



Webster
UNIVERSITY

Vienna
Private University

2023

2024

Webster Vienna Private University

Annual Accreditation Report



Vienna
Private University

WEBSTER VIENNA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

for the academic year June 2023 to May 2024

(reporting period: June 1 to May 31)

Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria

Submitted on March 26, 2025

By the University Council of the Bildungsverein 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.

By incorporating research-driven projects into the curriculum and addressing real-world issues WVPU equips students with essential critical thinking and problem-solving skills and ensures that its graduates are prepared to navigate complex professional landscapes and drive innovation in their fields. Through robust support services for its students, small classes, and an overall student-to-faculty ratio of 6:1, the university works diligently to help students achieve individual excellence and prepares them for academic and professional success.

The 2023-2024 academic year was marked by several notable achievements including strong growth in the numbers of degree seeking and study abroad students, a continued, positive operating margin, newly filled faculty positions, high impact public visits by leading scholars and diplomats, an application for a new degree program in the STEM area, and initial work on developing and introducing a PhD program.

Enrollment success

WVPU welcomed 536 students to WVPU this year, making 2023-2024 one of the best enrollment years for WVPU in the last five years. It added 180 new degree seeking students, which was a 28% increase over the previous year and the fourth consecutive year of growth. With most of that growth at the undergraduate level, the arrival of such a large cohort bodes well for the future as this large cohort is expected to return, given WVPU's close to 90% retention rate. In addition, 76 study abroad students from across the Webster network attended courses on campus, the highest figure in the last five years and the third consecutive year of growth. As a tuition-based institution, such sustained growth is a clear signal of reputational success and one that translates well into financial success.

Financial success

WVPU closed the year with revenues and operating margins up. As befits the growth in students, the university saw its revenue increase by 10% and its operating expenses increase accordingly in order to maintain the high-class educational and support services we provide to our students. As result, the university generated an operating surplus of 7.3%, a significant uptick over the 5.1% surplus reported the previous year. With multiple consecutive years of positive performance and current and projected student figures and financial plans, WVPU looks forward to generating sustained, positive results for years to come.

Accreditation 12/24 response

In reaccrediting WVPU the previous year, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research based on the recommendations of the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria) reaffirmed the quality of its education and operations as part of the Austrian and European higher education landscape. In so doing, AQ Austria also laid out key conditions to be met, primarily related to strengthening the role of key stake holders and establishing a PhD program. In response, WVPU implemented a series of changes to its constitution, introduced new policies and regulations to strengthen the academic autonomy and co-determination rights of the WVPU University Senate and added formal regulations ensuring student participation at all levels of the university's organization and planning including curricular development and academic policies. The university added minimum, quantitative objectives for faculty research output that serve as the starting point for each individual faculty member's annual performance agreement. These new regulations not only strengthen the university's research culture, they tie into next major step forward for WVPU, the development and accreditation of a PhD program prior

to the next institutional accreditation. The university worked extensively on these development through second half of 2023 and submitted its report on the fulfillment of reaccreditation conditions in January 2024.

Began development of PhD program

The addition of a doctoral program constitutes an essential element of the university's new overall strategy and meets the latest requirement in Austria to maintain the status of a private university. The university established a plan to develop a PhD program, maximizing the potential strengths and research trajectories of its faculty, which it submitted as part of its reaccreditation process. The development of WVPU's Doctoral Program Plan, which will be finalized in the coming academic year, will incorporate all stakeholders (the Student Government Association, University Senate, University Council and representatives of the global Webster University network) at each phase of development, from conceptualization through accreditation to implementation. A detailed project plan for the development of the program was created in first half of 2024 and the kick-off meeting of the PhD Committee was held in mid-April consisting of Samuel Schubert (Associate Director), Jozef Batora (Head of the University Senate and Professor of International Relations), Maria Madlberger (Head of the Business and Management Department and Professor of Marketing), Bradley Wiggins (Head of the Media Communications department and Associate Professor of Media Communications), Marc Mehu (Associate Professor of Psychology), Nikolaos Antonakakis (Professor of Economics), Daniela Haarmann (Research Services Officer), Allison Snowden (Head of the Rector's Office). The committee discussed details regarding the future program's budget, personnel requirements, necessary expertise, and interdisciplinary nature as well as examined key needs and changes necessary to succeed in establishing a doctoral program. To that end, the Rector's office provided further guidance in the Performance Agreement dialogues with faculty to focus on the kinds of publications, grants, and supervision necessary to strengthen the university's bid expected in late 2025.

Computer Science

In keeping with its plans to introduce STEM programs, WVPU submitted a proposal for a Master of Science (Msc) in Computer Science for accreditation. The proposed program will broaden the university's research and teaching profile, augment its prospective student base, and equip students with knowledge, skills, and competencies in fields that are economically vital and crucial for scientific and societal advancement. Its curriculum provides a solid foundation in computer science and offers two 30 ECTS emphasis tracks in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, thereby providing a platform for further specialization.

Introducing technology-oriented programs at WVPU is strategically aligned with its key markets and ensures that students are equipped with the skills and competencies demanded by today's job markets. With the increasing relevance of STEM and data-related disciplines, these programs position WVPU at the forefront of future workplace trends, where digital proficiency is essential across industries and functions. This initiative modernizes WVPU's academic offerings by leveraging Webster University's decades of excellence in IT education in the United States and around the world and enhancing its reputation for producing leaders in business, politics, and society. By expanding into this critical area, WVPU aims to cultivate the next generation of computer science and technology experts among its future alumni. WVPU plans to welcome its first Computer Science students in Fall 2025.

Growth of Business & Management department

As part of its growing success and investment in research, WVPU added two young researchers with bright futures to the Business and Management department. After an extensive and highly competitive international search, the university hired Vitaliano Barberio and Boris Fisera to fill the positions of Assistant Professor of Digital Business and Assistant Professor of Economics respectively. Dr. Barberio, who holds a PhD in Management Science from the University of Bologna, has held positions as Researcher and Senior Research Associate at the Vienna University of Economics and Business and is a part-time post-doc researcher at the Institute of Management and Organization at the University of Lugano, Switzerland. Dr. Fisera, who holds a PhD in Finance and Banking from the University of Economics in Bratislava and has held positions at both the Slovak and Czech Academy of Sciences is also undertaking a second doctorate in Economics and Finance at Charles University. The two new assistant professors join a team

of high quality and proficiently published experts, further strengthening the research output and trajectory of the department.

Approach to the use of Artificial Intelligence

With the beginning of the new academic year in September 2023, the university recognized that new generative AI tools such as ChatGPT were becoming widely and easily available creating new opportunities for research and creativity, but also strengthening the temptation to cheat, plagiarize or pass on as one's own the output of such tools. Such tools may seem like great research assistants, but the underlying technology tends to construct sentences that on one hand are coherent and useful, but often contain false sources or claims of fact – a dead giveaway for cheating - or are structurally biased, a dead giveaway for not thinking. In reviewing the risks and rewards associated with AI use, the university decided to place academic freedom above all else allowing instructors to define fair use and set limits in their classes with the overarching rule that any use of AI generated information needs to be cited properly. As part of concerted education effort, the use of AI tools (actual and ethical) was integrated into all student orientations and workshops and incorporated into all syllabi and every semester, the university updates its guidance on the use of AI tools to students. Furthermore, to best keep track of all the myriad of possibilities arising from easy access to AI tools, the university invited all students to make further recommendations or comment on the university's approach to AI through Student Government Association. Importantly, while the university did not ban the use of AI tools by students, it established clear guidelines that any use of any kind must be cited, even if it just about formulating ideas.

WVPU celebrates the Class of 2024

On May 18, Webster Vienna Private University conferred degrees upon more than 85 graduates during a commencement ceremony held at the historic Hofburg Imperial Palace. More than 450 faculty, staff, family members and friends gathered with a celebratory air to honor the accomplishments of the 2024 graduating class, representing nearly 40 countries. This year two students earned the honor of being valedictorians: Muriel Johanna Mrosik and Mackenzie Driscoll.

WVPU's Rector, Prof. Dr. Johannes Pollak, opened the ceremony with a welcome address, urging the graduates toward introspection and discovery. Nenad Pacek, founder and president of Global Success Advisors and EMEA Business Group, complimented the accomplishments of the 2024 graduating class as this year's commencement speaker. "I have learned there is no shortcut to success and no substitute for working hard. I have never ever met anyone successful who was lazy. Dream big, but big dreams tend not to come true unless you put a lot of effort, focus, attention and discipline into it. Positive mind-set is good, but has to be combined with work ethic," Pacek told the audience.

Stefano Cantini and Melanie Smith of the Vienna Chapter of the Webster University Alumni Association presented the Alumni Association Awards, along with Jeanette Miller, WVPU alumna and visiting faculty member and 2008 Bronwyn K. Mitterecker Alumni Awardee. This year's Bronwyn Awardee is Janina Mank. The Student Leadership Award was presented to Michael James Self. The recipients of the 2024 faculty awards were Franco Algieri and Suzanne Preston-Mroz (Diversity in Teaching) and Marco Bocchese and Andrea Gaal (Excellence in Teaching). Teachers of the Year awards went to Marco Bocchese (Faculty) and Ralph G. Schoellhammer (Adjunct Faculty). Rector Pollak, along with Academic Services Officer Maida Kojic-McAndrew, conferred the degrees of the graduating students, followed by a valedictorian address by Muriel Johanna Mrosik.

Janina Mank awarded 2024 Bronwyn K. Mitterecker Memorial Alumni Award

The 2024 Bronwyn Award was awarded to Janina Mank, a 2009 Webster Vienna graduate with a double degree in International Relations and Management. 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.

