

A black and white, motion-blurred photograph of a large crowd of people, likely at a public event or festival. The image is oriented vertically, with the crowd moving from top to bottom. The background is a plain, light color.

**Vytautas Magnus
University**

ACTIVITY REPORT

2014



01 — INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

On a special day to Vytautas Magnus University, 25 April 2015, during the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of VMU re-establishment, professor Kęstutis Skrupskelis said: “For me this celebration is the celebration of victory, it is not the repression regime that won but my parents who were faithful to the ideals acquired at this University”. I am certain that the words of the professor can be applied to the whole community of the re-established VMU. The values being nurtured here – freedom, openness, sociality, partnership and tolerance – support us and will guide us in moving forward in today’s world. On the basis of these values we create a peaceful, dynamic environment open to ambitious and creative personalities. On the basis of these values we foster the growth of free spirit personalities who belong to the new generation of VMU – mature, courageous and ambitious citizens of Lithuania and the world.

It is symbolic that each year we prepare our annual report in January – during the month of the ancient Roman god Janus – the god of ends and beginnings. Janus, the two-faced god, looks to the future and to the past. I hope that while preparing this annual report, i.e. while looking backwards to the year 2014, we also look forward to the creation of a future university. On these pages there is only a summary, only a small part of the huge amount of work performed by the University people – as most important things cannot be recorded, they can only be felt.

The year 2014 was significant for all of us not only due to the particular University anniversary, but also due to opportunities to self-evaluate ourselves and be evaluated. We prepared the self-evaluation documents for both the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) and European University Association (EUA). We are happy to be evaluated positively by both Lithuanian and foreign experts for the unique *artes liberales* university vision supported by the University. Still, in my opinion, the most important event of the year was this turning back to ourselves, enhanced by self-evaluation. Full-scale summoning of the whole community to achieve the purpose once more confirmed our strength and sociality, and how important and needful we are to each other.

I firmly believe that partnership will continue to guide the University forward. It is not important who we are or will be – our *Alma Mater* will always foster us and the spirit of *artes liberales* will guide our ways we advance. This spirit is based on antique wisdom, but it inspires for the future. I know – we were, we are, and we will be.

Rector
Prof. Zigmantas Lydeka

02 — MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2014

Vytautas Magnus University has its origin in the Courses of Higher Studies that were established in Kaunas on 27 January 1920 and developed into the foundation of the University of Lithuania opened on 16 February 1922. The University was re-established in 1989 under the joint efforts of Lithuanian and Diaspora Scientists. VMU has become a real alternative; it has nurtured people famous in Lithuania and abroad whose hearts beat to the rhythm of openness and freedom. Openness and freedom are the basic VMU values, easily recognisable in all domains of university life. The new University generation cares for the future bravely, actively and sensitively, willing to create a better state.

In September of 2013, the University started its 25th Jubilee academic year which lasted till September 2014, marking the re-establishment of Vytautas Magnus University. A number of events and initiatives were organised, publications issued which were dedicated for the occasion of the anniversary. The main event to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the University re-establishment took place on 25 April 2014. The reminiscences were shared about the way leading to the re-establishment of Vytautas Magnus University. During the festive events solemn ceremonies of conferring VMU honorary doctor’s titles and regalia took place, initiators of the University re-establishment, honoured staff members received University awards, and etc.





In 2014, University honorary doctor's titles and regalia were granted to the following distinguished people: professors Kazys Almenas and Rimas Kalvaitis, members of the Restorative VMU Senate; professor emeritus Kęstutis Skrupskelis; Robertas Keturakis, a writer, chief editor of VMU Publishing house; Edward Lucas, the observer of East Europe and economy, chief editor of the British weekly *The Economist* and Vygaudas Ušackas, His eminency EU ambassador in the Russian Federation. Leonas Fliorentas Gudaitis was granted a professor emeritus title.

University granted 15 pedagogical titles of professors and docents. In the area of Social Sciences, the professor titles were granted to prof. dr. Auksė Balčytienė, prof. dr. Eugenijus Danilevičius, and prof. dr. Nijolė Petkevičiūtė, the docent titles were granted to doc. dr. Tomas Berkmanas, doc. dr. Lina Pilelienė, doc. dr. Aušra Rutkienė. In the area of Humanities the professor titles were granted to prof. dr. Sigita Barniškienė, prof. dr. Gintautas Mažeikis, prof. dr. Asta Kazlauskienė, the docent titles were granted to doc. dr. Artūras Lukaševičius, doc. dr. Erika Rimkutė, doc. dr. Jūratė Ruzaitė, doc. dr. Andrius Utkā. A professor's title was granted to prof. dr. Vladislav Fomin in the area of Physical Sciences and a docent's title – to doc. dr. Lina Ragelienė.

