

Buddy Program

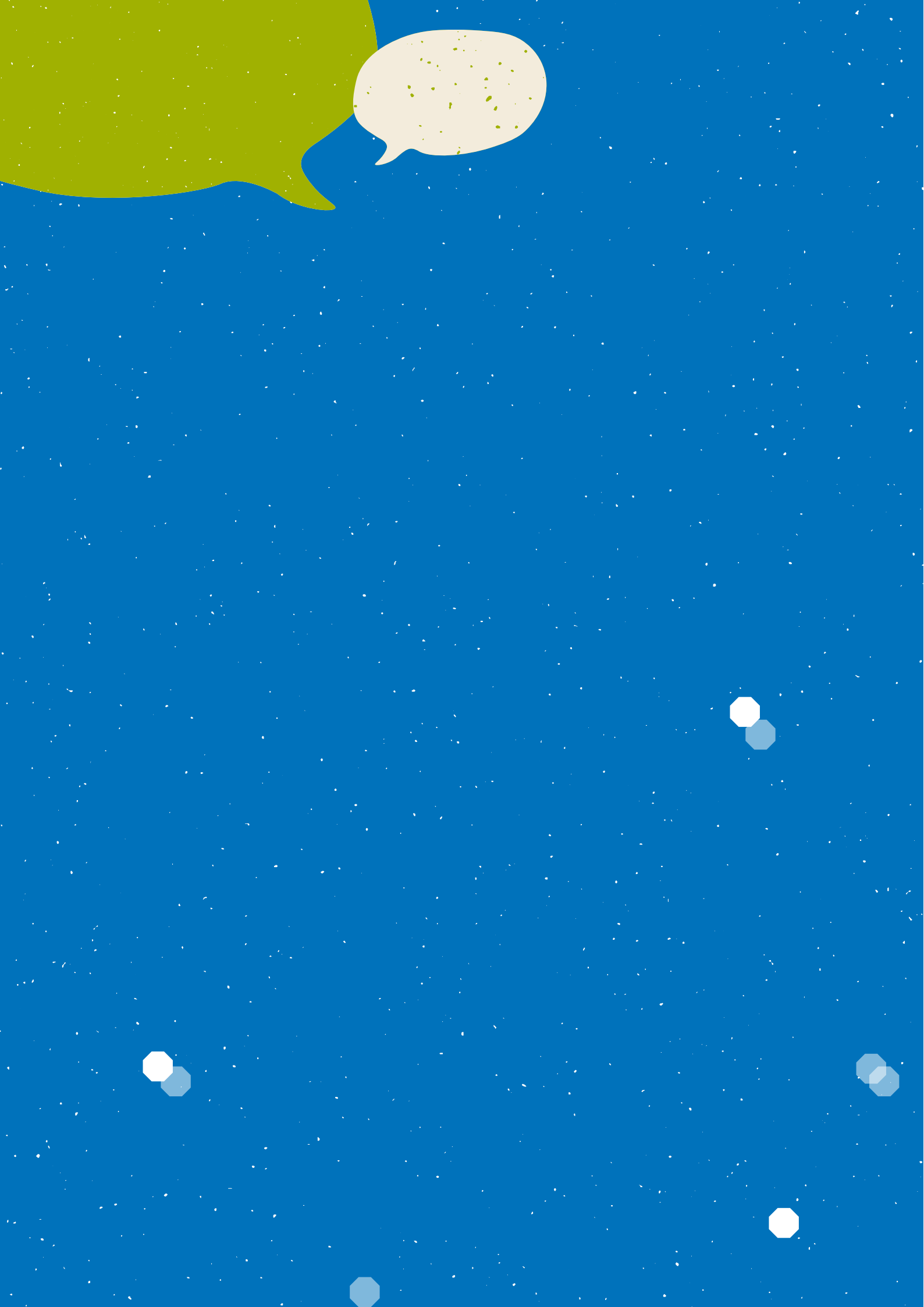
5 YEARS

BUDDY PROGRAM

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME

ANNIVERSARY BROCHURE
OF THE TUM CAMPUS
HEILBRONN





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DEAR REA



Today we are celebrating a very happy anniversary. The Buddy Program has been running at the TUM Campus Heilbronn for five years now. It gives us great pleasure to see how the students in Heilbronn have progressed during this time, how they enrich the city and positively characterize our campus.

