



School
of Business

Special edition
Winter semester
2023 – 24

BUSINESS NEWS

CONTENTS

FACTS

Students

At the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg: 7,061
At the Faculty of Business (including IWI): 1,660

of which:

BA Business Administration (BW)	456
BA International Management (IM)	470
B.Eng. International Management and Engineering (IWI)	245
B.Sc. Business Psychology (WVP)	221
MA International Business and Finance (IBF)	60
MA Marketing Management Digital (MMD)	73
MA Sustainability Management (MNM)	21
MA HR Management (PMG)	51
MA Taxation and Accounting (MSR)	45
Certificate Economist of Health and Social Care	10
Certificate Customs and Foreign Trade Management	8

Advanced modules BA Business Administration in winter semester 2023/2024

Finance Management
Logistics and Supply Chain Management
Marketing Management International
HR Management
Taxation

Advanced modules BA International Management in winter semester 2023/2024

Corporate Finance
European Business Studies
International Marketing and Sales Management
Managing Data Driven Business Models

International exchange programs

Students from foreign partner universities (incoming): 42
Students to foreign partner universities (outgoing): 97

As of: 18 April 2024

TITLE PHOTO



Yola Holzhauser,
Product Owner at Allianz SE
in Munich and our alumna

**The name Faculty of Business is still used in texts and reports that refer to the time before renaming to School of Business*

WELCOME

Dear students, prospective students, alumni, friends, sponsors and partners of our School of Business*,



Prof. Dr. Nicolas Warkotsch, Dean

The last edition of our newsletter was four years ago and was published during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. My predecessor as Dean referred to the challenges of the second wave in the preface. Despite a number of subsequent waves, the pandemic has calmed down. However, we can by no means speak of a crisis-free time after the pandemic. We are confronted by the war in Ukraine, the transformation of business and society towards greater sustainability, the Israel-Palestine conflict and much more. Our Faculty is not unaffected by these developments.

(Post-) Pandemic

We have clearly noticed that the entry level of our new students has fallen. The effects of Covid-19, especially the limited face-to-face teaching during these students' school years, have left their trace. The decision to make adjustments to Abitur grades in order to compensate for disadvantages means that we can no longer automatically conclude that good Abitur grades mean good entry conditions. In light of the fact that almost a third of Abitur students now receive a grade of 1.9 or better, the rising failure rates in the first semesters are easy to explain. It is unclear as yet whether or how we as University can bridge this competence gap.

Crisis points

Our Faculty is an open system which integrates partner institutions as well as foreign students and lecturers. Therefore, our University life is directly affected by the current crisis points. Through online offerings, we attempt to support foreign students who cannot personally come to the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg at this time. The need to moderate differing opinions on political topics has risen significantly. It is

the task of the University to offer a safe space for teaching and learning and to commit itself to an open society in Augsburg as a peaceful city.

Sustainability

The transformation of business and society towards more sustainability is a long-term task in which education plays a key role. Our Faculty is pursuing a number of approaches. On the one hand, sustainability can be integrated in every subject. On the other hand, additional offerings need to be created to guarantee comprehensive education which contributes to solving current and future issues relating to sustainability. With the introduction of the Master in Sustainability program, we are consistently following this path.

Digitalization

The theme of artificial intelligence is omnipresent due to ChatGPT. Digitalization in teaching has been a continuous topic for years. The use of generative AI represents an additional challenge in grading written papers because it is becoming more and more difficult to determine whether the papers are actually independent student work. It is important for colleagues to keep pace with these developments and adapt the examination formats accordingly. It will also become increasingly important to integrate the new possibilities of these tools in research and convey them in teaching. This development will need to be accompanied by ethical questions regarding responsible handling of the new possibilities.

Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg – School of Business

In 2023, we were added to the group of Technical Universities of Applied Sciences. In the course of this restructuring, we went through an exhaustive process to

further define our identity. This resulted not only in a new logo, but also in a more focused target image for our University. Under this momentum, we renamed ourselves "School of Business" to emphasize our standalone nature within the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg and to give ourselves a more international character. The School of Business is growing in terms of study programs, student numbers and colleagues. We are reforming existing study programs and introducing new ones, strengthening our research and recognizing the necessity of further education courses. In this way, we are pursuing our mission of equipping our students with the future skills that they will need as sought-after personalities in management, entrepreneurship and civil society.

I hope you enjoy reading our new edition!

Yours,

Prof. Dr. Nicolas Warkotsch, Dean

GOOD EXAMPLES FOR REGIONAL CLIMATE PROTECTION



Lots of interest in the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg's stand at Regio Augsburg Wirtschaft's 6th regional climate protection conference: Study program director Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris from the Faculty of Business describes the new Master in Sustainability Management program. Photo: Jessica Hövelborn

the University in the context of the HSA_Klima project, and Johannes Schindlbeck, who is the leader of the "Creation of a sustainability monitor for the Augsburg region" project on the University side, which is conducted for and in cooperation with the Regio Augsburg Wirtschaft GmbH.

As part of the conference program, study program director Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris presented the new Master in Sustainability Management. "The Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg offers a unique program with the new interdisciplinary Master in Sustainability Management. Graduates will help to shape the future of the Augsburg region in a more sustainable and climate-neutral way", explained Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris.

The researchers of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg are in close communication with companies in the region in order to develop innovative solutions for real needs – especially with respect to climate protection. In his opening statement at the regional climate protection conference, Dr. Klaus Metzger, Head of the Aichach-Friedberg District Administration, explained that researchers from the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg are working together with companies and craft businesses at the TTZ in Aichach, the technology transfer center for digital planning and manufacturing in construction, to develop innovations for efficient climate protection.

Information: Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris
Author: Jessica Hövelborn, MA

The sixth regional climate protection conference of the Regio Augsburg Wirtschaft took place on 30 January 2024 in the Town Hall in Neusäß with around 180 participants from companies, politics, associations, organizations, clubs, cooperatives, municipalities and research facilities. The focus was on good examples of regional climate protection in practice, especially from and for companies. The conference was organized by the Regio Augsburg Wirtschaft GmbH in cooperation with the city of Augsburg, the Augsburg district and the Aichach-Friedberg district.

At its stand, the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg presented innovative solutions for current sustainability and climate protection topics which are realized in practical research and student projects. Conversations with conference participants were led by Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris from the Faculty of Business, who is responsible for the new Master in Sustainability Management and is a member of the Sustainability task force at the University, Climate Protection Manager at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg Martin Roith, who drew up a climate protection concept for

SAVE-THE-DATE

As part of a taster study program at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, school students can also discover the fascinating world of business: How does a company work, what does a business study program entail and what career prospects does it open up? Interested parties can find the answers to these questions and many more in direct exchange with students and teachers.

Information: Karen Grando, Dott.ssa,
Julia Koch, MA



PRESENTATION OF THE 2023 TEACHING AWARD



(from left) Vice-President Prof. Dr. László Kovács, Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris, Brawndy Graça Kapela and Alisa Kastle-Henke, MA Photo: Julia Koch

They stand for topics that are of particular concern to the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg: Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris, study program director of the new Master in Sustainability Management and sustainable development officer, creates global awareness for the environment and future-proof economy in her seminars and projects. Alisa Kastle-Henke, language coordinator at the Center for Languages and Intercultural Communication, is particularly committed to diversity and mutual respect. Both ladies were presented with the 2023 teaching award from the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg on 9 November. The special aspect was that the prize winners were nominated and selected by the students themselves. The students had a month to nominate teachers who stand out due to their special dedication, creativity and motivation in their seminars and classes. The jury, made up of student representatives, the Vice-President of the Department for Learning and Teaching, the Head of the Didactic Media Center and the Spokesperson for the Dean of Studies, then selected Prof. Dr. Joeris and Alisa Kastle-Henke as winners from the ten top nominations. On the Tag der Lehre (Day of Teaching), Prof. Dr. László Kovács presented the award to the two winners during a ceremony at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg. He left the laudation to the students. Franziska Müller, student from the Bachelor in Business Administration, praised Joeris especially for her student project "Sustainable Campus". Students are able to strengthen the knowledge they have gained during their studies as well as their social and economic commitment through their work in this project. They benefit espe-

cially from the interdisciplinarity: The exchange with students from Architecture and Social Work allows them to take a broader view. "Prof. Dr. Joeris deserves this prize not just for her work, but for who she is as a person. For her, sustainability is a vocation, a way of life, which she passes on to the students with great enthusiasm", said Müller. Joeris was awarded first place in the "Best Project" category. The prize for best teaching in large classes went to Alisa Kastle-Henke, who has taught presentation techniques, negotiation methods, cross-cultural management and English communication at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg since 2009. The students especially appreciate the respectful atmosphere of her classes. Kastle-Henke creates a learning culture in which students support one another and encourages their confidence. She inspires students to leave their comfort zone and try out new things. The prizewinner was delighted: "I am speechless – and that doesn't happen very often. This is the greatest honor of my career". In addition to the winners, the following teachers from the Faculty of Business were nominated: Prof. Dr. Georg Erdmann, Prof. Dr. Thorsten Feix, Prof. Dr. Jörg Hoffmann, Prof. Dr. Simone Kubowitsch, Alexander Röntgen, Prof. Dr. Florian Waibel. The Faculty of Business warmly congratulates the prizewinners and nominees and thanks all teachers who encourage students' passion for learning with great dedication. A special thanks goes to the students for their high level of participation and constructive feedback.

Information: Alisa Kastle-Henke, MA,
Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris
Author: Julia Koch, MA.

EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT MUST BE LEARNED

All of the experts were agreed on this at the expert forum "Focus on Operative Management – Employee Management as Key to Efficient (Intra-)Logistical Processes" at LogiMAT. Not only process excellence, but also employee satisfaction and motivation depend on how group leaders and shift leaders perceive their management tasks.

