

V-LEAD-X

Virtual Learning Engagement and Academic
Development through Exchange and Collaboration

Prof. Violeta Vidaček Hainš, Ph.D.

Prof. Marina Klačmer Čalopa, Ph.D.

Antonela Devčić, Ph.D.

Karolina Kokot, Ph.D.

Meet the V-LEAD-X team



Nothing makes the earth seem so spacious as to have friends at a distance; they make the latitudes and longitudes.

Henry David Thoreau



Challenge

University of Zagreb Faculty of Organization and Informatics faces increasing pressure to **provide international learning experiences** and work-based skills to students while ensuring equity of access.

Traditional mobility programs are limited in reach, and many students lack the opportunity or motivation to engage in global, practice-oriented learning.



Objective

To design and implement a scalable, inclusive, and **innovative teaching and learning model** focused on **internationalization** that:

Facilitates international collaboration **without the need for physical mobility (via COIL) – virtual mobility**

Embeds real-world, **work-based learning (WBL)** in course design

Develops students' intercultural, digital, research and professional **skills**

Strengthens institutional partnerships and strategic internationalization across programs and levels

Key Steps of the V-LEAD-X COIL Methodology



Course Preparation

Teachers from FOI and partner universities (USA, Netherlands) prepare guidelines, assignments and timelines before semester start



Initial Team Meetings

Teams hold introductory meetings to share academic and personal backgrounds, fostering intercultural understanding



International Team Formation

Diverse student teams (HR, Erasmus, IISMA) are formed based on a mix of countries and programs (4-6 students per team)



Project Development

Teams collaborate virtually, using tools of their choice, to develop solutions for cross-cultural negotiation or HRM topics



Assignment Introduction

Teachers present course tasks and provide resources via LMS (negotiation topics or HR practices in global companies)



Feedback and Reflection

Students reflect on intercultural teamwork and provide insights for course improvement (used for continuous development)

Bonus: Beyond the Course

- > Participation in the Student Research Symposium (USA)
- > Presenting at CECIIS Conference (Student Poster & Presentation Section)
- > Ongoing collaboration with international peers beyond the classroom

Tools and technologies



Core Digital Infrastructure

Moodle LMS – central hub for all materials, assignments, deadlines @ UNIZG FOI
MS Teams / Zoom / Google Meet – real-time collaboration and virtual meetings



Collaboration & Communication

WhatsApp, Messenger
(FB/Instagram) – informal, student-led coordination
Google Drive / Dropbox – file sharing, joint document editing



Creative & Visual Tools

Canva, Prezi, Venngage – for engaging presentations, posters, flyers
Mind mapping tools – for concept development and brainstorming



Key Features of the Toolset

- ✓ Flexibility and autonomy in tool choice
- ✓ Easy to use, free or widely accessible platforms
- ✓ Promote inclusion, participation and professional readiness
- ✓ Reflect real-world virtual teamwork practices

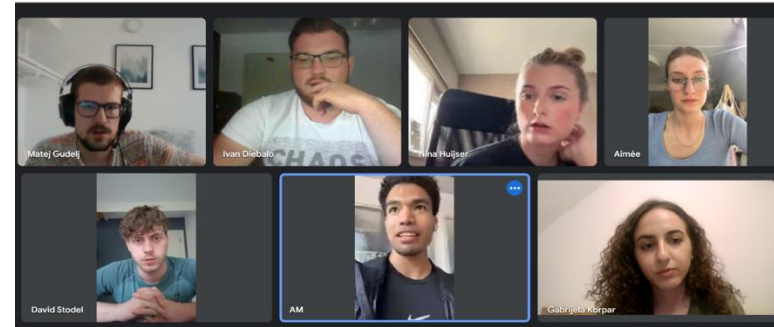
COIL – Collaborative Online International Learning 2018–2025



V-LEAD-X project integrates the COIL methodology into two graduate courses on the study program Economics of Entrepreneurship: **Negotiating in the International Environment (NIE)** and **Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM)**.

