

**Director's Report of the Branch of the University of  
Białystok in Vilnius  
Faculty of Economics and Computer Science  
on the Activities of the Branch in the Academic Year  
2021/2022**

All areas of activity of the Branch of UwB in Vilnius in the academic year 2021/2022 were partially determined by the evolving pandemic situation on the territory of the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Poland.

### **1. Studies and Students**

In the academic year 2021/2022, the Branch of UwB in Vilnius offered exclusively degree programmes with a practical profile across three fields of study: economics (first- and second-cycle programmes), European studies (first-cycle programme), and computer science (first-cycle programme). This diversity of fields of study is a defining characteristic of the Faculty and has a significant bearing on its operation.

As of 31 December 2021, the Faculty was educating 203 students, distributed as follows: first-cycle economics: 74, second-cycle economics: 18, European studies: 66, and computer science: 45 students.

The Branch of UwB in Vilnius does not enrol students with physical disabilities, a circumstance that results from the building's lack of adaptation for persons with disabilities.

On 28 July 2022, a diploma ceremony was held at the Dom Kultury Polskiej [Polish Cultural Centre], marking the conferral of bachelor's degrees upon the XIII cohort and master's degrees upon the VI cohort of graduates of the Branch of UwB in Vilnius. In the academic year 2021/2022, a total of 35 students completed their studies: 13 in first-cycle economics, 11 in European studies, and 4 in computer science. Seven students completed second-cycle programmes. Two students were distinguished for their academic engagement and student activities. Since the Branch's establishment, a total of 846 students have graduated.

As a result of the admissions process for the academic year 2022/2023, 109 students were admitted, including: 35 to first-cycle economics, 33 to European studies, 28 to computer science, and 13 to the second-cycle programme in economics.

In response to the expectations of the Polish community in Vilnius and Lithuania, and the needs of Polish-language schools in Lithuania, work was undertaken to launch a further field of study at the Branch of UwB in Vilnius — pre-school and early childhood education. In collaboration with staff of the UwB Faculty of Education Sciences, an integrated master's degree programme with a general academic profile in this field was prepared. In March 2022, an application for approval to launch the programme was submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Poland. The prepared programme received a positive opinion from the Polish Accreditation Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, and in August 2022 the Ministry of Education and Science granted consent for its delivery at the

Branch in Vilnius. The subsequent step was the submission of an analogous application to the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania. This application is currently being processed.

In the winter semester of the academic year 2021/2022, due to the prevailing pandemic situation, teaching activities and consultations at the Branch of UwB in Vilnius were conducted in two formats: in-person (for first-year students in all first-cycle programmes) and synchronous remote (for students in subsequent years). In the latter case, the delivery of lectures in an asynchronous format (up to a maximum of 20% of the hours prescribed in the study programme) was also permitted, though few instructors availed themselves of this option. During the period from 4 to 12 November, a transition to fully synchronous remote delivery of all classes became necessary. In the summer semester, teaching activities and consultations were conducted, as a rule, in an in-person format.

## **2. Quality of Education**

The Faculty of Economics and Computer Science holds the following accreditations:

- in the area of institutional assessment:

In 2015 — a positive resolution of the Studijų Kokybės Vertinimo Centras (the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education) and accreditation for a period of 6 years; the next assessment is planned for 2023;

In 2015 — a resolution of the Polish Accreditation Committee [Polska Komisja Akredytacyjna] concerning institutional assessment; the next assessment was scheduled for the academic year 2020/2021.

- in the area of programme assessment:

Field of study: economics — Resolution of the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee of 7 July 2011 — positive assessment;

Field of study: computer science — Resolution No. 779/2021 of the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee of 13 August 2021 — positive assessment for a period of 2 years (the assessment visit by the PKA panel took place on 25-26 March 2021).

The accreditation teams for the individual fields of study, appointed in the academic year 2020/2021, continued their work, monitoring the educational process in the context of accreditation requirements.

The Branch of UwB in Vilnius operates a Faculty Quality of Education Team as well as field-specific didactic teams for economics, European studies, and computer science. These bodies function on the basis of the *System for the Assurance of Quality of Education at the Branch of the University of Białystok in Vilnius, Faculty of Economics and Computer Science* [System Zapewniania Jakości Kształcenia w Filii Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku w Wilnie Wydziale Ekonomiczno-Informatycznym], adopted by the Branch Council in the academic year 2020/2021. In connection with staffing changes that occurred during the preceding academic year, the membership of the individual teams was updated.