In logistics, operative employees are often promoted to managers. Usually, the rule is: The person who knows the processes best becomes shift leader. However, employees must be prepared for this role. Ms. Jahn from Andreas Schmid Logistik introduced the talent management system at the company, which prepares employees for their new role. Mr. Hochstatter from Hermes added that the conditions must be right to give managers a fertile space for new insights. From an academic perspective, Ms. Lubecki-Weschke from Fraunhofer IIS underlined the importance of the operative level: This is where the disseminators of information from higher levels and the first contact partners for all matters concerning industrial colleagues are.

In conclusion, Prof. Dr. Krupp summarized: Training is the foundation. In addition, it must be ensured that learned skills find a framework in which they can be successfully applied. Integrated development of processes, the environment and employees is necessary for this purpose.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp





FUTURE FIELD OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence (AI) is changing our world on various levels. AI will play a significant role in shaping Augsburg's future, in industry, trade and also in journalism. Mayor Eva Weber extended an invitation to a City of Augsburg press reception on the future topic AI on 21 September 2023. The podium discussion "Future field AI: Opportunity for business region of Augsburg - Challenge for journalism" addressed exploring AI opportunities and handling AI challenges and risks. As an expert in generative AI, the basis for deep fakes and fake news, Prof. Dr. Jianing Zhang from the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg explained what to look out for to recognize AI-generated fake news and fake images. "Content that is created with generative AI has become commonplace in an era in which we are bombarded by text, images and sound. Although the potential positives of the technology are obvious, misuse is unfortunately an issue. Deep fakes and fake news are prime examples of the fact that our response cannot be purely technological. Our intrinsic human ability to reflect critically is equally necessary. And the key to technology and the ability to reflect is education", explained Prof. Dr. Jianing Zhang. He is Professor of Applied Data Science at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg and Lead Scientist at the Data Science and Autonomous Systems technology transfer center in Landsberg am Lech.

Lea Thies, Head of the Günter Holland journalism school at the Augsburg Allgemeine newspaper, explained how AI is changing our use of media and the requirements on journalists. Prof. Dr. Markus Sause, Director of AI Production Network, Mechanical Engineering Institute for Materials Resource Management at the University of Augsburg, provided information on the AI-based production technologies currently subject to cross-institute research with regional partners in Augsburg in cooperation with the AI Production Network Augsburg. In addition to the University of Augsburg, the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, the Fraunhofer Institute for Casting, Composite and Processing Technology (IGCV), and the Center for

(from right) Prof. Dr. Jianing Zhang, Professor of Applied Data Science at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg and Lead Scientist at the TTZ Landsberg, Eva Weber, Mayor of the City of Augsburg, Lea Thies, Head of the Günter Holland journalism school at the Augsburg Allgemeine and Prof. Dr. Markus Sause, Director of AI Production Network, Mechanical Engineering Institute for Materials Resource Management at the University of Augsburg. *Photo: Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg*

Lightweight Production Technology (ZLP) of the German Aerospace Center (DLR) in Augsburg are members of the AI Production Network Augsburg group.

*Information: Prof. Dr. Jianing Zhang
Author: Jessica Hövelborn, MA*

INSIDE OUT ART EXHIBITION

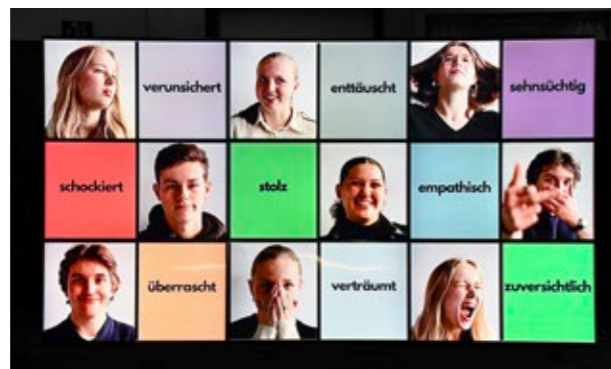


Photo: Julia Koch

The Inside Out art exhibition was officially opened on 1 December 2023 with a large preview in the foyer of the Faculty of Business. Artworks by the students from different classes in the *Gymnasium bei St. Anna* secondary school with the theme "Feelings" were exhibited. The exhibition was held by the school students of the P seminar, who followed the creation of the artworks and organized the exhibition.

Information: Julia Koch, MA

COMMITMENT FROM THE REGION

Energie Schwaben not only sponsored a lecture hall, but also donated a think tank for students of the Faculty of Business. (from left): Prof. Dr. Nicolas Warkotsch, Dean of the Faculty of Business, Jacqueline Mangold, HR Marketing Manager at Energie Schwaben, Dirk Weimann, CEO of Energie Schwaben, and Frank Surmacz, Head of HR and Legal at Energie Schwaben.



Photo: Julia Koch

PEOPLE

OBITUARY

The Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg mourns the loss of Prof. Dr. Anton Frantzke. The former professor from the Faculty of Business passed away at the beginning of February 2024. Anton Frantzke was a professor of economics from winter semester 1995 until his retirement in the fall of 2020. He was Vice-President of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg from October 2002 until September 2004, a member of the University Senate for many years, and chaired the Examination Committee. Frantzke was passionate about the internationalization of the Faculty and, in particular, promoting the international student exchanges. From 2008, he was one of two International Faculty Coordinators (IFC) at the Faculty of Business.

He was involved in the international networks of the Faculty and was President of the CIDD (Consortium of International Double Degrees) for a number of years. In his role as IFC, he was able to establish valuable international contacts for the Faculty. Many colleagues at the partner universities had a deep friendship with him. Anton Frantzke was highly regarded among the students, teachers and staff at the Faculty due to his warm and approachable manner and his professional expertise. In him, the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg and especially the Faculty of Business has lost an outstanding personality. We will miss him and will cherish his memory. Our thoughts are with his loved ones, to whom we extend our heartfelt sympathy.



Prof. Dr. Anton Frantzke

NEW TEAM MEMBER

In summer semester 2024, the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg appointed Prof. Dr. Dr. Carolin Palmer as Professor of HR and Organization Psychology. She joins the business psychology team after holding positions at the University of Hohenheim (PhD in psychology), Justus Liebig University Giessen, the University of Liechtenstein, LUT University (PhD in economics and business administration), Kehl University of Applied Sciences (professor of psychology) and Cologne University of Applied Sciences (professor of occupational and organizational psychology), combining her interdisciplinary academic expertise with broad practical

experience. Her research topics include psychological consequences of digitalization, discovering innovation potential, and the interplay of psychological characteristics with the business success of entrepreneurs. We would like to warmly welcome Professor Palmer and wish her all the best in her new role!



Prof. Dr. Dr. Carolin Palmer

STUDENT PROJECT WITH LECHWERKE AG

Applied market research in a student project with Lechwerke AG (LEW). Together with the wonderful colleagues from LEW, Andreas Näßl, Nicolai Lippold, Ewa Gorn and Chantal Purat, the project group tackled various issues relating to energy and heat. This time it was even a double project: The Bachelor students led by Prof. Dr. Hariet Köstner and the MMD Master students led by Prof. Dr. Barbara Eschner gave a presentation on Marketing Day 2023. Through application of empirical methods such as market analysis and expert interviews, the project team were able to provide LEW with valuable insights, inspiration and ideas. And, during the highly entertaining and



impressive presentation of the grid control center by its manager Peter Schwae-gerl, we learned what shoes on power

lines mean – do you know?

Information: Prof. Dr. Hariet Köstner

ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS ALONG THE TRACKS OF THE AUGSBURGER LOCALBAHN

The challenges in the transport sector with respect to climate goals are evident, especially as the political target of 25% rail share of freight transport by 2030 is still a long way off. Measured by transport performance (tkm), the current share is about 19%, meaning that a further 6% rail share must be achieved to meet the government's target. If we base it on the volume of goods, i.e. the tonnage transported, the target is even further away. Rail freight transport is currently dominated by one company: DB Cargo AG. This often means that primarily large customers with goods suitable for rail transport are served by large facilities, e.g. container terminals. Tapping into new customer groups is essential in order to

increase the rail share. Rail SMEs can play an important role here: Smaller companies have a relationship to the region. They are more familiar with smaller facilities in the area and are better connected regionally. They can use these advantages for small-scale transport. Customers with lower transport volumes and a broader spectrum of goods can be acquired in this way. There is an example of such an SME in Augsburg: the Augsburg-er Localbahn. As a private railway with its own rail network of about 41 km, it represents important infrastructure for the future development of freight transport in the city. To further develop its potential for rail freight transport, the THA_ops, research group for optimized value crea-

tion, conducted the "Analysis of potential customers along the tracks of the Augsburg-er Localbahn" project in summer semester 2023. An overview of potential customers close to the rail network was drawn up to support a targeted shift of freight transport to rail. However, railway services are not equally suitable for all customers.

Specific transport needs make rail companies and customers attractive to one another. To identify these characteristics, criteria that allow the suitability of a company for cooperation to be assessed were worked out in a joint workshop together with representatives from the Augsburg-er Localbahn. The Augsburg companies were asked directly about these characteristics in an online survey. Potential partners for the Augsburg-er Localbahn can be prioritized based on a benefit analysis. The further developed idea will be presented at the 20th Eisenbahn- und Stadtbahnforum (Railway and Light Rail Forum) on 7 May so that it can then be passed on to other rail SMEs. The aim is to help to get more transport onto the railways and achieve the target of 25% rail share of freight transport.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp, Klaus Meyer (AL)



Photo: Augsburg-er Localbahn (AL)

THA_OPS IS WORKING ON RISK MINIMIZATION IN SUPPLY CHAINS

In the context of the AI Production Network at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, a workshop in the iSCRM project took place with partners from practice on 2 February under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp. The subproject with the focus "AI-supported risk analysis in digital value creation networks" has the aim of minimizing procurement risks in the supply chain. This aim is to be achieved by developing an automated, data-based decision support system for purchasers. iSCRM focuses on the analysis and evaluation of risks in the supply chain (probability of occurrence, impact analysis). It is essential to make these measurable through suitable risk indicators and evaluation of data. The workshop served to record the status quo in SMEs of the region. After lunch together, which served as an opportunity to get to know one another and network, Vice-President Prof. Dr. Frank Danzinger introduced the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg's research activities in the AI Production Network. In the AI Production Network, the Technical University of Applied

Sciences Augsburg translates findings and developments in the area of AI research into usable solutions for the regional industry. Transfer is one of the key competences of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg. The aim of research activities in the AI Production Network is to develop customized solutions for practice, an offer that provides many points of contact for the 14 companies represented.

