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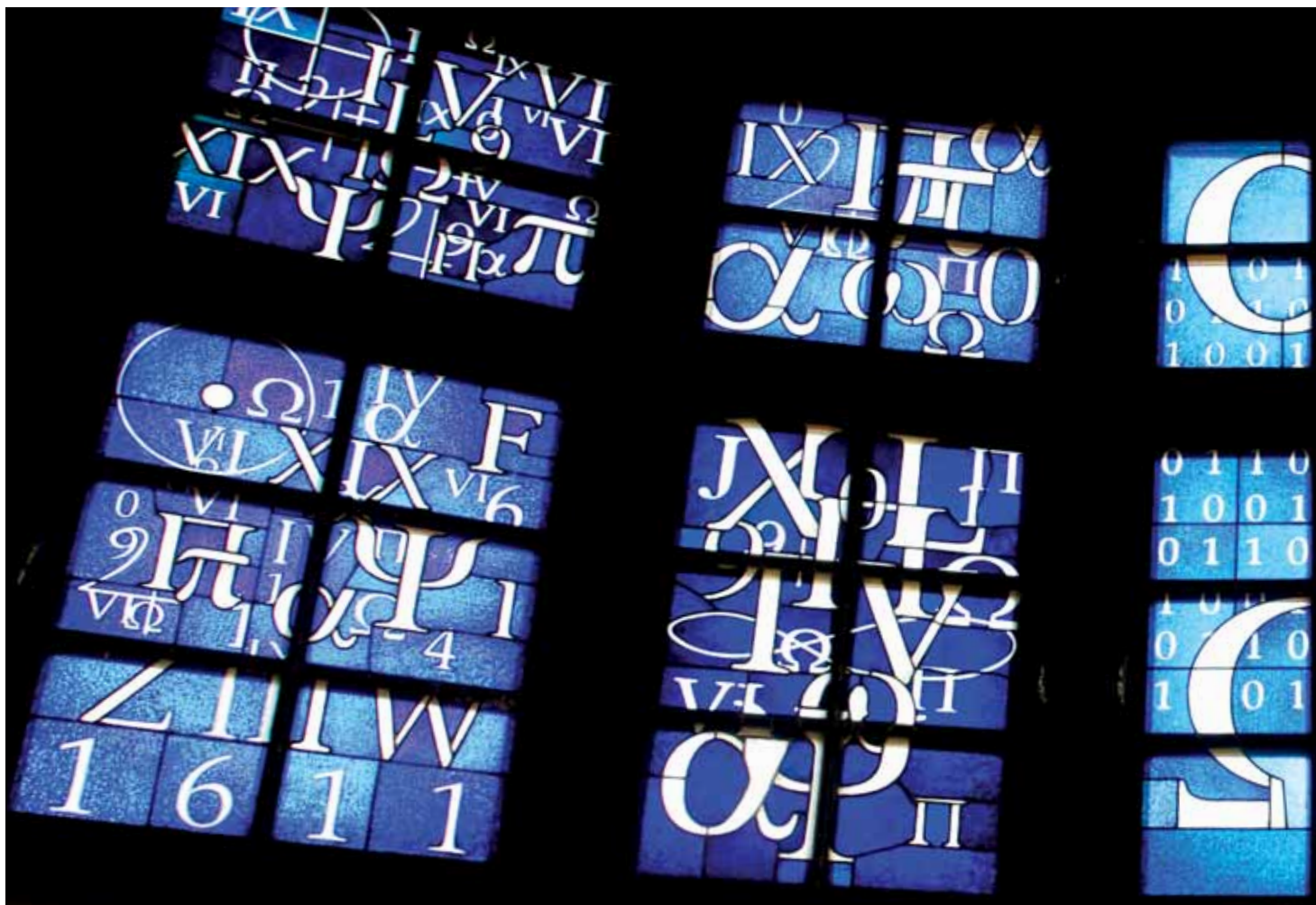
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April/May 2011

**SPECIAL
EDITION**

**Feel Invited
International
Student Day**

s. 12





Senatus cum vitro

(a handful of reflections)

27 January 2011 saw the official opening of a new Senate's Conference Room in the Collegium Minus building. The new room is also special for its stained glass window. The idea to put it there was proposed some time ago by the previous university authorities. First, several traditional proposals were considered, but then a dedicated Commission¹ decided unanimously [sic] to direct the conceptual work into totally different regions. Hence, the present form of the work. The stained glass window depicts letters, numbers, characters and symbols. Some of them are easily readable, others are not, and the whole image allows a variety of individual interpretations. And it is the room for individual interpretation that the Commission recognised as the most significant assessment criterion. Iconoclastic as it may sound, the Commission members also decided to perform their educational function in the evaluation process by „sneaking in” some universal contents related to our University and the current reality, viewed both in macro and micro scale.