In the past 8 years, Janina has been active in multiple roles within the European Commission, focusing on development and humanitarian aid in the West African region. Her impressive career path within the Commission, starting Brussels and currently continuing in Abuja, Nigeria, is an inspiration for all, including our outgoing students wanting to help others. Apart from her crucial contribution to the European Commission, Janina also engages in volunteering. She participated in the projects of ICVolunteers as a conference reporter, where she informed the public on select presentations and panel discussions at the Trade&Aid Conference and the International Health Conference. Furthermore, she worked with TravelWorks in Costa Rica, helping at an orphanage and teaching English to high school children. Last but not least, Janina is a participant of our mentoring program, contributing her invaluable professional experience and skills to the Webster Community since 2014.

Analysis

Webster Vienna Private University's annual performance reveals significant strategic and operational accomplishments that have positively impacted its academic profile, student enrollment, financial stability, and institutional development. Enrollment figures have shown sustained and robust growth, particularly evident in the substantial increase in new degree-seeking students and marking the fourth consecutive year of positive enrollment trends. The university's high retention rate underscores its success in delivering quality education serves as an indication of its continually growing institutional reputation. This has likewise translated into a positive financial trajectory that while combined with a consistent pattern of enrollment growth continues to ensure WVPU's future financial viability and capacity to reinvest in academic excellence and infrastructure. Consistent and prudent fiscal management, effectively aligning increasing operational expenses with rising revenues, reflects WVPU's healthy financial practices leading to sustainable growth.

While the accreditation process successfully reaffirmed WVPU's standing in the Austrian and European higher education landscapes, demonstrating institutional adaptability and responsiveness, specific areas needed to be addressed, particularly enhanced roles for stakeholders, strengthened academic autonomy, student participation in governance, and quantitative targets for faculty research. By working to meet these requirements throughout reporting period, WVPU highlighted its commitment to continuous improvement and compliance with regulatory standards and its initial steps in developing a PhD program before the next re-accreditation application, a key strategic priority, aligns with national requirements and will further enhance WVPU's research capabilities and academic reputation. This approach is now fully embedded in all recruitment processes as witnessed by the university's appointment of new, research-active faculty reinforcing WVPU's competitive advantage in delivering cutting-edge, research-informed education.

In submitting a proposed Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Computer Science, took a major step toward its strategic goal of add programs in the domain of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). In so doing it aims to broaden the university's research and teaching profile, augment its prospective student base, and equip students with knowledge, skills, and competencies in fields that are economically vital and crucial for scientific and societal advancement. The new program proposal integrated expert comments on two previously proposed and withdrawn proposals. It now provides a strong foundation in computer science and offers the choice of two one-semester length tracks in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. It also addressed the experts' concerns regarding the interconnected criteria of funding, infrastructure, research, and staffing and implements a steering process and strategy to evaluate progress on an annual basis to ensure that goals are met.

In sum, WVPU's strategic actions and performance indicators clearly reflect a well-managed, forward-looking institution, positioned effectively for sustained growth, continued academic enhancement, and increased institutional prestige. The steps taken in the reporting period continue to build important forward looking trends. The substantial growth in new students serves as a strong sign for the academic and financial health of the organization. Meanwhile, the university's efforts to fulfill all re-accreditation conditions are in full swing and WVPU plans to fulfill all remaining conditions within the next academic year.

2 Governance structure & organization

The following governing bodies were active in the fiscal year 2023-2024:

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

- Dr. Elizabeth J. Stroble, Chancellor (until January 2024)
- Dr. Julian Z. Schuster, President
- Nancy Hellerud, J.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Richard Meyer, Chief Financial Officer (until January 2024)
- William Donovan, Chief Financial Officer (since January 2024)

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")

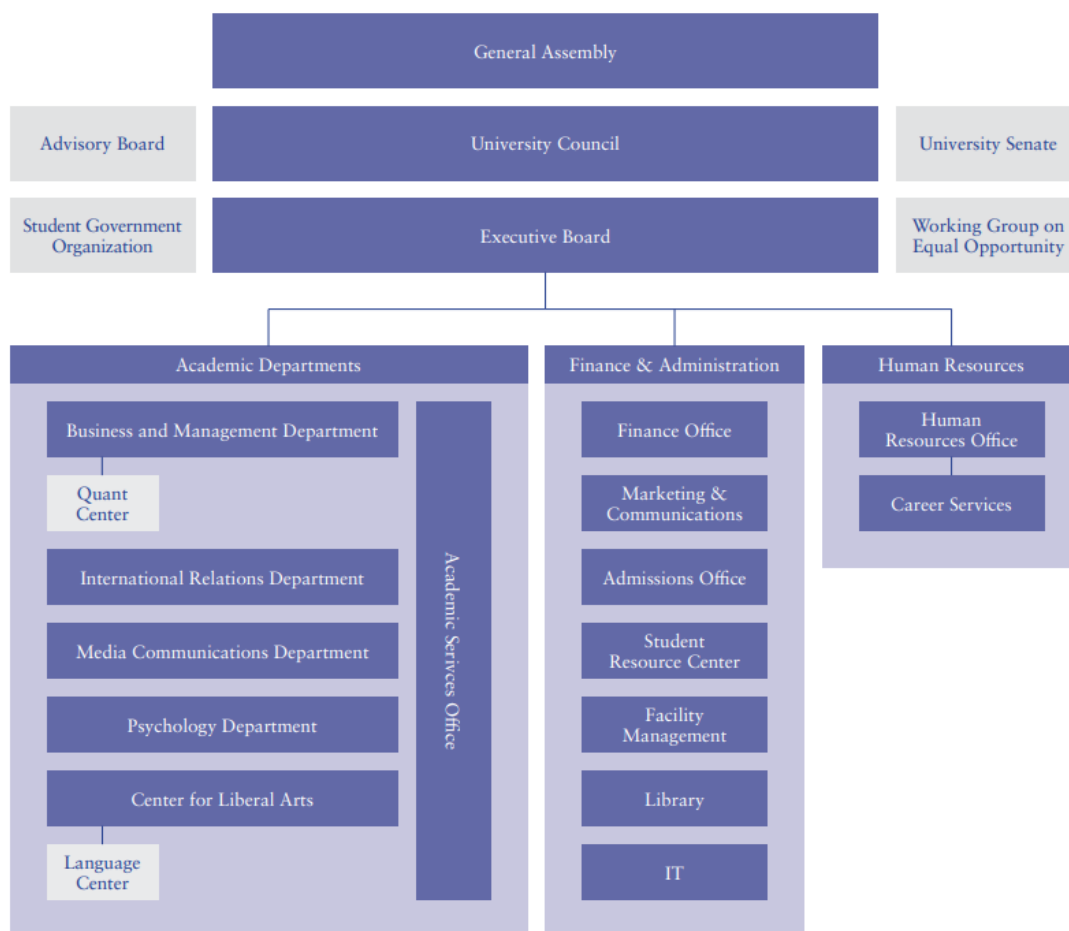
- Ryan Guffey, PhD, Director General for Global Campuses, Webster University
- William Lynch, MFA, Professor Emeritus from Webster University
- Richard Ryffel, Executive Vice President and Managing Director Wealth Management at the First Bank in St. Louis and
- Dr. Stefan Zapotocky, Chairman of the Board 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 2023-2024 the University Senate consisted of the following members representing the different constituencies:

- Dr. Jozef Batora, International Relations Department

University Senate Chair & Representative for the Constituency: Employed Faculty

- Mr. Tobias Gerber, Student Government Association (until January 2024)
- Ms. Oleksandra Chernysh, Student Government Association (as of January 2024)

Representative for the Constituency: Students

- Dr. Andrea Gaal, Business and Management Department

Representative for the Constituency: Adjunct Faculty

- Dr. Nikolaos Antonakakis, Business and Management Department

Representative for the Constituency: Employed Faculty

- Nermin Podžić, MA, Head of Marketing and Communications

Representative for the Constituency: Employed Staff

During the academic year 2023-2024, the **Advisory Board** consisted of 13 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. Markus Brenner, Managing Director of Brenner & Company
- Mag. Michael Edelsbrunner, Country Executive, Citibank Europe plc, Austria Branch
- Mag. Liane Hirner (CPA), Member of the Managing Board, Vienna Insurance Group
- Ing. Rudolf Kemler, Senior Partner, Roland Berger GmbH
- Prof. (FH) Dr. Christian Kreuzer, Managing Director, EY Advisory Services and Managing Director, Austrian Controller Institute
- Mag. Gernot Mittendorfer, MBA, Member of the Management Board, Erste Group Bank AG
- Mag. Patricia Neumann, CEO of Siemens AG Austria
- Philippe Roodhooft, Executive Vice President Middle East and Growth Projects, Borealis
- Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Mag. Friedrich Rödler, Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Erste Group Bank AG
- Biljana Weber, Senior Director Business Applications, Microsoft ERP and CRM
- 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

WVPU undertook several reviews of existing programs as well as began developing others throughout the reporting period.

Management (BA) and Business Administration (BSc)

As part of the university's ongoing quality assurance processes, the Senate began discussions to evaluate its three Management (BA) and one Business Administration (BSc) degree programs. In particular it began assessments of the need for separate programs, the selection, role and size of emphases. The Senate's findings and any related final decisions are expected in the next reporting period.

PhD program

In line with the university's new strategic direction, the WVPU has developed a plan to create a PhD program that leverages the strengths and research focus of its faculty, which was submitted as part of the reaccreditation process. A detailed project plan for the program's development was crafted in the first half of 2024, with the first meeting of the PhD Committee taking place in mid-April. During the meeting, the committee discussed aspects such as the program's budget, personnel needs, required expertise, interdisciplinary scope, and identified key adjustments necessary for the successful establishment of the doctoral program.

Computer Science

As part of its plans to introduce STEM programs, WVPU has submitted a proposal for accreditation of a Master of Science (MSc) in Computer Science. This program will enhance the university's research and teaching profile, expand its potential student base, and equip students with essential knowledge, skills, and competencies in fields that are vital for economic growth and crucial for scientific and societal progress. The curriculum offers a strong foundation in computer science, with two 30 ECTS emphasis tracks in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, enabling further specialization.