Clever minds from all over the globe meet in Heilbronn to learn, grow and make discoveries about themselves and the world. The Buddy Program has succeeded in providing these young talents with the best possible starting conditions. A new chapter of life begins for our students. Many of them are leaving their accustomed environment for the first time. So it's a big plus to receive support and to be advised and understood on an equal footing.

Friendships and contacts for life are formed alongside the pursuit of knowledge. This goes far beyond academic boundaries.

Many thanks to Adelheid Schäfer-Terino and the Buddy Program Team, who have practically built up this initiative from the ground up and are there for their protégés full of love and passion.

We're looking forward to the next five years!

Yours

Daniel A. Gottschald,

Managing Director of Die TUM Campus Heilbronn gGmbH



DER



As the founding dean and the Delegate Officer of the TUM President for the Overall Development of the TUM Campus Heilbronn, I look back on the founding of the TUM Campus Heilbronn and am delighted to see that campus life is active and students are growing together successfully.

The TUM Campus Heilbronn is not only synonymous with first-class research and teaching, it is also about empowering people. As an international campus, empowerment includes giving students from all over the world a “helping hand” to ensure the best possible start to their studies as a launching pad for a successful future.

The Buddy Program meets exactly this guiding principle and creates a platform where young people support each other, pass on knowledge and are there for each other - across countries, cultures and denominations. The international character of our campus is reflected in almost all facets of the program. It is no coincidence that our Buddies are prepared for their responsible role as intercultural bridge builders through professional training and playful elements at the kick-off event.

I am delighted to be able to celebrate five years of the Buddy Program today and would like to take this opportunity to thank the Buddy Program Team and especially Adelheid Schäfer-Terino for their ideas and tireless efforts on behalf of the students on campus to offer them the best possible start.

Yours

Prof Helmut Krcmar,

Founding Dean (2018-2020) and Delegate Officer of the TUM President for the Overall Development of the TUM Campus Heilbronn

“THE BEAUTY OF BEING TOGETHER”

ADELHEID SCHÄFER-TERINO, FOUNDER OF THE BUDDY PROGRAM, AND NIKITA GRIGOREV, FORMER STUDENT ASSISTANT, TALK ABOUT HOW AND WHY THEY GOT INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM AND THEY SHARE THEIR MOST BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES.



Perhaps not everyone is familiar with the Buddy Program. Could you briefly explain what it is?

Adelheid: In the Buddy Program, new students are assigned to a Buddy and a small Buddy Group. The aim is to give them a good network, to make friends very easily from the start and to get to know each other. The groups are very diverse and reflect the high level of internationality on our campus.

Is the program open for all students?

Adelheid: Yes, and that's what sets us apart from other universities. Typically, Buddy Programs are for incoming students, for exchange students. But we have so many international students that everyone is on the same level here. Anyone, no matter where the student comes from, can be a Senior Buddy after a year.

Whose idea was it to set up such a program on our campus?

Adelheid: The School of Management has it in their program and they wanted us to do the same in Heilbronn. So I established a Buddy Program which was meant to be like Munich's model. With the growing management study courses and the growing program, I understood that Campus HN needed a different and uncommon framework and pragmatic solutions for a functional Buddy Program tailored to our international students. The biggest change was two years ago: When the School of Computation, Information and Technology started in Heilbronn, we decided to include them in the Buddy Program. Normally, each school or faculty has its own Buddy Program, but we have two schools whose students all meet in one program.

Nikita, what was your experience when you joined the program as a freshman?

Nikita: I wouldn't say I had a 100 percent positive experience because my Buddy was in Munich the whole time. Within my Buddy Group, I didn't really have much contact with my fellow Buddies or my

Senior Buddy. I didn't have two Senior Buddies, just this one. We later decided to change that so that if someone dropped out, the other person could fill in for them. My negative experiences also influenced my desire to participate in the Buddy Program because I wanted to improve it.

Then you became the first Student Assistant ever. Can you tell us what your tasks were and what steps you took to further improve the program?

Nikita: My main task was to develop a matching tool for assigning Buddies to freshmen. But then the matching tool became more of a background task, and I was more involved with organizing the Buddy Program itself. I kept track of everything that was happening on the student side because I was in contact with everyone. And I was available around the clock because I couldn't really separate it from my private life.