A subsequent keynote lecture by Bastian Zeltwanger (reportingimpulse) provided an insight into the topic "Best of Dashboarding". A data dashboard represents the common practice of displaying key company figures today, based on the company's own data, usually from the ERP system. Risk figures are often included, but do not satisfactorily reflect all risks, as recent experience shows. As a project partner of the THA_ops research group, reportingimpulse provides valuable support and expertise in the areas of data collection, analysis and representation. During the workshop, which was accompanied by MAPR students from the THA_ops research group – Philipp

Kerler, Tamara Kartheining-er, Jasmin Hagen and Carina Zimmermann – the current status quo and existing challenges in supply chain risk management (SCRM), in particular possible and dangerous "blind spots", were discussed and analyzed in depth in three sessions. The workshop clearly illustrated the complexity of supply chain risk management and the need for a comprehensive, data-driven approach. The findings from the sessions underline the importance of developing a comprehensive decision support system, which iSCRM is intended to be. Supply chains should become more resilient. The participation of experts and specialists from practice made an important contribution to identifying practice-related challenges and solution approaches which can be incorporated in the future development of the iSCRM project.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp, Tamara Kartheining-er



Photo: THA_ops

ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT FOR AI-BASED BUSINESS MODELS: DIGITALIZATION AND ELECTRIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK

Would the use of artificial intelligence (AI) make sense in my company or is it just hype? Many companies, especially SMEs, are asking themselves this question currently. But how do you assess the (re)development of a business model and how do you identify development options that are actually relevant? It is helpful here to adopt a data- and value stream-based perspective: AI is based on data. However, the conditions for AI-based business models are often not in place. There is a lack of core resources such as data collection, storage and assets for evaluating and using the data. The complexity increases when companies have to participate in cross-sector delivery relationships, so-called ecosystems. In this case, companies are dependent on the availability and quality of other companies' data as well. The "Ecosystem development for AI-based business models" project aims to analyze the challenges and opportunities that result from the integration of artificial intelligence in business models and ecosystems. In the context of the AI Production Network at the Technical University of

Applied Sciences Augsburg, this project focuses in particular on the digital transformation and electrification of public transport. In cooperation with regional bus companies and under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Frank Danzinger and Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp, a structured approach to examining the integration and the resulting effects of AI in business models and in the associated company ecosystems was developed. The multi-phase approach ranges from initial data collection to identification of the potential of AI in a wide range of business model configurations.

1. Relevant stakeholders and data streams in the course of sector coupling

First, a detailed understanding of the current business models of the companies involved was developed. In addition, potential value streams, especially data and energy streams, needed to be identified. These are becoming increasingly important due to the coupling of the mobility and energy sectors and in AI-based business models. For this purpose, interviews

were conducted and the desired state of the "Public transport digital and electric" ecosystem was drafted in an initial project phase.

2. Basis for decisions: Business model configurations

To develop a strategic basis for decisions, a comprehensive examination of the changing structure of the energy sector was conducted. For this purpose, over 600 business models were analyzed and classified, which allowed the current state of the business models in the mobility and energy industries to be represented. A morphological tool was developed to identify business model configurations based on technological decisions. This tool allows systematic analysis and combination of different dimensions and features of business models in order to identify new or modified configurations that AI technologies can enable or improve. Based on the initial situation and the identified business model options, six relevant business model configurations were defined using the tool. These interim findings were subjected to intensive discussion with interested companies in terms of new business activities (e.g. load management), new revenue components (e.g. revenue from GHG trade) and completely new business model options (e.g. energy generation options), and possible development options were defined.

3. Identification of AI potential

In the last phase of the project, the AI potential of the individual business model configurations was identified. This analysis had the concrete aim of identifying specific use cases and opportunities for the use of AI technologies in a wide range of business models in order to achieve efficiency gains, new value creation possibilities and strategic advantages. The "Ecosystem development for AI-based business models" project represents a meaningful step in the direction of the use of AI for improving business models and promoting the digital transformation. With its focus on the analysis and optimization of the relationship between AI-based business models, the project makes an important contribution to the successful electrification of public transport and to the development of sustainable, future-proof business practices.

Information: Prof. Dr. Frank Danzinger, Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp, Tamara Kartheininger



Philipp Kerler and Benedikt Markus at the results presentation "Implementation of electromobility at SMEs in Bavaria" of the Bavarian Association of Bus and Couch Operators (Landesverband Bayerischer Omnibusunternehmen, LBO)

READING SPONSOR TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AUGSBURG READS AT THE VOR DEM ROTEN TOR PRIMARY SCHOOL AGAIN

The 4th class children peek shyly through the door at the reading island. Today is a special day at the Vor dem Roten Tor primary school. The Dean of the Faculty of Business at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, Prof. Dr. Nicolas Warkotsch, is visiting. What the children don't know is that the visit is part of the "Reading series" project at the University, in which

professors read their favorite books to children. The reading island, a brightly decorated room with shelves full of books, is supported by the city of Augsburg, the Stadtbücherei (Public Library) Augsburg and the Freunde der Stadtbücherei Augsburg e. V. (Friends of the Augsburg Public Library). Each reading island has a sponsor. The school's sponsor is the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg.

The first children gather the courage to enter the room, finding themselves surrounded by full bookshelves and colorful comics. The room slowly grows quiet as the children sit on the stage and make themselves comfortable with some cushions.

Professor Warkotsch takes a seat across from the stage. He introduces the book "Der Tag, an dem die Oma das Internet kaputt gemacht hat" (The Day Grandma Broke the Internet) by Marc-Uwe Kling. The kids are intrigued and murmuring breaks out in the room. The children seem very concerned by the idea that the Internet could actually be broken. Professor



Prof. Dr. Nicolas Warkotsch reads to the primary school children. Photo: Michael Krupp

Warkotsch now has their attention and they all want to know: "How did that happen? How did Grandma break the Internet?". The children love the story and have the opportunity to ask questions after.

Professor Warkotsch is not the only visitor to the reading island. A total of eight professors took part in the project in summer semester 2023. Prof. Drs. Maunz, Feucht, Gampfer, Hatfield, Kafadar, Elisabeth Kroen and Uhl read to children from various classes. The reading series will be continued in school year 23/24. THA_ops members Ms. Kartheininger, Ms. Drews-Sollinger and Ms. Hagen have volunteered as readers. Ms. Tielemann was the first reader in 2024 and read "Momo" by Michael Ende to the children. The children were captivated by the story and saw parallels between Momo's house and the open-air theater next to the school. Soon Ms. Mack and Ms.

Ponholzer from the library will have their turn reading, and a theater workshop with the theater group from the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg will offer an insight into the world of theater. This will allow the children to experience first-hand how a written text is brought to life. The reading series in the primary school is intended to familiarize children with reading as a key cultural activity and to foster their love of reading. However, there's more behind it: The aim is to open the University to the children. Insights and low-pressure contact break down barriers and introduce the University as a possible further educational path even to children for whom it may not be an expectation.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp, Jasmin Hagen

THEORY MEETS PRACTICE: VISIT TO DR. GRANDEL

Prof. Dr. Klaus Kellner and Prof. Dr. Manfred Uhl visited the company Dr. Grandel GmbH, with which the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg has a

long-running cooperation. They spoke to CEO Ariane Grandel and Head of Marketing Stefanie Franz about the evolution of their brands, the latest international prod-

uct trends and the significance of the company culture for societal success. Graduates of the Faculty of Business play an important role in Grandel's further development - many students have already worked in the company or successfully completed their Bachelor or Master thesis there. A perfect match between a family-run SME and applied sciences. Sincere thanks to Ariane Grandel and Stefanie Franz for the many fascinating insights into their company!

Information: Prof. Dr. habil. Klaus Kellner, Prof. Dr. Manfred Uhl



(from left) Prof. Dr. Manfred Uhl, Stefanie Franz, Ariane Grandel and Prof. Dr. Klaus Kellner.

DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABILITY MONITOR FOR (BUSINESS) STAKEHOLDERS OF THE AUGSBURG REGION



(from left) Johannes Schindlbeck, Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris, Annabell Hummel-Wiest, Andreas Thiel and Tamara Weber. Photo: Regio Augsburg Wirtschaft GmbH

The topic of sustainability has played a significant role for a number of years, not only at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg. Responsible handling of people and nature is also becoming increasingly important for all companies in the Augsburg region, from both an ethical and a strategic perspective. This is partly due to new laws, but also changing expectations of society. To find out how the organizations of the A³ are performing in this essential transformation to a more sustainable economy and what challenges they need support with, the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg is cooperating with the Regio Augsburg Wirtschaft GmbH. The project for determining the status quo with respect to sustainability, which started in spring 2023, is aimed primarily but not exclusively at companies. NGOs, municipi-

palities, authorities or associations, for example, can also take part in the annual, anonymous survey, provided that they employ at least one person. The only other condition is that they have their head office or a location in the city or district of Augsburg or in the Aichach-Friedberg district. Participating organizations are mainly asked about whether sustainability activities or measures towards their own sustainability are already implemented and, if not, what the reasons for this are. The addressed sustainability criteria are based partly on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), common sustainability reporting standards and relevant ISO standards. A comparison of the survey results over several years produces a comprehensive development path for the region. However, the true value of the analyzed and aggregated data is

that it provides information on why companies do not (yet) act as sustainably as they should or would like to. Further recommendations for action are derived in the next step based on this information. These recommendations can serve as a basis for action for the individual stakeholders, but also as a foundation for regional or sector-specific approaches to improving sustainability. In particular, the development of specific, needs-oriented support offers for the regional companies would be desirable. The approach of regularly monitoring (corporate) sustainability in relation to a region is unparalleled to date. Another aim of the project is to strengthen the image of the Augsburg region as a sustainable business location – and thus to retain skilled workers in the region or attract them to the region, for example. Not least for this reason, Regio Augsburg Wirtschaft GmbH is receiving grant funding of €300,000 for a period of three years from the Free State of Bavaria. The first survey phase finished in February 2024, and the data is currently being evaluated by research assistant Johannes Schindlbeck and Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris.

