

ANNUAL REPORT



UA RUHR

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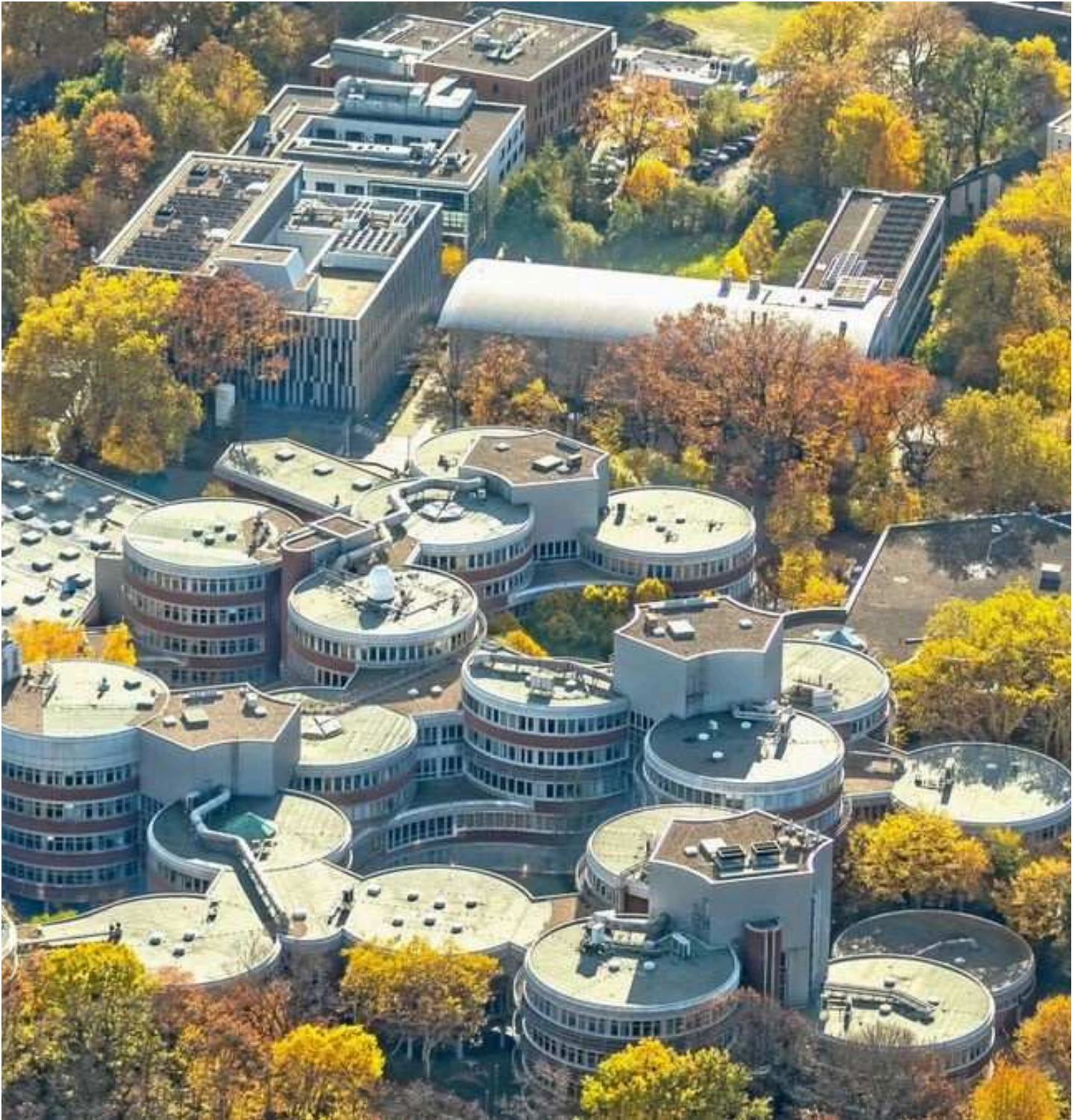
IMPACT DRIVEN RESEARCH

