

Polytechnic University shared the successful experience of supporting foreign students during a pandemic

On July 17, Polytechnic University took part in a virtual discussion “Ways to support international students during the Covid-19 pandemic.” Strategic partner of SPbPU, Leibniz University Hannover (LUH, Germany) was the organizer of the event. Ajou University (South Korea), University of Stirling (Scotland), the University of Pavia (Italy) and Manipal Academy of Higher Education (India) also took part in the discussion. Polytechnic University was presented by Olga EMELYANOVA, Head of the Department of International Educational Programs and Academic Mobility.



The meeting began with a greeting from Dr. Markus HOPPE, Deputy Director of the International Office of LUH, who noted that despite the complicated situation, the world’s foremost universities remain in touch, continue to actively work on existing projects and actively discuss the implementation of new ideas. *“It is absolutely essential that we have maintained close partnership and friendly contacts. I hope that the presented experience of the participants in the discussion will help all of us quickly return to normal life,”* added Dr. HOPPE.

In her report on the activities of SPbPU, Olga EMELYANOVA emphasized the importance of the university's official headquarters abroad: Polytechnic University's offices in Shanghai and Madrid provided information support to many foreign students, and also contributed to the development of international relations between SPbPU and foreign partners.

"Many international students decided to stay at Polytechnic University during the pandemic. The CEOs of our university quickly and smoothly transferred training to a distance mode; a hot line was operating; students remained in touch with the embassies, consulates and communities of their countries. All SPbPU students received financial assistance; volunteers and tutors provided powerful moral support, helped to fill out documents, resolve visa issues, and conducted various flash mobs and events," said the SPbPU expert.

POLYTECH | COVID-19: Measures to prevent and support students

Measures for prevention and control:

- ✓ Operational headquarter
- ✓ Remote education
- ✓ Desinfection
- ✓ Thermal imagers for remote temperature measurement
- ✓ Hot line
- ✓ Rooms for temporary isolation of patients
- ✓ Hygienic kit distribution

Measures to support students:

- ✓ Financial Assistance
- ✓ Food and emergency goods delivery
- ✓ Remote administrative procedures
- ✓ Hot line
- ✓ Support to get diplomatic assistance



Participants in the discussion highly appreciated the set of measures that Polytechnic University developed and implemented to prevent the spread of Covid-19, as well as the coordinated work of employees aimed at supporting foreign students. In addition to the fact that Polytechnic University managed to transfer the learning process to a remote mode for the students who remained at the university without any changes, an educational program adapted to the current situation was created for those who returned to their homeland during the pandemic. Despite the difference in time zones, the teachers continued to lecture and stayed in contact with the students.

The international offices of other participating universities have also taken great responsibility in implementing measures to support international students. Jae-Eun Kim, director for international exchange and cooperation, Office of International Affairs at Aju University, stressed that their university is in constant contact with students, promptly resolving issues on student exchange programs, exams, internships and practical training. Dr. Lee Zhuang, executive director, Internationalization and Partnerships Office at the University of Stirling, said that from the first days of the pandemic at the Scottish University, a page “Be connected” was created on the University’s website, through which students were able to communicate and help, as well as to organize virtual communities and meetings. Michela Cobelli, EU project manager, International Office of the University of Pavia, said that despite all the difficulties that Italy faced during the pandemic, the university was able to quickly translate classes online and students were able to continue their studies. Michela said that in such a stressful situation, the organization of psychological assistance to students has also become a priority.

Summing up, the Deputy Director of the International Office of LUG Dr. Markus HOPPE noted that all participants of the discussion showed a high level of implementation of measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection and support for foreign students in their universities, and that the cases indicated in the program will become an effective methodological basis for other universities and companies..

Prepared by the SPbPU International Office

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