Next time, the plan is for all regional organizations to be called to participate in October 2024. The project team is asking for high participation, as it is decisive for the quality of the results that as many organizations as possible take part in the survey.

Information: Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris, Johannes Schindlbeck

RATIONAL AG: ONLINE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

Online research communities currently represent an innovative method for direct communication between experts and companies in the B2B environment. However, setting up a successful community requires careful planning. Twelve students from the Business Administration and International Management programs analyzed exactly what is required in a practical project with the wonderful project partner from Rational AG, Oliver Feiler (Head of Market Intelligence). Under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Barbara Eschner, the students developed an action-oriented package of measures based on a method mix of literature and internet research, their own experiments and qualitative expert interviews. The intensive three-hour workshop, in which the group presented their well-thought-out community canvas to Rational AG

and professionally addressed the various success factors and challenges, was an absolute highlight. In the end, we had our red HSA-Mobil to thank for getting the entire group to the Rational headquarters in Landsberg am Lech punctually – in spite of farmers' protests, rail strikes and the onset of winter.

A wonderful compliment from Rational proved that the work was worthwhile: "It could have been Rational employees presenting the results. Even the charts were exactly our style, which made us feel that the group understood us very well as a customer."

Great feedback, not just for student advisors!

Information: Prof. Dr. Barbara Eschner



Members of the student project team

THA_OPS CREATES A FOUNDATION FOR APPLIED RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF CUSTOMS AND FOREIGN TRADE

The legal requirements in the area of customs and foreign trade have been steadily increasing, and not only since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the associated sanctions. Even before this, a volatile political environment led to constant changes and adjustments to regulations. This makes it even more surprising that there has been no significant research in the field of applied sciences with respect to process efficiency in customs and foreign trade to date. The exchange with companies and the experiences from the continuing education course "Customs and Foreign Trade Management" of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg illustrated this, as the development of efficient customs processes lacks a scientifically proven basis. There is a serious need for guidance in order to properly integrate customs and foreign trade legislation in the process structure of the supply chains. Especially in SMEs, a structured process is often neglected. Learning curves cannot be sustainably established with highly situational handling of challenges. This is where the REZA research project comes in: It is

aimed at internationally active companies that import/export operationally. The analyses started in winter semester 22/23. Companies of all sizes and from a wide variety of sectors are added every semester, and the current processes in the field of customs and foreign trade are recorded. These processes are then superimposed on each other and compared: A reference process that reflects all workflows results.

The interim results are regularly discussed with the project partners. Companies also receive individualized assessments of their workflows. Regular discussion of the findings takes place with the Customs work group of the Swabian Chamber of Industry and Commerce in parallel. The presentation of the resulting reference process is planned for 2024 as part of a public event on the topic. But what is the purpose of this ominous reference process? It provides the basis for a structured internal and cross-company discussion and for alignment of workflows in the field of customs and foreign trade. Benchmarking activities in different degrees of detail are offered

and the main conditions for target-oriented optimization, standardization and digitalization of these workflows are created. At the same time, the reference process is the foundation for the transparent localization of research questions and thus also the first milestone in the establishment of a customs and foreign trade research area at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, ideally in cooperation with a network of interested parties from professional practice.

The REZA project is financed by a broad consortium of participating companies.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp, Susanne Drews-Sollinger

"SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS" PROJECT

The "Sustainable Campus" project has been offered at the Faculty of Business since winter semester 2021/22. It was developed by Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris with the specific aim of promoting sustainability skills and was awarded the teaching innovation prize by the Bavarian State Ministry for Science and the Arts in 2022. In terms of content, the project module is an interdisciplinary and cross-faculty project for 3rd year students from all Bachelor programs at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg. Solutions for making the campus more sustainable are researched within interdisciplinary teams. Students thus have the opportunity to try out and apply the theoretical knowledge gained in their respective degree programs directly in University operations, fully in line with a Whole Institution Approach.

To date, well over 100 students from the Computer Science, Identity Design, Social Work, Architecture, Business Administration and International Management programs have taken part.

In the context of this project, the students tackle the topic of "Sustainability

on the campus" together with Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris, the project leader.

First, students are introduced to Agenda 2023 of the United Nations with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the form of a simulation game. Each student takes on a role from the field of business, politics, civil society or science in the simulation game. Decisions are made within the team in each round to pursue and implement the sustainability strategy together.

In the next step, the students consider how the topic of sustainability is already implemented on their own campus and how unsustainable processes can be redesigned and redeveloped through new projects or methods. The SDGs are kept in mind at all times. In this way, new sustainable projects are created at the University, on the one hand, and existing projects are continued, further developed and optimized, on the other.

After the actual project work, the projects are presented in class in the form of presentations and final videos and introduced to the other participants. The videos serve to facilitate transfer of the projects

to the subsequent groups and to provide an overview of the work done in the preceding semesters.

The aim of the "Sustainable Campus" project is to transform the University step by step into a more sustainable place through changes on the campus. Through the project work, the students gain in-depth know-how on the topic of sustainability and its direct implementation in everyday operations at the University. By developing new projects, they learn to plan and implement creative, sustainable and realistic solutions and present them to incoming groups. They also come to understand the relationships between the individual stakeholders and the University. In this way, the long-term existence of the projects can be ensured in the future also and sustainability on the campus can be maintained.

Information: Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris

UNIVERSITY PROJECT HSA_TEACH: STUDENTS SUPPORT PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN DURING THE PANDEMIC

In 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg launched a groundbreaking transfer project to support disadvantaged schoolchildren. Under the name HSA_teach, students from various faculties work together with teachers to encourage schoolchildren in their learning development. Virtual teaching during the lockdowns left many children with gaps in their learning, the effects of which can still be felt today and are likely to accompany the children throughout their education. Like so often, socially disadvantaged children and children with a migration background were disproportionately affected. To make it easier for these children, in particular, to join the classroom, the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg launched the HSA_teach project. Since March 2021, students and teachers have been working together to provide individual support to schoolchildren at the Vor dem Roten Tor primary school in Augsburg. The consistently positive response from teachers and schoolchildren led to the project being continued in the 2021/2022 school year and extended to

now also offer support at Birkenau Primary School in Augsburg-Lechhausen. During the project period from March 2021 until now, up to 20 students were engaged at the two primary schools at any one time and have completed around 8,300 hours to date (February 2024). These hours benefit practically the entire school and relieve the burden on teachers. The THA_ops research group voluntarily takes on organizational leadership of the project. Until the end of 2022, the project was funded by HSA_transfer, an agency for cooperative University projects in the context of the state and county initiative "Innovative Hochschule". The Freunde der Stadtbücherei Augsburg provided the financing in the first half of 2023. The project is currently financed from the THA_ops' own funds. Together with HSA_unite (a THA_ops project for the integration of Ukrainian schoolchildren), HSA_teach was honored for its commitment with the first prize from the Hans-Benedikt-Stiftung Foundation at the 2022 gP Awards. This award highlights the significance and the success of the project for society. With the start of the last stage at

the Vor dem Roten Tor primary school in summer semester 2024, the project will enter its final phase. Today's fourth-class children will leave primary school in summer as the last class affected by virtual learning. The project was documented in detail as a template for other third-level institutions and is now available as a "blueprint" to be copied. The concept has already been adapted for secondary schools at the Holbeingymnasium in Augsburg. HSA_teach has proven itself as a trailblazing example of how targeted cooperation between third-level institutions and schools can contribute to promoting educational equality and supporting schoolchildren in difficult times.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp

AI + CHATGPT FOR COMPANIES

The greatest innovation of all time or worse than the atomic bomb? The reporting on ChatGPT & co. fluctuates between these extremes. Nearly everyone has already used chatbots based on the GPT (Generative Pretrained Transformer) architecture. From conversations with users of GPT tools, it is notable that most of them a) don't go further than a few more or less serious questions or instructions, (b) do not know about the underlying technology of the "self-reflective" neuronal networks and (c) are not aware of the astonishingly easy adaptability of GPT systems to their own data and problems. Early adoption of this technology would result in the greatest benefit for everyone in the long term, but especially for companies from the SME segment. In a joint event on 10 May 2023 in front of an audience of over 30 CEOs and managers, Gero Gode and Prof. Dr. Jianing Zhang provided insights into the fascinating world of AI as well as specific rec-



Gero Gode and Prof. Dr. Jianing Zhang

ommendations on the use of ChatGPT in their own companies. In his keynote speech, Prof. Dr. Jianing Zhang outlined the fascinating development of AI algorithms and provided food for thought on the wide-ranging applications and consequences of AI for companies and society.

Information: Prof. Dr. Jianing Zhang

EXCURSION AND WORKSHOP AT DELO

On 26 October, the students of the Master in HR Management program, under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Erika Regnet, set off on an excursion to Windach am Ammersee. Their destination was the "hidden champion" DELO Industrie Klebstoffe GmbH & Co. KGaA. DELO is a manufacturer of industrial adhesives which can be found in a large number of products – from chip cards to the automotive sector and aviation – and is considered in the industry as one of the most important suppliers in the world. The students received a fascinating insight into the company and got to know the special characteristics of glue production during a factory tour. Afterwards, they tackled current issues from HR practice in small groups: How can a fast-growing hidden champion draw attention to itself? How can experienced, skilled staff be recruited? How can the careers page be further optimized?