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UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE RUHR INC.
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UNIVERSITY DUISBURG-ESSEN



Introduction and **WELCOME**

2024 marks a significant milestone for UA Ruhr as we celebrate two decades of fostering transatlantic academic and research cooperation. Our universities—Ruhr University Bochum, TU Dortmund University, and the University of Duisburg-Essen—continue to champion innovation and scientific exchange across borders. This year saw the launch of the Future’s Fellowship Program, connecting top researchers from our universities with prestigious North American institutions such as Lehigh University, University of Virginia, Rutgers University, and Cornell University. Through high-profile events such as the Presidents’ Roundtable on Addressing Global Challenges and discussions on sustainability, artificial intelligence, and academic freedom, UA Ruhr continues to underscore the importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration and science diplomacy. As we look back on 2024, we reaffirm our commitment to promoting internationalization, addressing societal challenges, and fostering transatlantic partnerships that shape the future of research, education, and global society.



TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY DORTMUND

UA Ruhr at 20 Years

IMPACT DRIVEN COLLABORATION

Dear UA Ruhr Community,

2024 marks another milestone year for UA Ruhr, celebrating two decades of fostering transatlantic academic and research cooperation. Our three universities **Ruhr University Bochum, TU Dortmund University,** and the **University of Duisburg-Essen,** continue to champion innovation, collaboration, and scientific exchange across borders.

This year, we celebrated the launch of the highly anticipated **Future's Fellowship Program,** commemorating UA Ruhr's 20th anniversary. This initiative connects top researchers from our universities with institutions across North America, deepening collaborative efforts on pressing global challenges, from climate resilience to the societal impacts of artificial intelligence. The inaugural cohort, partnering with institutions like **Lehigh University, University of Virginia, Rutgers University,** and **Cornell University** is a testament to the ongoing pursuit of academic excellence and the importance of cross-border dialogue in an ever-evolving world.

Throughout 2024, our events have underscored the critical role that science diplomacy plays in addressing global challenges. Key highlights included the Presidents' Roundtable on Addressing Global Challenges, organized in partnership with the German Center for Research and Innovation (DWIH), which brought together leaders to discuss the intersections of science, policy, and academia.

Transatlantic academic exchanges, public-private partnerships, and fostering diversity across disciplines were at the forefront of these discussions, highlighting the necessity for continued collaboration in combatting political polarization and fostering innovation.

