

# Sapere Aude

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VILNIUS  
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Vilnius Gediminas  
Technical University



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ear readers,

The first issue of the magazine in 2026 is dedicated to openness – a value that is inseparable from the everyday life of VILNIUS TECH. Openness here is not just a catchy word or a slogan. It is our attitude that shapes the university and its community. We are a university without walls, one that values cooperation and partners around the world as well as transparency of activities, acceptance of each person's individuality and uniqueness.

Openness begins with a simple understanding: we are all walking the same path and striving for a common goal. Each of us has our own story, accumulated experience, and a distinct perspective on certain matters. That is precisely why it is important not only to speak and share, but also to listen to others. Openness is the ability to see another person as a partner rather than a rival, even when opinions may differ. After all, differences are often not an obstacle, but an opportunity to see things from a different angle.

VILNIUS TECH is a place where cooperation is much more than just a formality. We work together because this is the only way to move forward and reach higher goals. Our transparent activities build trust: when we know how and why decisions are made and are able to see clear processes, we get a sense of belonging and responsibility. By trusting one another, we can confidently share ideas, experiment, make mistakes, and not be afraid to start again.

Openness also means the courage to admit that we do not know all the answers. It is the ability to sometimes ask uncomfortable questions and to acknowledge that we cannot yet answer all of them. This is also a sign of maturity: when we can be honest with ourselves and others, we learn and grow faster.

Our partnerships around the world also show that openness is a driving force. Every new connection made or experience gained enables further learning. Only by cooperating openly do we broaden our horizons and strengthen the university.

The stories featured in the pages of the magazine also invite us to be open – outside and inside ourselves. This is not easy, but openness allows us to understand one another better, learn from different experiences, and create a community in which everyone can feel heard.



Inspiring stories –  
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# Content



**3** Openly about openness – with Rector Prof. Dr. Romualdas Kliukas



**8** For their merits to the country D. Cygas and G. Caikauskas received state awards at the Presidential Palace



**11** Unusual anniversaries – a virtuous direction



**16** Innovation without borders: The role of women in the field of technology



**24** Fashion communication: experiences, research, and future perspectives



**31** Media School – when students' ideas become real solutions



**37** Where studies at VILNIUS TECH begin



**44** From the university to the executive chair: The story of construction engineering alumnus A. Guzikauskas



**49** Creativity beyond university doors



**5** New VILNIUS TECH admissions campaign – an invitation to start inventions with play



**10** Prof. Dr. Hartmutas Pasternakas: on openness in science, collaboration as well as the relationship between universities and society



**14** Graduate of the Lithuanian Maritime Academy P. Bekeza: "A connection with the sea often becomes a lifelong choice"



**20** From doctoral studies to the most cited researcher: the path of Prof. Dr. Ieva Meidute-Kavaliauskiene



**27** Integration, challenges, and creativity: experiences of international lecturers at the university



**34** "Atlantu Balkonas" – a place where ideas meet



**42** VILNIUS TECH graduate D. Dundulis: open dialogue in an organization is essential



**45** One platform for conference organization – for efficient organization, dissemination, and preservation of academic events



## Openly about openness – with Rector Prof. Dr. Romualdas Kliukas

### – Rector, please speak openly about one of the university's strategic values – how open are we?

For me, openness is first - listening, and then the ability to respond to arguments directly while seeing different sides. Engineers in general have not only a techno gene, but also a gene of openness. Engineering helps people to be open to future perspectives, different opinions, diversity, and share their knowledge, research, articles, and inventions with others.

The university lives in constant

open relationships with the world and the experiences of others. As scientists, we are always ready for criticism, arguments, we take alternative hypotheses seriously, and adjust our beliefs, so for us openness is a virtue of great importance. As teachers, we primarily develop open, critical personalities.

Openness is also about sharing and improving the quality of research. Our university cooperates with 577 higher education institutions in 59 countries, including

top-level QS WUR ranked universities. Internationalisation is further strengthened by active participation in the ATHENA European Universities Alliance, as well as the NORDTEK and BALTECH networks. Our role in the European innovation ecosystem is also growing – we cooperate with the ENIHEI network, which unites 38 advanced European higher education institutions.

Together with KTU and Fraunhofer FKIE, we are creating the au-

onomous systems competence centre ComARC, which will become a national platform for research and testing of autonomous, remotely controlled and interconnected air, land and water technologies. We also joined the Quantum Technologies Association. On top of that, we became a member of the Space Cluster, which allows us to cooperate more actively with the space technology and innovation community, businesses, and associations, participate in space hackathons, international exhibitions, and start implementing international projects as well as initiatives of the European Space Agency.

Together with other members of the TTO Lithuania network, we initiated and organised the International Science Week “(re) SEARCH 2025”, which brought together knowledge and technology transfer leaders from the Baltic countries, representatives of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the European Commission, lawyers, intellectual property specialists, and innovation policy makers.

Just last year, faculties and departments, as coordinators or partners, implemented 52 international projects under Erasmus+ higher education student and staff mobility, cooperation partnerships, capacity building, Erasmus Mundus, Nordplus, Digital Europe, and other international development programmes.

#### **– Do you agree with the idea that too much openness can be harmful?**

Openness also requires boundaries and an optimal level. It must be balanced with other values. Stricter migration policy rules, national security interests, and geopolitical tensions in the world have affected the admission of international students and academic exchange

52

**that is the number of international projects (Erasmus+, Nordplus, Digital Europe, etc.) carried out by faculties and departments last year, acting as either coordinators or partners.**

es at the university. Circumstances and values force us not to open up to everyone from high-risk countries and to protect our educational space. We are tightening selection processes because for us it is important to know that those who arrive are genuine students, motivated to become specialists who create high added value. How everything happening right now will affect our academic freedom, autonomy, and finances is uncertain.

I am also open with colleagues about travelling to certain countries: for internships and exchanges, I always suggest choosing advanced, leading countries where one can learn, gain experience, and establish useful contacts for the university. Then joint projects and innovations can emerge, and those choosing to teach can get needed support. However, we should not cooperate with, and should avoid, countries that support aggressors, actively interfere in elections, organise cyber attacks and sabotage, spy, and systematically act against the European Union, NATO, and support for Ukraine. Critical thinking is needed now more than ever – it helps us not to lose our way and to remain a cautiously open educa-

tional community. We must balance openness with security, autonomy, and responsibility.

#### **– And now openly, Rector, are you an open leader with your staff and students?**

I joke that there is no greater openness than over a cup of morning coffee at 7:45 on the 11th floor – I have said more than once that I welcome all “early birds” who drop by early with their challenges and proposals. The door must always be open to ideas.

Seriously, openness generates more ideas, and the more ideas there are at the university, the more attractive, well-known, visible, and needed we are. I like to listen to opinions from different generations: older people often see risks and long-term effects, while young people are not afraid to propose bolder, unconventional solutions. This helps avoid staying in one’s own “bubble”.

To be completely frank, as a leader I am still learning open leadership – together with other university leaders, I actively participate in leadership competence training every month. I have always been and will remain a civil engineer, so I understand well that openness is like a structural axis on which stability depends. If it is too weak, both the walls and the community ties begin to crack. Therefore, I try to strengthen it above all.

577

**higher education partners in 59 countries work alongside our university.**

# New VILNIUS TECH admissions campaign – an invitation to start inventions with play

This year, as VILNIUS TECH celebrates its 70th anniversary, it introduces a new admissions campaign, “Games and Inventions.” The campaign invites prospective students to treat the university as a playground for adults, where every game leads to an invention potentially changing the world.

**E**very invention begins with play – by experimenting, making mistakes, and learning. VILNIUS TECH elevates this play to a completely different level and turns it into innovation: from aviation and robotics to energy, shipping, and AI solutions. The new ad-

missions campaign is an invitation to play, explore, and discover solutions that go beyond today’s needs. It is an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that help answer the questions of tomorrow,” says Dovile Jursyte, Director of Public Communication at VILNIUS TECH. “Games and Inventions” is

the university’s first step in implementing a broader TECH CULTURE strategy. According to D. Jursyte, we live in a time when technological thinking is becoming a universal competence. It has never been easier to move from an idea to a working solution or at least a prototype: we have tools, technologies, and knowledge that significantly reduce the distance between concept and implementation, leaving almost no reason not to try creating.

“However, even in the age of AI, people remain the most important



**However, even in the age of AI, people remain the most important players – those who ask questions, experiment, and create. The ability to create with technology is becoming as fundamental a skill as reading or writing once was. This is exactly the relationship that VILNIUS TECH invites people to recognise.**

Dovile Jursyte



players – those who ask questions, experiment, and create. The ability to create with technology is becoming as fundamental a skill as reading or writing once was. This is exactly the relationship that VILNIUS TECH invites people to recognise,” shares the director.

The university developed the new admissions campaign together with “Synthesis Consulting Group.” According to Marius Mozuraitis, the project’s strategist and creative lead, technological thinking at VILNIUS TECH is alive, practically applicable, and reflects a broader worldview. It brings together curious inventors who want to understand how the world works and improve it: here students analyse, model, test, and refine even the simplest of things.

Students themselves became the source of inspiration when encouraging the campaign to highlight the moment of playful curiosity turning into invention. Together with VILNIUS TECH lecturers, they created the “inventions” shown in the campaign’s video clips and became their protagonists.

The communication aimed to show not only the final result, but also the importance of the process itself.

“We noticed that the VILNIUS TECH community often views the academic journey as an experiment – discussions, trials, analysis, and prototype development take place in laboratories. No matter what topic students explore, there is always



room for interpretation, improvement of solutions, or searching for alternatives. We wanted to capture exactly this process and show its beauty,” says campaign strategist M. Mozuraitis.

When creating the campaign’s visual solutions, the university deliberately chose not to rely on loud statements or heroic metaphors, but instead took a different direction. Through short narrative video clips and posters, the aim was to show specific moments where technological thinking emerges naturally, for example in everyday situations or simple environments.

The aerodynamics of a paper plane, the landscape of a sandcas-

tle, or robotic arm bending competitions – these are situations where playful form meets technical analysis.

“Technological thinking begins with curiosity – sometimes from a simple question, an attempt, or even a game. At this university, curiosity works together with engineering and always turns into structure, knowledge, and real solutions. This is what shapes TECH CULTURE,” says university representative D. Jursyte.

The campaign video clips for “Games and Inventions” were created by the video agency TURBO.

Prepared by External Communication Projects Manager Giedre Gedeikyte

You can view VILNIUS TECH videos here:

1



2



3





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Technical University

Play is  
where  
invention  
begins



Lift-to-drag  
ratio (L/D): 14,8

$$L = \frac{1}{2} \rho V^2 S C_L$$

$$Re = \frac{\rho V L}{\mu}$$

Airspeed: 22,4 m/s

$$C_D = \frac{D}{\frac{1}{2} \rho V^2 S}$$

Turbulence intensity: 3,1 %

Angle of attack (AoA): +6,2°

For the Creators  
of Tomorrow



## For their merits to the country **D. Cygas and G. Caikauskas received state awards at the Presidential Palace**

On the occasion of the 108th anniversary of the restoration of the Lithuanian state, President Gitanas Nausėda awarded distinguished citizens of Lithuania and foreign countries for their merits to the state and its promotion internationally. Among them were two long standing members of the VILNIUS TECH academic community: the Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Engineering, Prof. Dr. Donatas Cygas, and the professor of the Faculty of Architecture, prominent architect Gintaras Caikauskas. The professors were awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas.

**T**he Rector of VILNIUS TECH, Romualdas Kliukas, nominated Prof. Dr. D. Cygas for the award for his merits to Lithuania, to the country's science and education, to the progress of the state, and for his leadership when integrating the university achievements of scientific research into engineering practice. He was also recognized for his particularly diligent work in the education of engineers for Lithuanian com-

panies and organizations as well as for developing and implementing innovations in road infrastructure, and his overall active public activity. The university community is grateful and happy about the recognition that engineers and scientist practitioners have increasingly received by being honored with state awards.

