinary Perspectives in Biopolitics, Gender Justice, as well as many other contemporary issues related to women and gender research.
5. ANSO 2890: Health, Illness and Power, which covers the politics of conception, disability integration, queer perspectives on health and disability as well as modules on maternal health, and reproductive technologies, and include relevant source material such as Gamlin, J. and Berrio, L. (2021) ‘Critical Anthropologies of Maternal Health: Theorizing from the Field with Mexican Indigenous Communities’ and Mills, C. (2011) ‘The Limits of Reproductive Autonomy: Prenatal Testing, Harm and Disability’.
6. ANSO 1050 Global Social Problems explicitly looks at the ways race, class and gender affect individual life chances in different geographical and cultural contexts and includes modules on discrimination and the struggle for equality, the rights of indigenous communities, and strategies and cases of equality activism.

In addition, the university offered a special summer program on sex and sexuality that investigated the psychological aspects of gender identification. Equally, courses such as Women in Management (MNGT 3470), Topics in Sex and Gender (PSYC 2475), Media, Diversity and Society (MDST 2800) delve into discipline specific approaches to gender and diversity issues while foundational courses in all the university’s degree programs and study plans fully integrate related approaches and topics. In addition, in the course Topics in Culture(s): Vienna: The Social History of a City, Students were introduced to the psychological and social issues relevant to sexual orientation and gender diversity and undertake extra-curricular activities that emphasize how sexual and gender diversity can be implemented in a modern city.

In International Relations, for example, an entire section of theoretical study is reserved for feminism and critical theory. In the Business and Management Department courses such as Business Ethics, Organizational Behaviour, Human Resource Management, and Management Theory & Practice incorporate topics exploring modern-day issues such as the gender wage gap; how implicit biases lead to discrimination; gender stereotyping and leadership; the various dimensions of diversity and its importance to organizations; and the incorporation of works by scholars that challenge normative thinking. A specific course called Women in Management (MNGT 3470) explores specific issues and cases related to women, gender, and leadership – an important topic as more than half of WVPU students are female and more than half are enrolled in one of its business programs.

The increasing integration of gender and diversity studies in the classroom is directly connected to research by the university’s faculty as well as a source of international cooperation. In AY 2022-2023 this led to cooperative efforts, articles, conference presentations and grant proposals in areas of The interaction between children and gender by those working from home during COVID (Zedlacher in cooperation with Hartner-Tiefenhaler (TU-Wien) and El-Sehity (SFU), gender biases in attributions of blame for workplace mistreatment (Zedlacher in cooperation with Yanagida from Uni Wien), as well as further works on whether female perpetrators are blamed more harshly, which was presented at the International Association on Workplace Bullying and Harassment Conference in San Diego and Other issues explored included questions of Ecocide, Biocultural Diversity, and the Media (Löwstedt).



## **4 Funding and resources**

### **4.1 Presentation of current financial management**

WVPU's financial turnaround since 2016 continued in the academic year 2022-2023. The senior management has built a sustainable operation for years to come. The university's fiscal year, which began on June 1, 2022 and ended on May 31, 2023 was again a financial success as WVPU's financial figures for 2022-2023 shows again a net profit.

WVPU operates as a not-for-profit association under the Austrian Code of Associations. Formally known as the Bildungsverein für die Freunde der Webster University (St. Louis, USA), the Association is the university's legal entity with its registered seat in Vienna.

The association holds a 100% share in the Webster BV Bildung GmbH, a not-for-profit limited liability company with its seat in Vienna which is intended to host the university operations after the change of legal form. The Association also holds a 100% share in a commercial LLC, the WEBSTER Seminarbetriebs- und Handelsgesellschaft m.b.H. which formerly operated the student dormitory.

The declaration of Patronage issued by Webster University, St. Louis, USA, on May 31, 2023 (Appendix 3) ensures that WVPU will be provided with sufficient financial resources to meet its payment obligations if required. This commitment is valid at least until 2024, so there is no legal basis for over-indebtedness under insolvency law.

The balance sheet and income statement for 2022-2023 are attached as Appendix 4.