## **3. Research and Teaching Activities**

In the academic year 2021/2022, the Faculty's activities were focused primarily on teaching. Members of staff participated in training sessions on the use of the eduPortal platform for delivering classes and verifying learning outcomes. They prepared materials necessary for conducting classes, including in remote format. They also enhanced their competencies by participating in training sessions, webinars, and courses (covering, inter alia, universal design, accessibility of higher education institutions for persons with disabilities, and the use of the R programme in statistical analyses) as well as in academic conferences and seminars (14 in total). Members of staff at the Branch of UwB also published 4 articles and book chapters in monographs and prepared 4 reviews of scholarly works.

In October 2021, an international scientific conference "*Current legal challenges: human rights protection in pandemic*" was held in remote format, with the Branch of UwB in Vilnius serving as a co-organiser (together with the Faculty of Law of UwB, the Faculty of Law of Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, and the Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University of Ukraine).

In May 2022, the 1st Interdisciplinary Student Scientific Conference "*Statistics in Everyday Life*" [Statystyka na co dzień] took place, organised by the Faculty of Engineering Management of the Białystok University of Technology in partnership with the Branch of UwB in Vilnius, under the patronage of the Statistical Office in Białystok. The conference was held in remote format.

On 19–20 September 2022, the Branch of UwB in Vilnius celebrated 15 years of its activity at a jubilee conference combined with academic and didactic panels. During the event, a debate was held under the theme *The Role and Place of the Branch in the Education of Young Polish People in Lithuania*, together with three thematic panels related to the fields of study offered. The conference was attended by, alongside the management, staff, and students of the Branch, guests from the University of Białystok as well as representatives of the administration, the academic community, and Polish associations and organisations in Lithuania.

In the academic year 2021/2022, scientific and didactic-scientific seminars were also organised with the participation of staff and students of the Branch and invited guests:

*19 November 2021 — "The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Foreign Direct Investment"*

*9 June 2022 — "Specialised EU Agencies in the Implementation of European Union Policies"*

*17 June 2022 — "Multi-Criteria Decision Making and Negotiation"*

*20 June 2022 — "Principles of Humanitarian Aid Provision in Contemporary International Relations: The Case of Ukraine"*

From 10 to 12 May 2022, the Branch of UwB in Vilnius was visited by Prof. dr Visar Rrustemi and Prof. Bardhok Bashota from the University of Prishtina (Kosovo), who came within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme and delivered open lectures for staff and students.

#### **4. Student Activities**

The Faculty has a student self-government and three student research circles in the fields of economics, European studies, and computer science.

Two students of the Branch of UwB in Vilnius, enrolled in the economics programme, undertook study periods at Comenius University in Bratislava within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme (for one and two semesters respectively).

Members of the Economics Student Research Circle (KNSE) and the Computer Science Student Research Circle (KNSI) continued their activities under conditions of partial restrictions arising from the epidemiological situation (particularly in the winter semester). During KNSE meetings, members discussed selected economic topics. They were also able to participate in organised academic-didactic seminars and conferences. Meanwhile, students affiliated with the KNSI developed the conceptual framework and commenced work on the prototype of the *Student Research Archive ARPAS* system. In addition, they developed curricula and conducted workshops on the fundamentals of PHP, programming in the Laravel environment, the GIT version control system, HTML, and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). The activities of the European Studies Student Research Circle were suspended.

The Faculty organised several guest lectures and meetings with representatives of the Lithuanian labour market, as well as preventive lectures on broadly understood safety.