Prof. G. Caikauskas was nominated by VILNIUS TECH together with the public organization Vilnius Rokiskis Club "Pragiedruliai" for his

merits to the development of Lithuanian architecture, the promotion of urban culture, the education of young architects, and the promotion of Lithuania's name internationally.

### **PROFESSOR DR. DONATAS CYGAS**

Prof. D. Cygas has been engaged in scientific and teaching work at the university for more than four decades and has served as the Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Engi-

neering since 1999. The professor's main research areas include road construction materials and technologies, the implementation of new technologies, traffic safety, and information technologies. In 2006 he was awarded the Lithuanian State Science Prize for the cycle of scientific works "Experimental research and application of road and street construction technologies".

D. Cygas is also known for his active public and professional work. During two terms as a member of the Lithuanian Council of Higher Education, he participated in reforming the national higher education system and integrating it into European structures. From 2009 to 2020 the professor worked on the commission of the Ministry of Transport responsible for the Permanent Road Maintenance and Development Program. The scientist holds seven patents, has prepared more than ten standards and construction regulations of the Republic of Lithuania, has supervised ten doctoral dissertations, published more than 250 scientific and popular science articles, and delivered over 40 presentations at international and national conferences.

In his scientific work the professor focuses primarily on road construction materials and technologies, the implementation of innovations, traffic safety, and the application of information technologies in transport infrastructure. His work includes the development of new solutions for designing, building, and maintaining roads, as well as research on the relationship between road condition, traffic flows, and traffic safety.

He is also actively involved in teaching. He lectures on subjects related to road information technologies and traffic safety systems,



supervises students' final theses, prepares methodological literature, and contributes to educating a new generation of engineers.

Prof. Dr. D. Cygas has previously been recognized for his achievements and awarded the title of Honorary Road Engineer as well as receiving the Lithuanian State Science Prize. The most recent state award is a significant recognition of his long term leadership and consistent work contributing to the progress of the state.

## PROFESSOR GINTARAS CAIKAUSKAS

Gintaras Caikauskas is one of the most prominent architects of independent Lithuania and has made a major contribution to shaping the country's urban identity. His creative work includes important public and cultural buildings that have received both international and national awards. Among his projects are modern buildings and complexes in Vilnius that represent the direction of contemporary architecture while harmoniously integrating with the historical urban context.

The professor has been teaching at VILNIUS TECH since 1988, became a professor in 2006, and has actively contributed to the education of architects by training a new generation of professionals. G. Caikauskas not only introduces students to the key principles of architecture but also encourages civ-

ic responsibility. The architect also contributes to various student initiatives, such as the SIKON student ideas competition and the GERAS awards. The professor teaches architectural design, supervises students' final projects, participates in expert activities, and is an active member of the architectural community as well as the Lithuanian Union of Architects.

G. Caikauskas has designed various buildings in Lithuania and abroad, including schools, administrative buildings, residential houses, and public buildings. Since 1992 he has led the architectural studio "Architektūros linija", which has implemented numerous significant projects.

Prof. Gintaras Caikauskas has also contributed to the cultural and architectural life of the city of Rokiskis. Together with architect Faustas Lasys, he created the project "Legenda", which won the ideas competition announced in 2022 by the Rokiskis District Municipality in commemoration of the Tyzenhauz family.

G. Caikauskas has won numerous architectural competitions and received important awards. In 2014 he was awarded the honorary badge of the Lithuanian Union of Architects, in 2015 he received the St. Christopher statuette "For merits to the architecture of Vilnius", in 2023 he was awarded the Government Prize of the Republic of Lithuania for Culture and Art, and in 2024 he received the state decoration of Finland, the Order of the Lion of Finland. He has also been repeatedly recognized with acknowledgments and certificates of honor from the Lithuanian Minister of Culture and other institutions in Lithuania and abroad.

Prepared by Milda Mockunaite-Vitkiene, Internal Communications Project Manager.



*Prof. Dr. Hartmut Pasternak (center) underscores that openness is vital to international collaboration, noting that it drives the exchange of ideas, spurs scientific advancement, and dissolves existing barriers.*

## Prof. Dr. Hartmutas Pasternakas: on openness in science, collaboration as well as the relationship between universities and society

The title of Honorary Doctor is an academic expression of gratitude for an exceptional contribution to scientific progress. With this title, VILNIUS TECH honors researchers who create knowledge, mentor young researchers, promote international dialogue and innovation.

**I**n 2026, for merits to the Lithuanian state, science, culture, and for the development of cooperation, the title of Honorary Doctor was awarded to Prof. Dr. Hartmut Pasternak of the Brandenburg University of Technology (Germany). According to him, this is not only an academic recognition but also a symbolic sign of cooperation between VILNIUS TECH and the researcher.

"The awarding of the Honorary Doctor title is a great and special honor. For me, it means recognition and appreciation. It symbolizes a special connection between VILNIUS TECH and myself, which we should continue to nurture in the future," says the professor.

When speaking about openness, he emphasizes that it is one of the

most important conditions of academic and professional activity. According to him, openness is the willingness to accept experiences, new ideas, and different perspectives without preconceived assumptions. Important aspects of openness include transparency and the ability to question one's beliefs. Although this is not always easy, it is necessary.

The professor also stresses that openness is essential for international cooperation. It encourages the exchange of ideas, accelerates scientific progress, and helps break down barriers.

"I have accumulated considerable experience, so I can confidently say that young researchers and students, sometimes use rather unconventional methods when implementing projects and striving to achieve

their goals. Therefore, it is important to discuss and refine the ideas generated by them," he emphasizes.

Speaking about his own values that help him make professional decisions, Prof. H. Pasternakas notes that he is guided by trust, motivation, and long term job satisfaction. He advises young members of the academic community to be brave and think broadly.

"Collaborate at an interdisciplinary level and look beyond the boundaries of your own field. Young, motivated researchers quickly attract the attention of others. In some cases, even after publishing just their first scientific article," emphasizes Prof. H. Pasternakas.

According to the professor, it is equally important to recognize that openness can fundamentally change the relationship between universities and society. However, this does not happen as quickly as one might wish. It is important to answer the question: how often advanced scientific solutions are presented to members of society in a way that is understandable.

# Unusual anniversaries – a virtuous direction

An anniversary often becomes a wonderful opportunity to pause, look back, and review one's life – experiences, achievements, and values that accompany a person through many years.

**O**n this special occasion, VILNIUS TECH emeriti – Prof. habil. Dr. Algirdas Smilgevičius, celebrating his 90th anniversary this year, and Prof. habil. Dr. Leonas Saulis, marking his 85th – share their

thoughts on their academic journey, life challenges, and key accomplishments. Their life experience shows that true values – knowledge, work, and human fellowship – always remain important.

## – What does an anniversary mean to you?

**Prof. habil. Dr. A. Smilgevičius:** The 90th anniversary means that I have spent the majority of my life at the university and worked there to the best of my ability. In other words, I have done my work, so I feel at peace.

I devoted my life's knowledge to work, science, and studies. In ad-

dition, I spent 25 years in the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, 15 of which as a full member, and later as a member of the terminology subcommittee. Through this work, I contributed to the development of proper state language usage, science, and culture.

**Prof. habil. Dr. L. Saulis:** An anniversary primarily means that I was fortunate to reach it. My generation lived through difficult times, so the very fact that I can celebrate this stage of life says a lot. I experienced many important historical events, one of the most significant being the restoration of Lithuania's independence. Thanks to it, Vilni-



*Prof. habil. Dr. A. Smilgevičius: I would like to encourage young people not to be afraid to take on unexpected, difficult, but meaningful tasks.*



*Prof. habil. Dr. L. Saulis: For future generations, I would like to wish one simple but very important thing – to study a lot.*

us Gediminas Technical University was established.

I remember that period as a very special time: it was a “singing revolution,” when all of Lithuania was united and full of uplifting spirit. I was at the Vilnius TV Tower that night and was injured – I lost my hearing temporarily. Later, I was recognized as a defender of Lithuania’s independence. The sense of unity, courage, and determination we experienced then is difficult to replicate today.

For me, an anniversary is also an opportunity to look back at my life. I can say that it has been interesting and meaningful. There are many things I remember without shame – neither toward myself nor future generations. I believe we have performed our work honorably.

#### **– The secret of activity and longevity – what is it?**

**Prof. habil. Dr. A. Smilgevičius:** I believe that activity and longevity are

highly individual, but one main reason is family. My wife, who passed away five years ago, was my support in life. We got along very well, raised two sons, and I consider that to be my greatest success. Family gave me strength and motivation to act.

**Prof. habil. Dr. L. Saulis:** I think the greatest secret of my activity and energy is sport, which has accompanied me throughout my life. During my studies, I was very active – I was even a university and higher education skiing champion.

Later, while working at the institute, my colleagues and I began practicing water skiing – at that time, we were among the pioneers of this sport in Lithuania. At age 30, I started playing outdoor tennis, which remained an important part of my life for many years.

For me, sport has always been more than physical activity – it has been a way of life that helped me remain energetic and active.

#### **– What do you consider your greatest achievement?**

**Prof. habil. Dr. A. Smilgevičius:** In science, one of my most important achievements is the creation of a new scientific field: “Research of Direct-Current Electric Motors”, which I did with a colleague. Another one is the compilation and publication of terminology dictionaries with representatives of Kaunas University of Technology: “Dictionary of Electrotechnical Terms” and “Explanatory Dictionary of Electrotechnical Terms.” These are extensive (over 10,000 terms) dictionaries and were the first five-language dictionaries of this field in Lithuania.

**Prof. habil. Dr. L. Saulis:** I consider my greatest life achievement to be my family. I lived my life with my wife, we managed to maintain our family and unity, and raised a daughter.

Also important is my scientific career. I do not consider myself exceptional, but I am, nevertheless, a



**Openness means not being afraid to hear the truth and, if necessary, to express my opinion. I have always tried to stick to my convictions and speak the truth, even though it did not please everyone.**

Prof. habil. dr. A. Smilgevicius

person of science. I was very fortunate to have excellent teachers and authorities, such as the late Rector Jonas Kubilius and academician Vytautas Statulevicius. Interacting with these remarkable individuals had a great influence on my development as a person and a scientist. From them, I learned responsibility, integrity, and respect for work.

**– What does openness mean to you?**

**Prof. habil. Dr. A. Smilgevicius:** Openness means not being afraid to hear the truth and, if necessary, to express my opinion. I have always tried to stick to my convictions and speak the truth, even though it did not please everyone.

I am also ethnically Samogitian. I believe my origin and the traditions instilled in me also shaped my character and approach to life.

**Prof. habil. Dr. L. Saulis:** For me, openness primarily means being honest with oneself – the ability not to lie to oneself. It is respect for oneself and others.

Openness is also connected to speaking the truth, though every truth may have different shades. Moreover, openness means tolerance – the ability not only to express one's opinion but also to hear oth-

ers. Only then can genuine dialogue and mutual understanding emerge.

**– What is most important to you in life today?**

**Prof. habil. Dr. A. Smilgevicius:** What we have today. Lithuania as it is, or as it can be. It is important for me to value what I can cultivate now. Everything else depends on individual needs.

**Prof. habil. Dr. L. Saulis:** Today, the most important thing is that those around me are doing well. If they succeed, sooner or later good times come to me as well.

It is also very important for me to pass on my accumulated experience to others – I have gained a lot of it teaching young people. For many years, I worked individually with students, helping them pre-

pare for university entry exams. The work was intensive, but that is how I accumulated much of my pedagogical experience.

While working at the university, I always tried not only to evaluate students' knowledge but also to help them understand the subjects. It was important for me not to punish for not knowing but to help them learn.



**What would you like to wish for future generations?**

**Prof. habil. Dr. A. Smilgevicius:** I would like to encourage young people not to be afraid to take on unexpected, difficult, but meaningful tasks. Only by bravely tackling large projects can one achieve significant accomplishments. Taking responsibility and determination to reach goals is what allows growth and meaningful results.

**Prof. habil. Dr. L. Saulis:** For future generations, I would like to wish one simple but very important thing – to study a lot. Today, people often say that business is the foundation of everything. I believe the true foundation is science and education. Learning is not an easy path, and it does not always pay off quickly financially, but human culture and education are priceless. Science and culture are what shape both individuals and society.