On 14 March a forum for VMU alumni - "Intellect and Freedom" - was organised. On 23 April 2014 the members of the Restorative VMU Council convened in a meeting with the University management and community. In the festive evening ceremony, public speeches were given, documentaries shown, reminiscences shared.

While celebrating the jubilee the University wanted to transmit the message: the 21st century VMU is a new space for self-actualisation where future scenarios are being reconsidered, structured anew and tested. It is the space where people dream and try to create. The underlying motto of the 25th Anniversary of Vytautas Magnus University was "VMU in the Rhythm of 25 Hours".

To commemorate the University Anniversary, a VMU history album and album-gift "Ideas" were published; special calendars, post-cards and other attributes of the 25th Anniversary, jubilee University gifts – special 25th anniversary badges for VMU staff – were presented. A VMU ex-libris was created; the Bank of Lithuania issued a 50 Litas silver coin, dedicated to the University; the Post of Lithuania issued a special post-stamp "25 years to the re-established Vytautas Magnus University". 4 broadcasts of "Alchemy: VMU Generation" were dedicated to the anniversary where discussions on the importance of intellect, academic culture and university for the search of contemporary person's identity were held.

03 — IMPORTANT GUESTS OF THE UNIVERSITY



In 2014 the University was visited by VMU honorary doctor prof. Birutė Galdikas, a world famous anthropologist, the researcher of endangered orangutans; by Edward Lucas, Eastern Europe and economy observer, a senior editor of the British newsweekly *The Economist*; the philosophy professor emeritus Algis Mickūnas from Ohio University (USA); dr. Skirmantas Kriaučionis, a VMU alumnus, the head of scientific group at Oxford University Ludwig Cancer Institute and others.

Each year various public discussions, meetings and other activities are initiated by VMU where University community and guests of Kaunas city participate. In 2014, VMU hosted a round-table discussion-workshop "Diplomacy of the Lithuanian Republic in Kaunas: topography of historical memory", its participants were VMU rector prof. Zigmās Lydeka, Minister of Foreign affairs of the LR Linas Linkevičius and the Mayor of Kaunas city Andrius Kupčinskās; VMU prof. Robert van Voren gave a public lecture "Maidan: a fateful turn in history", prof. Alfred Erich Senn, a USA historian of Lithuanian-Swiss origin delivered a lecture "Heroes of history as human beings"; VMU teacher dr. Jay-Daniel Mininger shared his insights about the conception of Artes Liberales at the University; VMU and IQ organised a public artes liberales discussion "Artes Liberales in neoliberal times".





Socially active
and responsible community

Socially active and responsible community is one of the most important strategic goals of Vytautas Magnus University. VMU is committed to aspire to academic leadership by actively constructing and developing the University based on *artes liberales* principles, focusing on the individual,

his/her personal dignity, recognition of his/her merits and self, strengthening University's cooperation with various communities, societal groups and organisations, fostering University's organisational culture and actively participating in the public policy of Lithuania.

04 — EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY

In 2014 the University's activity was assessed by two international expert groups: the European University Association (EUA) and the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC). Both expert groups evaluated the vision of *liberal arts* university, supported by VMU and unique in Lithuania, particularly well. SKVC accredited the University for maximum period of 6 years.

In the world university rating "QS World University Rankings 2014/2015" VMU was evaluated as one among 800 best world universities, whereas in the largest academic higher education institution rating "Ranking Web" ("Webometrics") VMU took the third place among Lithuanian higher education schools.



05 — UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY'S RECOGNITION, ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS

The dean of the Social Science Faculty prof. Jonas Ruškus was elected an expert of the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (for 2015–2018 term of office) to perform the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in different countries of the world.



The historian prof. E. Aleksandravičius won a mini Nobel awarded by the weekly news magazine *Veidas* for his book *Karklo diegas. Lietuvių pasaulio istorija (Shoot of a Willow. Lithuanian World History, 2013)*.

The Chairperson of VMU Senate, historian prof. Zigmas Kiaupa was awarded the title of Honorary Citizen of Kaunas City. Professor Zigmas Kiaupa and professor of Natural Sciences Faculty Audrius Maruška became the full members of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (academicians).

Prof. habil. dr. Laimutis Telksnys (Faculty of Informatics) received the most distinguished scientific partner award of "INFOBALT" association for the first steps in the development of internet in Lithuania, and R. Šablinskas, the alumnus of the first year of graduates from the Faculty of Informatics, received a special award for the implementation of electronic signature solution in Lithuania.

Dr. Sima Rakutienė, the vice-dean of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, was granted a scholarship of Young Scholars by the Research Council of Lithuania, and lecturer dr. Inesa Birbilaitė received a premium of Contest of Young Scientists' Works, awarded by the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (academicians).

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The historian dr. Laima Bucevičiūtė was granted a scholarship of State Independence.