Online activity 2018-2025 on courses: virtual meetings with students from NL (Amsterdam), USA (Cincinnati) and Pretoria (South Africa)

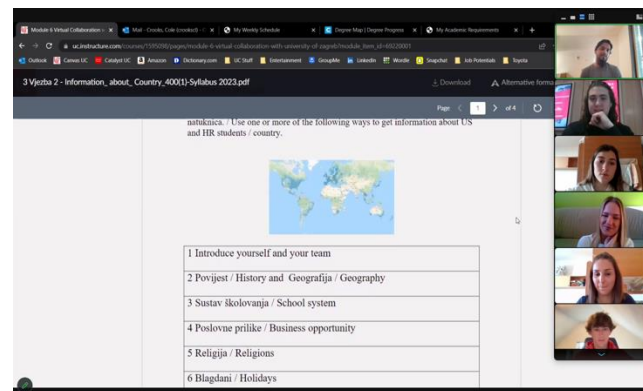
University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam (2018 – today)



University of Pretoria (2025)



University of Cincinnati (2023-today)

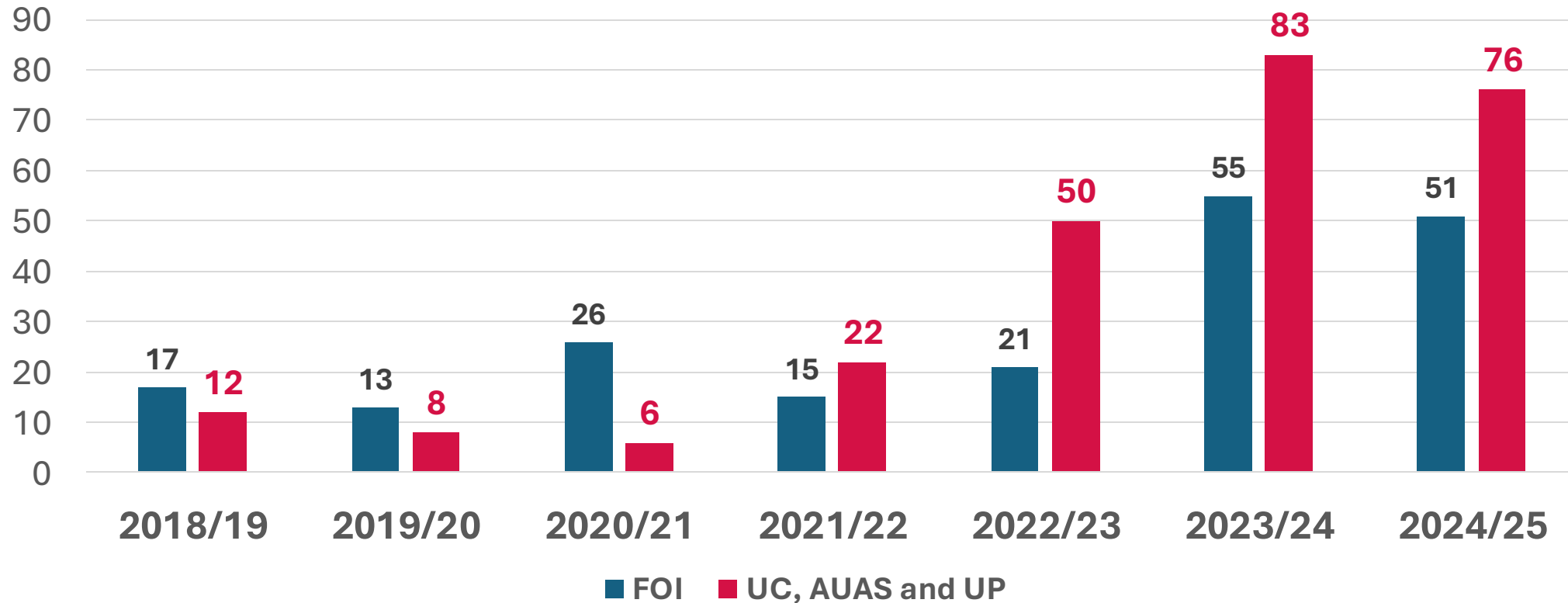


One of the goals of
virtual mobility is
networking with
students from other
countries and
participation in classes
on partner universities,
without physical travel

<https://www.foi.unizg.hr/en/international-students/students-experiences/virtual-mobility-between-foi-students-and-students>