Even if it has faded into the background for you over time, the matching tool you developed was a milestone for the program. Can you tell me more about how it works?

Nikita: In brief, the matching tool facilitates the allocation of participants in the Buddy Program, allowing organizers to form groups efficiently. The tool matches freshmen with Senior Buddies based on criteria like academic background and aims to create diverse groups in terms of gender, region, and hobbies. The allocation process is automated using Python code, with registrations accepted on a rolling basis. While the tool is not fully automated, requiring manual initiation, it efficiently handles the allocation process with minimal effort.



If you both could choose your favorite memory of the Buddy Program, what would it be?

Adelheid: I was deeply moved by a special experience involving two incoming exchange students from China and Taiwan. They were paired with Buddies from Russia and Ukraine, and they all connected seamlessly, sharing a great time together. It perfectly reflects our desire for the campus and the Buddy Program – creating a welcoming space where students from diverse backgrounds can feel at home, connect with others, and embrace the spirit of openness and unity. The story underscores the beauty of being together.

Nikita: One impactful moment for me came from an Easter event my colleague Barbara Borne Bass and I organized. We planned a city-wide treasure hunt for chocolate prizes, initially met with skepticism. However, the genuine joy and surprise of the participants, especially the winning team receiving a chocolate bunny, made it a resounding success.

How would you motivate someone to participate in the program?

Adelheid: All I can say is that you don't have to stay alone. There are many people waiting for you, who want to become your friends, and you can be their friend, too.

Nikita: It's the best way to socialize at the beginning of your studies in a new city, in a new environment and for some people in a new country.

EVERYTHING

AT A GLANCE

WHO, WHEN, HOW, WHAT – WE HAVE COMPILED THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE BUDDY PROGRAM FOR YOU HERE.

WHAT DO THE TERMS “BUDDY” AND “FRESHER” ACTUALLY MEAN?

“Fresher” is another term used to describe first semester students. Everything is new to them: the campus, the lectures, in many cases Heilbronn or even Germany. Some of them find themselves away from their families for the very first time. It goes without saying that they need help when dealing with the authorities, visiting the doctor or looking for accommodation, but sometimes they simply need someone to lend a listening ear. That’s exactly what the “Buddies” have been set up for: they are experienced students who take care of the Freshers, support them with all the major and minor obstacles of everyday life - they’re simply always there for them and in the ideal case become their friends.

WHAT IS THE BUDDY PROGRAM ALL ABOUT?

The Buddy Program brings together a group of freshers with a buddy who will support them during their first semester at TUM Campus Heilbronn. You will be contacted by your Buddy via e-mail either before or shortly after your arrival in Heilbronn. They will meet you at the university and take you on a tour of the campus, share valuable information about Heilbronn and university life, as well as organize group or individual get-togethers so that you feel more connected to the student community. This is how the Buddies play an important role in helping Freshers achieve a successful and enjoyable transition to life at TUM Campus Heilbronn.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

Our program welcomes anybody who has enrolled in one of our degree programs at TUM Campus Heilbronn. The link to the enrollment form is provided by your program manager in your school's orientation guide, distributed to all first-year students. It is possible to register from September 1st using your TUM e-mail address. But you can also register for our Buddy Program if you're embarking on your studies off campus. We'll then put you in touch with a current student. You'll communicate online and be supported as you settle into campus life.

HOW DO I FIND MY BUDDY?

New students can use a link provided by their Program Manager to register for the Buddy Program: Your name and e-mail address will then be passed on to your future Buddy(s), who will then make contact with you. Please don't worry if you don't hear anything after registering: it can take some time before you hear back from your Buddy. More information can be found here: <https://www.mgt.tum.de/campuses/heilbronn/buddy-program>.

HOW CAN I BENEFIT FROM THE BUDDY PROGRAM?

Becoming a Buddy will broaden your horizons. You'll have the unique opportunity of getting to know fellow students from all over the world, making friends for life and helping out others. You are invited to play an active role in organizing events and get-togethers. Last but not least, you will be able to have your intercultural skills certified and receive additional credits or a bonus for your application to one of the partner universities of TUM. Some of the requirements for acquiring credits are dealt with differently depending on the school. So it's worth participating!