Information: Prof. Dr. Erika Regnet

THE LOGISTICS PLAN FOR BAVARIA ALSO COMES FROM THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AUGSBURG

On 26 January 2024, Minister of State Christian Bernreiter introduced the "Güterverkehrskonzept Bayern" (freight transport concept for Bavaria) in the Bavarian State Ministry for Housing, Construction and Transport. The concept is based on a very extensive report which was drawn up between 2021 and 2023 by the following consortium partners, in close cooperation with the Ministry: Technical University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt (THWS), Railistics, SSP Consult, Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences and the THA_ops research group of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg. The freight transport concept defines three "pilot projects" which are now to be implemented with high priority:

- 1) Additional freight transport centers in the administrative districts
- 2) The implementation of a burner slot system
- 3) A conference on recruiting skilled staff

123 options for action, listed in bullet points, offer additional perspectives on the concept. These options were "distilled" from 630 ideas resulting from a series of workshops with over 136 companies, chambers and associations. THA_ops was entrusted with conducting the workshops and contributed content primarily to the "Digitalization", "City logistics" and "Qualification" sections.

With the "Güterverkehrskonzept Bayern" and the report on which it is based, the Bavarian State Government has set a clear development plan for sustainable and effective logistics. THA_ops will be pleased to contribute to the implementation of the measures contained.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp
<https://www.stmb.bayern.de/med/pressemitteilungen/pressearchiv/2024/10b/index.php>



Minister of State Christian Bernreiter at the presentation. Photo: Michael Krupp

PROCESS-ORIENTED DIGITALIZATION IN COOPERATION WITH AUMÜLLER AUMATIC GMBH

In the context of the student project "DigitizePro - Creation of a process map to digitalization", students of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, together with Aumüller Aumatic GmbH, drew up a process map to operationalize the digitalization mission statement. Business processes were recorded, modeled and analyzed with respect to their potential for digitalization or automation. The project was led by the MAPR students Carina Zimmermann and Jasmin Hagen, with guidance from Marjan Hefe and Prof. Dr. Peter Richard. Digitalization and process management are closely linked and form a symbiotic relationship that is often overlooked in today's world of business. Digitalization relates to the conversion of analog processes to digital formats through the integration of technology in order to improve efficiency, accuracy and speed. Process management, on the other hand, focuses on optimizing workflows and methods in a company in order to use resources more effectively and improve the quality of the results. The link between digitalization and process management is often overlooked because

many companies place a focus either on implementing new technologies or on optimizing their business processes, instead of looking at both aspects as an integrated unit. As an innovative supplier for the development, manufacture and distribution of automated solutions for building and industrial technology, Aumüller Aumatic GmbH recognized the important interplay between these two topics and launched the "DigitizePro" project together with eight students from the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg. In winter semester 2023/2024, the students first learned about the theoretical basics of process management and were trained in the use of tools for process modeling and project management. They had the opportunity to apply this knowledge promptly to the work practices at Aumüller Aumatic GmbH and to structure and model the business processes in the context of a process map together with representatives from the relevant disciplines. In the process map, the company's functional areas are first identified and operative and administrative processes are described. For this purpose, it was neces-

sary for the students, together with the company development representatives, to conduct process mapping interviews with the departments in order to structure and document the employees' knowledge. The results of these interviews were then modeled in a process modeling tool and made available to the employees in the form of a web model. This allowed continuous communication on business processes to take place at a technical level and initial potential for optimization to be derived. The processes and the associated information such as responsibilities, documents, IT systems etc. were only published after approval from the contact partners in the departments. The process map and the potential optimizations were presented, discussed and handed over in the context of an interim presentation and a final presentation. This marked the successful end of the "DigitizePro" project and the students were able to complete an informative and fascinating project.

Information: Prof. Dr. Peter Richard, Marjan Hefe, Jasmin Hagen

THE GVZ: THE NEW PLACE TO BE

Is there a need for a new location brand? Yes! Identity is attractive. For more than ten years, Gisela Blaas, communications coordinator for companies in the logistics sector and alumna of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, has been providing communications support for the Freight Transport Center (Güterverkehrszentrum, GVZ) of the Augsburg region on behalf of the cities of Augsburg, Gersthofen and Neusäß. In October, she introduced the idea of a location brand as a practical example and conveyed her communication experience in a seminar. Her idea: A community influencer program making the GVZ into a place to be. Students of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg from different disciplines studied the 112-hectare area in the north of Augsburg, which is currently home to around 20 companies related to logistics. The initial situation is a communal location project that is marketed and communicated by a company that will be dissolved when the last site is sold.

From this time, the companies will act under the umbrella of a location brand, which is currently still geared towards attracting other companies. The seminar team researched the stakeholder landscape. Using a matrix and power grid, a conceptual basis was created for a corporate influencer program which can support the idea of a future brand that represents the location as an attractive place to work. The interactive development of personas and the work with personal brand sheets improved the understanding of influencers as senders and receivers of messages. In the strategic communication loop, the students developed their concept ideas in just four seminar afternoons, individual online counseling and collegial feedback. The students now know what makes up a location brand, how to create a stakeholder matrix and how to identify and build brand ambassadors. Furthermore, their findings and ideas flowed into a concept with target definitions, contents and measures, including success measurement, in the context of a seminar project. The result is six implementable approaches for influencer programs. "In the long term, a living community that is ready to show what it's about has much more power than image campaigns alone", says Gisela Blaas, who will present the results to the companies in the Freight Transport Center.

Information: Prof. Dr. Krupp, Gisela Blaas

APPLIED QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN PSYCHOLOGY EDUCATION

Qualitative research in psychology education has long been in the shadow of quantitative methods. Nowadays, however, hardly anyone doubts the added value of guided in-depth interviews, skillfully moderated focus discussions or systematic observation for a holistic understanding of human behavior and experiences. Therefore, training on qualitative research methods is of course part of the compulsory Business Psychology curriculum at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg. The very first lecture in the summer semester, under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Peter Cocron and Prof. Dr. Barbara Eschner, attracted the interest of many practical partners: Andrea Ebner and Philipp Müller from the Mediaplus Group, Laetitia Ory from the HSA Funkenwerk start-up hub, and the two founders of Farm-Z, Anna Martin and Luis Zillich, were immediately enthused by the idea of participating in the model with specific research questions. Many students were delighted to have the opportunity to conduct their qualitative research not just for the filing cabinet or for their certificate, but for concrete use cases. (1) For Mediaplus, the work

groups systematically immersed themselves in the media world of Generation Z: They filmed the social media use of test subjects, collected adverts, created ideal advertising posts, and traced S-commerce journeys with all their ups and downs. The work groups were finally able to present their wide range of qualitative findings to Mediaplus colleagues at the Haus der Kommunikation in Munich. (2) The students researched potential target groups for FARM-Z, the start-up for sustainable vegetable cultivation. The wealth of insights included ideal locations for the planned vegetable towers in Augsburg, the diverse vegetable needs of consumers and chefs (B2C and B2B!), dos and don'ts for a suitable logo, and finally the realization of what causes genuine emotions when it comes to organic vegetables: earth on the roots. At the end of the semester, it is evident: Qualitative methods are not only just as much a part of the repertoire of budding business psychologists as experimental or multivariate methods, they are also (for some researchers) more fun.

Information: Prof. Dr. Barbara Eschner

Anna Martin and Luis Zillich from FARM_Z (2nd and 3rd from left) with the student group and Prof. Dr. Barbara Eschner (far right).



PROJECT COMBATTING THE DRIVER SHORTAGE

The LeitFahr³ project under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp and Susanne Drews-Sollinger has the aim of making the day-to-day work of professional drivers more motivating in order to make the career more attractive for career changers, new starters and women. In cooperation with the Fraunhofer Work Group for Supply Chain Services of the Fraunhofer Institute IIS and the PiA Institute for Psychology of the FAU Erlangen-Nuremberg, motivators and stressors are identified and strategies for strengthening or reducing these are worked out. The aim of the project is to develop the "Bavarian guidelines for improving motivation in the day-to-day work of professional drivers". The shortage of drivers is a problem in all industries, even in local transport, where the working day usually starts and ends at home (and not at truck stops, which is often the case with long-distance driving). Two surveys were conducted to achieve better understanding of the challenges and requirements of professional drivers: A direct survey of 141 school graduates looking for work at three career and education fairs as well as telephone interviews with 108 drivers from nine different companies. These interviews provide in-depth insights into the specific needs and requirements of current and potential drivers. Initial results indicate that commitment to the company helps to keep the drivers in the company, but the work situation should still be designed to be appealing to keep motivation high. In addition, three intensive workshops were held at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg to record the stressors and motivators along the "driver journey" - i.e. the daily routine of professional drivers. The focus was on the loading and unloading situation and the internal cooperation with logistics and management. The results were prepared in various formats and published in 2024. The LeitFahr³ project is supported by the Bavarian State Ministry for Housing, Construction and Transport and co-financed by companies from haulage logistics and trade.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp, Susanne Drews-Sollinger

SURVEY OF BEST AGERS AT WORK: POTENTIAL IN LIGHT OF SHORTAGE OF SKILLED WORKERS

A shortage of skilled workers is a frequent complaint these days. Despite a continued high unemployment rate of about 6% Germany-wide, many companies report difficulties filling their vacant positions. However, the labor force participation rate drops significantly after the age of 60. Are older, gray or silver workers, best agers as we call them, still able and willing to perform, i.e. competent and motivated? How do they assess their work situation and the cooperation between generations? What career goals are still appealing and realistic for older workers? How do they assess the changes in the world of work in this post-pandemic era? A group of 15 students tackled these questions in an HR project in summer semester 2023. Best ager surveys were also conducted in 2015 and 2018, meaning that interesting comparison data from between 1,500 skilled workers and managers is available. Like the previous studies, the survey was conducted in cooperation with borisgloger consulting, so that the link to practice was always there.