The linguist dr. Jogilė Teresė Ramonaitė was presented with the LR President's and Lithuanian Young Scientist Union's note of congratulations for the best dissertation defended in 2013.

The dean of the Faculty of Law prof. Julija Kiršienė won a "Fulbright" scholarship for the internship in Michigan State University, USA.

Nominal scholarships of Lithuanian Republic Presidents were granted to Jurgis Jarašius, a first-cycle student of Musical Academy and Viktorija Grigaliūnaitė, a second-cycle student of Economics and Management Faculty.

The Higher Education Programs Unit of the Lithuanian Education Exchanges Support Foundation awarded Konstantinas Kuržėvas, the employee of VMU International Relations Office, as the best *Erasmus* program coordinator of the year among all coordinators of Lithuanian higher education institutions.

The master in Social Work Živilė Lukošienė received a premium of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences for her scientific work.

Director of VMU girls' choir prof. Viktoras Masevičius was awarded with the medal of Kaunas municipality burgomaster Jonas Vileišis.

Doc. Artūras Areima of the Department of Contemporary Arts of the Faculty of Arts received a premium of a Young Creator of the Ministry of Culture of the LR.

VMU sportsmen won five medals in the SELL student sport games of the Baltic countries in Tartu (Estonia): 1 gold, 3 silver and 1 bronze medals. University basketball players succeeded in becoming the winners of SELL games for the sixth time. Badminton player P. Bartušis won two silver medals. Athletes A. Glebauskas and A. Lapinskas won silver and bronze medals in the games. VMU basketball players won a traditional basketball tournament "The Friendship games 2014" in Israel for the third time. The second boys' basketball team won bronze medals in the 2nd group championship of the Lithuanian students' basketball league and became the winners of the international student game basketball tournaments in Paris and Rome. The girls' volleyball team participated in the National student volleyball league championship and won silver medals. The representatives of bullet shooting sport branch won the first team place in the Lithuanian students' championship. J. Česynaitė and E. Nainys became the champions in women and men gun shooting competition. The badminton team won the third place in the Lithuanian students' badminton championship; P. Bartušis won the gold medal in men's singles.

06 — REACHING OUT RELATIONSHIPS, COOPERATION AND STRENGTHENING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ACTIVITIES

In 2014 the University became a participant of the largest voluntary social responsibility initiative UNO "World Agreement". The initiative is based on ten principles embracing human rights, staff rights, environmental protection and fight against corruption.

VMU joined the Lithuanian Association of responsible business (LAVA), which is a formal organisation, official representative of the "World Agreement" in Lithuania.

The partnership with the project "Ensurance of accessibility of studies to students with special needs" created possibilities to equip the University with special furniture, software and equipment to improve the study process of students with disabilities.

The University initiated the restructurisation of city's public transport structure to create opportunities for students to get access (especially for those with mobility disability) to VMU faculties more comfortably. The emergence of the service of the National Social Integration Institute "Social Taxi" in Kaunas was enhanced. It is a social service which is adapted to serve the people with movement disabilities.

In cooperation with KTU and Kaunas City Council of Academic Affairs, a Student Square was established, and the bust stop in S. Daukantas street was named after the Student Square.

A camp for the first year students with disability, the first such in Lithuania, was organised.

Aiming at higher quality of communication and increase in service diversity related with students' needs, A Student Centre was established at the Office of Student Affairs of VMU.



Cooperation agreements were signed with the Indonesian Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB), Philosophy School of Renmin University of China (RUC), Lithuanian State Radio and Television, The "IQ" journal, PI "National Social Integration Institute", College of Social Sciences, Science and Technology park PI "Technopolis", National voluntary rescue office PI "Voluntarius".

The spread of ideas concerning the image of the University as a socially responsible institution which cares for the environment were further disseminated and supported by the whole community of VMU. "VMU Go green!" project together with the PI "Copy 1 Academy" continued the action "Use Rationally. (Don't) Paper!" The community members are invited to place printed paper with an empty side into special boxes so that others could recycle it. In the places marked with the action labels students can use this paper for making copies with discount. VMU community is encouraged to save energy and use it properly, for instance, to switch off the monitors when not in use. "Go green" initiative to decorate a live Christmas fir tree which grows by the Central building of VMU is supported by the whole University community. During the the lightening of the Christmas tree ceremony, the community members are encouraged to join various social activities to help the poor, children living in foster homes, people in elderly people homes and other people deprived by the fate, to feed the starving forest inhabitants, and etc.

In 2014, "VMU project: Personalities" was successfully launched, which is the continuation of the communication project "VMU: more than a speciality". The project presents VMU alumni to the society – distinguished personalities who not only rely on the speciality knowledge acquired at the University, but also apply it in other activities. These success stories of alumni are excellent examples for the Lithuanian youth which reveal successful implementation of artes liberales principles.