HOW CAN I BECOME A BUDDY MYSELF?

To be eligible, you have to be in at least your third semester at TUM Campus Heilbronn, so you should already know the campus and the city. You should speak English and some German, be available from the beginning of the winter semester until early summer or at the beginning and during the summer semester and participate in our online Buddy training. But the most important requirement is that you have enough time to devote to your protégés. Do you have the motivation and meet the requirements? Then apply by clicking on the link that will be posted in the registration newsletter in July or March.

SOMETHING FOR EVERY TASTE



MANAGING DIVERSITY

We place considerable value on our **Code of Conduct (CoC)**. It ensures that we are always respectful towards each other in spite of all differences. Do you want to immerse yourself in the fascinating world of intercultural communication and gain soft skills that will also benefit you in your career? Then the CoC Ambassadors Training and the CoC Mediation Workshop with professional coach Ursula Haupt are the right choice for you.



KICK-OFF WITH PLAYFUL LEARNING

A new semester begins. Time for the big **kick-off event**, at which Freshers and Buddies encounter each other for the first time. You'll experience how Mensch-ärgere-dich-nicht (Eng. "Man, Don't Get Angry") is played around the globe in our Ludo game. Another exciting game will turn you into explorers who travel to a desert island to observe the culture of a mysterious tribe. What else have we come up with?



A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES

How does a non-profit organization work? When we visit the **Aufbaugilde Heilbronn**, you can discover how it helps people who are disadvantaged and promotes their reintegration into society. For instance with the second-hand department store, where long-term unemployed persons find satisfying employment. Of course, you are also allowed to do some shopping there too. A discussion with the management is also part of the program.

WE HAVE DEVISED A VIBRANT CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR OUR BUDDIES AND FRESHERS. HERE ARE A FEW HIGHLIGHTS SO THAT YOU DON'T FEEL OVERWHELMED BY THE WIDE RANGE OF EVENTS ON OFFER.



ATMOSPHERIC HIKES

One of Germany's most popular hobbies is hiking. We offer you the opportunity to try this out on May 1st every year: We embark on a **hike together**. This year, the hike was masterfully organized by our Student Assistant Andrea Antinori Acosta. It's also especially atmospheric when we set off together in the evening with lighted torches in our hands - as we do during our annual torchlight hike to Stettenfels Castle during the Advent season. Why not join us and learn some useful facts about German fire safety regulations along the way?



KEEPING ON THE MOVE

Our **February Fitness Challenge** has been scheduled to coincide with the busy exam period in February. We encourage you to do something good for your health while you're under exam stress. Head outside every day, count your steps and win one of our exciting prizes. But much more importantly: enjoy the sense of community, remain active, focus on your goals and keep believing that you can achieve anything if you really want to!



SPREADING HAPPINESS ON THE DAY OF LOVE

What does February 14th mark every year? **Valentine's Day**, of course, when you give your loved one something special. You alone decide what action to take on this day. Is it a charity campaign for the homeless as organized by our former Student Assistant Barbara Borne Bass? Perhaps a rose stall on campus as arranged by Student Assistant Andrea Antinori Acosta? Our Buddies and Freshers have staged some great events in recent years! Do you have another idea? Why not get involved with your creativity!

IMPRESSIONS





“A GREAT START INTO SOCIALIZATION”

WHAT MAKES THE BUDDY PROGRAM SO ATTRACTIVE? WE ASKED OUR STUDENTS AT THE KICK-OFF EVENT AND HERE ARE THEIR ANSWERS.



Advitya Chopra,
Information Engineering
Student from India

The program is very helpful for me. I've been in contact with my Senior Buddy since one month before my studies started. She has helped me with a lot of stuff: She planned my trip to Heilbronn from India and told me what to expect in my classes. I actually made a very good friend in her. For the future, I would like to pay back by becoming a Senior Buddy myself. I'd be happy to meet new students and support them in the way I was supported.