Approach to the use of Artificial Intelligence

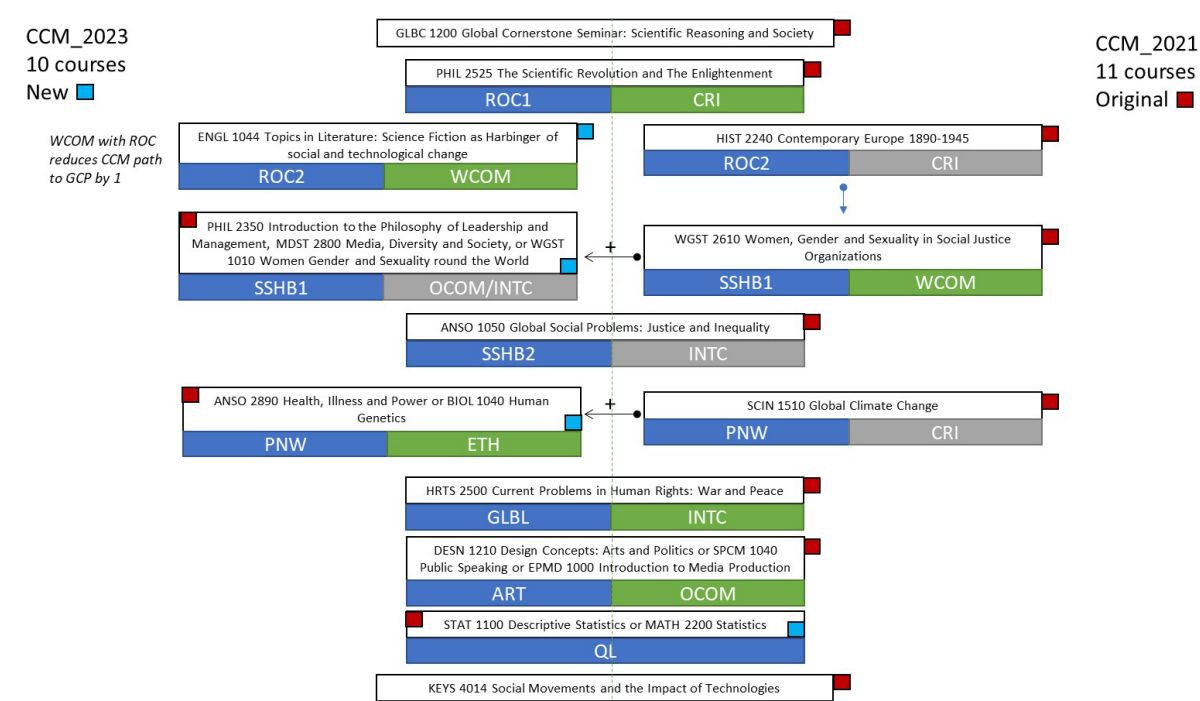
With the beginning of the new academic year in September 2023, the university recognized that new generative AI tools such as ChatGPT were becoming widely and easily available creating new opportunities for research and creativity, but also strengthening the temptation to cheat, plagiarize or pass on as one's own the output of such

tools. Such tools may seem like great research assistants, but the underlying technology tends to construct sentences that on one hand are coherent and useful, but often contain false sources or claims of fact – a dead giveaway for cheating - or are structurally biased, a dead giveaway for not thinking. In reviewing the risks and rewards associated with AI use, the university decided to place academic freedom above all else allowing instructors to define fair use and set limits in their classes with the overarching rule that any use of AI generated information needs to be cited properly. As part of concerted education effort, the use of AI tools (actual and ethical) was integrated into all student orientations and workshops and incorporated into all syllabi and every semester, the university updates its guidance on the use of AI tools to students. Furthermore, to best keep track of all the myriad of possibilities arising from easy access to AI tools, the university invited all students to make further recommendations or comment on the university’s approach to AI through Student Government Association. Importantly, while the university did not ban the use of AI tools by students, it established clear guidelines that any use of any kind must be cited, even if it just about formulating ideas.

Revisions to the Core Curriculum Module

All of the WVPU’s undergraduate programs build upon a Common Core of knowledge and skills with regard to scientific methods training (WVPU’s Methods Roadmap), global citizenship, and the relationship between science and social change. These 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. Originally introduced for students starting in Fall 2021, the Common Core Module (CCM) is reviewed annually and revised in January 2023 for implementation for the 2023/2024 period to introduce an alternative set of options for students while allowing an older students to opt-in to the newer CCM, referred to herein as CCM-2.

Figure 2: Common Core Module



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

WVPU offered in the 2023-2024 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
<p>Business Administration (BSc)</p> <p>Management (BA)</p> <p>Management with emphasis in International Business (BA)</p> <p>Management with emphasis in Marketing (BA)</p> <p>International Relations (BA)</p> <p>Media Communications (BA)</p> <p>Psychology (BA)</p> <p>Strategic Communication (BA)</p>	<p>Finance (MSc)</p> <p>Marketing (MSc)</p> <p>Master of Business Administration (MBA)</p> <p>International Relations (MA)</p> <p>Psychology with an emphasis in Counseling Psychology (MA)</p>

Each of the university's programs meets the knowledge, skills, and autonomy/responsibility standards of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)¹ and the respective Austrian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels VI² and VII³ 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

¹ 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>).

² See https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NQR_Infoblaetter_Deskriptoren6.pdf.

³ See https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NQR_Infoblaetter_Deskriptoren7.pdf.

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 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 212 regularly scheduled courses in the academic year 2023-2024. With average class sizes of 19 for undergraduates and 7 for graduates (see distributions below), and a student to overall faculty ratio of 5.7, WVPU is within the range of expectations and evidence of its USP of small classes.

Figure 3: Students per graduate course

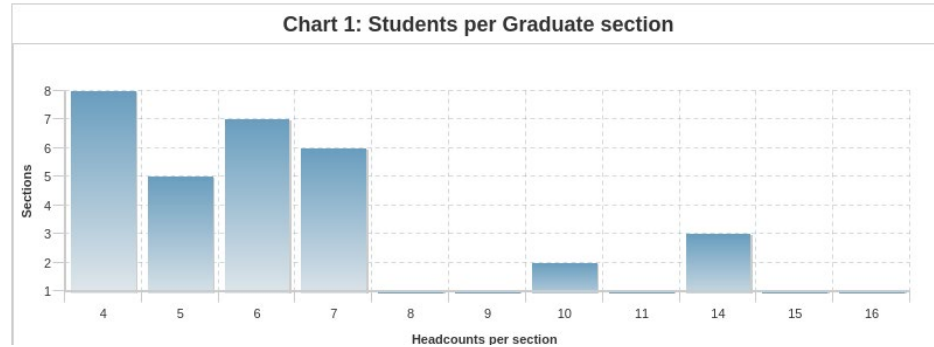
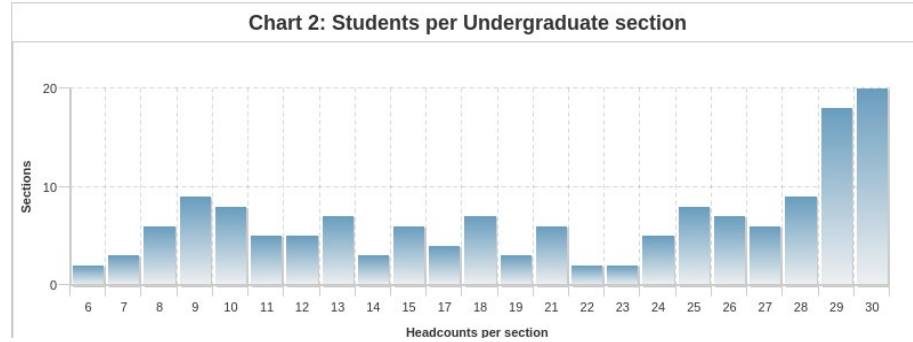


Figure 4: Students per undergraduate course



Another 12 courses were run as directed studies (similar to independent studies one-on-one with professors) by 10 faculty supervising 15 students excluding the university’s English preparatory program and its 35 students. Our employed faculty supervised 81 theses. 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.

67% of all courses by ECTS including thesis projects were taught by WVPU scientific employees (status-track faculty and lecturers). As shown in the table below, the overall ratio between employed scientific staff and adjunct faculty at WVPU has continued to improve compared to previous years, with a greater emphasis on permanent scientific staff.

SHARE OF COURSES (ECTS) TAUGHT BY EMPLOYED SCIENTIFIC STAFF AND ADJUNCT FACULTY IN 2023-2024					
	Overall	BM	IR	MEDC	PSYC
Employed Scientific Staff	67%	62.7%	80.2%	80.5%	63.8%
Adjunct Faculty	33%	37.3%	19.8%	19.5%	36.2%

Austrian private university law requires that permanent faculty cover all core subject areas (CSAs). The university has been undergoing reviews of programs and their core subject areas. For reporting purposes, 'covered' means that a permanent faculty member either teach or supervise at least one occurrence / section of a course, thereby covering the subject matter in the specific academic year. As presented below 'offered' refers to the number of distinct courses classified as core subject areas in a department's respective study plans. 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	5	6
Psychology	10	15

As the above table indicates, employed faculty cover almost all of the CSAs in its major programs with a notable dearth in the Psychology department where consistently lecturing adjunct faculty covered a number of CSAs. This is largely due to personnel departures. Recruitment processes are open to fill positions in Psychology and the core subject areas should be fully covered within the next two academic years. The most significant 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 and by consolidating the processes behind the development and delivery of course contents. Nevertheless, 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. The university plans to take up reviews of all of its programs in the next academic year as part of its internal quality management procedures. Following the Senate's review and recommendations, the university plans to revise its study plans and core subject areas accordingly.

In addition to classroom instruction, students receive robust support through co-curricular and extracurricular activities led by faculty and institutional partners. Many courses feature prestigious guest speakers, including leading scholars, corporate CEOs, and diplomats. Students also benefit from experiential learning opportunities, including visits to multinational corporate headquarters, international organizations like the United Nations and Vienna-Based International Organizations (VBOs), and participation in high-level meetings at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). These immersive experiences, combined with our academic rigor, equip our students with the knowledge, connections, and skills needed to thrive in a global, ever-evolving landscape.