**Openness is also connected to speaking the truth, though every truth may have different shades. Moreover, openness means tolerance – the ability not only to express one's opinion but also to hear others.**

Prof. habil. dr. L. Saulis





## Graduate of the Lithuanian Maritime Academy P. Bekeza: "A connection with the sea often becomes a lifelong choice"

Seafaring is often associated with strict order and a clear hierarchy. However, openness also occupies an important place within this system. At first glance it may seem that strict discipline and open communication do not easily go together, but at sea they complement each other and are necessary for safe and smooth work.

**A**ccording to the graduate of the Lithuanian Maritime Academy (LMA) and long-time chairman of the Lithuanian Seafarers' Union, **Petras Bekeza**, the field of seafarers' work is like a precisely arranged mechanism in which nothing is left to chance. International organizations began creating rules

more than a hundred years ago to protect seafarers' rights and define working procedures at sea. States then incorporate these provisions into their own laws.

In his view, openness at sea is no less important than discipline. If even a small malfunction or problem appears, it must be immediately reported to supervisors in higher positions. Concealed informa-

tion can create serious dangers, such as accidents, fire or even the sinking of a ship. Therefore openness, the ability to report problems in time and solve them together, is an essential condition for safety.

Speaking about leadership at sea, Bekeza notes that seafarers themselves often emphasize that a leader must be strict and fair. Strictness in this case does not mean authoritarian behavior, but the ability to follow rules and ensure that they are carried out. A leader must supervise that tasks are completed on time and established requirements are implemented. However, fairness is just as important. A leader must clearly understand the functions of every position and cannot demand

from a person something that does not belong to their area of responsibility. Instructions must be based on established procedures as opposed to personal wishes or spontaneous decisions. For this reason, a good leader at sea must be able to combine strictness with openness as well as respect for the crew.

"Trust between leaders and crew members at sea is vital. Every seafarer performs their own function, and overall safety depends on the work of the entire crew. If one person does not perform their duties properly, it can affect the entire ship. That is why teamwork is especially important at sea. Seafarers must trust each other and know that everyone will do their job properly. This trust becomes even more important in extreme situations, when life itself may depend on the mutual assistance of crew members," says Bekeza.

Another important aspect of seafaring, according to him, is working with people from different cultures. Ships often employ seafarers of various nationalities, so everyday communication becomes a kind of intercultural experience. However, at sea nationality or cultural differences become secondary matters. A ship is like a closed environment where everyone depends on each other. It does not matter whether a crew member is European, Filipino, Indian, or of any another nationality - everyone is part of the same team. This is why mutual understanding and respect for people of other cultures naturally develop at sea. Even everyday matters such as food are often adapted to the traditions of different religions or cultures.

"Over time, working in an international environment helps develop openness and a broader view of

the world. The more time a seafarer spends at sea, the more they learn to appreciate different cultures and understand other people. Long-term experience in this field clearly shows that seafaring requires constant improvement. Even after reaching high positions, learning does not end - it is necessary to follow changes in legislation, deepen professional knowledge, and adapt to a constantly changing environment," says the LMA graduate.

Bekeza identifies the opportunity to become a captain as one of the most important professional achievements. However, he also notes that a career can continue beyond the ship. After moving to work ashore, opportunities arise to contribute to the activities of the seafarers' community.

"For example, working in the Lithuanian Seafarers' Union requires not only knowledge of seafaring, but also understanding of maritime labor law, participation in collective negotiations, and defending the in-

terests of seafarers. In this activity legal knowledge and the ability to discuss issues with specialists from various fields - lawyers, representatives of employers, and other experts - are particularly important. Therefore continuous learning and professional growth become an inseparable part of this profession," says Bekeza.

According to the LMA graduate, many seafarers become interested in this profession already in their youth - by reading maritime books or by living near the sea. Later this interest turns into a life path that includes both work at sea and activities in ports or seafarers' organizations.

"Despite the challenges, many seafarers admit that they would choose the same path again. Seafaring provides not only professional knowledge and experience, but also teaches responsibility, trust in the team, and respect for other people - values that are important not only at sea, but also in life," Bekeza notes.



“

**A good leader at sea must be able to combine strictness with openness as well as respect for the crew.**

Petras Bekeza

”

# Innovation without borders:

## The role of women in the field of technology



Artificial intelligence (AI) and innovation are becoming an inseparable part of today's everyday life. However, it is important to understand that behind the technology, there are also people – those who create all that and encourage others to fearlessly move in this direction.

One of them is prof. dr. **Simona Ramanauskaitė** from the Department of Information Technologies at VILNIUS TECH, who actively involves women in the world of digital technologies. She shares her experience, challenges, and insights about AI education, gender equality in technology, and the importance of openness in the innovation process.

– **How do you feel about being recognised in the fields of innovation and artificial intelligence (AI)?**

I was nominated in the "AI Educator of the Year" category by the Lithuanian Artificial Intelligence Association. Honestly, being on the list of nominees was somewhat unexpected for me. I was the only representative of the education field, while the other nominees were social media creators, non-governmental organizations, or companies. This made me reflect on how the situation has changed in recent years, which led to almost everyone today "teaching" AI-related topics in one way or another.

On the one hand, it is encourag-

ing that AI education has become relevant and widely accessible. On the other hand, it raises the question of why we do not speak to the same extent about computer networks, cybersecurity, mathematics, or other fundamental fields. The answer is probably simple – AI is currently a popular topic, so many people want or feel capable of being experts in this area, especially if they are able to apply already existing solutions.

However, gaining a deeper understanding of how different AI methods work and how new machine

learning models are created requires much more preparation. Therefore, today we see a fairly natural distribution of education: the broader public gains basic knowledge and application principles through informal education, while those who decide to dive deeper eventually come to universities. And that is good – many of us will need to apply AI solutions, but only some of us will create new ones.

**– What motivates you to work on gender equality in the field of technology?**

The topic of gender equality in technology emerged in my activities quite consistently and manifested in various forms. In 2011, I participated in the international project INTEGER, which analyzed issues of women's equality in the community of technological sciences. As a participant, I became more aware of the invisible barriers women face when pursuing an academic career in technology and how these attitudes begin to form already at school. Working as a lecturer and seeing that girls make up only about 10 percent of students in computer science studies, I increasingly began to think of how we could show them that technology is open to everyone, not only to boys.

In 2019, I joined the Women4Cyber network in Lithuania, which focuses on an area that attracts even fewer women – cybersecurity.

In 2022, I had the opportunity to contribute to raising awareness about the situation of gender equality in Lithuanian municipalities when the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson began developing a monitoring tool. Being responsible for data visualization, I saw that gender inequality is not

only a problem in the field of technology – it is still prevalent at various levels of society.

In January 2025, VILNIUS TECH together with partners launched the European Union funded project Connecting Women in Digital (WIDCON), which aims to assess the gender equality in the field of digital technologies in EU countries and identify examples of good practice. Leading this project at the university, I once again realised that gender equality is not only a women's issue – it requires the involvement of society as a whole.

I undertook these projects for several reasons. First, I believe that if nothing is done, nothing changes. If my activities encourage at least one girl to take an interest in technology or at least one decision maker to evaluate a person based on abilities rather than gender, that will already be a step forward.



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prof. dr. Simona Ramanauskaite



Second, I want to better understand how my daily actions as a lecturer can influence young people's career choices.

**– What interests you the most in these projects?**

I like numbers and their analysis – trying to understand what really lies

behind statistics. The projects combine quantitative data and qualitative insights, allowing us to see not only trends but also real human stories.

For example, 2023 statistics show that Lithuania and Latvia were leaders in terms of the share of women in science and technology – as many as 63 percent of employees were women. At first glance, this may raise the question of whether we should start talking about greater involvement of men. However, a more thorough analysis reveals that men more often choose the business sector because of higher salaries, while in science there is more space left for women, who often prioritize self realization.

**– What does openness mean to you?**

Openness to me means the freedom to share the knowledge and experience, as well as the willing-

ness to listen to another person and accept their arguments. This helps to form a broader perspective and creates conditions for new ideas to spread more quickly.

A common mistake is to confuse openness with sociability or self confidence. Often, a person who lacks self confidence masks

insecurity by trying to be visible. In such situations, an open dialogue is often replaced with political decisions, manipulation, or attempts to bypass the problem. As a result, time is wasted on interpretations, searching for compromises, or covering up newly emerging problems.

In my opinion, true openness provides more clarity and increases work efficiency. It begins with the ability to listen, accept criticism, and, if necessary, devote additional time to understanding another opinion.

#### – How is openness related to innovation?

Essentially, innovation is impossible without openness. In order to create something new, we must first understand what already exists and not be afraid to look at problems from a different angle. Only by being open can we expect faster innovation development.

However, innovation is closely linked to economics. The one who innovates first usually gains a com-

petitive advantage, but this requires significant effort and resources. It is often economically more beneficial to be second – to adopt the experience of the first, use fewer resources, and, with stronger marketing, become more visible in the market. For this reason, some innovators are not inclined to share their experience completely openly.

From the perspective of society, this slows down the progress, but from the perspective of a particular innovator, it is an attempt to optimise the achieved results. That is why the academic environment is very close to me. The activities of researchers are essentially based on openness and the dissemination of new ideas. Since we are not directly encouraged to exploit the economic potential of innovation, we can significantly contribute to ensuring that the pace of innovation does not slow down but grows.

#### – How does openness help generate ideas and search for solutions?

The greatest creative pleasure for me comes from open discussions. It is during them that new ideas and unexpected solutions are born. The interaction of different experiences and perspectives allows us to see problems more broadly and find more original solutions. It resembles the functioning of collective consciousness – a single person at the level of a neuron, acting in isolation, transmits little, but once connected to a network, begins to create new impulses.

However, it is not easy to find the right people for open discussions. We are often too busy, afraid of authority figures, or unable to find conversation partners who are ready to listen but exchange opinions and ideas. Therefore, I greatly value the colleagues and students at VILNIUS TECH who see the value of discussion and are willing to engage in joint projects.

When there are no discussion partners or the topic is not relevant to them, one has to discuss with



**First, we all have brains of the same size and the same opportunities to learn, so there is no reason why girls should not choose STEAM fields.**

prof. dr. Simona Ramanauskaite



oneself. From the outside, this may seem strange, but it is a developed ability – to analyze opinions, distance oneself from personal attitudes, and creatively search for alternative explanations or solutions. By the way, this principle is also applied by AI solutions today: modern chatbots, after generating a response, critique it themselves, adjust it, and find the most suitable option.

**– What does it mean to be a woman in the field of technology and innovation?**

When I applied for a bachelor's degree in information technology, I was very surprised by the question: "Why there? There are also feminine professions." At that time, I did not even understand that professions could be divided by gender – facts were important to me, not attitudes.

During my studies, I sometimes heard expressions of surprise, but they were more surprising than hurtful. There was no feeling of open discrimination at the time, because few would dare to say directly that they reject an opinion solely because of a person's gender.

Being a woman in the field of technology sometimes also opens additional opportunities. In striving for gender balance, event organizers actively look for female speakers. In such cases, an internal dilemma arises – are you invited because of your competence or because of your gender? However, the awareness that even one woman's voice in a space dominated by men can become motivation for other girls often outweighs the doubts.

**– How does openness help break stereotypes and achieve recognition in science?**

I think openness alone is not

enough. Breaking stereotypes and achieving recognition are most helped by visibility, activity, sociability, and networking. Although I mentioned networking last, in my case it is an essential element.



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Over the past five years, I have clearly felt the impact of networking. Previously, attempts to engage in international projects were often limited to initial contacts – Lithuania was considered a country that was not advanced enough, and in order to gain credibility, it was often necessary to involve more experienced men. However, after several successful collaborations, attitudes began to change. Now former partners initiate new activities themselves, and acquaintances made at events often turn into real projects. Openness is necessary when accepting invitations to collaborate, while responsibility and keeping promises allow these connections to become long term partnerships.