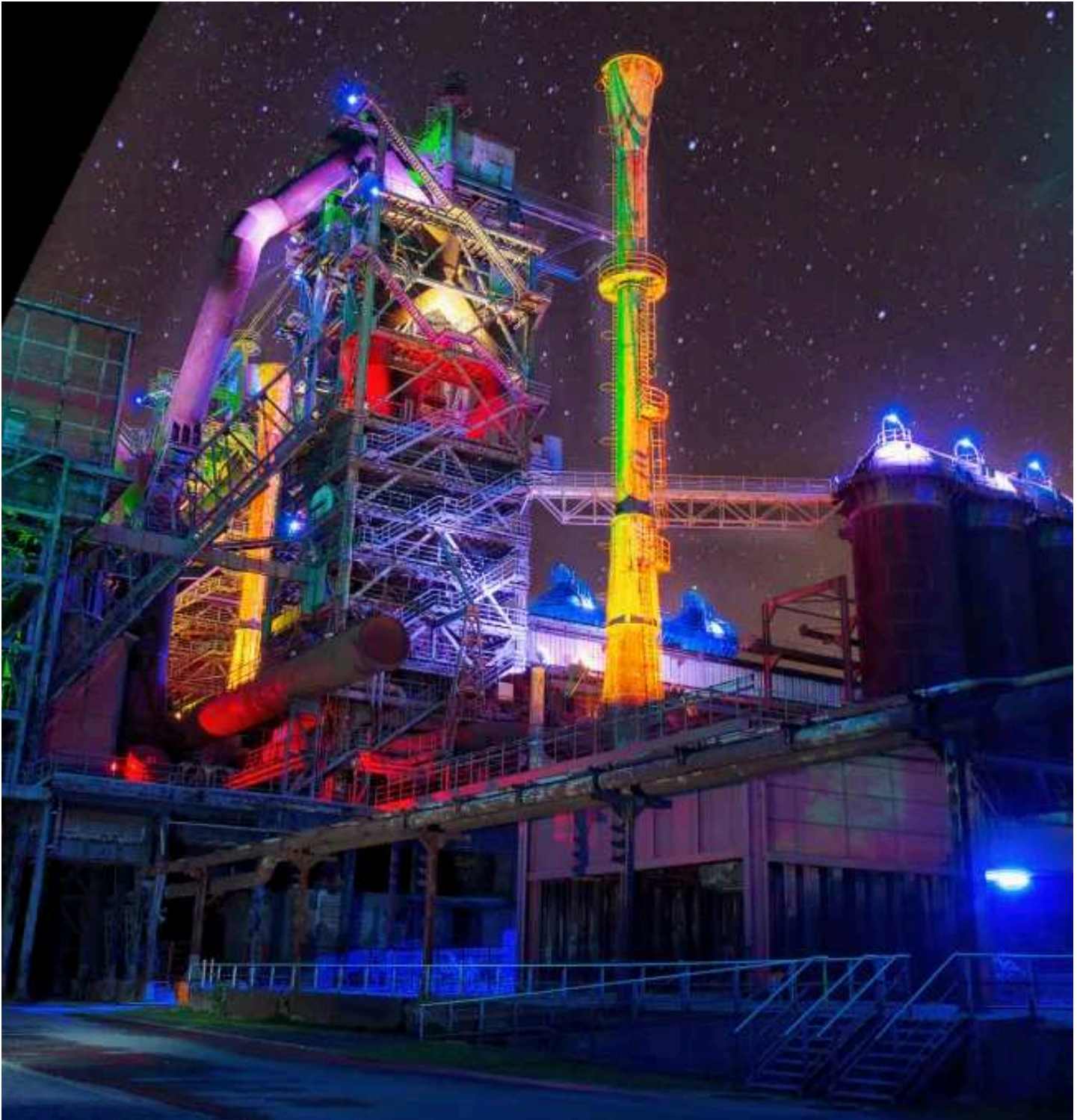
Furthermore, the activities organized by UA Ruhr this year, included high level discussions on **sustainability** and **artificial intelligence;** **diversity, equity** and **inclusion;** **democracy and diplomacy;** **academic freedom;** **entrepreneurship** and **transfer** - reinforcing our position as a bridge between Germany and North America. These gatherings foster a space where scholars, students, and industry leaders can exchange ideas, share insights, and develop solutions that will shape the future of research, education, and global society.

As we reflect on 2024, UA Ruhr reaffirms its commitment to **empowering internationalization,** promoting **research** that addresses societal challenges, and expanding transatlantic collaboration. We look forward to continuing this journey of knowledge-sharing and innovation into the coming years.



Priya S. Nayar
Executive Director





DUISBURG LANDSCAPE PARK

Our Universities and **THE RUHR AREA**

The Ruhr area, or "**Ruhrgebiet**," is one of Germany's most dynamic and culturally rich regions, with a legacy deeply intertwined with the country's industrial past. Once the beating heart of Germany's coal and steel industries, the Ruhr has transformed itself from an industrial powerhouse into a hub of innovation, culture, and education. Today, it boasts a unique blend of modernity and heritage, with repurposed industrial sites like the Zeche Zollverein coal mine complex in Essen and the Gasometer in Oberhausen now serving as cultural landmarks and UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The region is known for its vibrant arts scene, annual festivals, and a multicultural population that adds depth to its cultural landscape. The Ruhrgebiet stands as a testament to resilience and adaptability, symbolizing how areas rooted in heavy industry can evolve to become centers for creativity, sustainability, and knowledge.