Combining classroom learning with co-curricular activities, WVPU welcomed students from across the U.S. and around the world in Vienna In summer 2023 for a transformative experience in Music Cognition, led by Professor Jutta Street of Campbell University and Dr. Scott Edwards. The program explored the profound impact of music on the mind and behavior, utilizing WVPU's Cognitive & Affective Neuroscience and Behavior Lab (CanBeLab). Alongside a course on sexuality and sexual behavior in cultural contexts, these psychology-based programs offered students hands-on experience in fields such as music perception, sexual attitudes, and cultural evolution. The Music Cognition package included courses like *PSYC 2000: Music Cognition and Emotion* and an accompanying lab (*PSYC 3875*), complemented by visits to the Vienna State Opera, classical concerts, and renowned venues like Haus der Musik and Porgy and Bess. Meanwhile, the "Sex in the City" package engaged students with topics of human sexuality, reproductive health, and sexual behavior through courses such as *PSYC 4400: Human Sexuality* and the lab course *PSYC 3875*. This program was enriched with visits to sexually oriented museums and historical tours of Vienna's notable figures. For music enthusiasts, the "Vienna: Capital of Music" package, designed for non-music majors, provided an exploration of Vienna's musical legacy, spanning classical to contemporary genres, through courses like *MUSC 1070* and *MUSC 1071*, paired with excursions to museums and concert venues. Each package

offered a blend of academic rigor and immersive cultural experiences, fostering an environment where students could deepen their understanding of their chosen fields through both scholarly and real-world perspectives.

WVPU offers a range of student-focused programs designed to enhance opportunities for graduates as they embark on their careers. One such initiative is the Mentoring Program "Dare to Grow Together", which connects students nearing graduation with accomplished alumni from around the globe. The 2023–2024 edition of the program ran from October to May, providing participants with valuable career guidance, knowledge enhancement, and skill-building to achieve their professional aspirations. Additionally, career lunches with various companies facilitated internship opportunities for students. As part of the Careers in International Relations course - a core element of the new certificate in Diplomacy and International Organizations - representatives from MASF, UNODC, and international NGOs shared insights into possible career paths during spring 2024.

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 84 faculty members (16 permanent faculty members and 68 adjunct lecturers) across 4 departments and 13 accredited degree programs educated 536 students on campus through 212 publicly scheduled courses awarding more than 20,300 ECTS in the 2023-2024 period. In addition, 19 students took 15 independent or directed studies under the direct supervision of 10 faculty (including adjuncts) while 79 students (15 graduate and 64 undergraduate) undertook theses supervised by 17 permanent faculty members.

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 536 students who enrolled in classes on campus in 2023-2024, 73% were undergraduates and 14% were graduates. More than half of all WVPU degree seeking students (58%) were enrolled in one of four undergraduate or three graduate programs in the areas of Business and Management. Another 19% were seeking degrees in International Relations, 15% in Psychology, and 6% in Strategic Communication or Media Communications.

Residential students at WVPU in 2023 – 2024 [comparative figures from the previous year in brackets]:

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

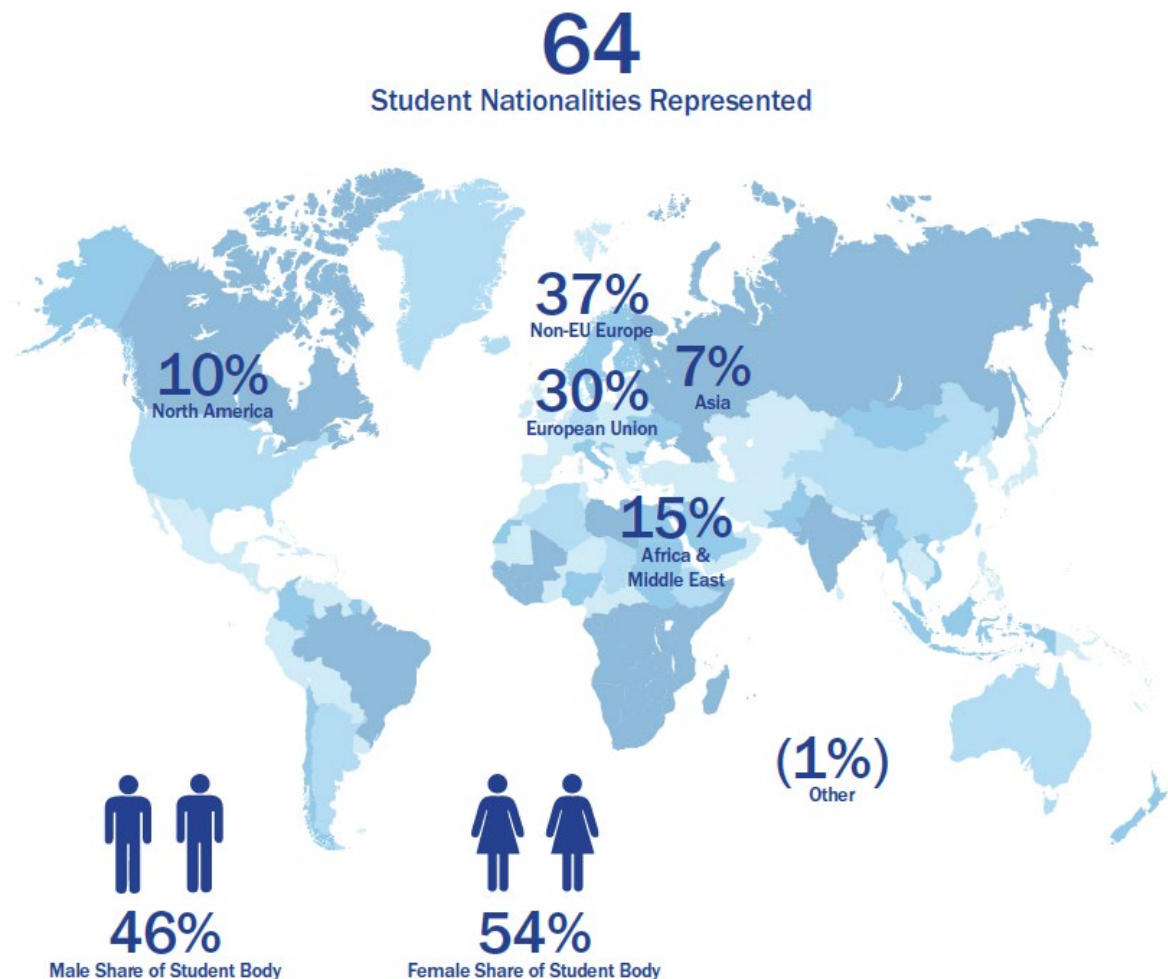
Undergraduate Programs/Students	
Degree Program	Head Count
Business Administration (BSc)	102
Management (BA)	17
Management with emphasis in International Business (BA)	55
Management with emphasis in Marketing (BA)	37
International Relations (BA)	74
Media Communications (BA)	5
Strategic Communications (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. Following a pandemic year that prevented the attendance of any study abroad students, WVPU was able to welcome 76 students from across Webster University's global network and Erasmus.

WVPU also offers one of the most diverse student bodies that can be found at any university. The 2023-2024 student body brought together students from 65 countries around the world, speaking 48 languages. Women constituted 54% 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 84 faculty members (16 permanent faculty members and 68 adjunct lecturers) across 4 departments and 13 accredited degree programs educated 536 students on campus through 212 publicly scheduled courses awarding more than 20,300 ECTS in the 2023-2024 period. In addition, 19 students took 15 independent or directed studies under the direct supervision of 10 faculty (including adjuncts) while 79 students (15 graduate and 64 undergraduate) undertook theses supervised by 17 permanent faculty members.

With average class sizes of 19 for undergraduates and 7 for graduates, and a student to overall faculty ratio of 5.7, 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 2023-2024, undergraduate students successfully completed their studies in 48 months on average (in previous reporting period 45). Graduate students finished their programs in 32 months on average (previous year: 33 months).

3.2.5 Drop-out-rate

During the academic year 2023-2024 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 2023-2024 [comparative figures from the previous year in brackets]

Dropouts	UG	GRAD	ALL
Stopped	35* [30]	7 [11]	42 [41]
Dismissed	3 [4]	1 [1]	4 [5]
Total Students	392 [359]	73 [78]	465 [437]
Drop-Out-Rate in %	9 [9]	11 [15]	10 [11]

* including 4 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.

In 2023-2024, WVPU hosted 75 graduate and undergraduate students, and an additional 3 through the ERASMUS+ program. Of the 78 students, 3 came from other Europe-based institutions, 25 from our Webster campus in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and the remaining from different institutions across the United States. Seven WVPU students experienced a semester abroad: for the first time, four undergraduate students spent the fall semester at Obirin University in Tokyo, two students went to our Webster campus in Geneva, Switzerland, while one other undergraduate student took the semester to experience student life at Webster's main campus in St. Louis, Missouri.

