

Rector's introductory words



The celebrations of the anniversary of thirty years since freedom and democracy came to our country are still not over. Those of us who experienced this breakthrough period, so to speak “first-hand”, will certainly remember the wonderful feeling of finally being able to travel freely. Borders opened and we went to great places in Europe and beyond, and travel around the world soon became a matter of course.

Just before the Velvet Revolution, I finished my studies at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of Charles University. The offer of internships was very modest at that time – selected students of nuclear physics could visit Dubna in the then Soviet Union, which was probably the most valuable option. I remember well the moment at the very end of my studies when a completely fabulous offer appeared: an internship at a school of physics in Trieste, Italy. Although there was only one place, I really bow deeply to the Faculty staff who managed to secure it. Especially when one of the senior representatives of political power – understand: Communist power – said at the time: “Trieste? Perhaps we do not want to return to Austria-Hungary!” Today we would end such a sentence with a laughing smiley face. At the time, it meant that those who would try to arrange something like this could face great problems.

Fortunately, I am writing these lines in a time of freedom, when we can travel wherever we please, and students can choose from a wide range of internships in near and far foreign countries. The situation is completely reversed: the possibilities of various educational and business travels offered are often impossible to fully use. And yet: staying at another university or institution is a great opportunity for young people. During no holiday trip do we learn to know the country as well as when we stay there for some time, meet up with local people and try to understand the situation there. Many graduates of our University will tell me that they have friends in this or that country, those they once met during an Erasmus or other internship. What else is better proof of how beneficial foreign internships are than bonds between people?

I recently visited the University of Kyrgyzstan, with which our Faculty of Philosophy and Arts has been cooperating for three years. The main goal was to find out possibilities of extending this cooperation to other fields and faculties. I had many meetings, met many interesting people, and got to know this beautiful country a bit. What most appealed to me was, however, meeting our University students who were there for a short-term internship. It was very nice to listen to their experiences and learn about how they had to deal with unusual situations in a completely different culture. I was intrigued by what they told me about the courses they took, and, of course, – as is usual at schools – by their witty descriptions of individual teachers and the whole atmosphere of study.

I then thought a lot about how foreign students perceive us, what kind of experiences are as bizarre for them as for our students in Kyrgyzstan, and what they will most remember from their stay with us. I would like individual Faculties and the whole University to do their best to make their memories all positive. This is a great way to spread the reputation of the University of West Bohemia to the whole world.

I would also like our students to be more and more interested in studying abroad, so that our teachers and researchers can have excellent contacts at reputable universities around the world; I hope we become a fully international university, a university where you can commonly see foreign scientists or teachers. I know there is a long way to go. But our starting position is very good.

I realized this very clearly when I was standing on a rocky hill above the vast Kyrgyz city of Osh, with a university whose number of students is comparable to Charles University; I was looking at the setting sun and thought of our small country, far to the west. At that moment, I realized how glad I was that for the last thirty years our country had proudly been able to claim to be part of that “West”.

Miroslav Holeček, rektor

Vice-Rector's introductory words



Dear supporters of the University of West Bohemia,

I am very glad that you have another issue of our University magazine, this time dedicated to internationalization. The University of West Bohemia strives to create a stable international environment in order to achieve a top academic and scientific research level that enables education, research and study with global responsibility, thus contributing to addressing global challenges. Such a university is a driving force for change and improvement, for acquiring knowledge, skills and competences needed in the 21st century. This is in line with the Long-Term Plan of the University of West Bohemia, the Regional RIS3 Strategy and the National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic.

Since I have been Vice-Rector for Internationalization, and perhaps even before, I have heard and still hear that internationalization means building relations with foreign countries. Yes, it is true... but it is only a partial fragment of one large complex puzzle that, if not put together correctly, will not make it possible to speak of UWB as a stable and internationally open university.

With the help of all of you, colleagues, students, partner entities, domestic and foreign supporters and the public, we are starting to put the pieces together. It's painstaking work and the results will not come about overnight, but if we join efforts, share examples of good and bad practice and communicate openly and constructively, success will come!

All the pieces of the puzzle are incorporated in the Strategy of Internationalization of UWB, which should help us and prevent us from coming to a dead end. Fortunately, it is a puzzle that is possible and indeed necessary to be constantly innovated and improved.

As Vice-Rector for Internationalization, I am delighted to learn about a number of international achievements in science and research, the collaboration of the University Parts in the area of study, and the experience of foreign employees and students at the University of West Bohemia, as well as our colleagues' and students' experience abroad. I would like to share with you the most important of these achievements on the pages of this magazine. Shared joy is more joy and, at the same time, it can stimulate others to join and make our puzzle a bit more colourful. You will also learn about the newly planned activities in the area of internationalization for the next period and the possibilities of its further development.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your interest and willingness to support UWB in its efforts to be an open, friendly and high-quality institution that is and will be perceived in this way both in this country and abroad!

I look forward to further cooperation with you.

Dita Hommerová
Vice-Rector for Internationalization

UWB&WORLD

Dear readers,

You have just opened the eighth issue of UWB&... , this time UWB&THE-WORLD. If you ask a numerologist about the number 8, they will tell you that it is the most powerful of all numbers, which expresses, among other things, ambition, toughness, and purposefulness. The following pages will show you that these traits are important for the University of West Bohemia in relation to the world. You can read about projects thanks to which we can send experienced scientists to the world and attract their counterparts to internships in Pilsen. You'll also see programmes that help our students gain valuable experience abroad, see the footprints left by the University of West Bohemia in the world, and learn about international student organizations, the HR Award and how foreign languages are taught at the University so we won't get lost in the world. Finally, you will also glimpse into the future in which the University of West Bohemia looks even more international. Have you heard about the Project Welcome Centre?

All this is encompassed in UWB&THE WORLD. Without the ambition, tenacity and purposefulness of employees and students – in short, the entire University of West Bohemia – this magazine would probably not make such colourful reading.

On behalf of the magazine editors' team,
Pavel Korelus

