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Social responsibility as a part of the university's goals: the case of VMU

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Education 360°



Based on the initiatives and efforts of the University community, Vytautas Magnus University has been implementing the model of an active and socially responsible university since the very beginning of its restoration...



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The University



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Vytautas Magnus University was **re-established** in 1989, by the joint efforts of **Lithuanian and diaspora scientists** and researchers. At that time, it became the first autonomous higher education institution in the country, which also stood out from other higher education institutions with its **modern study concept** based on the **model** of Harvard University (**USA**). It is unique because it's preference is given not to a narrow and highly specialised studies, but to a **broad, co-university education** which meets the needs of comprehensive personality development and modern society.

The most important principle in the activities of the University became its academic freedom, while its main purpose was **to prepare graduates with a broad humanistic orientation with social knowledge and skills required** for the need of Lithuania in research, culture, education and economy.

Modernity, liberalism, **sociality and partnership** are **the most important features** at the Vytautas Magnus University.

VMU organisational culture



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The key values of the university are academic freedom, autonomy, a liberal system of studies, **university's culture**, thorough liberal-social and linguistic preparation of students, and a **good balance between studies, research and administration**.

The relationship between students, teachers and administrative staff is based on collegiate cooperation, openness to the world, dissemination of liberal thought, and a modern attitude. Collegiate relationships stimulates **unique internal traditions of the University, which involves all community members** (e.g. opening of the school year celebration and parade, Christmas celebration of the community, community's awards ceremony, university birthday celebration, school year closing picnic, teacher in a non-formal environment, etc.)

University's **administrative structure is more centralized**: academic units are responsible for studies and research, non-academic units – for services and support in a specific area.

Openness to the society and to the world towards internalisation, constant desire to improve for a better quality of studies, research and services, **implementation of good case practices at the university** – stimulates it to move forward.

VMU strategies and social responsibility



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Vytautas Magnus University Strategic plan for 2007–2011

VMU MISSION

VMU is a **community-based** research and study institution, which continues the mission of the University of Lithuania established in Kaunas in 1922, creates liberal learning conditions for an **individual**, develops **partnership**, takes active participation in the life of **Kaunas**, creates the future of **Lithuania**, and contributes to the **global** cultural and academic development.



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Vytautas Magnus University Strategic visions

Vision for 2010

We are a community-based, autonomous, liberal and dynamic university in Kaunas

Vision for 2015

We are a Lithuanian university, which is open to the challenges of the world university movement, we are a reliable equal social partner, a creating Lithuanian university.

Vision for 2020

We are an active, leading, and modern Lithuanian university which fosters national identity and actively participates in the life of the world universities.



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Vytautas Magnus University Strategic plan for 2012–2020

VISION

VMU is an active, modern, globally recognised, classical university which fosters the principles of **artes liberales** developing **creative personalities** to both **Lithuania and the world.**

MISSION

VMU is a **community-based research, art and study institution**, which pursues the mission of the University of Lithuania, established in Kaunas in 1922, **creates liberal learning** conditions for an **individual**, develops **partnerships**, takes **active part** in the life of **Kaunas**, advances the future of **Lithuania**, and contributes to the **global** cultural and academic development.

VALUES

Personal freedom, openness, **responsibility**, creativity, **sense of community**, academic excellence and autonomy.



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VMU STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2027

VISION

VMU is one of the strongest, **comprehensive universities** in the **Baltic region**, fostering the principles of **Artes liberales**, bringing together **the community** to build the future of **Lithuania and Europe**.



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VMU STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2027

MISSION

VMU is **community-oriented institution** of science, art and studies which continues the mission of the University of Lithuania, established in Kaunas in 1922, creating **liberal education** conditions for an **individual, developing partnerships** and taking an active part in the life of **Lithuania** to advance its future and to contribute to the **global** cultural and academic development.



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VMU STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2027

VALUES

- **Personal and academic freedom**
- Democracy*
- **Openness**
- **Responsibility**
- **Creativity**
- **Sense of community**
- Sustainability*
- Academic excellence

*values added in 2021; others retained from 2012-2020



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VMU STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2027

STRATEGIC ASPIRATIONS

(i.e. the main five directions for the development of the university)

1. COMMUNITY IN HARMONY AND CONSOLIDATION
2. INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY
3. “STUDIES 360”
4. INTERGRITY OF SELF-GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY
5. UNIVERSITY IMPACT ON SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT



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Social responsibility as the horizontal goal of the university



Social responsibility at VMU



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VMU as a socially responsible university

In accordance with values of respect for human being, society and nature, University addresses social and environmental issues, develops active communication and cooperation within the University's community and in relation with all interested groups of society, businesses and government.