Two dates seem to stand out most distinctly: 1611 and 2011: the first one marks the year when Poznań Jesuit College was raised by the king Sigismund III Vasa to the rank of a university, and the second one indicates the anniversary of that event. External circumstances did not allow Poznań to fully benefit from that privilege, but the fact remains that the city has had its university for 400 years. This is why the date was worth to be reminded and perpetuated in

stained glass, which is at once a fragile and exceptionally durable material. And so we can see: Z III W and the counterpoint BMR - Bonus Magnus Rex, standing for: Good Great King, for this is how we see the king's decision from the perspective of the ages. Certainly, it is a matter of a watcher's imagination and ingenuity to come up with other meanings of the abbreviations. The central part of the stained glass is clearly lighter than the rest, with characters placed more loosely and sufficiently legible. All actions have their beginning (α) and their end (Ω). The beginning of a work may be modest, hence a minuscule, but it should come to abundant fruition at the end, expressed with a majuscule. This may also apply to persons giving their speeches at Senate meetings from a special speaker's podium, bringing to mind an altar in a Greek ancient theatre forming the central part of the so-called orchestra. Being aware of this, speakers may not be encouraged to finish their statements in a prompt manner; therefore, a large omega is there acting as a signal urging them to leave the podium. Discernible in the same section are also the zero-one sequences („Let your speech be not: yes, yes, no, no”), indispensable components of IT systems. They bear resemblance to series of figures generated by the Enigma machine, designed by our three mathematicians who are this way referred to in the stained glass window, apart from being commemorated with the plaque on the ground floor of Collegium Minus, formally corre-



PHOTO MACIEJ MĘCZYŃSKI

sponding to the statue erected outside the castle to perpetuate their memory. As we proceed further in both directions, the characters become more crammed and the colour of glass gets darker. At the fringes, the arrangement is even denser and the colour darker. This part of the image leaves a lot of room for imagination and diverse interpretation of particular symbols and characters. Everyone may find a sign or a letter to identify with or decipher a meaning that others have not discovered. But then, tired with the external tangle, one turns their eyes back to the light-flooded centre and the Ω which seems to indicate that the watching is over. Let us only give a good-bye glance at our University's patron, Adam Mickiewicz, represented by an easily recognisable symbol of 44, a reference to one of his famous poems.

The stained glass window contains a lot of information, somewhat concealed, but not that difficult to unveil for a discerning eye. It is clearly symmetrical, with the central sections appearing to be well organised. And so it should be. After all, in the Centre, that is in Collegium Minus, the University authorities need to be bright and luminous, ensuring effective and harmonious management of the institution. The further from the centre, the more entropy is to be seen², meaning only one thing: creative turmoil in peripheral departments.

This is how the stained glass window can be viewed. But then it can be viewed in many other ways even by the same spectator. It has its dynamism emphasised by the symbols of the four elements that have affected humans for ages, determining their living conditions on the Earth.

Let us conclude by a very important fact that needs to be underlined. The stained glass window would not be there but for the talent and skills of the contractor who was able to realise the flamboyant ideas born in the minds of one chemist and one philologist. Prof. Janusz Stankowski and his team from the University of Arts in Poznań listened to those ideas, materialised them into a design, and supervised its impressive implementation.

Sylwester Dworacki (classical studies)
and **Henryk Koroniak** (organic chemistry)

¹ Commission - in management of any organisation, a body consisting of one or many persons aiming to prevent competent authorities to take an unequivocal and the only right decision.

² Entropy - a thermodynamic concept measured in cal/deg (in SI units J/deg), habitually borrowed by representatives of non-natural sciences as a measure of disorder, that is mess. Hence the saying: **Your are the queen of entropy!!** is by no means flattering...



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UAM POZNAŃ

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Heading for quality

High quality of education, the ambition of many European and Polish academics, including those from our University, is no longer a matter of good will. It is a necessity arising from many aspects and demands.

The development of internal education quality assurance systems is a requirement established by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and imposed by the new Higher Education Act which is now under preparation. Providing students with high quality education and employers with properly trained and competent graduates has also been set as a priority objective for the AMU. That is why, our University is putting a strong emphasis on ensuring high quality of its education, which should give rise to the culture of quality, spreading across the higher education system. The issue has become particularly relevant with the introduction of the three-level study system. „This, as can we now see, occurred too fast, too prescriptively, without proper preparation”, says **Prof. Maria Ziólek**, Rector's representative for quality of education.

The new approach will, above all, benefit our students. It is to them, therefore, that an extensive appraisal questionnaire was directed.

The survey conducted last year involved around 5,000 students. It was the first ever appraisal survey to be held on such a wide scale.

The idea behind the project was to evaluate the quality of education as perceived by students. Particular faculties, thus diagnosed, were then able to analyse their students' contributions.