The following findings were unsurprising:

- Working hours increase with hierarchy level
- There is more remote work compared to previous years
- Willingness to fluctuate is significantly higher in the younger age groups

In contrast, the following findings were notable:

- Top management reports by far the highest satisfaction, topped only by the sa-

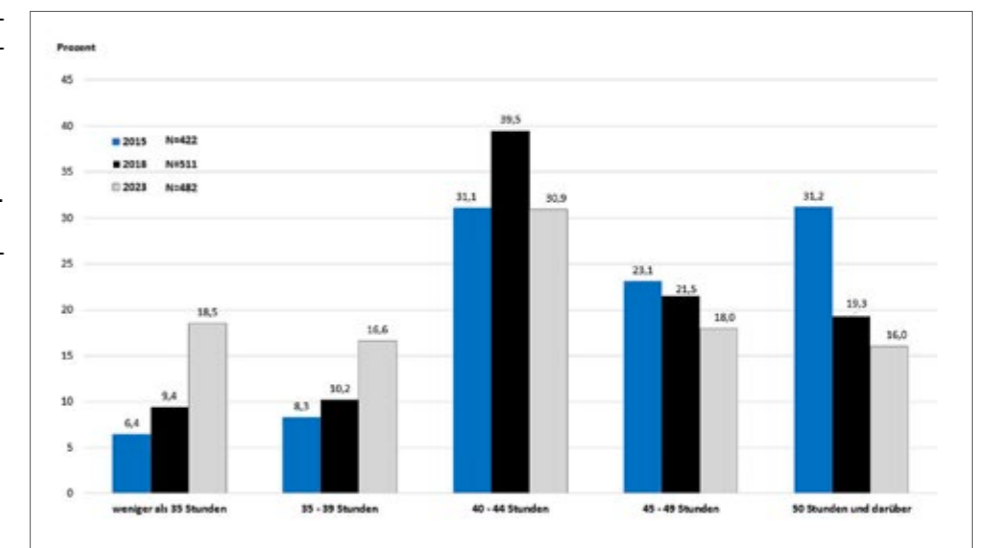
tisfaction levels of self-employed individuals. This indicates that forgoing a career reduces job satisfaction. It seems to be important to have interesting tasks, be able to do something meaningful and to have creative freedom.

- Although most managers still do regular overtime, their working hours have also fallen considerably since 2015. Long working hours (in concrete terms, over 50 hours per week) are increasingly being rejected at management levels also; see figure below.
- Despite the many critical reports on Generation Z in the labor market: In our study, the younger colleagues were evaluated much more positively than the older ones, although they were considered more demanding and less reliable.
- Career remains important for many older workers - but they often feel left behind and overlooked, missing out on development opportunities and appreciation. This is particularly noticeable in the over 50s group.
- Older workers also have clear ideas of what they still want to do in their career - be it passing on their expertise, mentoring, having more freedom or taking on more responsibility in their role.

Conclusion: Older workers are a group that has been rather overlooked to date but has high significance in terms of retaining skilled workers. Many skilled workers and managers feel capable regardless of their age and are motivated. This resource is highly underused!

Information: Prof. Dr. Erika Regnet
Results report: <https://doi.org/10.23779/0016>

Regular working hours of the surveyed skilled workers and managers in a comparison over time



THE FIRST YEAR OF ELLSI - EDUCATION AND LEARNING LAB FOR SUSTAINABILITY INNOVATIONS

What is ELLSI?

The Education and Learning Lab for Sustainability Innovations (ELLSI) supplements the technical innovations in the AI Production Network of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg in the area of sustainability with modern teaching and learning formats, focusing particularly on the textile industry. The ELLSI is located in the Augsburg Recycling Studio, one of three model factories of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg.

What is meant by model factory?

In the context of the AI Production Network of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, the concept of a model factory allows test methods as well as learning environments for education and further training of students and skilled workers. The aim of ELLSI is to further develop novel concepts in mixed re-

ality and virtual reality environments, in addition to conventional learning formats, and apply them with the use of artificial intelligence. For example, the digital VR twin of the Recycling Studio allows location-independent training of mechanical textile recycling in the digital phases of the recycling process and on the necessary equipment in each case.

Why is textile recycling currently a hot topic?

We are drowning in used textiles. Every person in Germany buys about 18 kg of clothing and throws out about 5 kg of old textiles each year - and the trend is increasing. In addition, technical textiles are usually not included in the available figures. In Germany alone, we can assume a possible total quantity of 3.5 to 4.5 million tons per year. Although the willingness to recycle is very high in Germany (about 1.2 million tons), only a small

portion is returned to the cycle. A large portion is burned or downcycled into cleaning cloths. Only 1% of old textiles are subject to high-quality recycling, i.e. they are processed into new textiles in a closed cycle. This is known as fiber-to-fiber recycling in technical jargon. In other words: 99% of our textiles are not circular textiles! This situation is unacceptable from an ecological, economical, technical and social perspective. Changing the situation into a circular textile economy is a big task, but it holds enormous potential if we manage to get all stakeholders on board.

What is ELLSI's mission?

ELLSI is developing skills for sustainability and offers a platform for this transformation. Furthermore, ELLSI sees itself as an open place of learning and aims to co-create innovations. Recycling processes and economic cycles are made

tangible and accessible to students and interested business partners in ELLSI through modern innovation and learning formats. Immersive environments and innovation techniques promote a sustainability mindset, convey green knowledge and develop transformation skills.

What do students gain from it?

In interdisciplinary teaching projects, students develop solutions for implementation of recycling concepts and sustainability transformations in cooperation with various clients. Through learning-by-doing, students gain sustainability skills and are prepared for future job requirements. When students and project partners experience the creation and recycling process of clothing by means of VR environments from the sewing factory in Bangladesh to the mountain of rubbish in the Atacama Desert in Chile or on the outskirts of a village in Poland, their understanding of economic cycles and their motivation grow. Future projects will deal with the topics of technology and clothing, e.g. how can wearables in items of clothing raise awareness of the 'value of textiles'? Or how can generative AI be used in a meaningful way to generate motivating change stories for sustainable consumer behavior?

What does the economy gain from it?

Due to the European Green Deal, the interest in textile recycling at an industrial scale is very high, so it is advantageous to demonstrate machine applications of industrial partners in VR environments worldwide and thus make the requirements of textile recycling directly tangible. To achieve consistent realization at an industrial scale, it is first necessary to set up and harmonize process steps and data flows. The VR setting of ELLSI offers possibilities here to construct such models and run through them as stakeholders. Interested companies receive the opportunity directly on site to take part in innovation workshops for sustainability transformation and Design4Recycling. Using techniques based on design thinking principles and on the physical station of product development, concrete prototyping for sustainable products can take place. Because everyone has access to textiles - at the end of the day, nothing comes closer to our skin - transferability to other products and industries is easily established.

What does society gain from it?

With the Open Studio every second Thursday of the month and public events, it is also possible for the public to experience ELLSI in the Recycling Studio. Formats such as the Long Night of Science and pop-up events in the 'Zwischenzeit' store in Augsburg, which invite people to repair textiles and upcycle, communicate the value of textiles and offer professional guidance and tips on working with your own clothes, which can be followed immediately. Furthermore, ELLSI sees itself as an extracurricular place of learning, e.g. in the context of reading days at primary schools, when the young generation learn about the "magical world of fabric" in a playful way, and as an excursion destination for secondary schools, where students can learn about digitalization and the circular economy in a practical way.

Which topics are researched?

The ELLSI team is constantly writing applications to receive funding for meaningful research. The range of research is broad, stretching from the establishment of innovation communities in the textile industry to the use of AR and VR to design sustainable landscapes and leisure opportunities. In the field of market and consumer psychology, questions such as consumers' willingness to pay for sustainable purchase decisions and what affects this are addressed. The use of AI to promote the circular economy in the sense of twin transformation, where digitalization and sustainability go hand in hand, is an example of a future application and research focus. Traditional learning research is also performed by ELLSI; for example, comparison and combination of different learning formats (e.g. mixed vs. virtual reality vs. infographics) allows empirically validated conclusions to be reached for learning environments in evaluative designs.

BAU-JIT-KMU PROJECT: EFFICIENT DELIVERY PROCESSES IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The construction industry is suffering from low productivity growth and a serious shortage of skilled workers. This is where Bau-JiT-KMU, a project of the THA_ops research group in cooperation with Planstack GmbH, comes in. In the project, a cross-company example process for the delivery of prefabricated parts and supporting software based on this are developed.

Research-based solutions for SMEs

Through an expert survey and on-site process monitoring, the weak points in the process are identified. An example TARGET process is generated. There is a special focus on suitability for SMEs in order to offer practical and effective solutions.

Increased efficiency through IT tools

To support and facilitate the introduction of the target process, conventional IT tools are prepared in such a way that they can be used well for communication in the process. A process model with prepared IT communication solutions results from this to handle the process.

Effective redesign of the construction industry

The project has the aim of effectively modernizing the construction industry in one small step. The targeted optimization of inter-organizational coordination processes and adaptation to the needs of SMEs is intended to result in a process phase that can also be transferred to other delivery processes to increase efficiency.

Cooperation with Planstack

The project is supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) as part of the DATIpilot funding series. In the project, the THA_ops research group cooperates with the University-related start-up Planstack GmbH. Planstack offers software for optimized cooperation of various stakeholders, especially in the planning process. "With the Bau-JiT-KMU project, we want to expand our activities to construction processes. This is a promising step for us and aims to increase efficiency in construction", explains Linda Mayr, CEO of Planstack.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp, Lina Mayr (Planstack GmbH)

Prof. Dr. Simone Kubowitsch and Prof. Dr. Sarah Hatfield (center) together with Marco Hühn from Deuter (left) and Rolf Heimann, hessnaturstiftung Board of Management. Photos (left): Behrus Yazdanfar / YAAAA Mann Agency



INFOBOX

Research project AIXPERIMENTATIONLAB - Augmented intelligence for support of employees in decision situations:
www.tha.de/Wirtschaft/AIXPERIMENTATIONlab.html

Where can I learn more and who can I contact?
www.tha.de/Forschungsschwerpunkte/KI-Produktionsnetzwerk/Lernlabor-ELLSI.html

For research questions and industry cooperation:
Prof. Dr. Simone Kubowitsch and Prof. Dr. Sarah Hatfield, relevant academic director

To visit the Open Studio and for workshops on textile upcycling and Design4Recycling or placement of a student project: Laboratory Head Rebecca Bilger.