This blend of past and present gives the Ruhr a unique character—one that is progressive, inclusive, and vibrant, fostering a spirit of innovation and collaboration that permeates the region's approach to arts, sciences, and social life. This cultural richness is also reinforced by the region's diverse population, shaped by waves of immigration that began during its industrial boom. Communities from across Europe and beyond settled here, making the Ruhr a mosaic of cultures, languages, and traditions. This diversity enriches the region's cultural offerings and fuels a dynamic exchange of ideas, perspectives, and artistic expressions.

Museums like the Ruhr Museum and the Museum Folkwang showcase this history and diversity, offering insights into the Ruhrgebiet's evolution and its people. As a culturally inclusive space, the Ruhr exemplifies how economic transformation and cultural adaptation can go hand in hand, setting an example for other post-industrial regions around the world.

At the heart of the Ruhr's academic and research ecosystem are three universities: **Ruhr University Bochum**, **TU Dortmund University**, and the **University of Duisburg-Essen**. Together, they form the **University Alliance Ruhr (UA Ruhr)**, a collaborative powerhouse that drives research, innovation, and academic excellence in the region. Each institution brings unique strengths to the alliance—Ruhr University Bochum is renowned for its interdisciplinary research and strong focus on humanities and social sciences, TU Dortmund University excels in engineering, natural sciences, and technology, and the University of Duisburg-Essen is a leader in medical research, social sciences, and education. These universities are not only key players in educating future generations but also serve as essential contributors to the local economy and cultural landscape. Their combined efforts foster a vibrant intellectual community, support the local economy, and enhance the Ruhrgebiet's reputation as a leader in global research and development.



RUHR UNIVERSITY BOCHUM

Three Universities

ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

Ruhr University Bochum: Bridging Disciplines and Inspiring Innovation

Founded in 1962, Ruhr University Bochum (RUB) was the first new public university established in Germany after World War II, symbolizing both growth and a fresh start for the Ruhr region. Known for its interdisciplinary research approach, RUB brings together diverse academic fields to tackle complex global challenges. The university excels in areas like materials science, neuroscience, and engineering, while its humanities and social sciences departments contribute critical insights into the cultural and social shifts in post-industrial societies. RUB's research initiatives often transcend academic boundaries, encouraging collaboration across fields to develop holistic solutions.

TU Dortmund University: Shaping the Future of Technology and Society

TU Dortmund University is renowned for its strong focus on technology, engineering, and natural sciences. Established in 1968, TU Dortmund has developed cutting-edge expertise in fields such as data science, automation, and logistics, making it a critical partner for Germany's technological sectors. Its collaborative projects with local industries are instrumental in driving innovation within the Ruhr region's economy, particularly as it transitions away from traditional industries. Additionally, the university's commitment to social sciences ensures a balanced perspective, exploring how technological advancements impact society, ethics, and policy, thereby shaping a future that is both innovative and responsible.

University of Duisburg-Essen: Championing Diversity, Sustainability, and Health

The University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE), one of the largest universities in Germany, is distinguished by its commitment to social inclusion, diversity, and sustainability. Founded in its current form in 2003 through a merger, UDE is known for its research in medical sciences, social policy, and environmental studies, focusing on challenges that are highly relevant to the Ruhr area's industrial legacy. The university has developed a reputation for excellence in health sciences and engineering, contributing to medical research that addresses public health needs in the region and beyond. UDE's Center for Logistics and Traffic, as well as its Institutes for East Asian Studies, position the university as a leader in international collaboration, reflecting the Ruhr's multicultural heritage. Through a strong emphasis on social responsibility and global citizenship, UDE educates students to not only excel in their fields but also to contribute to sustainable and inclusive communities.