## **5 Research**

### **5.1 Major developments and analysis**

As mandated by the university's internal quality assurance guidelines a constant monitoring of the faculty's research activities has been undertaken. This assessment is always based on the individual performance agreements all faculty members have to conclude with the Office of the Rector. While the research output in general was satisfactory, both in terms of quantity and quality, WVPU still lagged behind when it comes to successful scientific grant attraction. This observation led the university management to the establishment of longer-term research horizons and a differentiated strategy, i.e. younger faculty members first have to build their publication basis before they can hand in research proposals while for established researchers the research support service was substantially enlarged. Moreover, WVPU established measures to create a proper research culture in-house.

### **5.2 Research of the institution**

The integration of research and teaching at WVPU was observable in our faculty's scholarly achievements. For the academic year 2022-2023, our faculty received 5 grants for just over €100,000, delivered 22 full papers at renowned academic conferences and chaired panels or presented research at another 14, published 29 scholarly works including 16 peer-reviewed journal articles, 9 scholarly book chapters, 2 books, and 2 conference proceedings alongside 28 reviews, magazine and newspaper articles.

**19**  
**Professors  
& Lecturers**

**29**  
**Scholarly  
Publications**

**36**  
**Conference Papers  
or Presentations**

WVPU faculty continued to be recognized for their scholarly work. Many served as reviewers of editors of international scholarly journals such as Financial Studies, European Political Science Review, Information, Communication & Society, Emotion Sciences Sustainability, Discourse & Society and Routledge, just to name a few. Others served as reviewers for granting institutions such as Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), the Republic of Poland, and the European Research Commission. WVPU faculty regularly publishes in leading journals including, inter alia, International Affairs, International Review of Economics and Finance, International Journal of Financial Analysis, Organization Studies, The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy, International Journal of Value Chain Management, Journal of Neuroscience Methods, Journal of Communications Media, Eastern European Economics, and Frontiers in Psychology as well as through publishing houses Edward Elgar, Routledge, Springer and Nomos.

Some highlights of their achievements during the academic year 2022-2023 include:

- Anatoly Reshetnikov, assistant professor of International Relations releases Chasing Greatness, a book that traces and critically engages with the evolution of Russia's concepts of political greatness, imperialism, and superiority. Published by University of Michigan Press, the work unpacks the original semantics and their troubled conceptual entanglement with the Western conceptual equivalents – of particular value to those trying to understand the ideological roots of Russia's ongoing conflicts. Rather than a book of history, although it does span more than ten centuries, "Chasing Greatness" provides vital insight into the present by carefully reconstructing historical narratives that continue to exert their influence on the Russian decisions-makers and hinder the further improvement of mutual understanding and trust between Russia and the international society. In a nutshell, the book explains how Russia's firm attachment to its great power identity has consistently brought calamity to its political regimes, citizens, and international integration projects.
- Bradley Wiggins, associate professor and Media Communication department head, continued to advance the study of Internet memes, publishing his most recent work on the subject in an edited volume titled The Pragmatics of Internet Memes (ISBN: 978-90-272-1136-1). Here, Dr. Wiggins examines the role of the media narrative that is often incorporated into memes, sometimes meaning that people might become aware of issues and current events first through memes, rather than traditional forms of news media. Together with his colleagues, this research looks under the hood of understanding, revealing what and how serious if not unsayable concerns can be concealed behind the seemingly humorous, carefree and colorful carnival of internet memes across cultures, contexts, genres and modalities. In his chapter, Wiggins examines the role that media narratives play in the creation and dissemination of internet memes, especially as they related to facts. He focuses on the case of Colin Kaepernick, a former NFL quarterback, who famously and controversially kneeled during the playing of the national anthem. He analyzed how Kaepernick's part in the Nike advertisement, Just do It, went viral analyzing a remixed Nike advertisements as internet memes from the player's Twitter account. He shows how components of the

advertisement were remade and reused in memes linking them to narratives as far flung as gun rights.