Supported by Hightech Agenda Bavaria of the Bavarian State Ministry for Science and the Arts.

THA_OPS CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES



Certificate presentation in summer semester 2023: Many congratulations to all graduates.
Photo: Matthias Leo

The world of work is changing faster than ever: The technological progress, economic and demographic developments and the fluctuating political circumstances must be taken into account if a company wants to successfully maintain its place in the market or establish itself. Its performance depends on the know-how and skills of its employees. Continuing education and life-long learning are therefore essential to improve competitiveness and to prepare the company for the requirements of a constantly changing, globalized world. Of course, the THA_ops research group also recognizes this necessity in its field of activity, optimized value creation, and has brought two more certificate courses onto the

market: In 2017, a course for logistics experts came on the market with "Process Developer Logistics". In 2020, the "Customs and Foreign Trade Management" course was introduced in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Alexandra Coenberg for employees who want deeper insights into the area of foreign trade and customs. The "Process Developer Logistics" course involves getting to know your own flow of goods and being able to efficiently plan, coordinate, control and optimize it, if necessary. The current trends in logistics and the legal requirements are of course not neglected. The "Customs and Foreign Trade Management" course aims to equip participants with the expert knowledge needed to efficiently and

effectively integrate the requirements from customs and foreign trade legislation into the supply chain processes of companies and to monitor them. In both courses, there is a strong focus on sustainability: The current legislation, e.g. regulations on climate duty, are taught, while trends in this area are addressed and are presented and discussed during the classes. Classes take place mainly at the weekend and in two block weeks. The "Process Developer Logistics" certificate relies heavily on face-to-face teaching, while the weekend classes are given online in the "Customs and Foreign Trade Management" course and face-to-face teaching at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg only takes place during the block weeks. When the lecturer teams for both certificates were composed, efforts were made to ensure a mix of internal and external persons: Professors and adjunct lecturers from the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg are used, as well as experts from the private sector. Furthermore, the courses aim to provide the foundation for successful and profitable networking so that the professors, the graduates and the University maintain a professional exchange even after the courses.

Registration to start the courses in winter semester 2024/2025 is possible at any time.

Information: Prof. Dr. Florian Waibel, Susanne Drews-Sollinger

MASTER IN HR MANAGEMENT

28 budding HR professionals (23 female and 5 male) started the Master program last winter semester. In the second week of classes, a full-day workshop took place in the Vöhlenschloss castle in Illertissen – to provide a compact introduction to the Talent Management module and to allow the students to get to know one another. The Vöhlenschloss with its impressive grounds is used by the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg and the neighboring Kempten and Neu-Ulm universities of applied sciences as a center for events and workshops.

Information: Prof. Dr. Erika Regnet



The students from the Master in HR Management in winter semester 2023/24.

ECONOMIST OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE CERTIFICATE COURSE



Aspiring skilled workers and managers from the social and healthcare sector can obtain business know-how and management knowledge on a part-time basis. The participants learn to make, justify and consistently implement business decisions on a sound professional basis.

The key course contents are:

Module 1: Recruitment and HR management, labor law, marketing
Module 2: Accounting, cost management, controlling
Module 3: Project, process and quality management, digitalization, profitability calculations

Continuing education at University level:

Our lecturers are experienced professors of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg and the Munich University of Applied Sciences. The participants are registered at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg and can use the library, computer room, Zoom license, etc.

Contact partners: Prof. Dr. Erika Regnet, study program director, Erika.Regnet@tha.de, Gabriele Hokscho, study program organizer, Gabriele.Hokscho@tha.de

Overview of the certificate course:

- Part-time on Saturdays and sometimes Friday afternoons
- 16 attendance days over 15 months, starting in April 2025
- Compact knowledge transfer and practice opportunities
- Exchange of experiences and individual specialized coaching
- Maximum of 15 participants
- Qualification: Certified University certificate (requires participation in three exams and submission of an assignment)
- Student ID with access to the library, computer room, etc.
- Fee for the entire program: 4,300 euro
- Place of implementation: Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, some parts of the course also online if needed.

Dates, detailed information and registration: <https://www.tha.de/en/School-of-Business/Economist-of-Health-and-Social-Care.html>

MASTER IN SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT

Fully in line with our mission to educate sought-after personalities, the new Master in Sustainability Management started in summer semester 2024. In this program, the students obtain comprehensive understanding of the relevance of global sustainability goals and the resulting requirements on companies. At the end of the study program, graduates will have the knowledge and skills necessary to increase the level of sustainability in organizations. The regular duration of the study program is five semesters. The classes take place on three days each week so that the students can combine studying and working in a company in a realistic way. However, it is also possible to study full time. The study program consciously focuses on interdisciplinarity: It can be studied with every Bachelor program and many modules are taught in cooperation by professors from different faculties. The students work on specific programs from companies in the region during their studies to allow them to directly apply the theory in practice. Various cooperation agreements are entered into for this purpose; for example, the SustainLab project was launched with the Swabian Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

Information: Prof. Dr. Sabine Joeris
<https://www.tha.de/en/School-of-Business/Sustainability-Management.html>

MARIIA KOSTENKO RECEIVES THE DAAD PRIZE 2023



On 1 December 2023, during the Winter Fair at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD) prize was awarded to Mariia Kostenko, student of the Master in International Business and Finance program. The prize, which is worth 1,000 euro, awards students who have distinguished themselves through excellent academic achievements and special social or intercultural commitment. Congratulations to the prize winner! (from left) Prof. Dr. Thorsten Feix, study program director Mariia Kostenko and Ines Roman, Head of the International Office. Photo: Julia Koch

ON A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY THROUGH THE BUSINESS LANDSCAPE OF AUGSBURG: A SERIES OF VISITS IN WINTER SEMESTER 2023/24

Winter semester 2023/24 offered fourteen students from the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg – including six guests from the Erasmus program – the opportunity to experience four well-known companies in the context of the "Logistics and Supply Chain Management" advanced module. The series of visits led the group to Andreas Schmid Logistik AG, Hosokawa Alpine AG, Quantron AG and MAN Energy Solutions SE, in different but typical industries of the region.

Andreas Schmid Logistik AG: Focus on efficient logistics

The journey started at the Andreas Schmid Logistik AG company, where the students received an in-depth insight into the world of logistics. The visit illustrated how efficient processes and customized technologies contribute to meeting the complex requirements of different customers. The insight into the strategic objectives of the logistics service provider over the next ten years was especially interesting.

Hosokawa Alpine AG: Precision technology in process engineering

The next stop led the group to Hosokawa Alpine AG, an expert in the field of process engineering. The students received an insight into highly precise machines and systems used in the F&B and pharmaceutical industries. Discussions with experts illustrated the importance of precision and innovation in systems, but also the logistical challenges of machine building in the last number of years. Quantron AG: Pioneers in electromobility



Students visiting Andreas Schmid Logistik AG

The series of visits continued at Quantron AG, a pioneer in the field of electromobility and alternative drive technologies. The students learned how Quantron develops sustainable solutions for the transport sector. An interactive presentation highlighted how Quantron wants to contribute to the decarbonization of the transport sector and the innovative business model on which the young company relies for this purpose.

MAN Energy Solutions SE: Sustainable energy solutions for the future

The series of visits ended at MAN Energy Solutions SE, where the students were immersed in the world of sustainable energy solutions. The tour of the company illustrated the role that innovative technologies and renewable energies can

play in shaping an environmentally friendly future. The students were impressed by the wide range of applications and the global reach of MAN Energy Solutions SE as well as the logistical challenges posed by the distribution of heavy loads.

The series of visits to these four companies allowed the students to obtain fascinating insights into different industries, as well as promoting intercultural exchange through the participation of the Erasmus students. The experiences are sure to contribute to improving the students' understanding of practices in the respective industries and to broaden their career prospects.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Krupp

MARKET RESEARCH FOR GEN Z WITH DOMINIK GRAUER



Start-up feeling in the Marketing advanced module of the International Management study program. Dominik Grauer introduced his company gutfeel, which he founded together with alumnus Marius Greubel, to the students. The two founders are passionate about market research for Gen Z and also make their expertise available to start-ups. The workshop at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg addressed issues such as the ideal incentives for Gen Z and the usability of the gutfeel app. The students learned a few surprising things, for example that panelists sometimes donate a goat. But the most important thing they learned was definitely that market research can be fun – even and especially for Gen Z!

Information: Prof. Dr. Hariet Köstner

GUEST LECTURES AND TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS IN THE MASTER IN HR MANAGEMENT

The Master in HR Management hosted renowned experts from the field in the winter semester. Fabian Schoeller, Creative Director | Art Director at SportBrain Entertainment GmbH in Gersthofen, reported on experiences and successful campaigns in "Employer branding on social media". He gave a number of tips on how to successfully address target groups on the various platforms. Dagmar Baldus, Head of Human Resources at the Champignon-Hofmeister group and a member of the practical advisory committee, discussed the "Expectations of a recruiter in an SME" and explained the field of activity in a very practical manner. After various positions in consulting and management in companies, Sarah Reinhold, graduate of the Master

program, is now Customer Success Partner at SAP. She explained the opportunities and challenges in "Digital Recruiting" as well as the requirements of HR-IT consulting projects. Highly experienced lecturer Alexander Röntgen, who is now a coach after 20 years in top management in multinational and family-run businesses, taught the "Understanding Business" module again. Joachim Volpert, Managing Partner at novamusHR01 GmbH, is a regular adjunct lecturer. He took over the "Strategic Management" course, placing a focus on process understanding and digitalization.

Information: Prof. Dr. Erika Regnet

GUEST LECTURE WITH MAREIKE OEHL

In the context of a guest lecture by Mareike Oehrl (Q-Agentur für Forschung), our budding business economists got to know a powerful method from the broad spectrum of the market research landscape: social media monitoring. In the lecture, Ms. Oehrl talked about the issues for which social media monitoring is suitable. These may include the optimization of the customer experience, early identification of trends or an early warning system against shitstorms. The course participants also learned that writing a good query is not as easy as it first seems and that a good (random) sample is essential for social media monitoring.