**– What would you advise young women who want to enter the world of digital technologies?**

It is often observed that girls and

women want to contribute to social welfare, to help, and to create change. Digital technologies are often associated with high salaries rather than with "changing the world." However, in reality, digital

technologies today are one of the most powerful forces transforming society.

Greater involvement of women could help create more user friendly, socially sensitive, and sustainable solutions. Therefore, when speaking with pupils and students, I usually emphasize several things. First, we all have brains of the same size and the same opportunities to learn, so there is no reason why girls should not choose STEAM fields. Also, in the world of digital technology users, there are as many men as women. So why are they created by such a disproportionate group of people?

And most importantly – do not allow yourself to be evaluated based on gender, age, or other external characteristics. If you feel that someone doubts you, demonstrate your abilities. Your example can fundamentally change the situation.

# From doctoral studies to the most cited researcher: **the path of Prof. Dr. Ieva Meidute-Kavaliauskiene**

Have you ever wondered what determines the real impact and popularity of some of the work of researchers? Is it consistent and focused work, the main objective of the research, or perhaps the contribution of a properly selected team?



**W**

e speak with one of the most cited researchers – Prof. Dr. Ieva Meidute-Kavaliauskiene, Head of the Department of Business Technologies and Entrepreneurship at the Faculty of Business Management at VILNIUS TECH. She shares her accumulated experience, research directions, and insights into the challenges and opportunities of modern science.

**– You are one of the most cited researchers in your field. What has been the main contributor to the visibility and impact of your work?**

In my opinion, the greatest impact on the visibility of my work has been systematic and focused scientific activity carried out over many years. I began my path as a researcher during my doctoral studies at VILNIUS TECH and continue along it to this day.

Visibility and citation have been strengthened by a clear focus on strategically important topics that are relevant internationally and respond to current scientific issues. Topics raised at the right time naturally attract broader attention from researchers and are more often included in the work of other authors.

**– Citation indicators often reflect not only individual contribution but also collaboration. What role does teamwork play in your research?**

The citation indicator itself is a quantitative measure of scientific evaluation that shows how often a researcher's publications, a journal's work, or an institu-

tion's research are cited in other scientific works. It reflects the relevance of a researcher's work. Teamwork is an essential factor that directly influences both the quality of scientific results and their visibility.

Modern scientific challenges are usually complex, so solving them requires various competences – theoretical, methodological, and empirical. Teamwork allows these competences to be combined and enables more thorough as well as well grounded results. This is all based on attracting and involving researchers from different fields and countries.



**Openness is first expressed through open communication and transparency at all stages of research - from formulating research questions to interpreting results.**

prof. dr. Ieva Meidute-Kavaliauskiene



Collaboration with researchers from different fields and countries also contributes to a broader understanding of the research context and greater relevance of results. Cooperation creates wider academic networks and greater dissemination of results.

**– How do you form your research team?**

First of all, I follow the research question and its complexity. The composition of the team depends on the theoretical, methodological, and empirical competences required to implement a specific study. The team agrees on research goals, working principles,

and authorship so that cooperation is transparent and sustainable.

I also actively seek international and interdisciplinary cooperation, as researchers from different countries and fields allow the same phenomenon to be viewed from a broader perspective. Finally, I see the team as a learning environment – I encourage mentorship, knowledge sharing, and continuous professional growth, which in the long term strengthens both individual and collective scientific contribution. Among my co authors are well known Lithuanian researchers such as habil. dr. prof. Edmun-

das Kazimieras Zavadskas, prof. dr. Vida Davidaviciene, foreign colleagues such as prof. dr. Fernando Ferreira, prof. dr. Kannan Govindan, as well as young researchers and doctoral students.

**– Please tell us about your research field and the main object of your research. Why does this topic seem important to you in the context of today's science and society?**

My research field is business, logistics, and supply chain management. I devote much attention to their efficiency, resilience, and sustainability in a rapidly changing business environment. The main object of my research is how com-



**Research on the digitalization and management of supply chains today becomes one of the key topics linking scientific research and real business needs.**

prof. dr. Ieva Meidute-Kavaliauskiene



panies can form and manage supply chains using advanced decision making methods, digital technologies, and innovative business models. This topic is highly relevant in today's business and scientific context, as companies face increasing uncertainty, fluctuations in global markets, supply disruptions, and growing competitive pressure. Technologies such as the Internet of Things, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and automated information systems fundamentally change the functioning of supply chains, the speed of decision making, and the transparency of business processes. Research in this area helps to understand how digital solutions can increase operational efficiency, reduce risks, and create long term competitive value.

From a scientific perspective, I believe my research contributes to the development of decision making theories, multi criteria evaluation methods, and the application of digital transformation in business and logistics systems. In the context of

society and business, this field is important in striving for more sustainable use of resources, more responsible business decisions, and greater resilience of economic systems. Therefore, research on the digitalization and management of supply chains today becomes one of the key topics linking scientific research and real business needs.

**– How does your research contribute to broader scientific discussions or practical solutions?**

It expands understanding of how modern supply chains operate in a complex, digitalized, and constantly changing business environment. On the scientific level, it integrates theories of logistics, business management, and decision making by proposing new or adapted multi criteria evaluation, optimization, and analysis methods. Additionally to deepening theoretical discussions about the efficiency, resilience, and sustainability of supply chains it also provides methodological tools that other research-

ers can apply in different contexts.

From a practical perspective, my research focuses on real business challenges. It helps companies and public sector organizations make data based decisions, especially those related to digitalization, risk management, and process optimization in supply chains. Research results are often transformed into recommendations for technology implementation, performance evaluation, or strategic choices that can increase organizational competitiveness and resilience.

My work also contributes to broader discussions about sustainable business development and digital transformation. It helps connect academic insights with practical solutions, thus reducing the gap between science and business practice. This encourages the real applicability of research results.

**– How does openness manifest in your scientific activity when collaborating with other researchers?**

Openness is first expressed

through open communication and transparency at all stages of research – from formulating research questions to interpreting results. When collaborating with other researchers, for me, it is important to clearly agree on common goals, methodological decisions, data use, and authorship, which leads to cooperation based on trust and professional ethics.

From a scientific perspective, openness is also reflected in sharing methodologies, data, and research results whenever possible. This allows other researchers to critically evaluate, replicate, or expand the conducted studies, thereby contributing to the accumulation

is different academic cultures, work pace, and research traditions. This can lead to differences in expectations regarding publication, methodology, or the decision making process. Challenges also arise from different understanding of terms, concepts, or even problems, especially in interdisciplinary research.

Another important aspect is communication. Different languages, time zones, and work habits require additional attention to coordination, and lack of clarity in communication can slow down work or cause misunderstandings. In interdisciplinary teams, it often takes more time to reach a common methodological and conceptual founda-

Over many years, trust and understanding develop.

### **– How do you evaluate the involvement of young researchers in team based research?**

I evaluate the involvement of young researchers in team based research and joint publications very positively, because at one time someone believed in me and accepted me into a team. It is true that I faced challenges, but I managed to overcome them, and now I am where I am supposed to be.

I believe it is especially important for young colleagues to feel that their ideas are heard and valued, even if they are not yet fully refined. Teamwork, research, and publications provide space for discussion, experimentation, and mistakes, which are a natural part of scientific learning. I am in favor of it.

### **– What would you advise researchers who aim to create open, collaboration based, and internationally visible research?**

I would advise not being afraid to step out of your comfort zone in terms of topics, partners, and co authors. Interdisciplinary research and collaboration with researchers from different fields often require more effort, but they open opportunities for new ideas and more original results that receive greater international attention.

It is also important to purposefully increase your visibility in the scientific community. This includes not only publishing in high level journals but also actively participating in scientific discussions, working groups, editorial boards, or international projects. Open and consistent communication of your research helps to build a clear scientific profile.



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prof. dr. Ieva Meidutė-Kavaliauskienė



of knowledge. When collaborating with international partners, openness means respect for different academic cultures and perspectives, flexibility, and willingness to learn from one another.

### **– What challenges arise when working in international or interdisciplinary teams? How do you overcome them?**

There are indeed many challenges when working in international and interdisciplinary teams. One of them

tion. However, these challenges can be overcome by clearly defining working principles, using regular and structured communication, maintaining an open attitude toward different perspectives, and showing mutual respect. In practice, flexibility also proves effective – the ability to adapt, seek compromise, and learn from one another.

When working with long term co authors, such problems no longer arise. We know each other, understand deadlines and work quality.

# Fashion communication: experiences, research, and future perspectives

Fashion communication is increasingly becoming the center of discussions, yet in Lithuania this field is still considered relatively new. Among members of society, fashion is often perceived as a rather superficial phenomenon associated with consumerism and short term trends. However, academic research shows something different – not only does fashion communication shape cultural symbols or consumer behavior, it also builds social identities.

**A**n interview with Dr. Sigita Kamasauske, a lecturer at the Department of Creative Communication at Vilnius Tech and the first person at the university to defend a doctoral degree in the field of communication and information, reveals that experience gained in the sector of fashion industry can be successfully transformed into a field of research.

**– Fashion communication in Lithuania is still considered a relatively new and not much explored field. What is the development of this field and its potential in the academic context?**

Fashion communication has great potential in the academic context, and I am extremely happy to explore this topic in my research as well as in the lectures I teach. I understand the popular view of fashion and the superficiality and consumerism associated with it. However, studying fashion communication contributes to the understanding of cultural symbols, digital changes, and consumer behavior. For example, the area analyzed in my disser-

ation – mass prestige – is a popular and increasingly growing segment. Its emergence was influenced by changing and increasingly hedonistic consumer habits, a financially strengthening middle class, and of course social media, which shape the perception of prestige.

Fashion communication is a powerful field that influences our everyday choices as consumers. What we consider beautiful or not beautiful depends not only on personal taste but also on how often and in what context we see something. This is the influence of fashion communication, which we may not always recognize, but everyone encounters it in one way or another.

**– Your academic path began with practical experience in the fashion industry. How did real work in this field shape your research direction and your approach to science?**

Before starting my doctoral studies, I had accumulated significant experience in the fashion business. I worked in various positions in the fashion field for ten years, so it was natural for me to want to research a

field I'm so familiar with. From the practical world I brought very real problems – in my last workplace I worked in marketing with Lithuanian brands. Many times I thought: we Lithuanians create wonderful products that are not inferior in quality and design to global brands, but why do we so often fail to create a sense of prestige and even simplify the product through our communication? Why does communication so often emphasize features that could sell rather than the brand identity? I also noticed the similarity between brands, as they try to fit into certain social media trends and conform to a certain canon.

I am very grateful to the supervisor of my dissertation, Professor Zivile Sedereviciute Paciauskiene, who supported me, trusted me, and joined me in this adventure of researching fashion communication. I was not only the first person to defend a doctoral degree in communication and information at the university, but also one of the few speaking about fashion in an academic context. Such a choice required focus, openness, and ambition. I believe that my supervisor and I were a great team.

**– In your opinion, how can openness within the community and practical experience contribute to a deeper understanding of fashion communication?**

Cooperation between academics and practitioners is undoubtedly beneficial for both sides. Offering



science based solutions in this dynamic field allows us to maintain a strong backbone in communication and, therefore, avoid quick solutions that in the long term do not build a strong reputation or brand image.

However, I clearly understand why dialogue between academics and practitioners does not happen so often in this industry. Communication is often perceived as an intuitive science. Corporate communication is created by trained professionals who constantly update their competencies through various courses, so there is often no need to research or understand it from a

scientific perspective. This is a logical tendency. However, building a communication strategy purely on intuition or on the rhythm dictated by social media algorithms is risky. Especially since fashion is not only about product communication, it is a reflection of society. Communication science examines the process of how a message is sent, received, and interpreted, and what meanings symbols and signs carry. I also tell students that communication looks into the environment we operate, often without even realizing it, and scientific insights help us be in the right place at the right

time. This leads to the creation of communication that is sustainable both in time and space.

I believe that academic research should be heard more often by practitioners, and practical problems should inspire research. I observe the communication of fashion brands and can say that the difference between those who simply transmit a message and those whose communication is deep is very noticeable.