Part of the questionnaire related to the curricula. The respondents were asked to assess the current curricula and methods of their implementation with regard to education aims; the ways used to assess the quality of education; or thesis reviewing methods. In other words, we wanted students to share their opinions about their faculties and departments. The questions related to teaching methods,



PHOTO MACIEJ MECZYŃSKI

studying conditions, social matters, etc. There were also open-end questions for students to present their views. Information thus obtained were then forwarded both to the University authorities and particular deans.

In the eyes of students

Summary report on quality of education as seen by AMU students

Nearly a half (47%) of the participating students rated the quality of education provided by the AMU as good; 9% as very good; 6% as insufficient and 38% as sufficient.

No significant differences were found in mean overall evaluations in relation to study level and year, the mean score ranging between 3.5 and 3.7.

Out of specific components constituting the quality of education, the following were predominantly rated as good or very good:

- compliance with curriculum
- teachers' dutifulness
- teachers' personal culture
- teachers' readiness to provide assistance, consultancy
- group size

The following components were mostly rated as sufficient (up to 3.5):

- relevance for future employment
- range of optional activities
- form of activities (attractive, diversified, etc.)

Most components were scored higher by third level students than by first and second level students.

Responses to detailed questions indicate that the students are not very much interested in mobility (a possibility to study at other universities in Poland and abroad) or research opportunities. Responses regarding online availability of administrative information indicate that curricula and syllabuses are the only types of content regarded as commonly accessible. Other types of information, such as:

- duty hours
- current updates, e.g. cancellation of scheduled classes
- rules of MA seminars
- exam and pass requirements
- teaching aids, e.g. indices of literature
- were assessed to be unavailable online in most faculties.

Students taking courses abroad under the Erasmus programme often pointed out to incompatibilities with rules and criteria applied by foreign universities.

In their responses to the open-end questions, the students raised a variety of issues, many of them of incidental nature. Two problems, however, reoccurred very often:

- the lack of logical sequence of subjects in a study curriculum and first level subjects repeated on second level studies
- insufficient number of practical activities associated with limited relevance for future employment



PHOTO MACIEJ MECZYŃSKI

New Law for Higher Education

The Polish Parliament has adopted a new law on the higher education system. The act is now waiting to be signed by the President. The revised regulations - the Act on Academic Degrees and Academic Title, as well as the Art Degrees and Title - are all to enter into force on 1 October, with the new academic year beginning.

Together, we have made a crucial step towards a modern system of higher education, effectively managed, open to the world, and focused on the development of students' and academics' talents - underlines the Minister of Science and Higher Education, Prof. Barbara Kudrycka - I would like to thank all those who, in recent three years, have put so much of their effort, time and knowledge to improve the provisions of the existing acts. The Ministry was supported in its reforming effort by rectors, Ph.D. students, students and Members of Parliament. The academic community once more proved to be able to build a compromise around an essential cause - she added.

Modern education model

The reform strengthens the autonomy of higher education institutions with respect to curriculum - they will now be able to develop their own programmes and courses, combining contents of multiple disciplines. Prominent scholars and scientists, employers and economic experts will be involved in the creation of a new educational offer. New mechanisms will be put in place based on so-called Qualification Frameworks that are already used throughout Europe. Owing to the National Qualification Framework, Polish graduates' diplomas will become comparable to those awarded by other European countries.

Financing for quality

The financing of the higher education will now be more strongly correlated with the quality of education and the level of research. The existing financing regime will be maintained, along with the annual revaluation system. At the same time, however, more and more funds will be distributed on the basis of competitions so as to be directed to the best units, scientific teams, departments, and universities. Additional resources will go to the best units of public and non-public universities, i.e. those awarded with the status of Leading National Scientific Centres (pol. KNOW). Owing to the new system, more subsidies will be awarded to prominent scientists and scholars, young academics, Ph.D. students and students.

Transparent rules of academic career

The changes proposed by the government will result in simplification of the academic career pathway. They are meant to promote development and support the achievement of successive levels

of scientific and academic career. The habilitation procedure will be simplified, too. It will be more focused on actual accomplishments and outcome, with its duration reduced from eleven to for months. The new procedure is designed to exclude irrelevant and non-essential aspects of the assessment. A competition requirement will be put in place in qualification for Ph.D. studies. To be eligible, a candidate will have to have at least one article published in a national scientific journal or a reviewed report from an international scientific conference. Ph.D. students will receive stronger financial support, with additional fellowships awarded for the best ones. A Senate amendment has also been adopted to include Ph.D. students into the public transportation discount system (51%)

The new regulations provide for competition procedure to be held for all university positions and more openness to foreign academics. A recognised scholar or scientist of significant merit will be permitted to attain habilitation in Poland. Academics will no longer be allowed to be employed by several institutions at a time. An additional position will require a rector's approval. Academic teachers will also undergo obligatory assessments of their scientific, teaching and organisational skills. The assessment will be performed not less than every two years, and not less than every four years for professors. A second negative evaluation will obligate a rector to terminate employment with the teacher concerned.