Toshini Iyer,
Information Engineering
Student from India

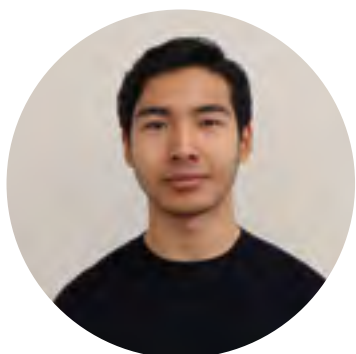
It's my first time to become a Senior Buddy. What I especially like about the program is that I can talk to new people and get to know about their cultures. As a fresher in my first semester, I could tell all my doubts about my studies and the city to my Buddies and they helped me out. Now, it would be nice to give some help to other freshers. If I can be a help regarding the study program or living in Heilbronn in general that will be great.





Oshin Bhuiyan,
Information Engineering
Student from Bangladesh

When I first came here – to another continent – my Buddies arranged everything for me. I didn't know anyone and it was very tough for me. I felt very lonely and isolated. The program has been helpful for me to at least get to know some people and reduce some of the loneliness. It helps when you have some people around that really know you. Now I'm becoming a Buddy myself and I'll take care of four freshers together with a partner.



Amir Amangeldiyev,
Management and
Technology Student
from Kazakhstan

The program is pretty useful. We can connect to senior students and they can share information which is very helpful for us. They have gone through the same situation like us and made some mistakes they can tell us about. I wasn't expecting a massive Kick-off Event like that and it was really nice and impressive. I hope that there'll be even more networking events to get to know some people from other programs. And surely I can imagine to become a Senior Buddy in future.



Mokhina Dustmurodova,
Management and
Technology Student
from Uzbekistan

Our Buddies are here to help us, they are quite supportive. We're two buddies and three freshers in my group. We got to know each other quite well and they ask us tons of questions. That's a great start into socialization, I even got to know some students from the master program. We don't feel as foreigners that don't belong here and we can gradually adopt. We have everything we need at the moment. I guess next year I will become a Buddy myself. I would like to help first grade students – no matter of their nationality, gender, general background or socio-economic status.



Andis Tahiraj,
Management and
Technology Student
from Albania

I'm super excited about the program – I never saw anything like this. It's such a great idea overall and the team and the people who invented this are really brilliant. I get to know new people and it's a good option to socialize. I hope to make as many friends as possible and to create relationships that will last over the years. Hundred percent I'll become a Buddy myself in future.

ADVANCING THE CAMPUS BY HELPING OTHERS

XHONATAN MEHMETI HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE BUDDY PROGRAM SINCE HIS TIME AS A FRESHMAN – NOW HE BECAME STUDENT ASSISTANT.



In his hometown of Vlora, he lived just 15 minutes from the sea. "Ever since I was a child, my parents always took me to the beach. We spent most of the summer just going for a walk," says Xhonatan Mehmeti, remembering his childhood in Albania. When he has completed his degree in Management and Technology at the TUM Campus Heilbronn, the now 22-year-old would like to work by the sea again – perhaps remotely for a technology company.

But even if he has to do without the sea in Heilbronn for the time being, Xhonatan feels very much at home on campus. The Buddy Program, which he joined as a freshman two years ago, plays a very important role for him. "I didn't hesitate to sign up for it because I thought it would help me. I wanted to meet new people, make new friends. And of course, the Buddy Program is designed to help freshmen with anything they need," he recalls.

Azra from Indonesia became his Senior Buddy back then. She helped him to settle in quickly on campus and in the city. "It was a nice experience as a freshman because I also got to meet some other new students from my class and from other majors," Xhonatan reports. "I tried to stay active throughout my first year and I also managed to help with some activities."

MANY VALUABLE THINGS LEARNED

By the end of his first year, Xhonatan was certain that he would become a Senior Buddy. Together with his friend Victoria, he was assigned six first-year students. "In my second year, I was a bit more excited because I now had the task of helping the others," says Xhonatan. "But I just felt that I now had some experience that I could use to help others. And I felt happy to be part of the Buddy Program again, but now in a different role as a Senior Buddy." The Freshers came from South America, India, North Africa and Eastern Europe, so the cultural diversity was huge: "Whenever we got together and met, we had really nice conversations, exchanged ideas about our cultures and, of course, we helped the newcomers with anything they needed."

At the same time, Xhonatan was also involved as a Code of Conduct Ambassador. As such, his main task was to maintain peaceful coexistence between students on campus. To this end, he was coached by professional trainer Ursula Haupt. "We tried to bring the campus together in some way. And by campus I mean the students, of course, but also the faculties," he explains. Xhonatan wouldn't want to miss the experience he gained: "It helped me to connect with the campus even more because I could now see things from a different perspective. And Ursula Haupt taught us so many things that we could later use in campus life and that helped us with problems."