Results: Number of students participated at the COIL 2018-2025

Croatian (FOI) and International Students (AUAS, UC and UP)
participated at the COIL

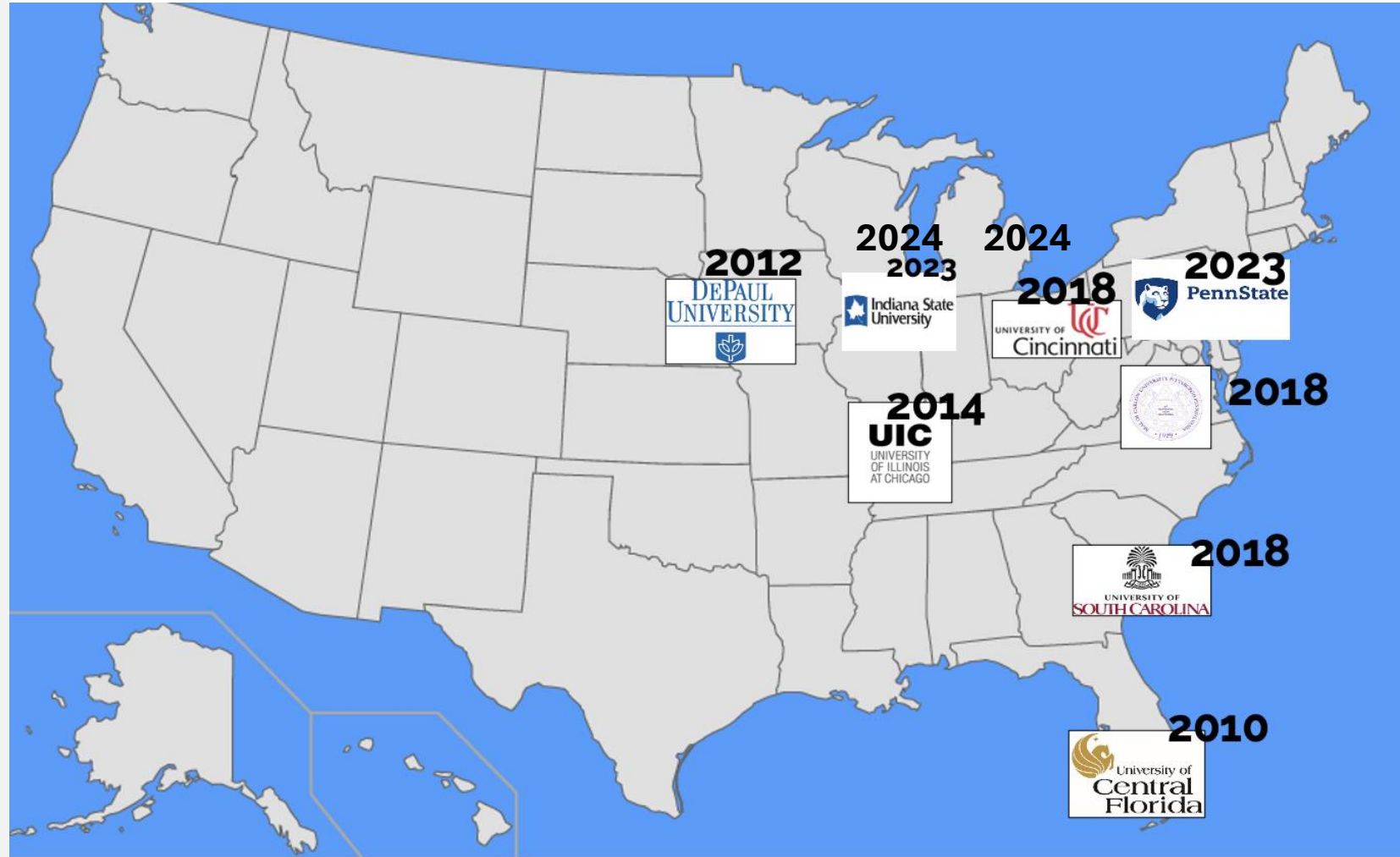


Follow-Up

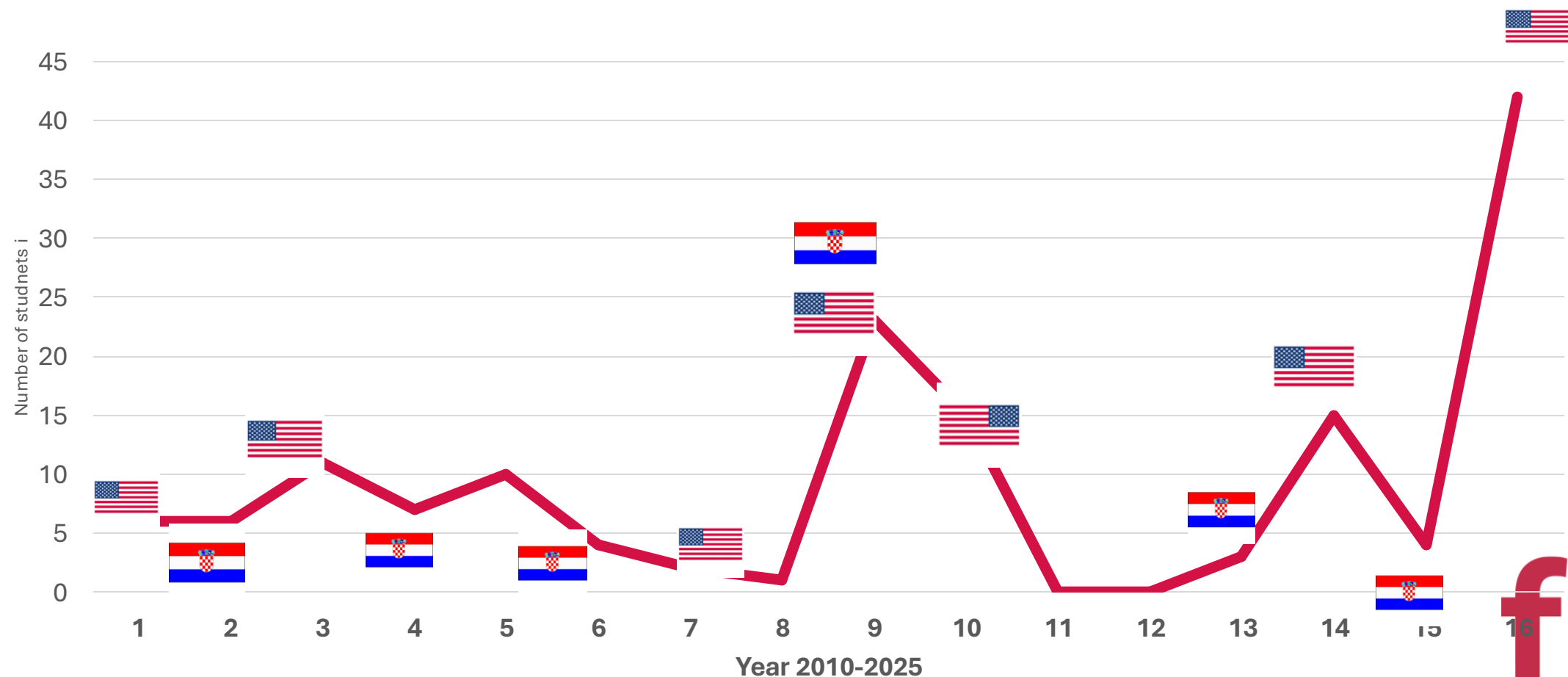
Student Research Symposium on Intercultural Learning

COIL Follow-Up – V-LEAD- X International Partners

15th Student Symposium on
Research and Intercultural Learning
(held annually from 2010 to 2025)



Number of Students and Staff Students Research Symposium on Intercultural Learning 2010-2025




Legend:
USA flag – American students mobility to the HR
HR flag – HR students mobility to the USA