Overall, it was an incredibly valuable insight into market research practice.

Information: Prof. Dr. Hariet Köstner

CONJOINT ANALYSIS WITH ANNEKE SCHWIER

The Magic of Conjoint Analysis – this was the intriguing title of the guest lecture by Anneke Schwier (IfaD), who came to Augsburg from Hamburg on the invitation of Prof Dr Hariet Köstner. Indeed, when determining preferences through market research in a highly differentiated world, magic powers would sometimes not go amiss! Two groups of students had the opportunity to immerse them-

selves in the magical world – the students of the Master in MMD, for whom conjoint analysis fits perfectly in multivariate methods, and Business Psychology students, who are studying pricing policy. Conjoint analysis is both a proven and an innovative method for determining willingness to pay. In the lecture the students learned, on the one hand, how powerful conjoint analysis is, especially

in the later evaluation part. On the other hand, the question of where this method can be used was clarified. Conclusion: The results really are a little bit magic. Despite this – or perhaps because of it – they are ideally suitable for developing customer-centered products and services.

Information: Prof. Dr. Hariet Köstner

The students with Anneke Schwier (front left) and Prof. Dr. Hariet Köstner (3rd from right).



ST. NICHOLAS PARTY FOR INCOMING STUDENTS



The traditional St. Nicholas party for incoming students took place once again on 6 December. The visit from St. Nicholas and Servant Ruprecht – aka Prof. Dr. Michael Feucht and Prof. Dr. Michael Freiboth – was the highlight.

SAVE THE DATE: INTERNATIONAL WEEK

The International Week represents a forum for enthusiastically exchanging ideas, strengthening partnerships and running extracurricular activities and networking events. It will take place from 10 to 13 June and features international guests and fascinating lectures.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Feucht, Helene Wetzel

<https://www.tha.de/en/School-of-Business/International-Week.html>

VISIT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

International Faculty Coordinator Prof. Dr. Michael Feucht and International Coordinator Helene Wetzel (right) had an interesting exchange with Lissy Ureta, Study Abroad Advisor from the University of Oklahoma. Possible cooperative agreements in the form of a summer school at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg and teaching mobility were discussed.



VISIT TO THE INTERNATIONAL WEEK AT THE SZTU IN SHENZHEN (P.R. CHINA)

An International Week at our partner university SZTU (Shenzhen Technology University) in Shenzhen, China took place in September 2023, for the first time since 2019. The Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg had strong representation at the event. In addition to Prof. Dr. Franz Raps, former Dean of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, who established the College of Urban Mobility and Logistics there in 2018, Professor Feucht, Professor Freiboth, Professor Uhl

and Professor Murza also took part. All of the foreign guests gave a total of 14 hours of classes for third-year students over the four days, as well as a two-hour keynote lecture for first-semester students. The development of the SZTU since its founding in 2017 has been impressive. Over the pandemic years, it grew into an open and modern campus and now has almost 14,000 students. Although the university is located on the eastern outskirts of Shenzhen – a city with an esti-

DOUBLE DEGREE WITH THE LTU IN LULEÅ

With the successful defense presentation of her Bachelor thesis at Luleå Tekniska Universitet at the end of May 2023, Tomke D'Souza fulfilled all the requirements to obtain a Bachelor degree from LTU in addition after completing her degree in International Management at Augsburg. Prof. Dr. Michael Feucht, new International Faculty Coordinator, took the opportunity to strengthen contact



Prof. Dr. Wolfram Schönfelder (left) and Prof. Dr. Michael Feucht at the Luleå Tekniska Universitet

with the important partner university. Accompanied by Prof. Dr. Wolfram Schönfelder, his predecessor who retired in October 2022, he flew to Sweden for cooperation talks. Although it was a short trip, they were both able to participate in the thesis defense presentation – which was very impressive in terms of both content and the excellent presentation style – and make many important contacts. Prof. Feucht also gave a lecture to Master students on technical share price analysis in R. The short trip was rounded off with an excursion to the waterfalls in Storfossen.

Information: Prof. Dr. Michael Feucht

ZSI: EXPERIENCING CHINA UP CLOSE

In August 2023, ten students from the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg under the leadership of Dr. Tianshu Lü, Professor in Chinese at the Center for Languages and Intercultural Communication (ZSI) had the opportunity to take an unforgettable study trip to China and participate in a very special intensive course in the Chinese language, culture and geography. Over a period of more than three weeks, the participants explored the country. Items on the agenda included visits to the old temple in Qufu, the residence of the former German governor in Qingdao, the imperial Forbidden City in Beijing, climbing the holy Mount Tai and seeing the Great Wall of China. Of course, the typical cuisine was also sampled (hotpot, grilled skewers, noodle soup, Peking duck). The excursion to China has been a fixed component of the Chinese curriculum at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg since 2007, but had to be paused for three years due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the current political situation. It is therefore all the more gratifying that the program was able to take place again thanks to financial support from the Hans-Benedikt-Stiftung Foundation and the dedication of Dr. Tianshu Lü. The participating students, who had completed Chinese courses (Level 1 to 4) at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg in advance, were able to use their language skills and cultural knowledge in practice on location and improve them. At the Shandong University, a partner university of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, the students had the opportunity alongside their language classes to attend classes on different cultural and regional topics (Chinese calligraphy/art, paper cutting, tea ceremony, Chinese classical musical instruments). At the



weekend, the group were able to explore the city of Jinan. The excursions to Shanghai, Mount Tai, Qufu (home of Confucius), Qingdao (former German colony city) and Beijing rounded off the trip perfectly.

The aim of the trip was to prepare those

who intend to complete their semester abroad or internship in Asia (Taiwan, South Korea, China etc.) with respect to language and culture.

Information: Dr. Tianshu Lü

EDUCATION WITHOUT BORDERS: HOW VIRTUAL EXCHANGE CONNECTS BUSINESS STUDENTS WORLDWIDE

In the context of a Virtual Exchange project, over 200 students (IWI and IM) worked online on study-related topics with fellow students from Chile, Croatia, Spain, France and Germany last semester. In groups of three or four, they worked on tasks developed jointly by lecturers of the third-level institutions involved in video conferences over a period of five weeks. In total, more than 400 students took part in the Virtual Exchange. The topics included cultural education and career-rel-

evant tasks, including company management in different cultural contexts. By working together, the students were able to improve their communication skills and develop a deeper understanding of intercultural topics. English was used intensively as working language. Virtual Exchange is an integral component of the curriculum in the "Introduction to Business and Technical English" module.

Information: Prof. Dr. Alice Gruber

WITH YOLA HOLZHAUSER, PRODUCT OWNER AT ALLIANZ SE IN MUNICH AND OUR ALUMNA

You work as Product Owner at Allianz SE in Munich. What would you describe as the greatest challenges in your current job? And what do you particularly enjoy?

In my multifaceted and dynamic role as Product Owner, I work closely with various stakeholders. I define technical requirements, prioritize tasks and actively contribute to the strategic alignment of the product. One key challenge is understanding the needs of stakeholders with different interests and priorities and finding solutions that are acceptable to everyone. However, this makes the pleasure and fulfillment even greater when ideas are brought to life and real added value is created. Another aspect of the job that I really enjoy is the possibility of working in international teams. This gives me the opportunity to benefit from a wide range of cultural perspectives, experiences and expert knowledge. Through exchange with colleagues from different countries and cultures, we arrive at a variety of creative approaches and solutions that enrich and further our projects.

After completing your Bachelor degree in "Business Administration" at the Nuremberg Institute of Technology, you decided to do a Master in HR Management. What attracted you to this Master program?

I was fascinated by HR management even during my Bachelor degree. I recognized the important role that well managed and motivated workers play in the success of a company, and developed a strong interest in topics such as employ-

ee management, development and motivation. The Master in HR Management gave me the opportunity to specialize in these specific areas and to gain in-depth knowledge. The prospect of expanding my knowledge and skills in this area in order to be qualified for demanding positions in HR was very appealing to me. I was also won over by the reputation of the Master program and the quality of the teaching. The Master in HR Management was described as demanding and practice-oriented, which met my expectations for an advanced degree program.

You maintained your ties with the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg as adjunct lecturer in rhetoric and project management. What do you like most about this topic area and about teaching?

Rhetoric is the art of persuasive communication, which is highly important in both the personal and the professional sphere.

Good rhetoric enables students to convey their ideas clearly and effectively and strengthens their ability to inspire others and win them over to their way of thinking. Project management skills are a key requirement for success in a wide variety of careers. The ability to plan, organize and control projects effectively is essential for success in a constantly changing world of work. By teaching, I can share my knowledge and experience with the students and support them on their academic journey. It fills me with joy to see how the students grow, learn new skills and fulfill their potential.

What tips do you have for students today on their career path?

I would like to encourage students to be brave and take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves. Unexpected opportunities often prove to be the most rewarding and open doors for personal and professional growth. In addition, I encourage students to get to grips with new technologies. Today's world is characterized by rapid technological progress that affects nearly all facets of life. By learning to use new technologies effectively, you stay competitive. Ultimately, the key to success for me is having the courage to break new ground and the willingness to grow continuously.

What three phrases come to mind when you think of the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg?

- Practice-oriented education
- High teaching quality
- Great campus



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IMPRINT

Special edition
Business News
Technical University of Applied Sciences
Augsburg
An der Hochschule 1
86161 Augsburg

Publisher and person responsible acc. to
German Press Law:
Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Gordon Thomas Rohrmair,
President of the Technical University of
Applied Sciences Augsburg

Editor:
Melanie Schopf-Schriefer

Advertising acquisition:
Ulrike Dichtl

Design, creative direction and layout:
wppt: kommunikation gmbh
Gesellschaft für visuelle Kultur,
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Picture credits: Technical University of
Applied Sciences Augsburg, Martin Pfer-
sich (title picture), other picture rights be-
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Circulation: 1,100 copies

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