"If anyone needs anything, they can always come and ask me."

Xhonatan Mehmeti
Student Assistant



Now, in his third year of study, Xhonatan has become a Student Assistant for the program. He organizes events, assigns Freshers and Buddies to each other and tries to stay in touch and communicate with everyone involved. For example, he has set up a messenger group where students can find out about upcoming events and ask any questions that are on their minds. "So I would say that for all first-year students, I'm like their Buddy," says Xhonatan, summarizing his role. "If anyone needs anything, they can always come and ask me. I'm always ready to help." Each week he spends around ten hours of his time on the Buddy Program, sometimes even more. But that doesn't bother him: "Even if I have to work more than I should, I don't see that as a problem. I don't feel like it's an overload because I like doing it. I don't let it stop me from being productive and helping out."

Xhonatan also thinks a lot about what can be improved about the program. A tool developed by Nikita, his predecessor as Student Assistant, helps to better match Freshers and Buddies. Xhonatan also supervises the Code of Conduct Ambassadors and tries to involve them even more actively in campus life.

JUST TRY IT

He is looking forward to one event in particular: the fifth anniversary of the program this summer: "We're very excited about it and we think it's going to be great. The program is only five years old, which is actually not much. But at the same time, it's almost as old as the campus itself. And that's why it's a big deal."

Xhonatan strongly encourages anyone thinking about becoming part of the Buddy Program: "I think everyone should join the Buddy Program because it's a really good opportunity to connect with others and have a good time at the events we put on. I personally believe that anyone who joins the Buddy Program will never be disappointed or regret joining. So anyone who wants to apply or is considering it should not hesitate and just try it."

“THE PARTICIPANTS CAN BENEFIT IN MULTIPLE WAYS”

BARBARA TASCH, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE TUM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, EXPLAINS WHY THE BUDDY PROGRAM IS SO CLOSE TO HER HEART AND WHAT HER WISHES ARE FOR THE FUTURE.





The MGT attaches great importance to the Buddy Program. What is the most important thing students can take away from this program?

Barbara Tasch: The goal of the Buddy Program is to make our new students feel welcome and to foster a sense of belonging to TUM and the TUM School of Management. It helps them to integrate more easily into the school community. The participants of the Buddy program can benefit in multiple ways. They can learn from students who have been studying longer. They can establish a social network that will support them in making friends and learning how things work at the university. Whether it is about study-related questions or understanding how to navigate the university campus and potentially a new city, these are all things that may come up when transitioning into a new study program. Having a Buddy who will offer support regarding these questions can make the transition into a new study program much easier. But it is not only the new students benefiting from the program. In addition, the students who volunteer as Buddies can learn a lot from their participation in the Buddy Program while also having a fun experience by attending socializing events and getting to know their classmates. Hopefully they develop a sense of contribution by supporting the new students and contributing to their start at the study program.

What makes the Buddy Program so special?

Barbara Tasch: The Buddy Program promotes the integration of all our students into the TUM and TUM School of Management community. It is an excellent chance for new students to connect with other students. Students cannot only connect with the Buddy they have been allocated but are also grouped into Buddy Families to get to know even

more of their fellow students and benefit from a broader network. A variety of events is organized within the Buddy Program to help the new students get to know their campus but also the city they are studying in.

Why was it important to you to establish a Buddy Program in Heilbronn?

Barbara Tasch: The Buddy Program poses high value to the TUM School of Management students in Munich, and we wanted to ensure that such a best practice model could also be implemented in Heilbronn. The Buddy Program contributes to a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment we want to establish at the TUM Campus Heilbronn.

How do you envisage the further development of the program?

Barbara Tasch: The goal is to get as many students as possible to participate in this program. One of the most important success factors for a successful study program can be a supportive peer group. The Buddy Program is the ideal place to build this early on. For anybody who is starting their studies as a new student, I can only encourage you to sign up. You can only benefit from the experience. We also want to continually improve the program to evolve it.

What do you wish the students and the program organizers in Heilbronn for their anniversary?