UA Ruhr North America



*Prof. Dr. Tessa
Flatten*



*Prof. Dr. Kornelia
Freitag*



*Prof. Dr. Karen A.
Shire*



*Prof. Dr.-Ing. Gerhard
Schembecker*



*Dr. Barbara
Schneider*



*Dr. Joann
Halpern*



Susanne von Türk



Priya Nayar

Year in Review Activities

*Learn about our
focus areas for the
year.*



Focus Area

ENTREPRENEURSHIP



DLAB Delegation at Lehigh University

March 03-04, 2024

Bethlehem

UA Ruhr, in partnership with DWIH San Francisco, SAP, and the German Consulate, hosted a Corporate Innovation and Leadership Roundtable on June 3, 2024, in San Francisco. The event featured discussions on innovation and leadership, providing feedback to Ruhr University Bochum’s WorldFactory startups.



Corporate Innovation and Leadership Roundtable

June 03, 2024

San Francisco

UA Ruhr, in partnership with DWIH San Francisco, SAP, and the German Consulate, hosted a Corporate Innovation and Leadership Roundtable on June 3, 2024, in San Francisco. The event featured discussions on innovation and leadership, providing feedback to Ruhr University Bochum’s WorldFactory startups.



Entrepreneurial Well-Being

October 08, 2024

Bethlehem

Lehigh University, TU Dortmund University, and the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center hosted a panel discussion on Entrepreneurial Well-Being. The event focused on the unique challenges faced by entrepreneurs, especially regarding mental health and work-life balance, addressing the “recovery paradox” and promoting well-being in the entrepreneurial community.



Entrepreneurship Education Week Kick-Off

October 21, 2024

New York

The Entrepreneurship Education Week took place in New York, organized by the CET at TU Dortmund University. This event showcased global best practices and highlighted innovative concepts related to entrepreneurship, technology, and innovation. A networking reception followed, bringing together partners to foster knowledge transfer and collaboration.



Focus Area

DEMOCRACY + ACADEMIC FREEDOM



A Discourse on Equity & Action

April 30, 2024

UA Ruhr, in collaboration with the University of Cincinnati, hosted a course on Democratizing Healthcare: A Discourse on Equity & Action, which covered topics such as healthcare systems, socioeconomics, policy, and social determinants of health. The visit focused on the challenges of integrating individuals into the German healthcare system.



Transatlantic Working Group for At-Risk Scholars CHCI 2024

June 01, 2024

Berkeley

On June 1, 2024, UA Ruhr and Academy in Exile hosted a follow-up meeting of the Transatlantic Working Group for At-Risk Scholars during the CHCI conference at the University of California, Berkeley. The event aimed to further transatlantic collaboration to support scholars facing threats to academic freedom.



SAR 2024 Global Congress

October 16-17, 2024

Pittsburgh

UA Ruhr, in collaboration with Academy in Exile, participated in the 2024 Scholars at Risk Global Congress in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at Carnegie Mellon University. The event featured the exhibition What We Brought With Us and brought together scholars and experts to discuss critical issues concerning academic freedom and support for at-risk scholars.

Focus Area

SCIENCE DIPLOMACY



Science Diplomacy & 20 Years of UA Ruhr

May 09, 2024

New York

UA Ruhr celebrated 20 Years of Transatlantic Collaboration and Innovation on May 9, 2024 in New York. Organized in partnership with the DWIH – German Center for Research and Innovation New York and the German Consulate General New York, the event began with a luncheon and keynote address by Consul General David Gill, followed by the Presidents' Roundtables on Private Public Partnership and Addressing Global Challenges: The Role of Science, Diplomacy, and Academia. The roundtables included a distinguished list of speakers, and participants discussed strengthening collaboration to tackle global challenges. The evening reception launched the Future's Fellowship Program, with the founding cohort of researchers partnering with Lehigh University, Cornell University, and the University of Virginia.