**– While preparing your dissertation, you gained international experience and received support from foreign colleagues. How did this collaboration enrich your research and professional development?**

A very significant contribution to my dissertation preparation was the opportunity to participate in FAC-TUM conferences organized by USI, the University of Italian Switzerland. When I first attended a conference in Italy, in the city of Pisa, I met many like minded people. This experience greatly increased my motivation to move forward. I realized that I was not alone and that my field of academic interest is recognized and relevant worldwide. It sounds simple, but this realization was very important at that time.

I felt the immense support of Dr. Nadzeya Sabatini, who not only encouraged me to continue with my work but even became a member of my dissertation defense committee. For me this is a huge gift – to have like minded experts from all over the world who study the phenomenon of fashion communication from different perspectives.

**– What role did the open exchange of ideas and collaboration with other researchers play in your academic path?**

Although the academic path may

seem very individual and even lonely, my journey was different. I have always enjoyed communicating and sharing ideas, so the connections I formed strengthened me in many ways. I always accepted criticism and suggestions about my research with an open heart. Unlike in everyday life, where it is not always easy to listen to criticism, in the academic sphere I am very open and attentive. I appreciated everyone who took the time to analyze my work and give advice. There is a saying that it takes a whole village to raise a child, and writing a dissertation also truly requires dialogue, cooperation, and support from the entire faculty.

As a young researcher, many questions arise and it is impossible to know everything. Therefore cooperation with others is very important. I needed considerable help in developing the research methodology, and I am very grateful to Professor Asta Zelenkauskaitė for her involvement.

During my doctoral studies I often heard questions in my faculty such as: How are things going? Do you need help? How did the evaluation go? More than once I was surprised by how colleagues remember events important to me and how sincerely they care. The support of colleagues and other doctoral students meant a lot to me. Now I also try to support others as I know that when you feel supported things get done more easily.

**– You started teaching while still preparing your dissertation. How did this early involvement in teaching influence you as a researcher and as an educator?**

My story may sound like a success story, but teaching, which appeared in my life during the second year of my doctoral studies, became

my great passion. Eventually I gave up other jobs and the work of a lecturer became my main activity. I have always enjoyed speaking in front of an audience and sharing experience and knowledge, but the opportunity to teach was extremely valuable for me. Now I truly feel that I am in the right place.

I try to combine teaching and research by involving students in activities and sharing insights during lectures. I believe that it is very important for students to see an active lecturer because it builds reputation and trust. It is also personally rewarding to think that I might be an inspiration and motivation for someone to move forward and search for their own path.

**– How does openness manifest itself in teaching, in the relationship with students and in the learning process?**

Our goal as lecturers is always to enable a person to be successful and valued after graduation, so openness to new methods and creative lectures is a priority for me. However, a person truly deserves a capital letter – open communication creates an environment where skills and values can develop, which our students will later bring to the labor market. Each of my lectures begins with the question "How are you doing?" With this question I consciously initiate dialogue. I am interested in what is new in their academic lives, and sometimes they also share personal experiences. I often consult students individually, and each consultation ends with encouragement and motivation to move forward. I also feel the gratitude of students, and that is the greatest reward for me.

Social media and its trends are an important part of your dissertation. How do you evaluate the phenome-

non of fashion brand communication on social media today?

Content created by fashion brands on social media today is an independent product with its own audience, and the receiver of the content is an active participant who creates and recreates meanings. A social media account today acts as a facade that gives an impression and emotion about a brand before it even presents the product. I believe that this understanding changes a lot.

From what I've observed on social media, the communication of the brands, whether luxury or mass prestige, today is not about direct selling. It focuses on identity formation and building a relationship with the consumer, who today expresses a great desire to belong to a community. This can be seen in the choice of models selected by the brands to present their products – mature people are appearing more often because their bodies tell unique stories. Today social media communication is about creating value and using cultural codes, and this trend feels very close to me.

**– What does it mean to you personally to be an open scientist?**

For me, being an open scientist and lecturer means two things – constant improvement and creativity. I often think that by teaching others you learn much more yourself. You must always stay interested in the world, in the newest research, and of course continue to create.

I have a bachelor degree in arts, and perhaps that is why there is an untiring creator within me. I constantly have ideas about what could be created, organized, or done differently. The freedom to create and constant development define my path. These are important values to me, and there is a reason why it is said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

# Integration, challenges, and creativity: experiences of international lecturers at the university

Internationalisation and a culture of innovation hold a very important place at VILNIUS TECH. Lecturers working here actively engage in research activities, interdisciplinary projects, and community life, while students are encouraged to think creatively and express their ideas boldly.

**I**t is important to understand that the beginning of an academic journey is unique – it includes integration into the community and the ability to adapt to a new, unfamiliar environment.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Olusola Oluwakemi Abayomi Alli and Dr. Adebayo

Adewumi Abayomi-Alli from Nigeria, as well as lecturer Yeganeh Arblousabet from Iran, share their experiences of integrating into the university community, the challenges they faced, the teaching methods they apply, and the importance of an international environment. Their insights reveal not only per-

sonal and professional experiences, but also a broader perspective on academic culture and its development in an international context.

## – How did you integrate into the academic community?

**O. O. Abayomi Alli:** Since I started teaching at the university in 2024,



 Dr. Adebayo Adewumi Abayomi-Alli

my integration into the academic community has been very smooth. I was fortunate to receive support from colleagues at the Faculty of Fundamental Sciences. Their openness and willingness to collaborate are truly inspiring – both in joint scientific discussions and in preparing project proposals. Support from colleagues encourages both professional growth and meaningful academic dialogue.

**A. A. Abayomi Alli:** My integration into the university's academic community has been very positive. From the very beginning, colleagues and administrative staff were friendly and willing to collaborate and exchange ideas.

The university has a strong culture of innovation, making it easy to engage in meaningful discussions about teaching, research, and interdisciplinary cooperation.

**Y. Arablousabet:** My experience has been very good. At first, it took some time to understand how everything works and find my place. I felt supported by colleagues, which made integration much easier. Over time, through teaching and daily communication with colleagues and students, I became more confident.

#### – What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?

**O. O. Abayomi Alli:** As in any new environment, it took time to understand institutional procedures and balance teaching, research, and project activities. I overcame these challenges by actively seeking mentors among experienced colleagues and getting involved in various initiatives.

**A. A. Abayomi-Alli:** One of the main challenges when joining a new academic community is understanding institutional processes and adapting to a different ed-



⬆ Assoc. Prof. Dr. Olusola Oluwakemi Abayomi Alli

ucation system, as each university has its own rules, teaching traditions, and administrative procedures. I overcame this by staying open, asking questions, and learning from experienced colleagues. Over time, this helped me better understand the academic environment and adjust my teaching and communication style to meet students' needs.

**Y. Arablousabet:** One challenge was finding the most effective way to engage students in active learning, especially those who were initially hesitant to express their opinions or share ideas. I addressed this by using real-life examples in lectures and encouraging students to participate in discussions. Over time, this helped create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment.

#### – What methods or practices do you use to encourage students

#### to experiment, create, and implement their ideas?

**O. O. Abayomi Alli:** I apply active learning and collaborative group work, with the main goal of applying theoretical knowledge in real-life situations. I encourage students to justify their chosen methods, test assumptions, and critically evaluate results. I also create a safe learning environment where failure is seen as an essential part of experimentation and a natural part of learning. In addition, I integrate research-oriented tasks that foster creativity, independence, and the ability to implement ideas in practice.

**A. A. Abayomi-Alli:** I try to create a learning environment where students feel free to explore their ideas and are not afraid to take risks. I use project-based learning, open discussions, and tasks that encourage problem-solving rather than simply finding predefined answers. I also emphasise that experimen-

tation and occasional failure are natural parts of the learning process. When students feel supported and see that their ideas are valued, they begin to create innovative solutions and think independently.

**Y. Arablousabet:** I try to connect students' work with real-life decision-making so they learn to compare ideas, evaluate alternatives, and justify their choices from different perspectives. I also encourage them to think more broadly – not only about technical aspects, but also about feasibility, impact, and long-term value. This helps them feel more confident in implementing ideas, developing solutions, and making well-founded decisions.

**– What differences do you notice between Lithuanian and international students?**

**O. O. Abayomi Alli:** Lithuanian students often have strong analytical skills and discipline. International students bring diverse academic experiences and different perspectives, which enrich classroom discussions. Although learning styles may differ, both groups are motivated and curious.

**A. A. Abayomi Alli:** I highly value the diversity of groups. Lithuanian and international students often bring different academic experiences and learning styles. Lithuanian students are very hardworking, while international students often have a broader outlook shaped by different education systems and cultures. These differences enrich discussions and allow students to learn not only from lecturers but also from each other.

**Y. Arablousabet:** Both Lithuanian and international students have strong qualities. Lithuanian students are often responsible, hardworking, and consistent, taking their

studies seriously. International students are often open, adaptable, and confident in sharing ideas. In both groups, I see highly competent students, and their combination creates a very valuable learning environment where they can learn from each other by exchanging experiences and perspectives.

**– How do different cultures and perspectives contribute to an open, international learning environment at VILNIUS TECH?**

**O. O. Abayomi Alli:** Cultural diversity greatly enriches the academic experience. Different perspectives encourage critical thinking, creativity, and openness to alternative solutions. In an international classroom, students on top of subject knowledge also gain intercultural communication and collaboration skills.

**A. A. Abayomi Alli:** Cultural diversity is essential for creating an open and dynamic learning envi-

ronment. Students from different countries bring various perspectives, problem-solving approaches, and communication styles. These become especially visible in teamwork. This encourages broader thinking and helps develop key competencies such as adaptability and collaboration, which are essential in the global job market.

**Y. Arablousabet:** I believe different cultures and perspectives bring vibrancy.

Students contribute different experiences, ways of thinking, and problem-solving strategies, making discussions more engaging. It helps to understand that one problem can be approached from multiple perspectives and that there is not always a single correct answer. In such an environment, students gain something that goes beyond subject knowledge – they learn to listen to others, collaborate, and appreciate different opinions.



Lecturer  
Yeganeh Arablousabet

# VILNIUS TECH

Business

Talent

# GRA



# ITY

2026

04 16

## Career day

General partners

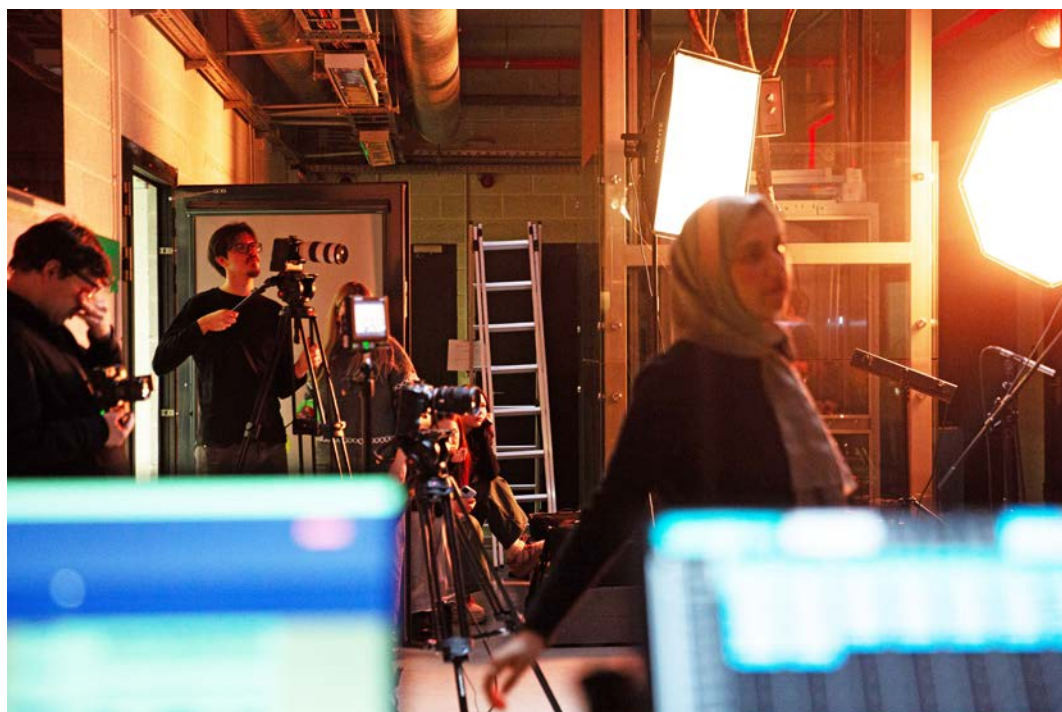
EPSO-G

Naujoji energetika



VILNIUS





# Media School – when students’ ideas become real solutions

Imagine a place where students can apply their ideas in a creative process, work with real music performers and help produce live performance videos. Such an opportunity is offered by the Media School – an intensive international Erasmus+ program.