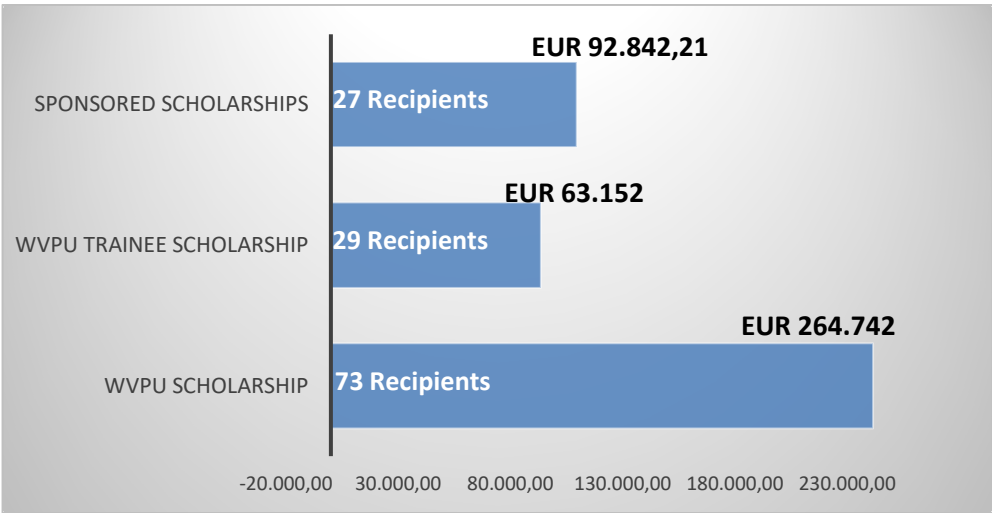
3.2.7 Scholarships granted or arranged by WVPU

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 2023-2024, 134 students benefitted from the extensive scholarship program. In total, 26% of WVPU's entire student body were supported financially with scholarships [last year, 139 students, 25% respectively]. The total

amount of scholarships awarded to the students including WVPU Training, WVPU Partial and sponsored scholarships was 429.362,70 euros.

Figure 7: Scholarship recipients

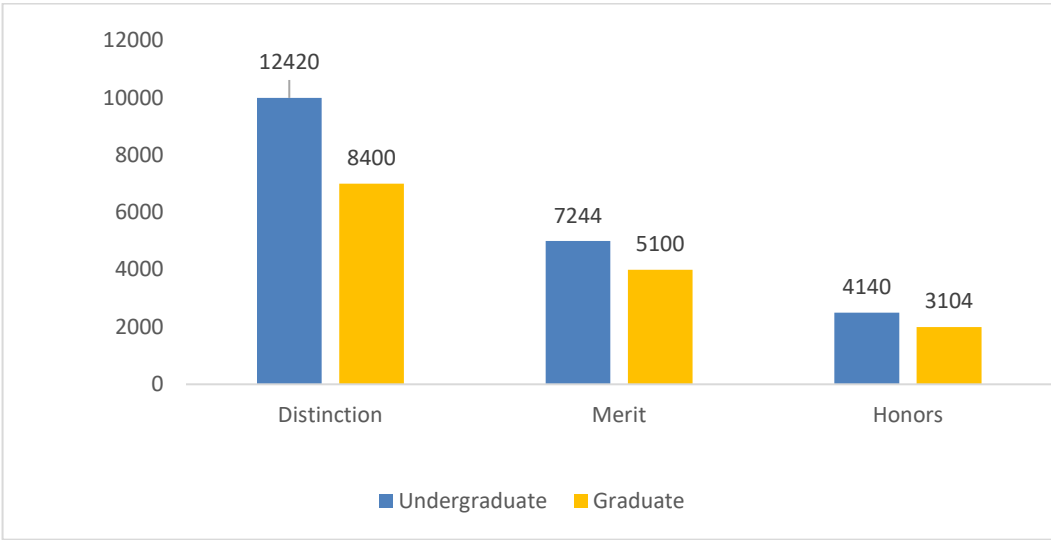


These scholarship opportunities play an important role in the recruitment of new students to WVPU. All scholarships are awarded based on exceptional academic achievement and financial need. Scholarship students must prove continuous academic success to continue in the scholarship program until they complete 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 1.110,00 and EUR 4.440,00 while for graduate students, the discount is between EUR 2.086,00 and EUR 3.912,00 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 2023-2024



- 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 2023-24 Borealis and the City of Vienna covered 40% to 100% of the tuition fee for 13 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 2023-24 WVPU credited the Second-Degree Tuition Grant to 12 students (since August 2020 the eligible student receives a graduate tuition fee discount of 20%). 18 students received the legacy grant (5% or 10% of the tuition fee).

On top of the 134 students receiving scholarships, 21 students (4.2 % of the total student body) financed their tuition fees with US annual state loans and VA benefits in the total amount of EUR 270.174,93.

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 2024-25, full-time students taking between 12 and 18 ECTS per semester were charged a "flat fee" of EUR 11.739,00 per semester. Any additional credits beyond that equaled EUR 740 per credit.

Part-time students (up to 22 ECTS per semester) as well as students during the optional summer term paid EUR 2.220 per course in tuition.

The total tuition fee for a 120-credit bachelor's degree course ranged between EUR 70.434 and EUR 88.800, 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 2.550 (EUR 850 for 3 ECTS)
- The estimated total program fee for the Master in Finance, Marketing, International Relations and the MBA (excluding prerequisites) equaled EUR 30,600 for 36 ECTS.
- The estimated total program fee for the MA in Psychology equaled EUR 40,800 for 48 ECTS.

3.3 Faculty and staff

3.3.1 Major developments and analysis

WVPU continued to modernize human resources operations and attracting internationally oriented professionals. The university's diverse, international roster of personnel and externally contracted lecturers and visiting professors requires that it provides a constructive, supportive work environment to perform and excel. 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 and focusing on research activities. The university's personnel plan for the next years foresees 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 2023-2024, WVPU employed 18 [previous year 19] permanent faculty, all with an employment level of 100%. In addition to the faculty, WVPU employed 9 scientific support staff. Scientific staff attended numerous external and internal professional development activities respective to their fields.

3.3.3 External scientific staff

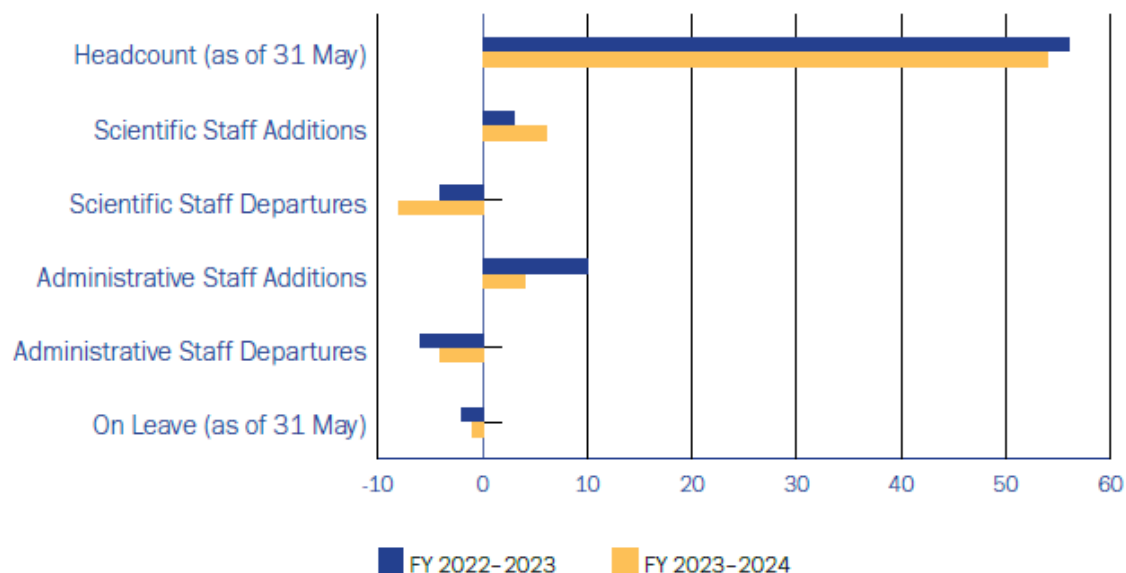
External lecturers play an important role in all universities and WVPU relies on them to bring up-to-date real-life experience into the classroom. Often beneficiaries of annual teaching excellence awards decided by the students, their quality and commitment are some of the most essential resources for the success of the university. During the academic year 2023-2024, WVPU employed 68 external lecturers also called adjunct faculty members. 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 2023-2024

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 2023-2024 period, WVPU employed 56 individuals (Full-Time Equivalent 49.2) plus one employee on maternity leave. This compares to 56 individuals (Full-Time Equivalent 50.27) plus three employees on maternity leave at the close of the previous year. The university hired 10 new employees in the fiscal year from June 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024, adding 6 scientific staff, including Faculty and Scientific Support Staff (5 female and 1 male) and 4 administrative staff (2 female, 2 male). In keeping to our commitment to deliver the state-of-the-art in our classrooms, we also contracted 68 qualified experts from across the public and private sectors to teach courses throughout the year.

As with any thriving environment, we also had to bid farewell to twelve of our employees who took on opportunities elsewhere, among which included four administrative (3 female and 1 male) and eight scientific staff positions (5 Faculty appointments, 3 Scientific Support Staff; 3 female, 5 male).

Figure 9: Comparison of employment (fiscal years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024)



Overview of all entries and exits at WVPU during the academic year 2023-2024:

ENTRIES	
Administrative Staff	
Student Resource Center Officer	June 19, 2023
Administrative Assistant	January 8, 2024
Junior Administrative Assistant	January 8, 2024
Junior IT Officer	February 1, 2024
Scientific Staff	
University Counselor and Head of Counseling Services	September 4, 2023
Research Assistant, B&M Dep (limited contract for project assignment)	September 4, 2023
English for Academic Purposes Instructor (temporary position)	September 4, 2023
Pre-doc/Post-doc Researcher, B&M Dep (limited contract for project assignment)	November 1, 2023
Faculty	
Assistant Professor of Counseling Psychology Didem	September 1, 2023
Assistant Professor of Economics Boris	April 1, 2024

EXITS	
Administrative Staff	
Project Support Officer	October 15, 2023
Head of Rector's Office	November 30, 2023
IT System Engineer	January 5, 2024
Admissions Officer (maternity leave replacement)	April 5, 2024

Scientific Staff	
English for Academic Purposes Instructor	June 1, 2023
Language Center Coordinator	June 15, 2023
Language Center Tutor	June 30, 2023
Faculty	
Assistant Professor of Second Language Studies	June 1, 2023
Assistant Professor of Economics	July 4, 2023
Assistant Professor of Accounting	August 31, 2023
Lecturer in Political Science	December 31, 2023
Full Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience & Head of PSY Department	March 31, 2024

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).