Democracy and Diplomacy

September 25, 2024

Washington, DC

This networking luncheon, in celebration of German Unity Day, was hosted in collaboration with North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) universities and other partners. Featuring opening remarks from high-profile diplomats, the event focuses on discussions about democracy and diplomacy.

Focus Area

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Smart Minds Meet Smart Machines - AI for Science and the Public Good

April 08, 2024

UA Ruhr, DWIH, and the Lamarr Institute for Machine Learning hosted an event focused on the potential of AI in advancing science and serving the public good. The event featured discussions with experts in the field.



Calibrated Trust in Artificial Intelligence

October 07, 2024

New York

UA Ruhr and the Research Center for Trustworthy Data Science and Security organized an expert workshop on Building Trust in Artificial Intelligence on October 7, 2024, in New York. The event convened stakeholders to discuss AI trust-building strategies.



UA Ruhr Organized SYMPOSIUMS



Arts as a Catalyst for Global Understanding

April 19, 2024

On April 19th, 2024, the Art as a Catalyst for Global Understanding 2024 symposium took place, featuring Fatemeh Rezaei from University Alliance Ruhr, TU Dortmund, and Academy in Exile, who presented *Ajenda (The Stranger): Investigating the Impact of Forced Migration on Afghan Refugee Women in Iranian Society*.



Transatlantic Dialogue DEI

September 12, 2024

New York

The Transatlantic Dialogue on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion took place on September 12, 2024, in New York. The event, attended by select participants, featured Ruhr University Bochum's Vice President Isolde Karle, who shared insights on promoting DEI within higher education, focusing on cultural differences, institutional policies, and community engagement.



Research Network Kick-Off

October 11, 2024

Boston

We launched the BU-TU Dortmund Research Network, which began with a Planning Workshop and Reception. Hosted by Boston University, the event brought together researchers from both institutions to discuss future collaborations in Membrane Biological Chemistry, High Energy Theory, and Quantum Condensed Matter Physics.



Variability and Influence on Conscious Experience: Perception and Memory

November 23, 2024

New Brunswick

On November 23, 2024, the hybrid workshop “Variability and Influence on Conscious Experience: Perception and Memory” took place at Rutgers University, supported by the University Alliance Ruhr.







UA Ruhr Organized CONFERENCE + EVENTS



New Year Reception

February 29, 2024

New York

Together with the German Consulate General, UA Ruhr and other German Universities of the German House invited alumni, partners, and friends to a special evening celebrating the New Year on February 29, 2024.



NAFSA Partners Reception

May 28, 2024

New Orleans

UA Ruhr, along with its North American partners, held a reception on May 28, 2024, at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans during the NAFSA conference. The reception fostered connections among alumni, partners, and friends.



GAIN Conference

August 23-25, 2024

San Francisco

UA Ruhr participated in the annual GAIN Conference in San Francisco from August 23-25, 2024. Highlights included a workshop on entrepreneurship and academia, as well as an alumni and friends reception featuring a GAIN Science Slam.



Postdoc Fair 2024

August 26, 2024

New York

The Postdoc Fair 2024 was held at the German Consulate in New York on August 26, 2024, providing young researchers an opportunity to network and explore collaboration opportunities with German researchers. The event featured keynote addresses on AI in research and career development.



Infosession TRF 2025

October 22, 2024

Virtual

The University Alliance Ruhr North America office was excited to welcome the next cohort of the Transatlantic Ruhr Fellowship 2025!

Participants joined our virtual info session, where they had the opportunity to connect with alumni and get all their questions answered.



Future Forum

October 31, 2024

Washington, DC

UA Ruhr was part of the 2024 Future Forum, hosted by the German Center for Research and Innovation (DWIH) New York. That year's theme, "Science Diplomacy in an Era of Technological Disruption," explored how advancements like AI and biotechnology were reshaping international relations. UA Ruhr Executive Director Priya S. Nayar and University of Duisburg-Essen Professor Nils Köbis contributed to a joint paper that will be published in 2025.