In November of 2014 VMU traditionally invited the University alumni to return to their Alma Mater. During the Alumni Day the VMU alumni participated in various meetings with faculty communities, teachers, former group mates and present students. After the meetings in departments and faculties the alumni were invited to the festive evening party "Dates A". Here the historian prof. Egidijus Aleksandravičius, the journalist Rytis Zemkauskas and the Italian language teacher dr. Stefano M. Lanza discussed the topic "Modern forms of Lithuanian origin". The funds collected during the auction organised in the event were devoted to the development of President Valdas Adamkus Library-Museum.

VMU Kaunas Botanical Garden organises various societal environment protection activities which attract hundreds of school children and Kaunas Citizen. In 2014 the Garden welcomed 22 groups of socially supported visitors, 197 visitors from foster houses, socialisation centres, and special education institutions free of charge.

VMU Chamber Orchestra released its second CD "Expression", which started a new series of musical works Acta Musica.

The University organised foreign students' visits to homes of homeless animals, to the Child's Care centre, separate University units or separate community members contributed to the provision of support for various organisations.

In cooperation with the State Blood Centre and Blood Centre of Kaunas Clinics of Lithuanian Health Science University, VMU Student Representatives and Student organisation ESN VMU arranged blood donation actions.

07 — STUDENT INITIATIVES

In 2014 various student initiatives were further supported and welcomed. VMU radio (independent student radio project) cooperated not only with Erasmus students, but also with school children from VMU partner gymnasiums. In 2013 VMU radio together with other student initiative groups (web portal Jauti.lt, student television Fokusas and others) created a Student initiative and media innovation centre (SIMIC). SIMIC organisation is oriented to all VMU students who intend to seek for self-realisation in the media area.

In 2014 VMU Student Representatives organised a traditional event “Spring Festival” for the University community and City residents. Students organised “Guitar Night” and meetings with distinguished societal and political actors: Remigijus Šimašius, Gintaras Steponavičius, Donatas Pūslis, Vytautas Landsbergis, Alvydas Šlepikas, Modestas Švoba and Paulius Ambrazevičius. A social action “Hey, student, we are all equal” was initiated as well as the experiment “Don’t judge the book by its cover”, a non-formal education method of “A Live Library” was developed aiming to change the students’ approach to their peers with disability and have a good time together.

On 19 November, in cooperation with the student self-governances of other Kaunas higher education schools, VMU Student Representatives commemorated the International day of tolerance. A lecture was delivered on inclusion of children with disabilities into the societal activity; an action enhancing tolerance was arranged.



Traditional University community award ceremony “V2” was organised; lectures “Me, beer and the teacher” were given which encourage students to be more interested in academic world after lectures, strengthen non-formal communication between the students and teachers and raise interesting discussions. Not only VMU teachers but also other well-known people participated in these events.

Improving the cooperation of University organisations, traditional basketball tournament was organised to win the cup of the President of VMU Student Representatives.

Two weekends in September were devoted to the first year student camp “Balanced freshman”, where new students could get acquainted with the activity of University and Student Representatives, acquire new useful communication and work-in-academic-environment skills.

To promote and disseminate the idea of academic honesty the Academic Affairs Committee of VMU Student Representatives organised the action “Don’t sadden the owl”. Having signed the declaration of academic honesty, students not only got acquainted with the concept of academic dishonesty, but also committed themselves to responsible attitude towards the student’s duties and promised to pursue this duty honestly. A student who holds a badge “Don’t sadden the owl” is determined to honest behaviour during the examinations, colloquia and other tests. Besides, members of the Student Representatives help teachers to provide assistance during various tests.

Seeking to improve the academic process in Lithuania, VMU Student Representatives also participated in the student-expert group, who performed the evaluation of studies in Lithuanian higher education schools together with the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

Each month, except for the period of academic holidays, a hard copy of students’ magazine Studis was issued. In the summer of 2014 a booklet was prepared for the first year students Balanced for a freshman 2014.

Voluntary program was further developed. In compliance with the description of the order of Vytautas Magnus University student voluntary activity organisation, University allocated resources for the realisation of voluntary activity motivation system. University volunteers performed 1 407 hours of formal voluntary activity in 2014.

VMU ESN implemented the project Multilingual Lithuania, supported by the Education Exchange support fund and non-profit organisation “Invest in Lithuania”. Volunteers, incoming foreign students gave foreign language and culture lessons to the signed project participants once a week for two months. Implementing the project, opportunities were created for VMU and Kaunas community members to learn new languages, to expand their world outlook and to learn more about other cultures, at the same time getting acquainted with foreign students.