Students of the Faculty participated actively in the following events and projects:

- 22 October 2021 — motivational and business training sessions for "Young Entrepreneurs", organised by the Polish-Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce;
- 28 October 2021 — annual clean-up of graves at the Rossa Cemetery [Stara Rossia];
- 23 October 2021 — 2nd Motor Rally of the Third of May, Vilnius-Žuluva-Vilnius, on the occasion of the 230th anniversary of the Mutual Pledge of Both Nations [Zaręczenie Wzajemne Obojga Narodów], organised by the Vilnius City Branch of the Union of Poles in Lithuania, the "Wilnoteka" Centre, and the Dom Kultury Polskiej in Vilnius;
- 11 November 2021 — celebrations of the National Independence Day of Poland at the Rossa Cemetery;
- 11 January 2022 — online workshops on the theme *Creativity*, organised by the Careers Office of the University of Białystok;
- 13 January 2022 — commemoration of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom on 13 January and the lighting of candles at the television tower and on the graves of the fallen at the Antakalnis Cemetery;
- April 2022 — participation of Branch of UwB students in Vilnius in *Journalism Workshops* at the Branch of UwB in Vilnius, conducted by Ms Ania Pilarczyk-Palaitis, journalist, translator, and screenwriter;
- 3 May 2022 — laying of flowers at the Mausoleum of Mother and Son at the Rossa Cemetery on the occasion of the Day of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad, Polish Flag Day, and the anniversary of the Constitution of 3 May;
- 7 May 2022 — parade of Polishness through the streets of Vilnius on the occasion of the Day of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad and the anniversary of the Constitution of 3 May;

- 6-8 May 2022 — educational and integration trip to Białystok and the surrounding area, organised by the Career and Promotion Office of the Branch of UwB in Vilnius;
- 20-22 May 2022 — training and integration trip LIDER 2022, organised on the initiative of the Student Self-Government Councils of the University of Białystok;
- 4-7 July 2022 — lecture series "Warsaw-Vilnius Colloquia" [Kolokwia Warszawsko-Wileńskie], organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Vilnius and the Vilnius Branch of the Centre for Eastern European Studies of the University of Warsaw.

Students also actively engaged in the activities of the Vilnius academic community, particularly the Vilnius Student Club, participating inter alia in a board game evening, in the recording of Adam Mickiewicz's *Dziady, Part II* for the Polish media portal Wilnoteka in Lithuania, and in a patriotic evening featuring a Polish film. In addition, they organised inter alia a freshers' welcome [otrząsiny] for new students of the Branch, a St. Nicholas Day party at a bowling alley, and a memorial evening featuring a Polish film on the occasion of the National Day of Remembrance of the "Accursed Soldiers" [Żołnierze Wyklęci].

In addition, students supported the management and staff of the Branch in promotional activities by participating in "Career Days" [Dni Kariery] at the Adam Mickiewicz Secondary School in Vilnius, promotional visits to Polish-language schools in the Vilnius region, the "Karjera & Studijos" educational fair, and the recording of promotional films and materials.

The Association of Polish Scientists in Lithuania awarded a prize for the best master's or bachelor's thesis to four graduates of the Branch.

The student internship programme organised by the Branch was carried out. Following the pandemic-related interruption, visits by students to the European Parliament for internships were resumed at the invitation of Member of the European Parliament Waldemar Tomaszewski. In November and December 2021, two students of the European studies programme participated in these visits.

In the academic year 2021/2022, students made use of the UwB scholarship offer. In particular, 18 students received Rector's Scholarships. National Agency for Academic Exchange [NAWA] scholarships were awarded to 113 students in the winter semester and 100 in the summer semester.

## **5. Faculty Staff**

In the academic year 2021/2022, teaching at the Branch of UwB in Vilnius was carried out by 13 members of staff employed at the Faculty of Economics and Computer Science on a full-time or part-time basis, including 3 independent researchers [samodzielni pracownicy naukowi], 4 holders of the doctoral degree, and 6 holders of the professional title of master. As of 1 October 2021, mgr Ernest Ginc has been employed (at his own request) at a ½ position. Furthermore, by court order of 28 March 2022, dr hab. Jaroslav Volkonovski, prof. UwB, was reinstated to his position. This staff member was assigned a teaching load commensurate with his post.

The Faculty was supported in its teaching activities by academic staff from five units of UwB: the Faculty of Economics and Finance, the Faculty of Mathematics, the Faculty of Law, the Institute of Computer Science, and the Institute of Management

(31 individuals in total).

In the academic year 2021/2022, collaboration was also continued with external practitioners who conducted teaching activities at the Branch on the basis of civil-law contracts. There were 7 such individuals.

The Branch of UwB in Vilnius also employed 11 administrative staff members; during the year, changes occurred in the positions of didactics officer and IT technician.