German American Conference

November 15-17, 2024

Boston

UA Ruhr was part of the German American Conference that brought together leaders from Germany and the US to explore critical issues affecting both nations and the broader global landscape.

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS FELLOWSHIPS

UA Ruhr has three Flagship Fellowship Programs that are administered in North America. Learn about our fellowships.

FUTURE'S FELLOWSHIP 2024 COHORT



Benjamin Badstieber
UDE



Daniela Gimenez
Jimenez
TUDO



Jessica Szczuka
UDE



Sofia Rappe
RUB

RUHR FELLOWSHIP 2024 COHORT



Lael Ayala
Harvard



Clara Conatser
Princeton



Sofia Ferrigolo
Cincinnati



Alexandra Guazzone
Lehigh



Christy Huynh
MIT



Reshma Sree Kotni
Cincinnati



Liam Kelley
Cincinnati



Anna Marie Patti
Lehigh



Eva Schoemaeker
Cincinnati



Eleanor Graves
Princeton



Adam Zimmermann
Lehigh

TRANSATLANTIC RUHR FELLOWSHIP 2024 COHORT



Alisea Wigger
UDE



Elif Bayat
UDE



David Schupp
RUB



Hannah Böckmann
RUB



Johanna Lehnert
UDE



Richard Brandt
TUDO



Karoline Kaimer
UDE



Karina Kaidarova
RUB



Patrick Sobbe
TUDO



Lea Hoerdemann
RUB



Fabian Klaps
TUDO



New York City Internship

UA Ruhr North America stands with the support of our interns. Meet the people who make our activities a success!



Vanessa Hajduga is an intern at UA Ruhr New York office from June 2024 until April 2025.

Ruhr University Bochum



Helen König is an intern at the UA Ruhr North America office from June 2023 until January 2024.

Technical University Dortmund



Gain insights into our strategic direction, prospects, and upcoming initiatives as we look towards an exciting future.

Envisioning Tomorrow, Embracing Opportunities



2025 Outlook

At the core of UA Ruhr New York's mission is the facilitation of meaningful research partnerships and academic exchanges between our three Ruhr universities and North American institutions. Through initiatives like joint research projects, faculty and student mobility programs, the office fosters opportunities for collaboration in fields as diverse as engineering, environmental science, humanities, and social sciences.

The Ruhr region's expertise in addressing complex societal challenges—ranging from climate change to urban development—aligns well with the priorities of North American research institutions, making these partnerships mutually beneficial. By bridging the gap between scholars and researchers from both continents, UA Ruhr North America promotes knowledge-sharing that can lead to innovative solutions for global issues.

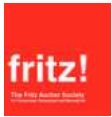
Our office also plays a pivotal role in advancing science diplomacy by organizing and supporting dialogues on critical global challenges. UA Ruhr North America frequently hosts panel discussions, workshops, and networking events that bring together academics, industry leaders, and policymakers from both North America and Germany.

By facilitating conversations on topics like water and climate, sustainable development, digital transformation, and innovation, UA Ruhr contributes to a transatlantic discourse that strengthens the role of academia in addressing international issues. These activities also underscore the Ruhr region's historical resilience and modern role as a model for economic and environmental transformation, inspiring North American partners to consider innovative approaches to their own regional challenges.

Looking ahead, UA Ruhr New York is dedicated to deepening its impact in North America through an expanded range of initiatives that align with evolving global priorities. As challenges such as climate change, technological advancements, and social equity become increasingly complex, the office will continue to facilitate innovative partnerships that harness the strengths of both Ruhr universities and North American institutions. By acting as a catalyst for collaboration, UA Ruhr upholds a vision of a world where academic and research communities across borders work together to shape a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future.

To learn more about our work and potential opportunities for collaboration, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us in New York.







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