08 — NEW AND RENEWED ACADEMIC SPACES

In 2014 a renovated building hosting the laboratories of VMU Natural Sciences Faculty was opened in VMU Kaunas Botanical Garden; the updated modern equipment will provide excellent study and research conditions both to students and teachers. In Kaunas Old Town (Muitinės str.), new premises of the Faculty of Arts were opened where the following new study programs are being provided: “Music Production”, “Creative Industries”, “Art Curatorship”, “New Media Art” and others. Furthermore, during a solemn ceremony a symbolic capsule was dug in in the place of the future study and research centre building on V. Putvinskis street. In Jonavos street, a renovated contemporary building of Social Science Faculty and Law Faculty was officially opened. A modern study and science information library space - Vaclovas Biržiška Reading Room – was officially opened after the reconstruction.



09 — MOST IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY STRUCTURAL CHANGES

In 2014, having joined the Quality and Innovation Centre, Career and Competence Centre and Continuing Study Centre, a new Quality and Strategy Office was established; having joined the Study marketing and Public Communication Offices, a new Marketing and Communication Office was founded; a Public enterprise “Business Practice Centre” was opened; having reorganised the VMU Publishing House, a Publishing Department was formed in the Library.





Reliable
international partner

Vytautas Magnus University is a member of various international organisations and networks: EUA (*European University Association*), EAIE (*European Association for International Education*), AABS (*Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies*), Green Light (*The European Green Light Program*), CE (*Campus Europae*), UNAI (*United Nations Academic Impact*), BESRP (*Baltic Energy Security Research Program*), ELC/CEL (*European Language Council*), and also – JTO “World Agreement” (*Global Compact*).

The number of incoming students has been increasing due to supply of various study programs taught in English. In 2009 the first two students were admitted to the master program studies taught in English; in 2013, even 170 foreign citizens from various countries of the world studied in various degree programs of the first and second cycle. In 2014 the number of foreign citizens studying at VMU was supplemented by 126 first year students. 9 bachelor and 22 master cycle study programs are taught in English at VMU.

VMU has signed 140 bilateral cooperation agreements with higher education institutions (HEI) from 30 countries of the world; VMU bilateral exchange program was carried out with 79 universities. In 2014, 49 VMU students left for studies in foreign countries under bilateral cooperation agreements, and 69 students came to study at VMU.

In 2014–2015 Vytautas Magnus University, pursuing the implementation of VMU Strategy for 2012–2020 and contributing to the increase of institutional internationalisation indicators, renewed the network of HEI *Erasmus* partners. At present VMU cooperates with 240 *Erasmus* partners in 32 countries. In 2014, 139 foreign students from 19 foreign countries studied at the University within the *Erasmus* program. Aiming at integration of incoming students to VMU life, a mentor program was carried out, orientation days as well as various information workshops were organised, an information publication *International Student Survival Guide* was issued. The students receive support not only from the Office of International Affairs, but also from the student organisation ESN VMU, which is a unit of the international *Erasmus Student Network* organisation.

In 2014, the number of outgoing students under the *Erasmus* exchange program was 201, 83 students went to perform *Erasmus* practice in 22 foreign countries. VMU teachers went to 174 *Erasmus* teaching visits; this opportunity is also actively used by non-academic VMU staff.

In 2014, for the first time the VMU students were offered an opportunity to study in foreign universities in virtual mobility form, and 19 students took advantage of this opportunity and started their virtual studies in foreign universities. At the same time 4 students from Oviedo University (Spain) studied at VMU in virtual mobility form and completed the chosen subjects successfully.

VMU is the institution which develops plurilingualism in the most efficient way in Lithuania. VMU Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL) offers the range of over 30 languages to students, VMU academic and non-academic community and city residents: Arab, Catalan, Chinese, Danish, English, Estonian, French, Finnish, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Kyrgyz, Latin, Latvian, Lithuanian Sign Language, Lithuanian as a Foreign Language, New Testament Greek, Old Greek, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Ydich. In 2013–2014 academic year, the number of students and non-classified students who studied foreign languages other than English was 4284.

10 — UNIVERSITY STAFF STRUCTURE

In 2014 the average number of University staff was 1043 including: 481 (46 %) academic staff members, 535 (51 %) non-academic staff and 27 (3 %) heads of administration. 481 academic staff can be further divided into: teachers – 428 staff, researchers – 53 staff. 67 % of academic staff members hold scientific degrees. 45 widely recognised artists worked at VMU Music Academy and Faculty of Arts. 29 doctoral students defended their doctoral dissertations, 17 of them were employed by the University. 74 % of academic staff members who hold scientific degrees are under 55 years of age. This year the University hosted 175 foreign teachers who came to the University from 31 countries. The majority were from Germany (19), the United States of America (18), Latvia (18), Poland (17), the United Kingdom (12), Estonia (12) and other countries.



11 — WORLD LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY

The goal of the World Lithuanian University is to foster collaboration between the Diaspora and Lithuanian scientists and students, to attract everyone interested in contemporary Lithuania, its daily life, traditions and culture. This project includes a number of activities: VMU Summer Academy programs, student and researcher studies and internships abroad, distance learning opportunities, Lithuanistic education projects, and other.