- WVPU Rector, Johannes Pollak co-edited an anthology of European political perspectives on climate change. Aptly titled *Climate Change and the Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals*, Pollak worked together with Michael Kaeding and Paul Schmidt to produce this fifth book in the series of Springer International's "Future of Europe" that collates national perspectives with regards to European issues. This latest work analyzes member state and EU neighbors' national efforts to combat climate change. "When it comes to climate change, carbon, and the 'green' economy, some parts of Europe are politically ambitious while others remain sluggish," Pollak said. Filled with the views of more than 50 experts from 39 countries in the EU and neighboring regions, the book is packed with examples of national paths toward climate neutrality, and on public perception of the climate crisis; and includes recommendations on how policy-makers should implement climate policies, both at the national and EU level. The book also addresses strategic questions regarding EU integration, the transformation of our economies, and the reduction of energy dependencies in the context of inter-country dependencies following Russia's war against Ukraine.

Appendix 5 (Faculty Research Activities and Publications for 2022-2023) lists the research output of all our permanent faculty during the academic year 2022-2023.

### **5.3 Research grants and external research funding**

In the academic year 2022-2023, research faculty at WVPU have submitted seven grant applications for more than TEUR 2,580. In September 2022, the Kulturabteilung Wien (Municipality for Culture of Vienna, short: MA 7) granted Prof. Jozef Bátora (International Relations) EUR 2,000 for organizing the international workshop on "Global Governance? New Dynamics and New Approaches", which was held in October 2022. Likewise Ass.-Prof. Marco Bocchese attracted EUR 5,887 by the Webster Faculty Research Grant in St. Louis, USA for a field trip to Guinea to collect data for his project "Justice in the Fog of War." Another EUR 7,737 was granted by the Project Management Institute in Australia as second installment for the project "Harnessing Social Capital with Community Stakeholders in Infrastructure Projects" for Pernille Eskerod and her Australian research partner Ken S. K. Chung. In total, the faculty members of WVUP could attract EUR 15,624 of funding.

In addition, EUR 8,193 were granted by the Erasmus+ program for the promotion of mobility of our academic and administrative staff for teaching and training purposes.

In the area of enhancing the quality of grant proposals, the university relies on a multistep process that seeks approval from the respective academic department heads and the Research Support Services, the Heads of Finance and Administration and Human Resources, the Associate Director, and finally the Rector. This internal approval process is documented and signed by stakeholders at each step through the WVPU Proposal Approval Form. To enhance the quality of proposals and increase the likelihood of successful applications, the university inserted an additional step in this process requiring that faculty proposing grants exceeding €20,000 present their proposals to internal and invited external experts for comment and feedback before receiving approvals from any members of the Executive Board. A new Research Services Officer, employed since March 2023, with academic background and experience in successful grant applications shall help to raise the success rates in grant applications.

## 6 National and international cooperation

### 6.1 Introduction

Beyond its collaborations in research, WVPU is committed to maintaining and deepening its cooperation with both national and international partners in higher education, industry, government, and society and promoting student and staff mobility. WVPU cooperates regularly with national and international academic institutions, businesses and organizations, established through its faculty, Advisory Board, and Alumni Association. We also collaborate with national and international partners to provide mobility and internship opportunities, bring in expert practitioners teaching hands-on skills into the classroom, host seminars and conferences, participate in projects, in addition to other enriching activities.

As part of its commitment to knowledge transfer and increasing its scholarly footprint, WVPU pursues and is committed to increasing its partnerships in research.

WVPU fosters internationalization as part of its mission of offering a globally oriented education. Its commitment to internationalization is evident in its history and embedded in its operations and values.

Three objectives guide WVPU's approach to internationalization:

1. promote cross-border mobility and cooperation in education and training
2. overcome socio-economic and international barriers and support an inclusive and innovation-driven approach to global education
3. support the automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and learning periods abroad

The promotion of cross-border mobility and cooperation will be accomplished by supporting international partnerships and networks, student mobility and engagement opportunities, and faculty and staff exchange. WVPU is working to deepen existing collaboration and looks to develop new sustainable partnerships with academic, entrepreneurial institutions, and governmental and non-governmental organizations that are essential to opening new opportunities to WVPU students, faculty and staff and enhancing the university's global outreach, visibility and reputation. Accordingly, the university offers high quality, tailored services and assistance to all incoming and outgoing students and promotes the integration of incoming students into all academic and social activities.