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Areas of social responsibility at VMU:

- Disability-friendly university
- Supporting vulnerable members of the university's community
- Promoting arts, creativity, sports, academic, scientific, sports, artistic and social excellence
- VMU Goes Green!
- Encouraging partnership
- Community based
- Facilitating activities, creativity and self-realisation
- Creating positive environment

Disability-friendly university



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Disability is not an obstacle to become a member of VMU community. This is the motto that Vytautas Magnus University has followed in its daily activities since 1992.

Openness, dialogue, attention to everyone and tolerance are the values cherished by VMU. Since the establishment of the university, the constant aim has been **to consider individual needs, to create equal conditions for all community members.**

Vytautas Magnus University was the first Lithuanian higher education institution to start a **program for the integration of disabled people into society through higher education** and is still **known as a disability-friendly university**, which is implementing a policy of socially responsible university for disabled students and employees.



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Supporting vulnerable members of the community

University supports its **community members**, especially students, **who have lost their parents** (are orphans) or are from the **families with a large number of children**, and encourages their aspiration to get a higher education degree.

By understanding students and employees who are in distress, University seeks to help them to the best of its ability. If they have lost their parents, **face another family disaster or a radical change in their socioeconomical situation**, they **are supported financially or get other services**, which is provided by the University **free of charge** or with a big discount.



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Promotion of the arts, creativity, sports, academic, scientific, sports, artistic and social excellence

During their studies at Vytautas Magnus University, students can expect a variety of **support from the university itself**, as well as other **public institutions, organisations or individuals**. With this support, **university encourages students:**

- **to study** and pursue academic heights
- to actively **participate in the life of the university community**
- to **represent university** in Lithuania and abroad in the fields of science, art, sports and (or) social activities



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VMU Goes Green!

“VMU Go green!” - the motto of the university’s community movement, which seeks to bring people together and encourage them **to take care of the environment**. The aim of this idea is to **save natural and energy resources, contribute to the environment and nature preservation both inside and outside of the university**.

Encouraging partnership



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Vytautas Magnus University closely cooperates with various partners. In pursuit of mutual cooperation, VMU promotes and develops relations **with public institutions, associations, representatives of public and private sector, communicates with Lithuanian schools, gymnasiums, colleges, and European and world universities.**

Financial contribution from sponsors and patrons are used to fund **various community events, social projects and scholarships**, which were established to encourage the most active and talented students.

Community-based university



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Despite growing individualisation, **relationships, empathy and close communication** are fundamental values of the university.

At the university we make friends, we dream, work, spend our free time, we fall in love - we live. **University is people.** Here, while being together, we **grow as persons, human beings and individuals**, that's way **diversity, equality and non-discriminational environment** creates safe conditions for the sustainable development of the community. VMU always looks for community's **psychological, mental and spiritual health and well-being.**

ALUMNI is always recognised as a part of the university's community, which ensures the sustainability of the University and fosters its growth.



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Facilitating activities, creativity and self-realisation

The goal of the University of Liberal Arts is to educate people who are searching, creating, thinking and who are not afraid to experiment, but at the same time are understanding, responsible and tolerant, who would be empathetic to the environment and people around them. Therefore, **employees** and, especially **students, always have a variety of activities and self-realisation opportunities** and - most importantly - **the conditions to realise what they dreams are, in a multilingual, multicultural and international environment.**

Creating positive environment



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While being in the university, very important role goes to the work and study environment, which consists of **comfortable and cost-effective conditions** in dormitories, **tidy public spaces of the university, ergonomical and flexible physical and virtual workplaces**, as well as **renovated premises which are** adapted to the study processes and facilities.

All members of the university community can play **sports**, engage in recreational, **artistic or social activities**, create, sing, make music, play, film and photograph, **volunteer** or actively spend their free time in other areas.

The university also provides an opportunity for students and employees to **grow and reach their career heights**.



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Questions, remarks, discussions...