Collaboration between VMU Lithuanian diaspora student internship (LISS) and the Lithuanian American Community in organising student internship in Lithuania has lasted for over four years already. In 2014, 30 young people of Lithuanian origin from the USA, Canada and the Netherlands could perform their professional practice in Lithuanian state institutions and private enterprises and at the same time improve their Lithuanian language competences, listening to lectures delivered by VMU professors, participating in the cultural program specially designed for them and getting acquainted with Kaunas and Vytautas Magnus University more closely. In 2014, the programme was extended and the *Summer Internship Program (SIP)* was successfully launched which created opportunities to invite students to Kaunas from North America and other continents. The program enrolled all participants who were interested in Lithuania and possibilities to spend the summer in an interesting and useful way irrespective of their Lithuanian language competence or having Lithuanian roots. The program hosted students from Brazil, Japan, the Ukraine, Germany and other countries.





Studies favourable
for unfolding talents and personalities

University aims at expanding the freedom of choice in studies and individualisation by promoting the development of talents, ensuring university (inter-faculty) and inter university choice of subjects, providing conditions to acquire additional

qualifications, developing opportunities for distance studies and lifelong learning, ensuring practical realisation of artes liberales principles in the study process, improving the quality of studies and fostering students' careers.

12 — STUDENTS, THEIR SUPPORT AND STUDIES

Aiming at attracting the most talented school-leavers and supporting them in choosing the studies adequate to their needs and abilities, in 2014 VMU carried study marketing activities rather actively, increased awareness about the University and nurtured relationships with schools and gymnasiums of the country.

In 2014 VMU representatives visited 84 Lithuanian secondary schools and gymnasiums. On different occasions schoolchildren, their parents and teachers also visited the University. In February-April VMU teachers provided consultations for secondary education school leavers free of charge, different events for school children were organised throughout the year: on 17 January, the “Day of Schoolchildren at VMU”, in February-March and October-November – the event “Schoolchildren, try the role of students”, on 9-13 June the third “VMU Summer School” was organised for schoolchildren, on 14 November – the event “Measure professions 2014”.

According to the data as of 1 October 2014, the University student population was 8 353: among them 5 759 studied in the first-cycle of studies; 796 – in integrated studies; 1 487 – in the second-cycle; 234 – in the third-cycle; 77 in non-degree providing studies.



In 2014, the entrants to VMU were offered 42 first-cycle study and integrated study programs. During the general admission 1587 students were admitted into VMU first-cycle study and integrated study programs. VMU maintains the position in Lithuania and takes the 4th place according to the number of state-funded places and the 5th place according to the general number of the admitted students. In 2014 the first-cycle VMU programs Biotechnology, Public Communication, Creative Industries, Cultures and Languages of East Asian Countries, English Philology were the University programs which attracted the highest number of students admitted to the state-funded places. Moreover, 536 students were admitted to 39 second-cycle programs offered at the University.

VMU maintains the approach of being open, friendly and supportive to people with disabilities. 134 students with disabilities studied at VMU in 2014. There is a tendency that young people with disability choose to study Social Sciences most often; however, Natural and Exact Sciences have also become a popular choice.

Aiming at developing interdisciplinarity and providing opportunities to acquire additional competences, for several years already VMU students have had an opportunity to study in parallel (minor) study programs free of charge – in total, 43 such programs are on offer at VMU. According to the data of 1 October 2014, 461 students studied in VMU minor programs.

University continues the provision of distance studies. 92 study courses were provided to the studies in virtual learning environment Moodle; the total number of courses offered at VMU is 1700. In 2014 VMU distance study environment was used by 7777 students, who studied in Lithuania and staying abroad.

Lifelong learning opportunities are ensured at the University by providing non-formal education programs and continuous adult learning programs. Non-formal education programs provide opportunities to acquire qualification, competences and create preconditions to ensure the accessibility to higher education, organisation of individualised and more flexible studies. 75 non-formal education programs were provided in 2014, attended by 2231 learners.

VMU students receive support and enhancement by the Scholarship fund, which consisted of 2 127 600 Lt (616 195.55 €) of budget allocations in 2014. Besides, 1 872 400 Lt (542 284.52 €) were allocated to doctoral student scholarships. Moreover, 1 824 020.00 Lt (528 272.71 €) of enhancement scholarships were allocated to students, 47 080.00 Lt (13 635.31 €) one-time scholarships, 250000.00 Lt (72 405.00 €) mobility scholarships, 6 500.00 Lt (1 882.53 €) University honorary scholarships, 671 social scholarships, 159 scholarships for students with less than 45 percent of disablement level, 114 scholarships to students who have custody till they reach the maturity, designated by the law, or whose parents are dead. Additional 66 036.80 Lt (19 125.58 €) support was allocated by nominal scholarship establishers – 14 nominal scholarships were awarded.