WVPU's second internationalization objective is to overcome socio-economic and international barriers and support an inclusive and innovation-driven approach to global education. A commitment to diversity and inclusion is one of WVPU's core values, it thus continues to seek avenues to widening international participation and inclusivity through outreach programs and projects, its recruitment and admissions policies and practice, and by providing targeted financial assistance to minimize barriers to entry, progression, and mobility.

WVPU's final objective in internationalization is to support the automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and learning periods abroad. Maintaining a high quality of teaching goes hand in hand with modernization and continuous improvement of the quality of academic services. WVPU conforms to the national qualification framework and standards established in the Bologna process and strives to continually improve processes and tools to provide transparency, consistency and to reduce burdens of mutual recognition.

## 6.2 Formal national and international cooperation

In the 2022-2023 academic year, WVPU continued to strengthen its commitment to formal national and international cooperation, establishing and nurturing connections that spanned research, academic exchanges, and practical industry collaborations. These partnerships enrich WVPU's educational offerings and facilitate its integral role in addressing current global challenges and fostering a network of scholarly and professional development.

WVPU affiliates or partners with a variety of national and international academic and non-academic institutions. These partnerships take the form of research partnerships, affiliations based on course content, sponsorships (as in WVPU's Partner in Education Program) and through memberships in associations.

WVPU's most important international cooperation network is that of Webster University, comprised of campuses, extended sites, partners, and almost 200.000 alumni worldwide. WVPU cooperates with Webster University in a range of university administration activities, events, faculty exchange, and most importantly, in supporting student mobility.

WVPU staff and faculty mobility continued to play an important role in WVPU's formal cooperation. Assistant Professor Eva Zedlacher spent a semester in Ghana, facilitated by the Leif J. Sverdrup Global Teaching Fellowship. Additionally, staff member Mauro-Eduardo Ortiz-Bustamente's participation in the "Porto Communication Higher Education Staff Week" in Porto, Portugal, funded by Erasmus+, exemplifies WVPU's dedication to staff development and international exchange.

Under the prestigious Dr. Elizabeth Chopin Endowed Visiting Professorship, WVPU hosted eminent international scholars such as Robin Mansell and Semir Zeki, furthering the institution's tradition of inviting world-renowned experts to enrich its academic community. These visits facilitated engaging discussions across diverse disciplines, underscoring WVPU's dedication to creating a vibrant, intellectually stimulating environment.

WVPU's involvement in research collaborations, such as the "Geo-economics dynamics and stakeholder agency in the EU's future neighborhood policies" project, demonstrated its active participation in critical geopolitical and policy-oriented discussions. These initiatives reflect the university's strategic emphasis on contributing to important global dialogues through rigorous scholarly work.

Through its Partner in Education Program, WVPU cooperates with companies, governments, and institutions to fund the studies of highly qualified and/or financially less privileged students. Borealis AG is currently our largest donor to the program. Participating for 30 years, the City of Vienna is WVPU's longest Partner in Education. The Partner in Education Program is one of the cornerstones of our fundraising activities. In 2022-2023 WVPU managed to secure TEUR 168 in donations.

Formal cooperations extended to industry and academic partnerships, with projects such as community stakeholder engagement in infrastructure projects with the University of Sydney, and neuromuscular electrical stimulation research with the University of Essex, marking WVPU's commitment to solving real-world problems through collaborative research.

WVPU is a member of Austrian Association of Private Universities (ÖPUK), the umbrella organization which links together the nationally recognized Austrian private universities and represents the interests of the private higher education sector in Austria. WVPU is also a member of the American Chamber of Commerce in Austria (AmCham).