The recruitment procedure for an Assistant Professor of Economics started in September 2023; the faculty member was hired in April 2024.

Appendix 2 contains copies of the job announcement which were distributed electronically in relevant media.

3.3.6 Measures taken to support young academics and staff development

In recent years, WVPU has continued to implement measures aimed at supporting academic excellence and promoting staff development. A regularly budgeted program for professional development ensures equal allocation per individual. This initiative is complemented by efforts to disseminate opportunities for staff and faculty development, as well as mobility through Erasmus+. Recognizing mobility as a key aspect of professional growth, the university also leverages external funding, such as Webster's Leif J. Sverdrup Global Teaching Fellowship, to encourage young academics to participate in mobility programs.

On the administrative side, bi-annual feedback meetings between supervisors and staff have become a regular practice. To address planning and organization of research and teaching activities more effectively, the university holds direct performance agreement discussions with individual faculty members. This approach allows for tailored guidance to faculty members, particularly in prioritizing their activities and setting realistic publication goals as part of a structured pathway toward securing prestigious early-stage grants.

Faculty performance in the classroom is closely monitored through an online student course evaluation system. This comprehensive, anonymous, and digital system supplies critical feedback from students, which is invaluable for ensuring the quality of courses and improving programs. Students complete the evaluations at the conclusion of each course, and the results are made accessible to every faculty member. Department heads routinely review these evaluations to inform decisions related to assessment, course assignments, and the re-hiring of external faculty. These evaluations also play a significant role in curricular planning, faculty performance assessments, and the development of both short-term and long-term academic programs.

In addition to the standard course evaluation system, WVPU uses a new evaluation specifically for first-time instructors. Conducted during the third week of their initial course, this early evaluation provides instructors with actionable feedback and specific suggestions for improving their teaching methods or course content for the remainder 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 2023-2024, this distinction was awarded to two colleagues, namely Marco Bocchese,

Assistant Professor of International Relations and Ralph G. Schoellhammer, a member of the adjunct faculty. Additionally, the Senate selects a colleague based on his/her/their course evaluations and regarding creativity and effectiveness in teaching. The Excellence in Teaching award was presented to Marco Bocchese, Assistant Professor of International Relations and adjunct faculty member Andrea Gaal.

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 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 a guided tour of the Austrian Parliament for students, staff, faculty and alumni with a special focus on the accomplishments of women in parliament highlighted WVPU's efforts to engage the community on these important issues.

Further, 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. At the commencement ceremony of this reported period, WVPU again specifically awarded faculty who most successfully integrate diversity in their teaching. This year's awards went to faculty member Franco Algeri, Assistant Professor of International Relations and Suzanne Preston-Mroz, an adjunct faculty member in the Psychology 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.

The following courses are specifically dedicated to or fully integrate related research:

- **WGST 1010/50 Women, Gender and Sexuality Around the World (FA23):** This course explores global gender equality, women's rights, and feminist theory, using multimedia resources to examine gender roles, intersectionality, societal power dynamics, and feminist movements across historical and cultural contexts.
- **ANSO 1050/50 Global Social Problems (FA23 and SP24):** This course examines global inequalities, focusing on race, class, and gender's impact on life chances. It emphasizes gender-based social issues, discrimination, feminist perspectives, and activist efforts, offering a comprehensive view of global gender disparities and equality.

- **ANSO 2890/50 Health, Illness, and Power (FA23 and SP24):** This course examines health experiences within power structures, focusing on gender-based inequalities in maternal health, reproductive rights, and healthcare access for marginalized communities. It emphasizes gendered power dynamics in healthcare and reproductive technologies through a multidisciplinary lens.
- **MNGT 3470/50 Women in Management (SU23):** This course critically examines challenges faced by women in leadership, blending historical context, personal narratives, and contemporary analysis. It explores systemic barriers and effective leadership strategies to help women succeed in management.
- **KEYS 4014/50 Social Movements and the Impact of Technologies (SP24):** This course explores social movements with a focus on gender equality and feminist activism, examining the role of technology in mobilizing feminist causes. It emphasizes digital activism's impact on women's rights movements and the influence of globalization on transnational advocacy.
- **INTL 2610 Advocacy, NGOs and Civil Society** – In this course, the focus on the role of NGOs and advocacy underscores the importance of championing gender and diversity issues as critical components of sustainable development and humanitarian practices. By integrating gender equality into its frameworks, the course prepares students to navigate and address the complexities of inclusivity in global contexts.
- **HRTS 2500 Topics in Human Rights: Current Problems in Human Rights: Migration & Citizenship** - By integrating a gender lens into its examination of migration, statelessness, and human rights violations, the course equips students to understand and address the unique challenges faced by women and gender-diverse individuals in these contexts.
- **INTL 2390 Politics of International Economic Relations : concepts, imbalances and the EU's international development policy** - This course explores how economic growth, development policies, and gender-inclusive initiatives shape economic development, combining theory and practical approaches to promote fairer global economic systems.

Equally, the university offered a special summer program on sexuality and sexual behavior in cultural contexts. This psychology-based "Sex in the City" program engaged students with topics of human sexuality, reproductive health, and sexual behavior through courses such as PSYC 4400: Human Sexuality and the lab course PSYC 3875. The courses were enriched with visits to sexually oriented museums and historical tours of Vienna's notable figures.

New faculty is obliged to commit to WVPU's goals and values regarding gender equality and inclusion. To this end, they are asked to provide a statement in which they describe their commitment to diversity and contribution to an inclusive professional environment. Regarding third-party funded research projects, faculty is aware of including gender dimensions into their project as it is a request of most of the smaller and larger funding agencies. As a consequence, we expect that in future, the majority of research projects and questions will touch aspects of gender, diversity and equality.

In spring 2024, WVPU introduced an adapted Gender Equality Plan following the recommended structure of Horizon Europe. WVPU is committed to raise the number of female share among the faculty body. Workshops on unconscious biases in employing processes for people in leadership and decision-making positions as for members in search committees shall help to further reduce prejudices. Additionally, we will install the "European Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers" as published by EURAXESS to follow state-of-art European standards in hiring processes.

A survey among staff and faculty in spring 2025 on measuring the effectiveness of WVPU's offerings on work-life balance (e.g. Home Office, FlexTime, Work from Anywhere, Part-time option) shall help to improve purposefully family friendliness of WVPU. Doing so, we intend to become even more attractive to female employees and for employees with care-obligations in general. This shall eventually raise our female share among the faculty body as within leadership and decision-making positions.

4 Funding and resources

4.1 Presentation of current financial management

WVPU's financial turnaround since 2016 continues. The senior management has built a sustainable operation for years to come. The university's fiscal year, which began on June 1, 2023 and ended on May 31, 2024 was again a financial success. Revenue increased by 11% and profits by 30% compared to the last fiscal year.

Webster Vienna Private University (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 Comfort Letter issued by Webster University, St. Louis, USA, on September 26, 2024 (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 2025, so there is no legal basis for over-indebtedness under insolvency law.

The balance sheet and income statement for 2023-2024 are attached as Appendix 4.

5 Research

5.1 Major developments and analysis

In accordance with the university's internal quality assurance guidelines, continuous monitoring of faculty research activities has been implemented. This assessment is based on the individual performance agreements each faculty member signs with the Office of the Rector. While the overall research output has been satisfactory in both quantity and quality, WVPU still falls short in attracting successful scientific grants. Specifically, younger faculty members are required to build a strong publication foundation before submitting research proposals, while established researchers now have access to significantly enhanced research support services. Additionally, WVPU has introduced measures to foster a robust research culture within the institution.

5.2 Research of the institution

The integration of research and teaching at WVPU also was observable in our faculty's scholarly achievements. For the academic year 2023-2024, our faculty received 5 grants applications for just over €80,000, delivered 16 full papers at renowned academic conferences and chaired panels or presented research at an additional 11, published 38 scholarly works including 18 peer-reviewed journal articles, 8 scholarly book chapters, 2 books, and 4 conference proceedings alongside 9 reviews, magazine and newspaper articles.

17
Professors
& Lecturers

38
Scholarly
Publications

27
Conference Papers
or Presentations

WVPU faculty continued to be recognized internationally for their scholarly work. Many served as reviewers or editors of international scholarly journals such as European Journal of Information Systems (EJIS), European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS), Journal of Media Ethics, European Journal of International Relations, Global Studies Quarterly just to name a few. Others served as reviewers for granting institutions such as Foundation for Science and Technology Portugal (FCT) or as External Assessor at King's College London. WVPU faculty regularly to publish in leading journals including, inter alia, International Journal of Strategic Communication, New Media and Society, Applied Economic Letters, Communication Biology, Behavior Research Methods, European Security as well as through publishing houses Routledge, Springer and Nomos.

Some highlights of their achievements during the academic year 2023-2024 include:

- Jozef Bátora, Professor of International Relations, edited a collective study together with his colleague John Erik Fossum (University of Oslo) on "Differentiation and Dominance in Europe's Poly-Crises"

(Routledge). The book discusses the relationship between differentiation and domination in the EU in relation to recent crisis, most of all COVID19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The international and interdisciplinary team of authors shed light on crisis management, international organizations, and EU politics from an academic point of view. The publication is another example of WVPU's strong international research cooperation.