Stronger ties with business

The changes will also promote a better integration between higher education institutions and their social and economic environment. Universities will be obliged to develop and implement intellectual right regulations and to adopt rules for commercialisation of research outcome. Schools will be allowed to educate students in cooperation with or on commission by employers. Representatives of social, economic and public organisations will be authorised to participate in the development of curricula in selected practical disciplines of study.

More empowerment for students

Students' rights will be protected by obligatory contracts made with a university. The new law ensures that all students are provided with a set of free administrative services: free exams (including re-sits, committee and diploma exams), issue of a diploma supplement, and enrolment for next



PHOTO MACIEJ MĘCZYŃSKI

semester or year of studies. The system of financial support will be changed so that it's targeted mostly to students who need it most. The number and amount of need-based scholarships will increase.

More people will gain access to free public full-time studies, owing to new, fairer rules of taking additional state-funded courses. Students with high grades will retain the right to take a second course of studies, but the new law will also enable weaker students to follow several courses at the expense of the state.

Decentralisation of higher education system

The revised law provides for deregulation and decentralisation of the higher education system. University regulations and statutes will no longer have to be approved by the Minister of Science and Higher Education. Rectors will be granted more powers with respect to the foundation, transformation and dissolution of university organisational units, as well as setting up of their branches. Two alternative modalities will be introduced for appointment of rectors, heads and deputy heads of basic organisational units: by competition or election.

* * *

The revision of the Act on Academic Degrees and Academic Title, as well as the Art Degrees and Title is a second stage of the major reform of science and higher education being conducted by the government. Six new reforming laws in this area have been put into effect since 1 October 2010.

Source: Ministry of Science and Higher Education
Newsletter



PHOTO MACIEJ MĘCZYŃSKI

„Learning from the Best Ones”

This year's Poznań Festival of Science and Art, held for the fourteenth time, was inaugurated with a fashion show inspired by the cellular structure. The three days of the festival witnessed eight Poznań's universities and the Institute of Polish Academy of Sciences staging nearly 600 popular science events all throughout the city.

Just like in previous years, each university had one day to present its achievements, research projects and capabilities. The AMU was assigned Wednesday, 30 March. The Festival provides setting for a wide range of events: exhibitions, lectures, presentations, workshops, laboratory activities, seminars, panel discussions, field activities, happenings, poster displays and films.

„The Poznań Festival of Science and Art is aimed to show that universities are not confined by classroom walls. Our tertiary institutions have always been open to cooperation with the public, thus playing a vital educational, opinion-making and culture-forming role. This is the reason why we organise this festival”, said Karolina Warpachowicz, the Festival Director Assistant.

„The initiative has helped to achieve a strong integration of the academic community of Wielkopolska”, says Jacek Radomski, Festival Director. „Poznań is more and more often referred to as a true academic city. The Festival has also proved to prompt other interesting initiatives attracting great public interest. Take the Scientists' Night for example. There's more interest in meeting our academics and there are some special shows on TV. A great credit must be given to the organisers of all those wonderful events. Furthermore, with so many departments involved, the students' participation was accordingly big. Fifty scientific clubs engaged in the Festival is an impressive turnout, but we are aiming for even more. Let us not forget about the demographic slump and the battle we will have to fight to attract

prospective students. Hundreds of buses full of young visitors and crowded lecture rooms will certainly results in many decisions on where to study and what course to choose.”

The presentation was closed with the exhibition „Poznań in Ryszard Horowitz's imagination” launched on Thursday at the Poznań University of Technology.

Here are some of the many Festival events:

- **Mater semper certa est** - paternity testing (Faculty of Biology, AMU). Many a man is anxious to know if his child is actually his. The lecture attempted to abolish some myths concerning paternity, while reconfirming that only the mother can be 100 per cent sure. (Anna Kołodziejczak, Grzegorz Nowicki)

- **The cell story** (Faculty of Biology, AMU). From amoeba to bats, all organisms are built of cells, meticulous mechanisms capable of performing basic life processes. It was Galileo who, using magnifying glass, first noticed the analogy between the structure and function of a single cell and those of the whole clusters of cells forming the microenvironment around us. Owing to prominent scientists and breakthrough achievements of modern technology, we could find out ourselves how fascinating a single cell can be. How to stain particular cellular organelle? Why are carrots orange? How do stone cells in pears look like? Can chloroplasts move? These are just a few of the



PHOTO MACIEJ MECZYŃSKI

questions that were addressed during the plant histology workshops. (Jagoda Bąk, Robert Fischer, Marta Gołębiewska, Katarzyna Melaniuk, Irena Rabęda)