## **6. Engagement with the Surrounding Community**

In the preceding academic year, staff and students of the Branch of UwB in Vilnius continued to hold regular meetings with pupils of Polish-language schools in Vilnius and the surrounding areas. Meetings with secondary school graduates and pupils of years 10-11 were attended by: the Director of the Branch — dr hab. Jerzy Halicki, prof. UwB, Dominika Błażewicz from the Career and Promotion Office, and student representatives. In addition, the Directorate, staff, and students presented the Branch's educational offer during "Career Days" [Dni Kariery] at the Adam Mickiewicz Secondary School in Vilnius, at the "Karjera & Studijos" educational fair held at the LITEXPO venue, and at a meeting with Ukrainian and Belarusian young people residing in Lithuania, organised by the Polish Institute in Vilnius in cooperation with the National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA).

Representatives of Polish-language schools in Lithuania and of Mykolas Romeris University were invited to participate in consultations related to the development of the curriculum for the new field of study — pre-school and early childhood education.

Open lectures and meetings of students and staff with representatives of companies and institutions operating on the Lithuanian labour market in various sectors, including IT, logistics, finance, and law enforcement, were organised.

As in previous years, students and staff participated in the maintenance of graves at the Rossa Cemetery, took part in the celebrations of Independence Day, the Day of the Defenders of Freedom on 13 January, the National Day of Remembrance of the "Accursed Soldiers" [Żołnierze Wyklęci], the National Constitution Day of 3 May, the Day of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad, and other significant events.

The Branch Directorate held a series of meetings with representatives of employers, Lithuanian universities, local government authorities, organisations, and associations, including meetings with: Urszula Doroszevska, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Lithuania; Andrzej Łuksza, President of the Association of Polish Entrepreneurs in Lithuania "Korona"; Artur Ludkowski, Director of the Dom Kultury Polskiej in Vilnius, adviser to the Prime Minister of Lithuania on national minority affairs; Inga Žalėnienė, Rector of Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius, and Jolanta Urbanowicz, research and teaching staff member of that university; Danuta Narbut, Deputy Administrative Director of the Vilnius City Municipality; Józef Kwiatkowski and Krystyna Dzierżyńska from the Association of Teachers of Polish-Language Schools in Lithuania "Macierz Szkolna". A number of these meetings were of a consultative character in connection with the establishment of the new field of study — pre-school and early childhood education.

From 11 to 13 May 2022, events organised as part of the 18th Podlasie Festival of Science and Art [XVIII Podlaski Festiwal Nauki i Sztuki] were held at the Branch of UwB in Vilnius. These comprised the following lectures: "The Chinese Market: Economy, Politics, History, Culture and Traditions, Philosophy and Religion, Science and Technology"; "Agile Project Management Methodology"; "Regeneration and Health Promotion for Contemporary People, Part 1"; practical sessions "Regeneration and Health Promotion for Contemporary People, Part 2"; and the competition "Computer Science — A Source of Knowledge and Entertainment". The events were open to the public and were attended, inter alia, by pupils of Polish-language schools from Vilnius and the Vilnius region.

All events held at the Branch and related to its functioning were covered by Polish-language media, including: TVP Wilno, the radio station "Znad Wili", the Polish-language programme of Lithuanian Radio, the radio station "Wilno", the weekly "Tygodnik Wileńszczyzna", the newspaper "Kurier Wileński", and the online portals "zw.lt", "Wilnoteka", "124.lt", and others.

## **7. Premises and Facilities**

In September 2021, the contractor for the new Branch headquarters was selected, and on 8 October 2021 a contract was signed between the University of Białystok and the company UAB Mosta for the execution of the investment. Following the receipt of a building permit in August 2022, construction work commenced. On 16 September 2022, the ceremonial signing and laying of the foundation stone for the new Branch headquarters took place. Completion of the investment project is planned for October 2024. Activities related to the implementation of the investment are overseen by UwB Chancellor Tomasz Zalewski, with the involvement of the Branch management.

The lease agreement for the premises at ul. Kalvarijų 135 was extended. Minor renovation works were carried out in a portion of the premises.

The remaining premises and facilities conditions remain unchanged.

**DIRECTOR**

**of the Branch of the University of Białystok in Vilnius**

**Faculty of Economics and Computer Science**

**dr hab. Jerzy Halicki, prof. UwB**