- Eva Zedlacher, assistant professor for Business and Management, continued successfully her three-party funded project “Four is More?” about the “four-day week” in Lower Austria. Together with her Co-Principal Investigator Dr. Martina Hartner-Tiefenthaler (TU Wien) and her research assistant Jana Mikats, she hosted a first “Vernetzungstreffen” on 4th April 2024. Here, representatives of all participating companies and other stakeholders (including HR professionals, media, Chamber of labour, students, researchers) were invited to a presentation of the first results and a networking dinner at WVPU facilities. Findings from the first wave survey in eleven companies (n=471) suggest that, overall, the introduction of the four-days-workweek via compressed working schedules was considered beneficial by employees. However, mostly blue-collar workers find compressed working hours to benefit their private and professional lives, whereas white-collar workers often struggle with time pressure and unfinished work in the shortened workweek. Moreover, the analysis of 34 in-depth interviews with blue-collar fathers indicates that fathers’ temporal strategies in a compressed work week increase existing gender inequalities and the unequal division of care-work in families.
- Nikolaos Antonakakis, Professor of Economics, and Workie Menbere, Associate Professor of Finance, published a paper addressing the question “Is there an Ageing Population Kuznets Curve?” in the renowned journal “Applied Economic Letters”. It is the first study that quantifies the aging population thresholds and their negative effects on population growth and productivity in advanced economies. Their key findings show that a) aging populations challenge labor markets as the state social insurance system, especially in advanced economies, and b) economic growth is negatively impacted when the population age hits a certain ratio among the different age groups within a society.
- Anthony Löwstedt, Assistant Professor of Media Communications, published together with WVPU student Natalia Hatarova a paper on “Transcultural and Transnational Communication Principles? Suggestions for Minimum and Maximum Values as a Common Ground”. Based on the analysis of different inclusivism communication values from different times and regions of the world, they propose in this paper seven principles that could serve as common grounds for future media regulations on common grounds. This publication deserves also an emphasis as a research highlight because it shows the support of WVPU professors of aspiring and talented WVPU students and their academic efforts.
- Bradley Wiggins, Associate Professor of Media Communications, advanced the understanding of online urban legends by examining *The Backrooms*, a popular internet narrative that reflects contemporary socio-cultural anxieties. In an article in *New Media & Society*, Dr. Wiggins explores the narrative construction of *The Backrooms*, analyzing why it resonates with online audiences and how its participatory nature contributes to its widespread appeal. By focusing on 16 videos produced by Kane Parsons, the study provides a sequential deconstruction of the narrative elements within the fictional world of *The Backrooms*, offering insights into its diegetic structure. In parallel, a semiotic analysis presents *The Backrooms* as an interconnected narrative, revealing how liminality—alongside themes such as video games, nostalgia, postmodern thought, and vaporwave aesthetics—creates a unique digital chronotope. The findings offer a deeper understanding of how liminal spaces function within *The Backrooms*, and how the elements of play and gaming are essential to its narrative construction, contributing to broader discussions on digital storytelling and online mythmaking. Due to his impactful research, Dr. Wiggins was invited to join the Journal’s editorial Board in April. The Journal *New Media & Society* is one of the leading journals in Communications in the SCOPUS ranking.

Appendix 5 (Faculty Research Activities and Publications for 2023-2024) lists the research output of all our permanent faculty during the academic year 2023-2024.

5.3 Research grants and external research funding

In the academic year 2023-2024, research faculty at WVPU have submitted six grant applications for more than TEUR 785,-. In June 2023, the AK Niederösterreich approved the project “Four is More?” by Assistant Professor Eva Zedlacher (PI) in cooperation with Dr. Martina Hartner-Tiefenthaler (TU Wien, Co-PI) with a total amount of almost EUR 80,000,-. The prolongation with a funding sum of EUR 19,749,- was approved in July 2024 as was the sub-project “No time for care?”, funded by the Jubiläumsfond der Stadt Wien with EUR 20,000,-, by Dr. Jana Mikats who was employed in the “Four is More” project. Another EUR 7,737 was granted by the Project Management Institute in Australia as third 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 – including the two confirmations in July 2024, EUR 127,218, - of funding.

In addition, EUR 18,107.20,- were granted by the Erasmus+ program KA 131 for the promotion of mobility of our academic and administrative staff for teaching and training purposes. This is an increase of about EUR 10.000. - compared to the previous two years. This increase is due to the raising interest in the mobility by both staff and faculty.

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 the Rector. This internal approval process is documented and signed by all stakeholders at each step through the WVPU Proposal Approval Form. The by the AY 2022-2023 introduced step of a Research Seminar where faculty presents their research proposals before internal and external peers proved so far successful in terms of feedback and qualitative input.

6 National and international cooperation

WVPU is dedicated to fostering and expanding its collaboration with national and international partners across higher education, industry, government, and society. This commitment extends to promoting student and staff mobility, facilitating internships, and integrating expert practitioners into classroom learning. Through its faculty, Advisory Board, and Alumni Association, WVPU actively engages with academic institutions, businesses, and organizations both locally and globally to host seminars, conferences, and collaborative projects, among other enriching activities.

Central to WVPU’s mission is its pursuit of research partnerships and the promotion of knowledge transfer, which enhances the university’s scholarly footprint. Internationalization is a core aspect of WVPU’s mission to provide a globally oriented education, reflected in its history and embedded in its operations and values.

WVPU’s Internationalization Objectives:

- Promote cross-border mobility and cooperation in education and training

WVPU supports international partnerships, networks, and opportunities for student, faculty, and staff exchanges. By deepening existing collaborations and forming sustainable new partnerships with academic institutions, businesses, and governmental or non-governmental organizations, WVPU opens doors to greater global outreach, visibility, and reputation. High-quality, personalized services ensure the integration of incoming students into academic and social activities, while outgoing participants are supported in their educational and cultural experiences abroad.

- Overcome socio-economic and international barriers while fostering an inclusive and innovation-driven approach to global education

WVPU is committed to diversity and inclusion, seeking to widen participation in global education through targeted outreach programs, equitable recruitment policies, and financial assistance that reduces barriers to entry, progression, and mobility. These efforts ensure that international opportunities are accessible to all.

- Support the automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and learning periods abroad

By adhering to national qualification frameworks and the standards of the Bologna Process, WVPU ensures transparency, consistency, and reduced barriers to mutual recognition of academic credentials. Continuous modernization and quality improvements in academic services further align the university's programs with international benchmarks.

WVPU's proactive approach to partnerships and internationalization reflects its dedication to equipping students, faculty, and staff with global opportunities while enhancing the institution's impact and reputation worldwide.

6.1 Research cooperation

In the academic year 2023-2024, 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 variety of research projects with national and international universities and research institutions, cultivating personal relationships and collaborative networks that span across countries and continents. The depth and breadth of these collaborations are detailed in Appendix 6 "National and International Cooperation," showcasing WVPU's growing research community.

For example: Dr. Boris Fišera, who joined the WVPU faculty body in the Business & Management Department in March 2024, collaborates in several projects with colleagues of the Slovak Academy of Science. Dr. Didem Kepir-Sávolý, our new Assistant Professor in the Psychology Department since 2023, is collaborating on several projects and research articles with Dr. Selen Demirtas Zorbaz from the University of Ankara on career development and perspectives of pupils and students.

The university's faculty members engaged in several projects that bridge the gap between academia and practical application, such as Professor Pernille Eskerod's ongoing work on stakeholder engagement in infrastructure projects via social media, in collaboration with the University of Sydney. Prof. Maria Madlberger submitted as Co-PI in cooperation with Run Niu (Webster University St. Louis) and Dr. Ying Fan (University of Colorado Spring) a Cisco grant on the "Leveraging Blockchain Technology to Transform Supply Chain Management: Adoption, Implementation, and Impact."

Assistant Professor Eva Zedlacher cooperated in her third-party funded project "Four is More?" with Martina Hartner-Tiefenthaler (TU Wien), and thus continued an already successful collaboration. Part of this project included also the collaboration with non-academic stakeholder that are business and companies in Lower Austria and Styria on the implication and effects of the Four-Day Week. Jana Mikats, who finished her PhD in summer 2024, was hired as a research assistant for this project at WVPU and could successfully apply for her first grant under the guidance of Dr. Zedlacher, proofing WVPU's capabilities to promote and train young researchers.

Professor Jozef Bátora was part of the Horizon 2020 project "Differentiation, Dominance, Democracy – EU3D" which ended in 2023. As it is in the nature of Horizon 2020 projects, this project had collaboration partners from highly esteemed universities and research institution from across Europe. As a result of this project cooperation, Professor Bátora published an edited volume in cooperation with John Erik Fossum (ARENA, University of Oslo) on "Differentiation and Dominance in Europe's Polycrises" with the renowned publisher house Routledge, and the peer-reviewed article "Thought Communities and Pre-conditions for Polity Formation in the European Union: Evidence From Six EU Member States" in *Journal of Common Market Studies*.

In the AY 2022-23 ended also the FWF Project on "Electrical muscle stimulation and social cognition, in which Associate Professor Marc Méhu worked as Co-Investigator in cooperation with Sebastian Korb (PI) from the University of Essex, UK. The project investigates the impact of neuromuscular surface stimulation on the perception of emotion in faces. Though the project has formally ended, the research still continues and articles are anticipated to be published in the AY 2024-25 and AY 2025-26.

6.2 Cooperation in teaching and mobility

WVPU faculty undertook different forms of mobility activities, from conference and research travels to professional development measures, around the globe. Assistant Professor Marco Bocchese conducted field studies to collect

data for his ongoing project on “Justice in the Fog of War” in Guinea in June 2023 with the support of a Webster Faculty Research Grant by St. Louis, USA. The outcome of this field studies shall be published as a paper in the AY 2026-26.

On April 8-10, 2024, Jozef Bátora visited Stanford University. He held consultations on his research on the private military and security companies and repositioning of war as an institution. He met with Prof. Walter W. Powell at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Science, Prof. Amir Goldberg at the Graduate School of Business, and prof. Anna Gryzmala Busse at the Department of Political Science / Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies.

Regarding conferences – to mention a few examples – Assistant Professor Anatoly Reshetnikov participated with a full paper at the Annual Convention of International Studies in San Francisco in April 2023, one of the major conventions in International Relations. Professor Nikolaos Antonakakis, Associate Professor Menbere Workie, and Assistant Professor Boris Fišera presented together a full paper on “Beyond Competitiveness. Is Productivity Everything?” at the 27th International Conference on Macroeconomic Analysis and International Finance in Rethymno in Greece, also one of the highest esteemed conferences in the field of economic and financial studies. In the Department of Media Communications, Associate Professor Bradley Wiggins talks with a full paper about his timely research on uses of humor in the Ukraine War at the American Folklore Society in Portland, USA.