In compliance with the description of Vytautas Magnus University student enhancement, support and allowance provision order, competitions were organised at the beginning of the semesters of the academic year to obtain tuition-fee allowances provided by the University. In 2014 the sum for tuition fee allowances for students was 964 145.06 Lt (279 235.71 €), and 64845.00 Lt (18 780.41 €) were allocated to accommodation in the dormitory fee allowances (University creates possibilities for students to live in dormitories).

Aiming at ensuring good employability of prospective graduates, the University is very much concerned with the development of career planning skills. It is the responsibility of VMU Career Centre (CC). 518 University students participated in CC workshops focused on the development of career designing skills. “VMU Career Days 2014” were organised which attracted 45 Lithuanian and foreign organisations.

2110 degree providing diplomas of various study-cycles were awarded in 2014: 1260 first-cycle, 781 second-cycle, 29 doctoral diplomas. 40 study certificates conferring teacher qualification were also awarded.





The highest level of
science and art



University nurtures science, talent, creativity and arts favourable environment, pursues the traditions of disseminating the highest quality science, classical and contemporary art education and practice.

University researcher groups are rallied in the priority fields of science and art.

In 2014 the VMU scientific research and other scientific activity was performed by 40 clusters: 30 clusters in the areas of Humanities and Social Sciences, 9 - in Physical and Biomedicine areas, and 1 - in Arts area. University scientists continued research in three EU 7th Framework Programs, 4 Global Grant and National Research program projects.

The successful science / art development is financed by different scientific research funds: external (Lithuanian and international science projects, Research Council of Lithuania, Agency of Science Innovations and Technologies research program financing) and internal (University Science fund). In 2014, University Science fund allocated 300 thous. Lt (86.89 thous. €) to develop cluster activities, to award the most active doctoral students and young researchers as well as the best scientist / artist / teacher, and finance research visits of doctoral students.

Having estimated a personal author's contribution it was found that in 2014 teachers and scientific workers published 551 scientific research articles: 114.5 in publications refereed in *Thomson Reuters / Scopus* databases, 259.5 in scientific publications refereed in other international databases, and 177 in other refereed scientific publications. 9 monographs were published and more than 400 other scientific works (translation of scientific texts, science resource publications, compiled scientific works, and etc.).

22 scientific periodical publications in the areas of Social Science, Humanities, Natural Science, Art, Law and Religion Science, included in the international databases, are issued at the University. Some of the journals are published in cooperation with other Lithuanian higher education institutions and the University of Nebraska.

Each year VMU researchers and artist organise international conferences, symposiums, workshops, festive events and other science/ art events aiming at sharing research and art achievements and good practice. More than 50 international events – video conferences were organised with such countries as the USA, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Italy, England, Turkey and others.

VMU was conferred the right to provide doctoral studies in 19 fields of science together with 25 Lithuanian and foreign higher education and research institutions. The greatest number of partners is the fields of Economics and Management, Education Science and Biology Science fields.

29 doctoral dissertations were defended in 2014 (586 since 1993). 17 doctoral students were employed by the University after their graduation.



13 — UNIVERSITY FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In 2014, the University revenue increased by 15.4 % and made up to 108925.4 thous. Lt. (31 546.98 thous. €). The obtained budget assignments and investment made up to 38725.8 thous. Lt (11 215.77 thous. €) and, in comparison with 2013, increased by 1677.2 thous. Lt (485.75 thous. €) (4.5%). In 2014, the University budget consisted of State budget assignments (35.6%) and other university financial sources (70199.6 thous. Lt (20 331.21 thous. €) of 64.4%). These financial sources were 12851.9 thous. Lt (3 722.17 thous. €) or 22.4 % higher than in 2013.

All University expenses in 2014 were 106103.2 thous. Lt (30 729.61 thous. €) or 8 529.5 thous. Lt (2 470.31 thous. €) (8.7 %) higher than in 2013. In comparison with 2013, the expenses for facilities increased by 2 386.6 thous. Lt (691.21 thous. €) (24.8 %), expenses for renovation of premises – by 12 242.9 thous. Lt (3 545.79 thous. €) (170.7 %)

Harmonious and creative
environment

14 — DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT ACTIVITY

In 2014, the University project activity was oriented to the implementation of the European Union structural fund projects and accomplishment of some of them. Last year both study and science as well as infrastructure development projects were completed and evaluated as successful. The total number of projects was 161 in 2014; the value of all performed projects was 157.97 mln. Lt (45.75 mln. €).

The same as in 2012–2013 most of the European Union Structural Foundation finances were received for infrastructure development projects coordinated by the University. In total, about 19.4 mln. Lt (5.62 mln. €) of the European Union Support funds were acquired in 2014 for renovation and building University premises. It is almost 3 times more than in 2013.