**H**ere, students from VILNIUS TECH and partner universities improve their technical, teamwork and creative communication skills, also learn how to solve

the challenges of real projects. The two week program allows students to closely experience the working principles of the creative industries, develop both professional and communication skills, and create con-

tent that reaches music performers.

The Media School project "Sound and Vision: Mastering Music Video Creation" is implemented under the Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (BIP). Participants

learn the principles of visual storytelling and sound recording techniques while producing live performance video clips for young Lithuanian music performers.

According to Dr. L. Peciure, director of the Creativity and Innovation Centre LinkMenu fabrikas, the Media School gives students the opportunity to work directly with music performers.

"Students not only improve their technical skills but also learn teamwork and creative communication – they analyze songs, search for visual solutions, record sound, film, and edit the final videos. The entire creative process reflects the real working principles of the creative industries, where artistic ideas must be combined with technical possibilities," she explains.

Working with music groups goes beyond developing only technical skills, it teaches communication and negotiation abilities. As in the professional sector, students must find a balance between the artist's vision and a high quality audiovisual solution.

The Media School is a short term intensive project lasting two weeks. The first week takes place online



The diversity of cultures and experiences is one of the greatest challenges and at the same time one of the most valuable gifts for students. They have to work with colleagues from different universities and cultures, find the best ways to collaborate, and how to work effectively together.

L. Peciure



and during the second week students meet and work in person at the Creativity and Innovation Centre LinkMenu fabrikas. During the theoretical week, students participate in interactive lectures and practical workshops focusing on the specifics of lighting, sound engineering, filming, and editing. During the in person sessions, filming with music groups takes place, which is followed by the editing process.

The aim of the program is not only teaching students how to produce high quality audio and video recordings of live music performances but also providing valuable practical experience that reflects real work in the industry. This benefits both the students and the performers, who receive professionally created content for their further creative activities.

According to Dr. L. Peciure, it is equally important that the Media School encourages students to think critically and responsibly. They must come up with an idea that is both technically and practically feasible within a very short time, with limited resources and a team in which each member has different levels of experience and



preparation. Participants may include students who already have experience on film sets or in sound recording studios, as well as those with no prior experience. The greatest responsibility lies in the fact that the final result of the students' work will be evaluated not only academically but also be delivered to the music group or performer, who will perform and publish the work.

"We give students complete freedom to propose their own ideas.

Music performers or groups participate in the Media School activities and collaborate, but they do not present their own ideas. Students create everything from the beginning, taking into account our spaces and technical possibilities. Most of the time we help them implement even their boldest ideas. Music groups always support and inspire the students," shares Dr. L. Peciure.

During the program, students work with real, actively performing music groups or artists. Usually these are young groups that are just starting their careers.

"The diversity of cultures and experiences is one of the greatest challenges and at the same time one of the most valuable gifts for students. They have to work with colleagues from different universities and cultures, find the best ways to collaborate, and how to work effectively together. This broadens their worldview, helps them build new connections, and gain valuable contacts for future projects," adds Dr. L. Peciure.



# “Atlantu Balkonas” – a place where ideas meet’

The current era could easily be called the era of podcasts. For this reason, representatives of the VILNIUS TECH Faculty of Creative Industries (KIF) decided not to stay on the sidelines and, therefore, created their own conversation platform.

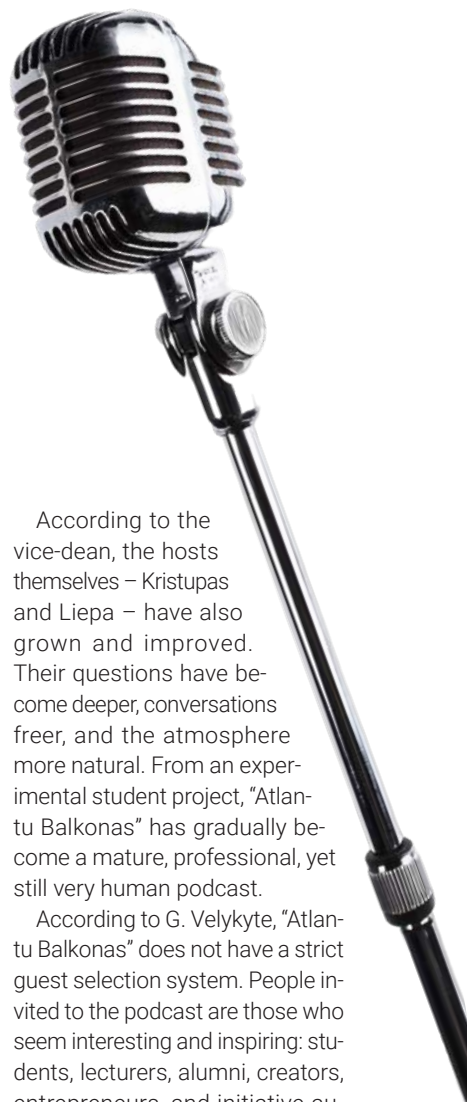
**A**tlantu Balkonas” was launched two years ago after realizing that such a format was also needed for the university community. The podcast is hosted by students – it is not formal university communication, but a platform created and moderated by young people with naturally presented conversations. Students’ questions are often bolder, more sincere, and closer to a younger audience needs.

According to Vice-Dean for Communication, Alumni and Partnerships Gabija Velykyte, the main idea was simple – to create a place where members of the university community and guests could talk about achievements, choices, values and share doubts. Explore what remains behind official roles or titles.

“The search for the name ‘Atlantu Balkonas’ was not easy – there were many discussions in order to find a name connected to the faculty and its space. The inspiration came from an architectural detail that we see every day but do not always notice. Have you ever walked along Traku Street, looked up, and thought: ‘Wow, what an impressive balcony. I wonder who is based here?’ – this is how the pod-

cast description begins, inviting reflection on what lies behind the building’s doors. Behind them are not only lecture rooms and offices, but also ideas, discussions, ambitions of young people, and the courage to create. The balcony is supported by two strong atlases, as if guarding the entire building where KIF is located. This architectural symbol became a metaphor for openness – the opportunity to speak without masks while maintaining respect and responsibility,” says the vice-dean.

According to G. Velykyte, since its first seasons, “Atlantu Balkonas” has changed significantly. At first, it was an experimental student project, searching for its format, style, and filming locations. Episodes were created in various spaces – from laboratories and foyers to the vice-dean’s office – and the process itself was full of improvisation and learning. This year, the project returned at full capacity – filming moved to the Creativity and Innovation Centre “LinkMenu fabrikas,” “Faux Real Studio,” professional equipment is used, and a team of nearly 20 people is working on the project. There is now a clearer structure, stronger visual quality, and projected greater confidence.



According to the vice-dean, the hosts themselves – Kristupas and Liepa – have also grown and improved. Their questions have become deeper, conversations freer, and the atmosphere more natural. From an experimental student project, “Atlantu Balkonas” has gradually become a mature, professional, yet still very human podcast.

According to G. Velykyte, “Atlantu Balkonas” does not have a strict guest selection system. People invited to the podcast are those who seem interesting and inspiring: students, lecturers, alumni, creators, entrepreneurs, and initiative authors. What matters is that their stories are relevant not only to the university community, but also to a wider audience. Often, the decision is intuitive – after hearing about someone or seeing their ac-

tivities, it is interesting to have them to talk about it.

“Different people open up in different ways – some quickly and boldly, others need time, safety, and trust. Openness depends on whether a person feels heard. When a conversation does not turn into an interrogation, and questions come from genuine curiosity, natural presentation appears. The podcast hosts – students – are increasingly exploring their guests’ activities, learning to ask open questions, waiting for answers, and are not afraid of silence. The main goal is to create a safe atmosphere filled with respect and curiosity,” notes the vice-dean.

Openness, according to G. Velykyte, does not mean pressure or provocation. During a conversation, it is important to feel boundaries, observe the guest’s body language, tone, and reactions. If a topic is sensitive, a question can be rephrased or the guest can decide how much they want to reveal. “Atlantu Balkonas” is not about chasing sensations – it is a dialogue where both sides should feel safe.

Although podcast topics are usually appropriate, people often avoid talking about mistakes, failures, or doubts. It is easy to talk about success, but much harder to talk about weakness. However, sincere stories about challenges are probably what resonate most with listeners and create a real connection with the audience.

“Atlantu Balkonas” allows the university to be visible more broadly. Through authentic conversations, the life, values, and identity of the community are revealed. Listening to these stories strengthens mutual understanding, and connections are formed not only within the university, but also with prospective students, partners, and society. It

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Different people open up in different ways – some quickly and boldly, others need time, safety, and trust. Openness depends on whether a person feels heard.

Gabija Velykyte

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is an open creative space where everyone can participate – university staff, students, lecturers, and alumni. It is a shared project, created together, and that is exactly why it is so valuable,” emphasises G. Velykyte.

#### HOST LIEPA

“For me, ‘Atlantu Balkonas’ is not just a university podcast – this project has opened many new opportunities. I clearly remember the moment when I was invited as a guest: the unique atmosphere and the warm connection that formed with Kristupas led to me soon receiving an offer to become part of the project and co-host the episodes. Although I hesitated for a moment about taking on a completely new role, I decided to challenge myself and learn something new.

This experience taught me not only how to manage a conversation, but also how to use psychology and body language to draw out deep and open responses from guests. Thanks to different episodes and guests, I expanded my horizons in

previously unfamiliar fields, built self-confidence, and learned the nuances of public communication, which still help me receive offers to host various events.

I am extremely happy that I allowed myself to try something completely new, be part of ‘Atlantu Balkonas’ and grow together with this project.”



#### HOST KRISTUPAS

‘Atlantu Balkonas,’ much like real balconies, invites you to observe people and events happening below from a different angle. As one of the hosts, it is an honour for me, with excited anticipation, to speak with stage stars, performers, and creators from the creative world, who willingly let me and the audience into the unseen backstage.

The hardest part is preparation, because it is essential to obtain unique and unheard information from guests, but to do so in a non-invasive way. It is not a series of uncomfortable questions, although personal topics do come up during conversations. You have to balance familiarity and politeness, revealing not only the guest as a colourful personality, but also as a technically skilled individual living their craft.

Each episode is full of new lessons and challenges that help grow not only me as a host, but also the viewer, who is taken into the limitless and exciting world of creative industries.”

# Where studies at VILNIUS TECH begin

The Admissions and Information Centre (SPIC) is much more than document processing or application deadlines to VILNIUS TECH. It is the first face of the university, the first conversation, often determining a young person's decision and courage to step into a new stage of life.

**L**ong-time SPIC employees share their experiences and memories of work where people, expectations, fears, and hopes meet. Decades of activity reveal not only changes in the admissions system, but also the human side of this work – from unexpected situations to lessons that stay for a lifetime.

## CHIEF SPECIALIST JURATE GIEDRAITIENE

Work at SPIC is closely related to young people who, upon finishing school, have many questions when choosing studies or preparing to submit applications. In my work, when communicating with young people, it is important to answer questions correctly, help find rele-

vant information within legal regulations as well as the vastness of the internet, and to encourage them to pursue their goals more confidently. This includes enrolling in studies, shaking off fears caused by not knowing procedures, and dispelling doubts about the difficulty of future studies.