Barbara Tasch: I wish the students and organizers continued success and enjoyment with the program. To keep organizing the program with the same enthusiasm and motivation. I am curious how the program can grow even further in the next five years. Here's to many more years of collaboration, growth, and positive impact.

A SUBSTANTIAL ENRICHMENT FOR OUR STUDENTS

DR. ANTON FRANK, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE TUM SCHOOL OF COMPUTATION, INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY, SPEAKS ABOUT THE HIGH VALUE OF THE BUDDY PROGRAM FOR HIS SCHOOL AND ITS IMMEASURABLE VALUE FOR THE STUDENTS.



What relevance does the Buddy Program have for your students?

We receive a lot of positive feedback from our students about the Buddy Program: first-year students, who are new to their studies report that the Buddy Program helps them to make friends, establish contacts and find their way around their new life situation and studies. This is certainly the reason why around 75% of our freshers decide to participate in the program every year. These positive experiences of support and community mean that students who took part in the program as first-year students want to be Buddies themselves as they progress through their studies. Fifty percent of our first cohort students were Buddies for new students in the winter semester 22/23. The spirit of the Buddy Program, which thrives on friendship, integration and community, is thus passed on from student to student. The Buddy Program is, therefore, highly valued by our School at the Heilbronn campus. We very much encourage our prospective and current students to take part in the program.



Would you say that the program is particularly important for your students at Campus Heilbronn?

The program is very important for our B.Sc. Information Engineering students, as over 90% of our students come from non-EU countries. With the help of the Buddy Program, our students connect with the student community and learn to find their way through their studies and new student life. As our students have a wide range of interests, the Buddy Program offers a platform for exchange and inspiration that goes beyond the subject-specific and organizational boundaries of the schools. Our students obtain substantial enrichment from this.

What skills do students learn through the program that will benefit them in their professional lives?

Our students contribute to the Buddy Program with all their skills and expertise. For example, one of our students enjoys cooking the traditional dishes of his country. He organized an event in which participants of the Buddy Program presented many different traditional dishes from their countries and tasted them together. There are many such examples of students gaining a lot of confidence in the program. This experience of self-efficacy and the intercultural skills they gain in the program are extremely valuable. In addition, students develop an assertive attitude towards situations and fellow students that can help them significantly later on. They cultivate a willingness to help, learn to take the perspective of others, question prejudices, engage in direct exchange, and proactively contribute with all their skills and competencies. This attitude stays with them for the rest of their lives. Once a Buddy, always a Buddy! Particularly motivated students can participate in additional mediation workshops on or act as ambassadors for our Code of Conduct. This allows them to gain further qualifications within the program.

How do you envisage the further development of the program?

We are pleased that our students will continue to have the opportunity to participate in this well-designed program in the future. With the start of our consecutive Master's program, our Master's students will be able to participate in the program from the winter semester 2024/25. In the future, we hope that the positive dynamic and the good vibes of the Buddy Program will be carried forward so that all students on campus benefit, even if they do not participate in the program directly. As the TUM continues to grow at the Bildungscampus in Heilbronn, we hope to have a large Buddy Community that will lead to long-lasting friendships beyond studies.

What do you wish the students and the program organizers in Heilbronn for their anniversary?

We are delighted with the Buddy Program team, especially with Adelheid Schäfer-Terino, who established the Buddy Program at the Heilbronn campus and has been in charge of it ever since. What a great success! Your work significantly contributes to the development of the campus and in many cases forms the foundation on which our students at TUM Campus Heilbronn build their future. We, as CIT, would like to thank you for all your passion and enthusiasm when it comes to planning, coordination and implementation of the program. The Buddy Program has become a matter of heart for all of us! Happy Birthday!

INSPIRING EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

A LOOK AT THE POINTS OF CONTACT WITH THE BUDDY PROGRAM IN MUNICH AND HOW BOTH SIDES BENEFIT.



The Buddy Program launched at TUM Campus Heilbronn in 2019 was based entirely on the Munich model. Despite the fact that the Heilbronn Buddy Program has long since “taken flight”, there remains close contact and fruitful collaboration with Munich. Heilbronn program coordinator Adelheid Schäfer-Terino and her Munich colleagues, Katja Leßke and Zuzana Zechovská, continue to meet weekly for virtual meetings to this day and visit each other several times a year.