This year a positive tendency was marked: active participation of the University scientists in science and national programs administered by the Research Council of Lithuania. In 2014, The Research Council of Lithuania financed 52 projects executed by VMU. The total sum of the allocated resources for various projects reached 12.72 mln. Lt (3.68 mln. €).



15 — LIBRARY SOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2014, the library acquired 280 thous. of traditional and electronic documents. The number of traditional documents is over 20 thous., electronic - over 260 thous. The acquired e-documents comprised 93.2%, and traditional – 6.8% of all purchased documents in 2014. The financial value of the printed and electronic resources is almost 1.2 mln. Lt (347.54 thous. €), including the major part of resources received from projects – over 518 thous. Lt (150.02 thous. €), and about 305 thous. Lt (88.33 €) received from the University funds.

This year the University community had access to 600 thous. documents: almost 336 thous. traditional and 260 thous. electronic documents. The University subscribed to 46 databases from 24 foreign and Lithuanian providers. 42 databases were tested, including the most important ones which are devoted to scientific production assessment and analysis, such as Scopus and Thomson Reuters Web of Science, data base SAGE science research tools.

Aiming at the development of virtual spaces for University activities and creating flexible and dynamic network study, science, art and management environments, implementation of modern information and communication technologies, the library installed Open Journal Systems, OJS, <http://ejournals.VMU.lt> - an advanced scientific communication electronic science journal publication system. This system creates possibilities to organise and manage all University e-journal publication stages online (article submission, editing, revision, publication, indexing).

In 2014, a new modern unit of the library – the Library of Social Sciences and Law Faculties (hereinafter – SMTFB) – and the reconstructed Vaclovas Biržiška Reading Room were opened and new prof. Leonas Gudaitis Collection Reading Room was established.

Expanding the services of the University e-Library, for the convenience of community members a modern book security and independent borrowing and book return system was installed, which acts on the basis of radio frequency identification technology (RFID). RFID installed in SMTFB, Vaclovas Biržiška Reading Room and the Library of Natural Science and Informatics Faculties consists of the 1) automatised document security system: entrance/exit gates and observation and registration system, 2) electronic book lending and book return height regulating equipment adapted also to those with disability, 3) external electronic self-service book 24/7 return equipment, 4) portable fund inventorisation facility which allows checking the accuracy of publication placement on the shelves, identification of their absence, performing fund inventorisation, 5) computerised library staff workplaces, 6) RFID security elements for books and CDs.

In the updated library infrastructure, 5 individual and group work zones were created which hold 18 workplaces, 224 new workplaces and (or) renewed workplaces were installed, including 81 computerised ones. 2 booths for individual foreign language learning were installed in the Lithuanian Foundation Foreign Language Reading Room, 2 such booths were installed in the Computer Lab of the Institute of Foreign Languages and 2 in the SMTFB. In Vaclovas Biržiška Reading Room it is possible to use a desktop video magnifier Freedom Scientific TOPAZ XL Hd, Brail printer INDEX Braille Everest and Brail note-taking device Eurobraille Esys. Different software for visitors with special needs was installed: SuperNova (magnifies the text on the screen), JAWS (screen reader which analysis information and transforms the written text to speech), Wintalker Voice (transforms information into voice in the Lithuanian language). Ergonomic environment was created after the reconstruction: modern heating and ventilation-conditioning system was installed, premise illumination completely changed in Vaclovas Biržiška Reading Room: skylights changed, new windows built; sound insulation of premises accomplished.



16 — SPACES OF WELLNESS AND RECREATION

In 2014, aiming at ensuring favourable conditions for fitness, recreation and sport activities and creating a modern and attractive environment, badminton and table tennis equipment was purchased and installed in the Sports Centre; the cardio training machine gym was supplemented by 4 cutting-edge universal training machines. Table tennis equipment was also installed on the ground floor foyer of the University building in K. Donelaičio str. 52.

At VMU Sport Centre, the conditions are created for students to train and develop their sport and game skills in basketball, football, volley-ball, table tennis, badminton, weight lifting and power triathlon branches of sport.

VMU Kaunas Botanical garden is the most often open University unit to the society. In 2014, the scope of plant exposition in the Botanical garden was particularly increased – up to 41 %. Nine new expositions were established (expositions of hydrangeas, dasiphoras and conifers, petunias, yearling flowers, educational yard, and etc.), five former expositions were renewed. This year the number of Botanical Garden visitors exceeded 62 thous.: 265 excursions, including 32 groups of university and non-university higher education school students; 106 excursions from secondary schools; 22 excursions were admitted free of charge (visitors with disability or socially supported persons). 21 events for the society were arranged.

A comprehensive VMU activity report 2014 can be accessed at:

http://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/2015-Rek.Ataskaita-2014_-virsnel.pdf



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