- **The dirty thirteen** (Faculty of Biology, AMU). Parasitology is a significant discipline of biologic sciences. Therefore, the workshop organisers decided to introduce the profiles of thirteen parasites deserving special attention due to their being either particularly dangerous or particularly popular. The parasites were presented at the opening lecture, and then during practical activities, e.g. those involving the generation of specimens. There were also contests to test one's knowledge in the area. (Mateusz Chrzanowski, Daria Grobys, Agnieszka Hartwig, Żaneta Kołodziejaska, Hanna Nowak, Tomasz Tymcio, Filip Wojciechowski, Natalia Pacholska)

- **Searching for Poznań. Urban game** (Faculty Social Sciences, AMU). The exercise combined the features of an urban game and workshops on the history and present of the city of Poznań. The game participants were divided into groups of 2-3 competing in performing assignments in various parts of the city, which are important from a historic point of view. Each assignment referred to the nature and/or history of the place where it was held. The tasks included searching for buildings based on their description, collecting hints hidden in historic monuments, finding differences between the original and present forms of buildings, etc. The game thus involved both elements of competition and learning about unknown yet interesting facts from the history of Poznań. (Łukasz Rogowski, Agata Maj, Bartosz Jamniak)

- **What do you know about your voice?** (Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology, AMU). How is voice produced? What are its characteristics? What affects the quality of voice? What is good and what is bad for your voice? Can you lose your voice? How to work with your voice to make it serve longer? These questions and many more were replied by Ewa Kaptur from the Lexicology Department.

op. len

Europe for all

This service was made for you. Here, you will learn about your rights, receive guidelines and advice on how to move around and live in common Europe - this is how the website was presented in Warsaw by its developers. They also referred to the frequently asked questions, for example those related to the „Education and youth” section.

- **I want to study at a foreign university but local authorities require me to take a language exam. Do they have the right to do so?**

Yes, competent authorities have the right to require that you take a language exam. However, such regulations should be applied in a proportional manner and exceptions should be made, where possible, to allow for individual circumstances, e.g. if a person concerned has worked or lived in a country where the language is used.

- **I am Danish and I would like to study in Germany. But the German university requires me to pay a fee. Am I not exempted from a tuition fee as an EU citizen studying in another member state?**

No, EU legislation does not exempt from paying tuition fee! It does provide, however, that you have to be treated in the same way as citizens of the country you want to study in. In this case, if German students have to pay their tuition fees, you do as well?

- **Will I lose my need-based scholarship if I go to study abroad?**

It is possible. It depends on your government whether you'll be granted a scholarship for studying abroad or not? Find out about applicable regulations in this area. If, however, your government decides to award you a scholarship, it will have to ensure that your eligibility criteria do not cause undue limitation of your freedom of movement.

- **I am Polish and I have just graduated from my first level studies in Poland. I would like to start second level studies in France. Can I receive a merit-based scholarship from Poland or France?**

It is possible. The governments of EU member states are not obliged to award scholarships or loans to students from other member states. Nor do they have to support their citizens who have decided to study abroad. Those decisions are taken individually by each government: in certain countries need-based scholarships pose a limitation on the freedom of study abroad. Please, contact the authorities of both countries.

„Your Europe” is the name of an online service which is aimed to facilitate the movement within the common market and the use of the opportunities to study, work, medical treatment, etc. Owing to the initiative of the European Commission and the European Parliament, the website has been extended and soon will be available in 23 official EU languages (currently in six). The „Your Europe” service contains plainly written information on EU citizens' rights, addresses of institutions and support organisations and links to relevant legal acts. It is a perfect tool for young people, students, workers, consumers and entrepreneurs. To convince users of its practical application, the website has been supplemented with the „True Story” tab describing instances of people who have been provided assistance.



PHOTO MACIEJ IWĘCZYŃSKI

Library – know-how

There has been some major changes in the University Library from the beginning of this semester. They are all designed to improve its functionality and make readers' lives easier.

We respond to the needs of our readers and try to facilitate the use of our resources”, explains Piotr Karwasiński, deputy head of the library.

Books available until 8 p.m. (and overnight)

The most significant change is that the library opening hours are made uniform. As of 1 March, the lending library and all the reading rooms are open to 8 p.m. Previously, the reading rooms remained open until that time, while the lending library closed one hour earlier, leaving some students knocking at the door. Furthermore, the Library established fixed opening hours on so-called special days between holidays. „So far, readers had look for information on when the library would be open. Beginning with the new semester, the library's working hours on those days are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.”, says Karwasiński.

New rules of access to book resources have also been published on the library website. The document is drafted in a completely different user-friendly way. It contains FAQs on service availability, regulations and lending deadlines. Information for readers has been made more intuitive by dividing readers into categories marked with colours.

Interestingly, some books can be borrowed overnight. This applies to books that normally, at day, can only be accessed in reading rooms. The service enables readers to borrow such books not sooner than half an hour before the closing of the lending library or the reading room. They have to be returned within an hour after the opening time. A delay will cost us a lot: 10 zloties per hour for each volume.