The AY 2023-2024 saw a significant increase in Erasmus + mobilities. Among faculty, Assistant Professor Marco Bocchese used the Erasmus + teaching mobility to hold a course at New York University in Prague about “Politics of Violence” as part of the *UNYP’s International Teaching Week*. His lecture was so successful that he was invited for the Teaching Week in May 2025 again. Assistant Professor Eva Zedlacher participated in a workshop called “Navigating the Future Together. AI and Digital Transformation in Global Education” at the Universum International College in Prishtina, Kosovo at the end of May 2024.

Under the prestigious Dr. Elizabeth Chopin Endowed Visiting Professorship, WVPU hosted eminent international scholars such as economist and professor at London School of Economics, Francisco H. G. Ferreira and co-founder and director of the European Council on Foreign Relations, Mark Leonard. These visits facilitated engaging discussions across diverse disciplines, underscoring WVPU’s dedication to creating a vibrant, intellectually stimulating environment.

During his visit to Vienna, Ferreira explored inequality’s impact in South Africa and Latin America through seminars and workshops, emphasizing the role of human capital investments in reducing inequality. His public lecture introduced modern economic theories of inequality of opportunity, illustrating the concept and evaluating policies like early childhood programs and teacher training. Ferreira highlighted the persistence of inequality influenced by family, education, and social factors.

Leonard, an expert in geopolitics and geo-economics, presented a lecture on “The Age of Unpeace” and led a seminar on “The Politics of Trauma in Europe’s Election Year,” discussing public attitudes ahead of European elections. At a public lecture on April 18, Leonard analyzed how Russia’s war on Ukraine is reshaping Europe’s geopolitical future, noting the EU’s evolving role as a geopolitical player and its reliance on the U.S. for security amidst an identity crisis.

Lindsey Kingston, associate professor of international human rights at the Webster Groves campus in Saint Louis, piloted a “human rights semester” for Webster Vienna students during the spring of 2024. Human rights is not a subject offered at the Vienna campus, but through Kingston’s fellowship, Vienna students had the opportunity to earn a human rights minor. Kingston taught a course in human rights and global migration during her time in Vienna. She also began a collaborative student-faculty research project with Webster Groves student Meghan Meehan, who is majoring in human rights and was studying abroad in Vienna at the time.

6.3 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.

With the support of a Webster Faculty Research Grant, Marco Bocchese, assistant professor for International Relations, travelled to Guinea in May/June 2023 where he conducted interviews with locals on “Justice in the Fog of War: Explaining State Cooperation with International Prosecutions”. The first results of this project are set to be published in an academic journal in the near future. In May 2024, Dr. Bocchese participated in the Erasmus+ Teaching Mobility program at the University of New York in Prague. As part of *International UNYP Teaching Week 2024*, he delivered lectures on civil wars and political violence, contributing his expertise to a global academic audience.

Dr. Sean McFate, Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council and professor at a professor at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service and the National Defense University, led a workshop on how states can navigate the complexities of modern global conflict. His recent book, *The New Rules of War: How America Can Win—Against Russia, China, and Other Threats*, was named a book of the year by The Economist and among West Point’s ‘Commandant’s Reading List’.

Anatoly Reshetnikov, also assistant professor for International Relations, presented his book “Chasing Greatness” (see last year’s research highlights) at several national and international institutions in Germany, Czechia and Hungary. Among those were the renowned Charles University in Prague and the Metropolitan University in Budapest and the University of Erfurt.

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.

6.4 Industry and event cooperation

WVPU harnesses its relationships within education, research, and industry to provide a range of opportunities for its students and community and to promote knowledge transfer.

Career services and support for students

This academic year, Webster Vienna Private University (WVPU) organized a series of successful events and workshops aimed at supporting our students and graduates in their career journeys. These initiatives provided valuable networking opportunities, insights into various industries, and practical advice to help students gain a competitive edge in the job market.

Bloomberg, WVPU, and leading companies hosted events showcasing exciting career opportunities. The *Discover Bloomberg Event* offered students, alumni, and the public insights into Bloomberg’s London work environment, with direct engagement with recruiters. At the *Career Calling Fair*, WVPU’s Career Services connected with Viennese companies to pave the way for internships and events. Students explored careers at EY and OMV during respective career lunches, gaining insights into company culture, job opportunities, and application tips. Workshops on psychology and the *Accenture Song Career Lunch* provided recruitment advice, while the *IAEA Career Event* shared job openings and fostered potential collaborations.

As part of the spring semester’s course “Careers in History, Politics and International Relations”, which is part of the university’s successful Certificate in Diplomacy and International Organizations, Webster Vienna’s Career Services team invited a series of guest lectures related to working in the field of international relations. Speakers included Laura Leyser, the General Director of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Austria, Fatime Barbara Hegyi who

shared about her EU-COST project, Faris Juma, a recruitment specialist at UNODC, and WVPU alumna Janina Mank, Head of Section Finance, Contracts and Audit at the Delegation of the European Union to the Federal Republic of Nigeria and ECOWAS.

WVPU's "Dare to Grow Together" Mentoring Program continued its successful run this year. Running from October 2023 to May 2024, the program supported WVPU's soon-to-be graduates in their career development by enhancing their knowledge and building skills for future goals and success. This year, sixteen tandems were successfully matched out of 39 applicants. The program continued to be diverse - both culturally and professionally - with mentors from various industries and business sizes. Participants included mentors and mentees from a wide range of countries, such as Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Serbia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Nigeria, Italy, Slovakia, Albania, Latvia, and the USA, among others.

Webster Vienna Alumni Association

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the WVPU Alumni Association took the lead in organizing a series of events featuring distinguished speakers on campus.

On September 27, 2023 more than 70 attendees gathered at WVPU for the 15th Webster Vienna Alumni Symposium. During the event, alumni, students, and business leaders gained valuable insights into the current and upcoming challenges in cybersecurity and how businesses, governments, and individuals can better protect themselves against evolving cyber threats.

On April 11, Webster Vienna Private University welcomed students, alumni, and aspiring entrepreneurs to its second annual Startup Factory Entrepreneur Night. Hosted by WVPU's Career Services team and the Webster Vienna Alumni Association, the event brought together industry experts to explore the journey from startup idea to securing investment. Titled *"Startup Factory: Building Ventures from Idea to Investment,"* the evening featured a keynote speech, a dynamic panel discussion, and opportunities for networking.

Further, the Alumni Association has played a pivotal role in the "Dare to Grow Together" mentoring program, which pairs alumni with current students to provide guidance and mentorship. This initiative highlights the Association's dedication to fostering students' professional growth and development by tapping into the extensive expertise of WVPU alumni.

Over the past year, the Alumni Association has organized a range of activities, such as guest lectures, newsletters, and social media campaigns, in addition to offering special alumni grants and hosting extracurricular events. These efforts aim to maintain strong connections between alumni and WVPU, as well as among alumni themselves, strengthening the community and encouraging continued engagement with the university.

6.5 Other cooperation

In the 2023-2024 academic year, WVPU strengthened its commitment to national and international cooperation through collaborations with diverse academic and non-academic institutions, through course-based affiliations, sponsorships and association memberships.

Its most significant network is Webster University, comprising campuses, partners, and nearly 200,000 alumni worldwide. WVPU cooperates with Webster in administration, events, faculty exchanges, and student mobility. This academic year saw a lot of integration between the European campuses in the Webster network. Students from the Geneva, Leiden and Vienna campuses again participated in the LEADS program (Learn, Evolve, Apply, Develop, and Serve) providing interactive, reflective, and learning community approaches to understanding leadership.

Through its Partner in Education Program, WVPU collaborates with companies, governments, and institutions to support highly qualified or financially disadvantaged students. Borealis AG is the program's largest donor, while the City of Vienna, a partner for 30 years, is its longest-standing supporter. This program remains a cornerstone of WVPU's fundraising efforts.

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).

7 Outlook

WVPU is poised for continued growth and success. With the anticipated addition of over 160 new degree seeking students expected to join the campus next year we will further strengthen our financial performance and maintain positive operating margins for the year. Indeed, we project steady growth in student numbers for the 2024-2025 academic year and are focused on meeting the necessary requirements for institutional re-accreditation through 2028. A key priority in this process will be the development and submission of a PhD program by the end of 2025.

In the year ahead, WVPU will continue to build on its core strengths of teaching and research, with an emphasis on increasing student enrolment, retention, and delivering high-quality services. To support this growth, we will introduce state-of-the-art teaching techniques, including two new hybrid classrooms that allow instructors and students to seamlessly interact regardless of whether they are sitting next to each other or are separated by several time zones. We will also invest in expanded digital infrastructure to better serve our faculty, students, and staff. Our goal is to be able to provide an educational experience that works both in the classroom and around the world opening up opportunities for international cooperation across Webster University's global network as well as students all over the world.

Programmatically, we plan to establish a new Computer Science department that will focus on Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity, marking the university's first step towards introducing STEM programs and enhancing our quantitative research capabilities. At the graduate level, we will finalize the submission of a new international affairs program and seek partnerships that will extend WVPU's renowned teaching and training to global audiences, particularly within the international civil service. Following recent hires in the Psychology department, we will work with our expanded team to revise and introduce new programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Supporting our faculty remains a top priority, as their contributions to academic scholarship are crucial to WVPU's reputation. In the coming year, we will continue to provide faculty with the resources needed to succeed, including conference funding, flexible schedules, and reduced administrative burdens. Looking ahead, WVPU's 16 permanent faculty members are projected to deliver an impressive scholarly output of six books, four book chapters, and 49 peer-reviewed articles during the 2024-2025 academic year, further solidifying the university's commitment to academic excellence. As we expand our programs, student body, and research output, we remain dedicated to delivering exceptional educational experiences and maintaining the high standards that define WVPU.