### **6.3 Informal national and international cooperation**

WVPU harnesses its relationships within education, research, and industry to provide a range of opportunities for its students and to promote knowledge transfer. WVPU leverages these relationships for its research conducted by faculty, its career services, to co-host public lectures and to bring both leading practitioners to the classroom and students to the field.

An example of WVPU's informal cooperation efforts included the collaboration with Dr. Akos Kopper from Hungary on a research project concerning security transformation processes in East Asia. This partnership exemplifies WVPU's commitment to contributing to critical global conversations through scholarly research. Dr. Franco Algieri's involvement with The Alphen Group, an international assembly of scholars and experts, further illustrates WVPU's active participation in discussions on European security, demonstrating the university's engagement with pressing international security issues.

The university's faculty members engaged in several projects that bridge the gap between academia and practical application, such as Dr. Pernille Eskerod's work on stakeholder engagement in infrastructure projects via social media, in collaboration with the University of Sydney. Similarly, Dr. Martin Altenburger's exploration of tax compliance and the effects of contract framing on employee performance is an example of WVPU's involvement in cutting-edge research that has direct implications for policy and practice.

WVPU's informal networks also facilitated unique learning opportunities for students, exemplified by Dr. Eva Zedlacher's role as a regional representative for the Academy of Management's Conflict Management Division. This position allowed her to organize a panel discussion that brought European and African perspectives on workplace mistreatment to the forefront, enriching the academic discourse with diverse cultural insights.

In the realm of finance and business, WVPU students made their mark by participating in the CFA Institute Research Challenge, showcasing their analytical prowess in equity research. Guided by the head of the Business and Management department, Dr. Antonakakis, the team's commendable performance in this global competition underscored WVPU's academic excellence.

This academic year saw more integration between the European campuses in the Webster network. For the first time, the students from the Geneva, Leiden and Vienna campuses who participate in the LEADS program (Learn, Evolve, Apply, Develop, and Serve) visited the Webster campus in Athens for the LEADS retreat. The retreat took place over a weekend in October and included leadership workshops and student networking, as well as a teambuilding activity where students competed in teams to take the best photos in different cultural heritage locations across the city. The students were also able to enjoy a performance of an ancient Greek drama in the Webster cultural center in the heart of Athens.

#### **Career services and support for students**

WVPU hosts many activities, networking opportunities, and public events to help our students gain an upper hand in the job market by connecting them with important players. One of the most important activities is WVPU's Mentoring Program, which pairs soon to graduate students with successful alumni from around the world. This year's WVPU Mentoring Program "Dare to grow together" lasted from October 2022 to May 2023 and supported our soon-to-be graduates with their career development, helped increase their knowledge and build skills for future goals and success. WVPU alumni supported students in pursuing their goals by interacting with them in productive conversations and meetings, exchanging ideas and sharing knowledge of career paths and insights to life after graduation. 18 pairs were successfully matched out of over 44 applicants. Once again, the program was diverse - both from a cultural and professional perspective with mentors from all kinds of industries and business sizes as well



as locations including Austria, Germany, Spain, Great Britain and Kenya, amongst others. Mentees' nationalities were equally diverse and included, among others, Austria, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Georgia, Bulgaria, Romania, Libya, the United States, and Japan. Summing up the program, Nora Binder, head of the Webster Vienna Human Resources and Careers Services Office noted, "We strongly believe mentoring to be powerful and the program creates and supports lasting relationships in our community."

Beyond helping promote students through mentoring, the university's career services undertakes regular networking and coaching activities. Among the highlights of 2022-2023 were:

- The "Discover Bloomberg" event gave our students and alumni a unique insight into Bloomberg's work environment alongside the opportunity to learn more about the roles they have available at their headquarters in London. Participants had the chance to connect with members of the recruitment team and business representatives as well as participate in on campus interviews leading to successful job and internship offers.
- Mr. Alain Matton, Press Attaché and Communication and Public Information Officer at the Delegation of the European Union to the International Organizations in Vienna presented on career opportunities in diplomacy and with the European Union. He shared personal insights into the work of his delegation and potential job opportunities as well as tips and tricks on how to succeed working in an international institution. Following the meeting, students successfully applied for internships with the EU delegation.
- As part of a Careers in International Relations Courses taught by Associate Director Dr. Samuel R. Schubert, representatives of UNIDO, the IAEA and several international NGOs presented on career opportunities throughout the Fall of 2022. In addition, representatives of the IAEA Programs Office at Argonne National Laboratory, U.S. Support Program to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) presented on two separate occasions to present open positions to interested U.S. citizens as well as guidance on how to submit a successful application.
- A KPMG Career & Recruitment Event gave interested students the opportunity to gain valuable insights into KPMG and learn about current recruitment opportunities. Among the speakers was one of our alumna, who shared her insights. Several students also took advantage of the opportunity to have personal one on one interviews with members of the KPMG Team following the presentation.
- An alumna provided an Assessment Center Insights workshop providing detailed experience of how assessment centers in industries such as pharmaceuticals or Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) function and provided students with sample exercises in preparation for future job applications. By going through this experience, students had the chance to identify personal strengths and development areas and deepen their self-awareness.
- Accenture Song joined us for a Career Lunch on April 12, 2023 where they shared insights and details about the company's operations, recruitment process and potential job and internship opportunities.
- The WVPU Mentoring Program "Dare to Grow Together," running from October 2022 to May 2023, facilitated career development and skill-building for nearing graduates through the support of WVPU alumni. Engaging in productive dialogues, 18 pairs out of 44 applicants shared career insights and post-graduation life advice, reflecting a diversity in culture,

industry, and geography, with mentors and mentees from Austria, Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Kenya, and beyond

### **Making a difference through public outreach, cooperation, and dissemination**

WVPU continued to emphasize the importance of knowledge transfer through public outreach and dissemination, recognizing these efforts as central to its teaching, learning, and broader community engagement. This approach aligns with WVPU's dedication to social responsibility and its principle of promoting knowledge-based decision-making through accessible forums and the sharing of information. Throughout the year, WVPU organized a range of events and initiatives that supported this mission, focusing on global dialogues, research collaborations, and community engagement to contribute meaningfully to academic and public discourse.

The faculty's involvement in addressing the conflict in Ukraine is an example of WVPU's engagement with current global issues. Analysis from faculty members, including Dr. Menbere Workie Tiruneh and Dr. Nikolaos Antonakakis on the economic impacts of the conflict, and Dr. Bradley Wiggins on the authenticity of digital content in conflict zones, positioned WVPU as an informative platform for understanding these challenges. A live discussion hosted by the International Relations Department, featuring experts like Franco Algieri and Prof. Jozef Bátora, provided critical insights into the changing geopolitical context.

WVPU also demonstrated its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion through various events, such as those commemorating International Women's Day, which facilitated discussions on gender equality and workplace mistreatment. Initiatives like the panel discussion led by WVPU student Mathilde Samson and the "Schaunichtweg" interactive training film on bystander intervention in harassment scenarios highlighted WVPU's efforts to engage the community on these important issues.

The Global Governance & Diplomacy Public Speaker Series, another key aspect of WVPU's outreach, featured speakers from a range of backgrounds, including diplomats and international officials. This series enhanced the academic environment by providing diverse perspectives on global governance and diplomacy.

Furthermore, WVPU's engagement in academic and industry collaborations, such as the workshop on mathematical economics in the energy industry and research on social media engagement in infrastructure projects, illustrated the university's active role in linking academic inquiry with practical applications. These efforts show WVPU's consistent pursuit of initiatives that bridge academic research and real-world challenges, supporting its educational goals and commitment to fostering informed, meaningful conversations within both the academic community and the wider public sphere.

### **Webster Vienna Alumni Association**

In the 2022-2023 academic year, WVPU launched a virtual online community, a significant step by the WVPU Alumni Association to enhance the alumni network, which includes over 190,000 individuals globally, with more than 4,500 from the Vienna campus. This platform facilitates easier connection and interaction among alumni, allowing them to stay engaged with their alma mater from anywhere in the world.