Convenient reading rooms

Another novelty is that books can now be ordered electronically for use in the reading rooms. So far, this method has only been used to borrow a book out of the library.

„Owing to the new service one can order a book and indicate the reading room where they want to work with it without having to fill in a form manually and wait for the book to be delivered from the storage room. The user will be notified when the book is there”, explains the deputy head.

The Historical Sciences and Journal Reading Room was also opened in the first weeks of the second semester, having undergone redecoration. „The service standard is now much higher, with a new mezzanine, comfortable sofas and cabins for silent study”.

Caught in the web

Notably, the whole library space is covered by wireless Internet access. Apart from using on-site computers, students are welcome to bring their own notebooks so as to make their work even more convenient.

The computerisation occurs on other levels as well. The University Library has had its Facebook account for three months now. At present it has some 1400 fans. „Once, they said that if you didn't have a website you actually didn't exist, now the same can be said about a Facebook account”, adds Piotr jokingly. „Mailing, Facebook presence or ASK A LIBRARIAN application brought us much closer to our readers. We intend to go on keeping up with the progress and new technologies, while responding to our readers' needs”.

What shall be our next step going forward? In the months to come, all reading rooms are planned to be equipped with scanners available to for use by students, and an information screen will be placed near the main entrance to display basic facts regarding the functioning of the library.

Filip Czekala



Who doesn't have a Facebook account that doesn't exist”, says Piotr Karwasiński, University Library deputy head.

Socialist paradise lost

date: 26 April 1986, time: 1:23



View of the damaged Chernobyl nuclear plant reactor from the Pripyat River



Propaganda Department in Pripyat in full preparation for the 1 May parade

The crew of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant began an experiment to test the performance of the reactor in emergency conditions. They lowered the working power of Reactor 4. But the experiment went out of control. A series of human mistakes combined with a peculiar structure of the reactor led to two explosions - first steam then chemical substances blew up igniting a fire which destroyed the structure of the reactor and caused radioactive elements to be released into the atmosphere. Contaminated air spread all throughout Europe. Within next several days the area within 30 kilometres surrounding the plant was evacuated and an exclusion zone set up. Those areas remain abandoned up to date. How do they look like now, the places where time stood still 25 years ago?

And the name of the star is called Wormwood

We set off to the zone by extraterritorial railway through Belarus from Slavutych, the city built for the population evacuated from the zone. We travelled together with some nuclear power plant employees. There are around 2,500 people working there now, each of them have to undergo a dosimetric control upon leaving the zone. We got out at an enclosed platform, which we were allowed to leave only after presenting special passes. An old bus took us to the plant site. We pulled up near Reactor 4, the one that gave rise to the huge calamity from a quarter century ago. The view is terrifying: a rusty-coloured sarcophagus capping huge amounts of life-threatening nuclear fuel... Despite assurances of its being under constant control, the structure looks as if it was about to collapse. The construction of a new one, however, is being postponed due to the lack of sufficient financial resources. It is said to be completed in 2016, but even this date seems to be highly uncertain. The radiation dose here is ten times higher than in Poland but still safe to health.

After ten to twenty minutes near the plant we made for Chernobyl, a little town some 18 kilometres away that gave its name to the facility.



Amusement park in Pripyat

In Russian, „chernobyl” means „wormwood”. A biblical prophecy or a coincidence? Chernobyl does not appear to be an abandoned place. Today, it is inhabited by scientists working in the zone, it has a functioning Orthodox church where a service was being held during our visit...

Ghost Town

Located two kilometres away from the plant and built for the nuclear plant workers, Pripyat was a Soviet paradise city. It was founded only in 1970, had a swimming pool and an amusement park, dream facilities for most of USSR citizens. The nuclear power plant brought this city to life only to bring it a sudden death sixteen years later. Evacuated one and a half days after the disaster, Pripyat now represents a one-of-a-kind museum of socialism. In the city, which was then preparing for a 1 May parade, one can still come across portraits of Lenin and abandoned banners, Soviet stars are still hanging on the lampposts, and the hammer and sickle are overlooking the city from rooftops of sixteen-floor block buildings. However, radiation level is quite low here, amounting to an average of around 0.4 microsievert/hour, which is more or less the level of Warsaw.

A nine-hour visit is much too little to explore this city once inhabited by 50.000. Overgrown with plants, with many buildings threatening to collapse, the city makes a tremendous impression. Empty houses, ruined facilities and appliances, abandoned articles of everyday use scattered all over the area are reminiscent of what was once a busy urban centre. The silence and sense of terror are further enhanced by a whistling wind, creaking doors or a sound of glass cracking under our feet...