Follow Up

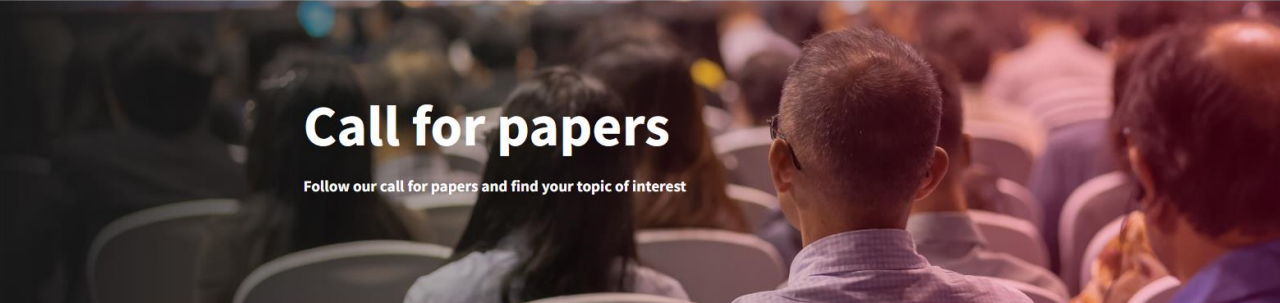
**Central European Conference
on Information and Intelligent Systems
CECIIS
(2011-2025)**

COIL Follow up: Students' Poster and Online Section of the Central European Conference on Information and Intelligent Systems (continuously each year since 2010)



35th Central European
Conference on Information
and Intelligent Systems

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Call for papers

Follow our call for papers and find your topic of interest

Undergraduate and graduate students are invited to present their research supported by information and communication technology (ICT). The main aim of this Section is to encourage student collaboration and networking.

Participants are asked to prepare posters or online presentations linked to different areas of communication supported by information and communication technology, interpersonal communication and cultural diversity, managing relationship challenges, human resources, interpersonal relationships on the Internet and at work, ICT products etc.

The Section will be held in **two parts**

- The first part of the Student Section is the **poster section** for students **personally attending** the Conference.
- The second part is the **online** section for **distance participants**.

Responsible

SUBMIT YOUR PAPER/POSTER

AUTHOR GUIDELINES

- CECIIS Paper template LaTeX - EN (.zip)
- CECIIS Paper template LaTeX - HR-EN (.zip)
- CECIIS Paper template - EN - docx/pdf (.zip)
- CECIIS Paper template - HR - docx/pdf (.zip)

CECIIS <https://ceciis.foi.hr/>
<https://ceciis.foi.hr/research-topic/15th-student-poster-and-presentation-section>



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Information and Intelligent
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Chair:
Full Prof. Dr. Violeta Vidaček Hainš, FOI
Full Prof. Dr. Victoria Appatova, University of Cincinnati, OH, USA
Dr. Socio Antonela Devčić, FOI

[Student Presentation and Poster Section 2024](#)
[Student Presentation and Poster Section 2023](#)
[Student Presentation Section 2022](#)
[Student Presentation Section 2021](#)
[Student Presentation Section 2020](#)
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[Student poster section 2011](#)