I have also communicated with

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**The most important lesson I have learned in this job is that sincere communication with colleagues and applicants helps solve all problems.**

Jurate Giedraitiene

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many very concerned parents, teachers, even grandparents or other relatives – patiently listening to the problems their children face at school, when choosing exams and suitable study programmes. People are interested in everything: the university environment, study subjects, fees, dormitory conditions, admission statistics, labour market forecasts, and so on. By the way, even after enrolling, students return to SPIC with various questions, sometimes even looking for a classroom or a lecturer. Most likely, we have already helped them before, so they expect it again. We try not to disappoint.

Having worked in this field for more than three decades, I have greatly expanded my knowledge of the Lithuanian education system and its changes. I have seen how people's attitudes toward education have changed, as well as the strategies of higher education institutions toward applicants, and I have gained extensive communication experience.



**My work credo is sincerity and openness, because it helps establish better communication and makes it easier for people to ask questions.**

Jurate Giedraitiene

I often consider SPIC to be the initial face of the university. My work credo is sincerity and openness, because it helps establish better communication and makes it easier for people to ask questions. Over time, communication skills have also evolved, and remote platforms

and social networks have provided more opportunities to explore relevant topics, including university admissions.

I remember a funny and unexpected situation when one summer, early in the morning, around 4 a.m., a phone call woke me up. I quickly jumped out of bed, not fully aware of the time, and answered. It was a young man who had questions about admissions at such an early hour. Since I had already picked up, I had to provide a consultation. Although my sleep was disturbed, my reaction amused not only my colleagues when I told them, but also myself.

At work, together with my team, we try to stay calm and solve problems as rationally as possible, and in difficult situations with applicants or their anxious parents, I try not to engage in arguments. Conflicts are unavoidable, as someone may have expected a higher entry exam score or could not attend an exam because they were on holiday. I try to talk and understand the situa-

tion, and if it does not work out and the conversation does not end as hoped, I analyse my mistakes and try not to repeat them.

The most important lesson I have learned in this job is that sincere communication with colleagues and applicants helps solve all problems.

Knowledge and continuous interest in changes, both in work processes and in life around us, motivates me every morning to think about work with enthusiasm.

**ASSOC. PROF. DR. ARUNAS JARAS, DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED MECHANICS**

Having worked at SPIC for more than three decades, I have understood that working with people is a constant challenge. Those who have not worked in such a role will never fully understand it.

This job is special to me because of the entire admissions team, which resembles a family unit, where cooperation is based on mutual understanding and collegial support. One advantage of this work is that over time I have made friends and acquaintances across the entire university. I have also travelled across almost all of Lithuania, visiting many schools. I would say that this is exactly why working at SPIC has been enjoyable for so many years. However, in some cases, this job is certainly not easy. When the sun is shining outside in summer and all colleagues are on holiday or playing outside, the admissions team has to work very actively – without counting hours and sometimes without even having time for lunch. I clearly remember the explanation of the then Admissions Committee secretary – now Rector Prof. Dr. Romualdas Kliukas – about finishing the working day: “We work until the last client (applicant).”

Over time, the admissions process has changed significantly. In the past, higher education institutions handled admissions separately: the Admissions Committee was formed only for the summer, applications were submitted, and contracts were signed upon arrival

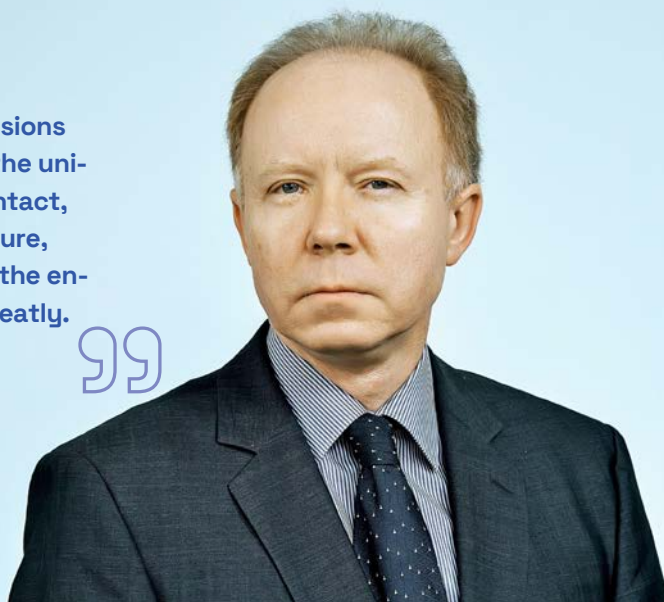


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**Undoubtedly, admissions are like the face of the university. The first contact, communication culture, attention, and even the environment matter greatly.**

Arunas Jaras

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at the institution. Later, when institutions joined the Lithuanian Higher Education Association for Joint Admissions (LAMA BPO), admissions began to be organised centrally. Opportunities and diversity increased, and the risk of not being admitted decreased. Initially, applications were still submitted in writing, but over the last decade or so, both applications and study contracts have been completed online.

The current activities of SPIC, compared to the former Admissions Committee, have fundamentally changed – primarily in workload and partly in nature. It is therefore encouraging that new team members are joining, partly inheriting established values while also bringing innovation and modernity. I wish them success.

Undoubtedly, admissions are like the face of the university. The first contact, communication culture, attention, and even the environment matter greatly.

I can illustrate this with my own

experience. I knew I would become an engineer, but I had not decided where or what exactly to study. So, as a young boy from Samogitia, I took my future seriously and went exploring. Kaunas did not leave much of an impression. Vilnius seemed more attractive – after all, it is the capital – but the main question was which faculty to choose. I visited one – it did not feel right. Then I went to Sauletekis, and there I found beautiful, new buildings, attentive reception, and professional conversation. That is how I chose civil engineering studies. At that time, it was only possible to apply to one higher education institution and one study programme.

Looking back on my long experience, I also remember funny and unexpected situations that still make me smile. Almost every season had its own highlight. Once, a mother and son applied to the same part-time study programme at the same time. When asked about this unusual choice, they explained that it

would be more convenient – they would attend lectures alternately.

I would consider the biggest university enthusiast to be a student who listed 19 VILNIUS TECH study programmes out of 20 possible choices in the application. However, one situation used to repeat itself every year, sometimes several times – the “super grandmothers.” They would often come to study fairs or even directly to the university and actively inquire about study opportunities for their grandchildren (who were usually somewhere else at the time). In such situations, admissions staff had to pass a true diplomacy test. Still, when you love your job, there are hardly any difficult situations. Although patience and diplomatic skills were certainly needed when explaining the same information repeatedly.

Over all the years spent at the university, I have learned a great deal. This activity spanning several decades has been like an extended lesson for me.

# A growing and changing university

In September 2026, new facilities of the Antanas Gustaitis Aviation Institute (840 sq. m) will be opened, dedicated to research, studies, and administration.



In autumn 2026, construction began in Klaipėda, on I. Kanto Street, on a new 1,500 sq. m Maritime Engineering and Renewable Energy Competence Center of the Lithuanian Maritime Academy.



Important environmental and materials science research relevant to Lithuania and the entire Baltic Sea region will be carried out in the renovated laboratories of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University's base laboratory in Juodkrantė.



Projects for the renovation of the outdoor spaces of the Faculty of Environmental Engineering and the amphitheatre have been prepared – their implementation works will begin soon. The Digital Defence Competence Centre is being established, the laboratories of the Building Materials Institute have been renovated, and the renovation of the first laboratory building of the Faculty of Fundamental Sciences is underway.



# VILNIUS TECH graduate D. Dundulis: open dialogue in an organization is essential



Openness is one of the core values not only in modern business, but also in leadership. Its contribution goes beyond building trust within a team as it also encourages creativity, discussions, and the emergence of innovation. Openness allows people to share ideas boldly, accept criticism, and continuously improve. For leaders, it is a tool that helps balance risks, strengthen the organization, and shape a transparent, responsible culture where employees feel valued and heard.

**W**e discuss this approach to doing business and practising leadership that is based on these ideas and values, with the CEO and head of UAB Rivona, the chairman of the board of the Norfa mazmena retail chain, and a graduate of the VILNIUS TECH Faculty of Civil Engineering, Dainius Dundulis. He shares his experience of how openness, transparency, and critical thinking shape his leadership style and organizational culture.

## – What does openness mean to you?

Openness is very important to me. In the business sector, we often encounter inaccurate or incomplete information. I believe that when you present all information openly and directly, many problems can be solved faster. People who cannot justify certain arguments usually withdraw and fall silent. Therefore, openness helps clearly resolve both moral and practical issues.

Openness is also important in

communication with society. When you openly express your thoughts, you receive feedback. Even if it is not always very constructive, it provides an opportunity to challenge your decisions, see the situation from other perspectives, and avoid misinterpretations.

## – How does openness encourage creativity and the generation of new ideas?

Open sharing of thoughts encourages discussion and allows new

ideas to emerge. Certain feedback makes you reflect, review your decisions, and look at them from various perspectives.

This is especially important when talking about innovation, because openness encourages critical evaluation of your ideas and continuous improvement.

**– How did your university experience shape your approach to business?**

The years of study provided a strong foundation, but the period in which I lived also had a strong impact. The collapse of the old system and the creation of a new one, along with emerging challenges, taught me to think independently and critically evaluate the information that reached me through various channels.

Technical foundations, such as calculation methods, remained important, but even more important was learning how to solve problems independently and understand causes beyond simply following instructions. This principle carried over into business – it is always important to know what you are doing and why.

**– What is the role of openness in effective leadership?**

In the business sector, openness helps solve problems faster and build trust with others. When we openly talk in a team about decisions, mistakes, or failures, the entire organization learns and becomes stronger.

For a leader, openness is important not only in communication but also in decision-making – it helps balance potential risks, promote innovation, and include different opinions in strategic processes.

**– How do technologies and new**

**ideas affect you as a leader?**

Modern business is highly dependent on technology. It allows faster decision-making, supports open communication, and enables experimentation with new ideas. Openness to technology and innovation inspires the team and helps discover new opportunities.

It is important to balance openness with caution – not all ideas succeed, but only by testing them can we discover the best ones. I would advise young managers to be bold, allow their teams to experiment, and treat openness as a strategic tool.

**– How would you describe your leadership style?**

The people I work with could describe it best. It is important to me that every employee clearly knows the boundaries of their responsibility – no employee can have two managers.

If I notice that certain changes are needed somewhere, I initiate them by speaking with managers to avoid chaos.

communicated using the organizational structure.

**– What values do you consider fundamental?**

Reliability and punctuality are very important to me. For example, if you make an agreement and do not fulfill certain commitments or fail to inform about a changed situation, working together becomes very difficult.

Planning and trust are the foundation of business.

**– How do you encourage open communication in your team?**

I see no communication obstacles with my team – everyone knows they can approach me at any time, inquire what is of interest to them, and discuss their concerns with me. We need to talk, not hide.

**– What would you advise those who want to be open but are afraid of criticism?**

If you are afraid, you will never accomplish anything. You need to put all fears aside and take action. We

“ Openness is very important to me. In the business sector, we often encounter inaccurate or incomplete information. I believe that when you present all information openly and directly, many problems can be solved faster.

Dainius Dundulis



The company employs more than 4,500 people, so I communicate daily with the central team and regional managers. In my opinion, changes must always be clearly

talk a lot but do too little. Criticism and ridicule will always exist – I experience it myself. That is the price we pay for taking action. But only by acting can we grow and improve.

# From the university to the executive chair: The story of construction engineering alumnus A. Guzikauskas

University studies often become one of the most important foundations for shaping a career. They provide not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills that help young specialists successfully begin their professional path.

**O**ne example is the VILNIUS TECH construction engineering alumnus and shareholder of KGC Group, Audrius Guzikauskas, who says that at the university he was immersed in the promising and interesting study program content and presented with the opportunity to solve real engineering tasks.

"My first job and my first real experience were related to general structures and facade design. I had enough theoretical knowledge, so I was glad to apply it in practice. It was a great opportunity to test the knowledge I had gained in real life," he recalls.

He emphasizes that although the studies were sometimes challenging, they helped him develop responsibility and independence.

"Even if some subjects were more difficult for me, for example physics, I understood that all the experiences gained contribute to overall understanding and the ability to solve real problems," he says.

