<u>Pro-Rectors of SPbPU and TU Graz discussed the opportunities</u> for new growth points during the pandemic

Peter the Great Polytechnic University and the Graz University of Technology (TU Graz; Austria) continue a series of strategic online meetings. The first meeting <u>of</u> <u>the coordinators of the strategic partnership</u> took place in the fall of 2020. That time Dmitry Arsenyev, SPbPU Vice Rector for International Relations, and Stefan Forbach, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs of TU Graz, discussed the main lines of partnership development between universities during the pandemic.



"Regular online meetings with strategic partners give us the opportunity to develop our cooperation without slowing down the "prequarantine" speed. The relationship between Polytechnic University and the Graz University of Technology is at a high level of trust. Our main task is to constantly improve this level. First of all at the account of launching joint projects, conducting joint research and increasing publication activity," Dmitry Arsenyev said.

"We all are quite impressed with the results of past years. The joint research and educational activities of the two universities have repeatedly received the highest marks from leading world experts. I hope that today's negotiations will become an *impulse for the development of new ideas and projects, which will not be hampered by either the pandemic or closed borders,"* said Stefan Forbach.

During the meeting, vice rectors of universities discussed opportunities for new growth points in the development of youth projects, joint programs at the Master's degree, Bachelor's degree, and postgraduate levels, research and publication activities. The spread of Covid-19 had a strong impact on the development of international education and cooperation. However, both SPbPU and TU Graz remain optimistic: even before the pandemic, universities had productive experience in online communication. In particular, this is a collective work within the framework of Joint student project marathon, which was successfully held in 2019. At that time, teams of Russian and Austrian students under the guidance of curators conducted research and carried out experiments; most of the work was done on virtual sites.

The work on the next Joint Student Project Marathon continues: on the part of Polytechnic University, students of the Institute of Computer Science and Technology take an active part in it, from TU Graz, these are students of the Faculty of Computer Science and Biomedical Engineering. In addition, the cooperation between research teams of the universities is developing. The next strategic meeting, which will take place in winter, will be devoted to the interaction between scientists from SPbPU and TU Graz. And in the fall of 2021, universities are planning to hold a major partnership forum with the participation of university rectors.

Prepared by the SPbPU International Office

Дата публикации: 2020.11.25

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