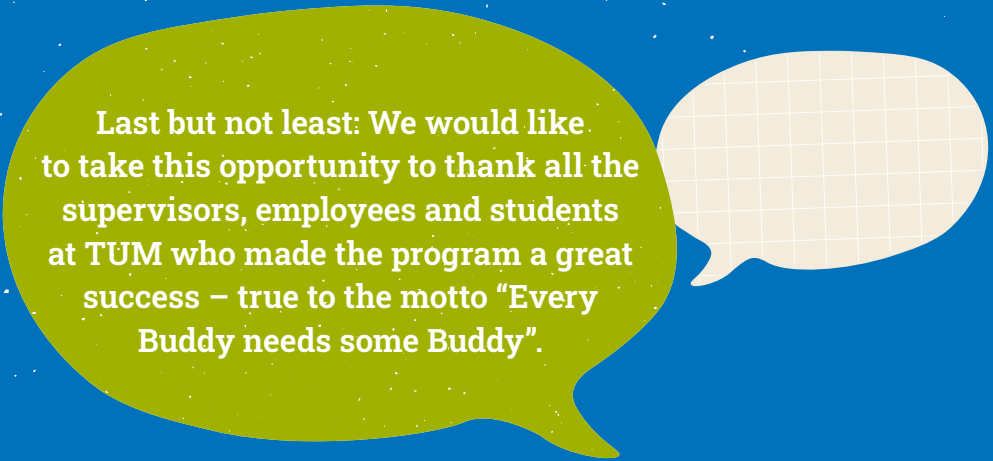
“We come up with a lot of new ideas when we see each other in person,” says Katja, Program Coordinator for the Master’s programs in Munich, who is responsible for all freshers in the Munich Buddy Program of TUM School of Management (MGT). She cites as an example the workshop on the Code of Conduct (page 10) and the automatic matching tool (page 7), neither of which are yet available in Munich. “I find it incredibly great what has been set up here,” says Katja talking about the Heilbronn program. What are her wishes for the anniversary? “That the program continues like this - while at the same time developing further where it’s useful and necessary.”

“We inspire one another by exchanging ideas and maintaining a warm and friendly relationship,” says Zuzana, Program Coordinator at the International Office, who is responsible for all incoming exchange students at MGT. “Our common goal of bringing students together and in doing so making a small contribution to peace in the world unites and motivates us.”

BUDDIES TURN INTO MANAGERS

The exchange is not restricted to employees: students also visit each other every year and learn about the other campus. With this in mind, a business simulation was initiated in 2019. This involves the Heilbronn Buddies temporarily forming a kind of company so that they can organize the visit of their fellow students from Munich, scheduled for the for January. Some Buddies turn into managers responsible for a specific area, such as catering. The program is also compiled entirely by the managers: Whether it’s campus and city tours or games for getting to know each other - there are no limits to creativity. The CEO oversees the managers and is responsible for the personnel with a budget of 1,000 euros. There are also numerous volunteers who become company employees for a day and help with catering and the subsequent clean-up.

There’s one thing that program coordinator Adelheid Schäfer-Terino attaches great importance to: “Our students should have talked to every guest personally at least once. The guests have to feel that they are welcome and cared for.”



Last but not least: We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the supervisors, employees and students at TUM who made the program a great success – true to the motto “Every Buddy needs some Buddy”.

Imprint: This brochure is a publication of TUM Campus Heilbronn of the Technical University of Munich

Publisher: TUM Campus Heilbronn, Bildungscampus 9, 74076 Heilbronn

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Conception: Adelheid Schäfer-Terino, Kerstin Arnold-Kapp, Frank Lutz

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Production: ReklameKlub Kerstin Gabriel, Steinstr. 44, 81667 München, E-Mail: gabriel@reklameklub.de

Design: Kerstin Gabriel

Printing: www.onlineprinters.de

Circulation: 500 copies

Image sources: Illustrations Kerstin Gabriel: cover, p. 2, 8, 9, 12, 13, 23

Photos: cover: Mary_markevich/Adobe Stock; p. 4, 5, 18, 20: Terzo Algeri/

Fotoatelier M; p. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22: TUM Campus Heilbronn; p. 19, 21: Andreas Heddergott/TUM

Status: June 2024

