The South African Ambassador: "I watch with fascination the fast-developing Győr University model"

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of South Africa, Pieter Vermeulen has recently visited Széchenyi István University, where he met with the leadership of the university and had a discussion with the South African students studying there. He found the Győr University model convincing, due to the way it was the fruitful symbiosis of industry with the practice-oriented training of students, leading to marketable degrees.

Győr, 27 September 2019. – SZEhírek, Nyerges Csaba, photo: Májer Csaba József

The meeting was attended by Dr. Richard Paul Ray, professor at the Department of Structural and Geotechnical Engineering, Dr. Emese Makó, Head of the Department of Transport Architecture and Water Engineering, and Dr. Krisztián Koppány, Deputy Rector of the Gyula Kautz Economics Department responsible for corporate relations and Associate Professor of the International and Theoretical Economics Department. All three professors are active participants in the internationalization process of the university, and are playing a major role in the English language programs. An interesting fact to be mentioned is that one third of the foreign students pursue their studies under the umbrella of the Economics Department.

Since the Ambassador visited Széchenyi University last spring, the number of courses offered in English has increased almost fivefold, out of the full number of 77 courses offered in Hungarian. “Today, there is an option to study one out of three fields of study in English at Széchenyi István University. At the same time, the number of foreign students has also increased dynamically to over 300, in addition to the Hungarian students from Slovakia studying here. The main focus of the university is on the Northern and Eastern Asian region, as well as on BRICS countries. We are able to offer Western European standard for students at Central European costs, both in terms of education and infrastructure” – Deputy Rector Eszter Lukács
has informed the Ambassador.

“Internationalization for us is not an aim, but a means in the process of model change, in which Gy?r shows itself as an international university. The university leadership are taking jointly co-ordinated effective steps for the implementation of the well-articulated strategic goals. This is how for example the Management Campus has come into being, to be next followed by the creation of the Science Park. Each phase of this process is based on the system of research serving concrete industrial needs, by practice-oriented cooperation with the economy”, said Eszter Lukács.

The Ambassador pointed out that he had visited many domestic higher education institutions, among others to stay informed about the situation of South African students studying at Hungarian universities. “I watch with fascination the speed at which higher education is developing in Gy?r, how the internationalization process is becoming wider and wider. Gy?r’s special character is given by its real life, multifold and pulsating symbiosis with industry, with Audi, and this practice-oriented approach has also born fruit in the teaching process and with regard to students. It is also attractive for the students, because they are receiving marketable skills and degree from the university”, said the Ambassador, praising the mission of the Gy?r model, putting science in the service of the country and the economy.

In the next phase of the meeting, the Rector of Széchenyi István University, Dr. Péter Földesi and Ambassador Pieter Vermeulen reviewed further diversified opportunities for cooperation, and then the Ambassador met with Phiwe Linda Maseti, a South African student studying at the Gy?r Campus, who has been doing her Masters in infrastructure engineering since last year, at the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Transportation, and Rivoningo Mukhari, who began his initial training in Civil Engineering in September. The students said that they had chosen the Széchenyi István University primarily on the basis of the study programs offered and the options, not the geographical location, but the fact that Gy?r is a beautiful, liveable city, was a special gift.