According to Guzikauskas, the theoretical knowledge gained during his studies helped not only in his first job but also later when man-



*A. Guzikauskas, a shareholder of KGC Group, emphasizes that although his studies were challenging at times, they helped him develop a sense of responsibility and independence.*

aging a company: it allowed him to better understand processes, perform certain calculations, and make decisions based on logic. He says that a manager's day is full of challenges, especially when leading a company of about 500 people with divisions across Europe. The most important thing is to focus on clients and the quality of the services provided whilst maintaining good working atmosphere and communication with colleagues.

"In my opinion, every manager must set the right example. I have the opportunity not to go to work every day, but I do not take advantage of it. Sometimes colleagues ask me why I work if I could be resting. It is my sense of responsibility. I believe that a manager must set an example - if he does not do that, it is difficult to expect others to behave responsibly," explains the VILNIUS TECH alumnus.

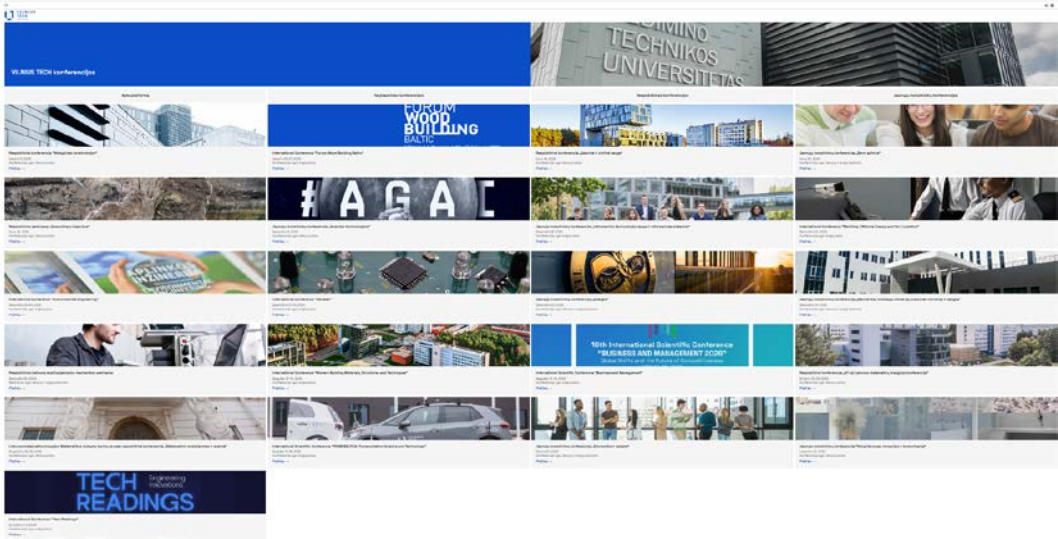
The VILNIUS TECH alumnus also highlights the importance of technol-

ogy in today's labor market and the competencies of young specialists.

"Modern students know how to work with the latest programs that did not even exist when I was studying. This gives them a huge advantage. I can confidently say that the most attention should be given to talented young people who understand what they are doing. It is also very important that universities are improving together with technology. This progress is clearly reflected in the high level of studies and the knowledge provided," he says.

Speaking about young people, Guzikauskas emphasizes that although today's students have many technical skills, they must also learn the sense of responsibility.

"The most important thing is to make an effort, keep learning, and not give up. This is necessary if you want to achieve success. After all, persistence and consistent work determine both personal and professional success."



## One platform for conference organization – for efficient organization, dissemination, and preservation of academic events

VILNIUS TECH is strengthening its reputation as a modern and open university – from now on, academic events will be organized more simply and smoothly. This initiative aims to promote scientific progress, share the latest research results, and develop international collaboration among researchers and students.

In order to improve the organization and communication processes of academic conferences, the team of specialists from the VILNIUS TECH Library has implemented a centralized VILNIUS TECH conference organization platform. This was achieved by relying on the cooperation with employees of the Research Directorate and their long term experience.



The platform is built on the open source Open Journal Systems (OJS) software developed by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP), an international non profit academic initiative. Its main goal is to promote open science, accessibility of knowledge, and sustainable infrastructure for scholarly communication. PKP solutions are widely used in universities and research institutions around the world, and their implementation at VILNIUS TECH ensures technological reliability, compliance with international standards, and the long term sustainability of the solution.

The functionalities of the newly implemented university conference

organization platform provide significant advantages for both conference organizers and presenters. For organizers, the platform enables centralized administration of conferences organized by different faculties, including presenter registration, participant lists, and conference programs. Automated and standardized processes simplify the submission and review of papers, allow efficient management of communication with authors, and enable tracking of program changes within a single platform.

For conference participants, the platform provides a convenient opportunity to find relevant conferences by topic, faculty, or date, en-









sureingą aiškų, transparentų, ir naudotojams draugišką dalyvavimo procesą tiek lietuviams, tiek tarptautiniams moksliniams tyrinėtojiams.

Viena svarbi platformos dalis yra publikavimo procesas, koordinuojamas VILNIUS TECH bibliotekos departamentų, atsakingų už publikavimo funkcijas. Jie užtikrina, kad konferencijų darbai atitiktų tarptautinius akademinio publikavimo standartus ir būtų tinkamai parengti, redaguoti ir viešai prieinami. Visi VILNIUS TECH konferencijų medžiagai yra uploaduoti į universiteto institucinį saugyklą, remiantis atviro prieigos principais, kurie užtikrina ilgalaikį mokslinių pristatymų archyvuojimą ir nuolatinį prieigą moksliniams rezultatams.



Centralizuota VILNIUS TECH konferencijų platforma padės organizuoti akademinis renginius lengviau, skatinti bendradarbiavimą, ir palengvinti mokslinių idėjų sklaidą.



Apie platformą	Tarptautinės konferencijos	Respublikinės konferencijos	Jaunųjų mokslininkų konferencijos
 <p><b>International Conference "Forum Wood Building Baltic"</b> Vasaris 20-27, 2020 Konferencija vyks anglų kalba. <a href="#">Plačiau →</a></p>	 <p><b>International Conference "Maritime, Offshore Energy and Port Logistics"</b> Balandžio 30, 2020 Konferencija vyks anglų kalba. <a href="#">Plačiau →</a></p>	 <p><b>International Conference "Environmental Engineering"</b> Balandžio 23-24, 2020 Konferencija vyks anglų kalba. <a href="#">Plačiau →</a></p>	 <p><b>International Conference "eStream"</b> Balandžio 23-24, 2020 Konferencija vyks anglų kalba. <a href="#">Plačiau →</a></p>
 <p><b>International Conference "Modern Building Materials, Structures and Techniques"</b> Gegužės 10-15, 2020 Konferencija vyks anglų kalba. <a href="#">Plačiau →</a></p>	 <p><b>International Scientific Conference "Business and Management"</b> Gegužės 14-15, 2020 Konferencija vyks anglų kalba. <a href="#">Plačiau →</a></p>	 <p><b>International Scientific Conference "TRANSBALTICA: Transportation Science and Technology"</b> Rugsėjo 11-18, 2020 Konferencija vyks anglų kalba. <a href="#">Plačiau →</a></p>	 <p><b>International Conference "Tech Readings"</b> Sruodžio 2-3, 2020 Konferencija vyks anglų kalba. <a href="#">Plačiau →</a></p>

# Creativity beyond university doors

We continue the section that was born in previous issues of the magazine, where we revealed that the creativity of the VILNIUS TECH community does not end in research laboratories or engineering solutions. Creativity lives on beyond work – each colleague has unique hobbies that reveal their talent and help maintain a balance between professional life and personal interests.

**I**n this section, we invite you to look at members of the university community from a different perspective – through hobbies, leisure activities, or creative initiatives. It can be art, sport, or music – every hobby tells a unique story.

**PROFESSOR DR. REMIGIJUS VENCKUS (DEPARTMENT OF GRAPHIC SYSTEMS)**  
**Art creation**

Photography and computers entered my life through a desire to explore, observe, and experience the world. Since my art studies (from 2000), I have used digital tools in my creative work. I have always wanted to expand my visual language through different forms of expres-



sion. In the past, I was very interested in moving image art (films), so I created quite a few video art works. After completing my bach-

elor's studies, I drew less and focused more on photography and video, while also working in graphic and web design.

Photography is my language and form of self-expression. Through it, I express my view of reality and my relationship with the surrounding world. Art creation is a tool for calmness and self-discovery. In the creative process, social roles disappear. There is no right or wrong, no mistakes or perfect solutions. To create means to reconcile and remain only with yourself. I believe this is the most difficult experience in life. If this inner agreement is reached, everything else in life falls into place more easily.

Since 2023, my creative direction has shifted toward painting.





elling, reading books, or visiting museums are just additions. Friends sometimes say you could never make me skydive or ski – and they are right. Let me photograph, paint, or think about art. That is enough for me.

**VICE-DEAN FOR  
COMMUNICATION, FACULTY  
OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT  
– ENRIKA LAUMENYTE**  
**Stand-up paddle boarding**



ing, and time is valuable in today's fast-moving world. That means I paint because I want to live richly and experience reality through touch, smell, and transformation. Painting engages more of my senses than looking at a screen.

Painting allows unpredictability, the creation of chance, and the discovery of unexpected color and composition nuances. Materiality, resistance of paint and canvas, and the uniqueness of hand movement are the true freedom and value of creation.

Art is my true passion, concern, and leisure. Other activities like trav-

I became interested in paddle boarding more than 10 years ago while finishing my second year of bachelor studies.

At the time, I was studying business management and working as a group fitness trainer. During summer, my workload decreased, and I was planning to go to Italy for a year under the Erasmus+ program. I started looking for active summer activities.

At that time, acquaintances had the idea to introduce paddle boards to the Lithuanian market – something still new globally – and I was invited to lead training sessions on water.

I have already held 16 solo exhibitions in Lithuania and abroad. This shift is partly related to technological changes in visual culture. While I still enjoy using digital tools, automation and artificial intelligence often make art feel repetitive. The problem arises when diversity disappears and original solutions decrease.

I prefer painting. It requires more time, but a painting is always more tangible than a composition on a screen.

Layering paint, removing excess, experimenting with rough drawing – all this demands deep concentration on the process. In painting, I cannot go back, so it requires precision and careful work. It is time-consuming,





It was supposed to be just a summer job, but I ended up taking paddle boarding equipment along with my suitcases to Italy.

Later, after returning to Lithuania, I managed the largest paddle boarding company and shop in the country.

Although I am no longer active in business, I remain the only person in Lithuania with the highest paddle boarding coaching qualification (ASI SUP Technical Coach).

In summer, I still go out on the water and teach others to overcome fears and paddle correctly. Paddle boarding has taught me a lot – I have travelled to beautiful places across Europe, from Alpine lakes to Norwegian fjords, and met inspiring people.

I hope to share some of these moments with VILNIUS TECH colleagues as well – feel free to join!

**PROFESSOR DR. ARTURAS JUKNA (DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS)**  
**Romance ensemble**

The romance ensemble “Juodoji roze” has existed for quite a long

time. The group mainly performs post-war romances, sometimes later ones as well.

However, the ensemble also includes newer works – both romances and poetry that fits the genre. Romances are a very emotional genre, closely tied to poetry. When music and words align, listeners can truly feel the message.

This hobby came into my life somewhat unexpectedly. A colleague I used to sing with in a choir invited me to join, knowing I liked playing guitar.

At first, I hesitated, but eventually I joined, selected chords, and started accompanying the songs. Since then, this hobby has continued for several years and has become an important part of my life.

The ensemble performs 10–15 times a year, traveling to different towns, participating in festivals, and performing for various audiences. Sometimes we get to perform in full halls, when people even have to stand with no seats left.

The repertoire is constantly changing, though we also repeat audience favorites. Members suggest songs, listen to recordings, and interpret them in our own way. The program is enriched by poetry readings by maestro Juozas Salkauskas. Each member contributes in their own way, giving the music a distinctive tone.

This is my second hobby, where music, words, creativity, and community meet – and where I can share and inspire others.