Filip Czekala

Wise Men of Europe

The general assembly of the Academy of Europe in Paris nominated Prof. Jacek Fisiak from the Faculty of Modern Languages and Literature, Adam Mickiewicz University, as a member of the Academia Board. Alongside with Prof. Fisiak, the Board was joined by two Noble Prize winners: Prof. Werner Arber, Switzerland, and Prof. Luc Montagnier, France.

The membership of the Academia Europaea is automatically awarded to Nobel Laureates. There are two types of membership: ordinary and corresponding, as in the Polish Academy of Sciences and Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. The Academy of Europe has around 300 ordinary members, all of whom are required to be members of their national academies. The corresponding members, also around 300, do not need to belong to any national academies. The corporation embraces scientists and scholars from all around the world. Among them, there are 70 Nobel Laureates. Twelve ordinary members come from Poland, including Prof. Bogdan Marciniak from the Faculty of Chemistry, AMU. Prof. Liliana Sikorska, AMU School of English, and Prof. Bronisław Marciniak, AMU rector, are corresponding members.

How does this elite corporation function? (interview with Prof. J. Fisiak)

Once a year, usually in early December, a plenary conference is organised to discuss organisational matters, and adopt the action plan and budget for the following year. In addition, symposiums and seminars are held in various regions of the world for smaller groups with specific focus.

What do those distinguished scholars and scientists deal with?

They cooperate with national academics in organising or initiating symposiums and conferences which either focus on specific topics or are interdisciplinary in nature. For example: the relationship between health and various economic and climatic risks. Or: tendencies in modern poetry..., mad-cow disease..., changes in the natural environment versus civilisation development... All sort of issues. The meetings result in publications and studies. In this respect, we closely cooperate with UNESCO which, by the way, funds a large part of Academia's activities.

Do these meetings perform their function any more with contacts and information transfer methods so simplified by modern communication technology?

That depends. In many cases the model does not seem to work



PHOTO: MACIEJ MIECZYŃSKI

any longer. National assemblies, held to discuss formal and organisational matters, tend to have little attendance. While symposiums, small forums discussing specific issues, continue to attract more interest. Large conferences are maintained mainly owing to their prestige and tradition. But even so, it is very difficult to call up people from around the world, while there are other forms of contacts - faster, cheaper and more convenient. Myself, however, I would miss all those large rallies where you can meet so many people face to face, talk, argue, agree or disagree... The modern techniques cannot replace that.

How is the idea of the Academia special?

I believe, it's about moving from country to country. Many communities hosting congresses or symposiums experience a scientific stimulus and use the opportunity to present their achievements to the most prominent figures of Europe's and world's science and scholarship. The Academia stimulates growth. Non-members have a chance to meet the elite, to promote themselves and their capabilities.

How does the world benefit from this collective wisdom?

The Academia may issue opinions, appeal, inspire, initiate. It does not deal with politics, what it offers are purely scientific solutions.

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„AMU my University” photo contest

The Promotion and Information Office together with the AMU Foundation and the Poznań City Office invite all students, including foreign students, to participate in the 2nd edition of the „AMU my University” photo contest. The „AMU my University” project consists of the following three parts:

1. The „AMU my University” photo contest opened traditionally on 7 May; the theme this year is „University Life”; photographs will be assessed by a five-person contest committee.
2. University Calendar 2012 featuring the winning photos will be published in mid-December 2011;

3. The exhibition of winning photos combined with a vernissage and a prize award ceremony will be held around mid-January 2012.

Lubrański Auditorium lobby, Collegium Minus Wieniawskiego 1.

We Teach in English Foreign Students at Polish Universities

British Council, the institution responsible for carrying out diagnostic tests in English for university admission, points out to a growing number of foreign students who wish to study in Poland in English. This trend is particularly strong with medicine and technical studies.

While waiting for the latest statistics, we can pride ourselves on the figures from the academic year 2008-2009 indicating an impressive 16.000 foreign students studying in Poland. They came mostly from Ukraine, Belarus, Sweden, Norway, Taiwan, China, and India, and choose medicine or technical studies as their major. Business, IT and tourism also ranked high in their preferences.

Do you speak English in Poland?

The rapid development of the educational sector is reflected in the number of people who register at the British Council to take the IELTS examination, which is designed to test university candidates' English skills. "Indeed, that means a totally new situation for us," admits British Council's Dorota Rankowska. "As of late, the IELTS has usually been raising the interest of those planning to study in one of the English-speaking countries. Last year, however, we were testing fairly big groups of foreigners wishing to study in Poland. This means Polish universities are becoming important players in the international education market: they are continuously improving their offer, which is targeted at both home and foreign candidates."