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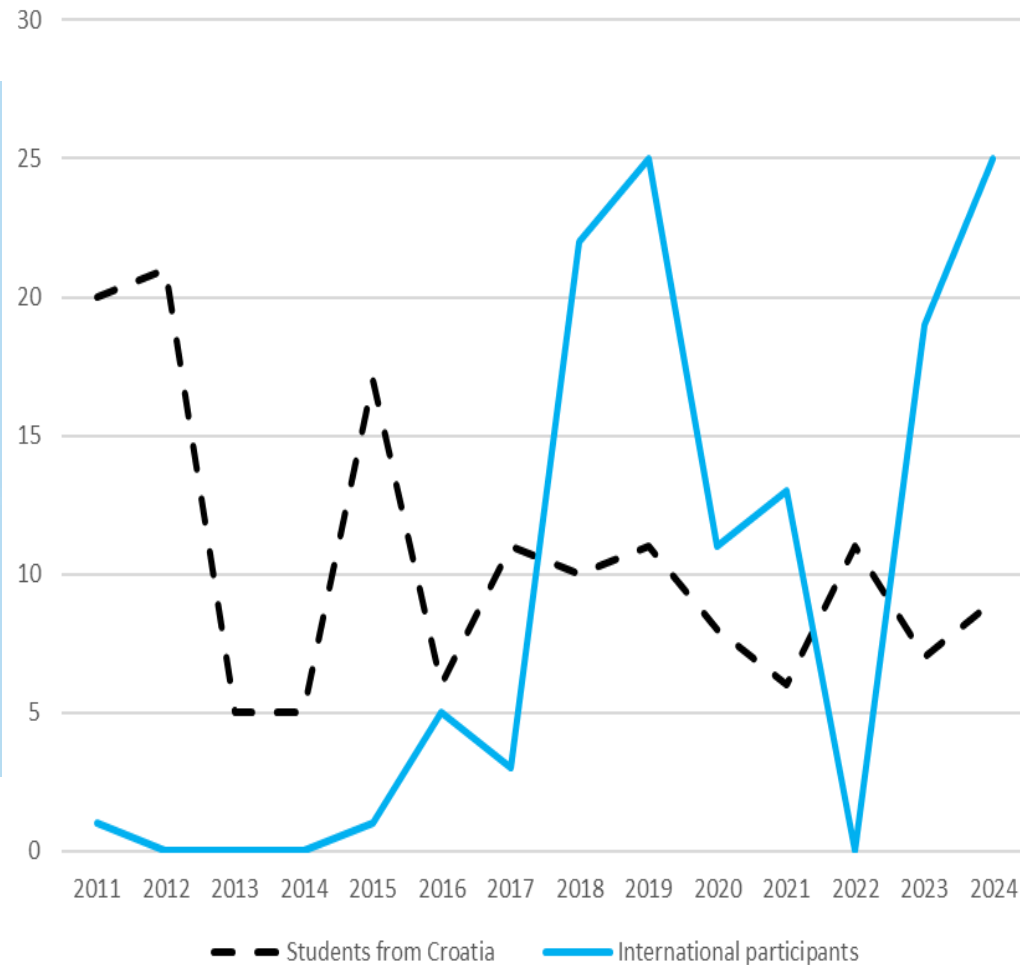
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The Number of Students and Students' Projects Students' Poster and Online Section (2011-2024)

Participating countries at the Students section 2011-2024



Number of International and Croatian Students



Key Lessons Learned






Virtual collaboration requires structure and active facilitation – Clear instructions, regular check-ins, and **teacher support** are essential for successful international teamwork.

Blended formats enhance long-term impact – Combining virtual COIL activities with face-to-face events (e.g. Student symposium, CECIIS conference) strengthens partnerships and encourages student engagement.

Motivation and equity require flexibility – Motivating students and allowing them to choose tools and adapt to their contexts supports inclusion.

Strategic alignment strengthens sustainability – Linking learning activities to institutional strategies, accreditation goals, and EHEA priorities ensures long-term relevance and sustainability.

Key Outcomes of the V-LEAD-X Project

Level	Key Outcomes	Broader Impact
 Student Level	<p>Development of intercultural, communication, digital, and collaboration skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to real-life business contexts & simulations • Participation in virtual and physical mobility (symposium, conference) 	<p>Empowered graduates ready for global work environments</p> <p>Lifelong learning mindset</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced employability through practice-based learning
 Institutional Level	<p>Enriched course content and structure through COIL and WBL methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to FOI's EFMD accreditation process • Expanded international teaching collaborations 	<p>Contribution to FOI's EFMD accreditation process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened international reputation
 European / Societal Level	<p>Implementation of EHEA priorities: Inclusion, mobility, quality education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with EU higher education strategies • Dissemination through conferences and best practice platforms 	<p>Contribution to a more inclusive EHEA space</p>

Transferability



At the Course Level

- COIL and WBL are modular and adaptable – can be integrated into various disciplines and course formats
- Tools used (Moodle, Zoom, Teams, Drive) are widely accessible and do not require advanced technical infrastructure



At the Institutional Level

- Successfully piloted practices (COIL and WBL) have been replicated across multiple courses within FOI
- The model aligns with FOI's strategic goals for internationalization and digital transformation, enabling institutional adoption
- Long-term international partnerships (e.g., USA, Netherlands, Indonesia) provide a sustainable framework for future implementation across programs (Symposium, CECIIS)



Thank You for Your Attention



We would like to thank our partner institutions and acknowledge the enthusiasm of both teachers and students. Their dedicated work has made this internationalization project and innovative teaching approach possible.