The WVPU Alumni Association also played a key role in organizing a series of events that brought notable speakers to campus. One such event was a public lecture by media communications expert Robin Mansell, which was made possible through collaboration with the American Chamber of Commerce. This initiative is part of the Alumni Association's efforts to provide current students and alumni with valuable learning and networking opportunities.

Further, the Alumni Association has been instrumental in the "Dare to grow together" mentoring program, connecting alumni with current students for guidance and mentorship. This program exemplifies the Association's commitment to supporting students in their professional growth and development by leveraging the vast experiences of WVPU alumni.

Throughout the year, the Alumni Association has facilitated various activities, including guest lectures, newsletters, and social media outreach, alongside offering special alumni grants and extracurricular activities. These efforts are designed to keep alumni connected to WVPU and to each other, strengthening the community and fostering ongoing engagement with the university.

### **Research collaborations**

In the academic year 2022-2023, WVPU sustained its commitment to fostering research cooperation, marking another year of prolific academic collaborations across its departments including Business and Management, International Relations, Media Communications, and Psychology. Faculty members engaged in a myriad of research projects with national and international universities and research institutions, cultivating personal relationships and collaborative networks that span across continents. The depth and breadth of these collaborations are detailed in Appendix 6 "National and International Cooperation," showcasing WVPU's vibrant research community.

This year witnessed a variety of notable research initiatives. Dr. Franco Algieri's analysis on the external relations of subnational actors with Asia, in collaboration with Dr. Martin Große Hüttmann from the University of Tübingen, highlighted WVPU's contributions to international relations research, emphasizing the importance of subnational perspectives in global diplomacy. Meanwhile, Dr. Nikolaos Antonakakis explored the dynamics between oil price volatilities and financial markets during the COVID-19 pandemic alongside colleagues from the University of Navarra, contributing critical insights into the interplay between global crises and economic indicators through work published in "International Review of Economics & Finance."

Further enriching WVPU's research portfolio, Dr. Marc Méhu continued his participation in the "Many Labs" initiative, focusing on the human face in collaboration with Prof. Lisa de Bruine of the University of Glasgow. This project aims to establish new guidelines for face research, underscoring the significance of large-scale collaboration in advancing psychological science. Dr. Pernille Eskerod's project with the University of Sydney on stakeholder engagement via social media in infrastructure projects bridged the gap between technology and societal needs, reflecting WVPU's engagement with contemporary digital communication challenges.

Additionally, Dr. Marco Bocchese's investigative work into the 'African Bias' in treaty negotiations offered a critical examination of global governance and legal frameworks, showcasing WVPU's analytical prowess in the field of international law and diplomacy. Each of these projects represents WVPU's commitment to advancing knowledge through collaborative research, addressing complex global challenges through diverse academic lenses, and contributing to the university's mission of academic excellence and global citizenship.

## **7 Outlook**

Having returned to full onsite courses again in fall 2022, the next academic year, 2023-2024 looks to be one of growth in numbers for undergraduate students, positive developments in the modernization of existing programs, and progress towards developing new programs. WVPU's management will continue to work on strengthening the university's core business of teaching students alongside generating quality

research output. The goals of increasing headcounts, enrollments and retention remains the center point of our annual activities. So too will continuing WVPU's financial surpluses, maintaining the high quality services we deliver to our existing and prospective students.

Our top priorities for the next academic year include meeting the open, required conditions of institutional reaccreditation, particularly structured procedure and planning for the development of a PhD program, further increasing the academic output performance of our faculty, develop new graduate programs in the areas of international relations, finalize reviews, assessments, and minor revisions of existing programs and curricula as well as prepare a new undergraduate program in computer science.

Maintaining the high quality of service for our students requires that our faculty also maintain a high academic performance and WVPU Faculty have performed well in terms of the quantity and quality of peer-reviewed publications. University management will continue to support them with continued funding for conference attendance and related travel, flexible scheduling, and reduced administrative activities (e.g. the removal of advising roles). With the new system of Performance Agreements between management and faculty in place and ready to be tested with the next mid-year assessment, WVPU will be in a better position to coordinate the development of faculty and grant request activities.