Foreign students often choose to study in Poland due to its comparably low living costs, in particular moderate tuition fees, especially that Polish universities are known for high standards of teach-

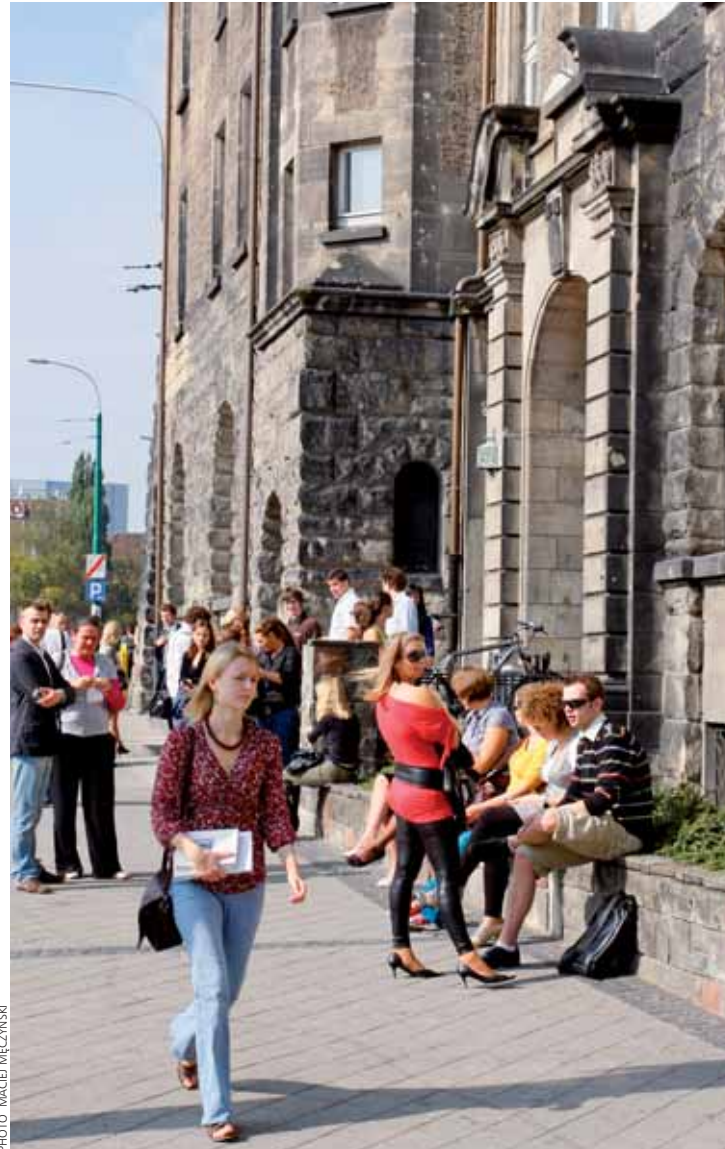


PHOTO: MACIEJ MIECZYNSKI

ing. Some institutions of higher education, encouraged by the opportunity to win "paying clients" and threatened by a drop in the number of home candidates due to the declining birthrate, are already running a wide range of programmes in English, mostly addressed to candidates from Asia, Africa and Southern America.

Student hunting

It is not easy, though, to attract a foreign student. Polish universities develop diverse initiatives aiming to increase the efficiency of promotional activities. They form inter-university consortia, run web marketing campaigns and promote their offer at educational trade fairs, including those held outside Europe. In all these projects they are supported by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, whose representatives often accompany the universities at promotional events.

Attracting a foreign candidate is but a part of the story. Ensuring adequate recruitment standards to make sure that prospective students are able to meet the requirements of the curriculum is just as important. A diagnostic test in English should be a crucial part of this procedure. In fact, more and more often, yet not always, it actually is. A few professionals with a track record of recruitment and language training for foreign students have shared with us their views on the topic.

Małgorzata Kurpias

Feel Invited

International Student Day

Programme:

1. bicycle ride from the Mickiewicz Square to the Morasko Campus
2. debate with representatives of University authorities
3. picnic

*Mickiewicza Sq., WNPID Building at Umultowska 89a
Time: from 3:00 p.m.*

„SIR ERASMUS” Knight Tournament

Programme:

An outdoor event comprising team competitions for students, including foreign students, craftsmen's stands, concert of White Garden folk music band, battle enactment and role-plays featuring knights

*Morasko Campus, Umultowska 89 (green area outside the Faculty of Chemistry building under construction)
Time.: 2:00 - 7:00 p.m.*



Juwenalia 2011 Poznań Music Festival

Hear it, feel it, touch it, see it

In May, the heart of Poznań and the hearts of its 130,000 college students will beat to the rhythm of student culture. The cultural, social, emotional and intellectual revolution of styles and means of expression will change the face of the city's streets, avenues, residential districts and suburbs. The celebration of student culture will be remixed with energetic live concerts and some of Polish best music. Prepare for the moments of purest emotions and released potential, the creative power of academic Poznań and free access to all events, hundreds of hours of outdoor concerts, club events, street plays and manifestations of everything that unites people and makes them develop.

Date: 26-29 May, AZS stadium.