

## I'm addicted to talking into a microphone: Dr. Wojtyła Konrad

-First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude for the kind care and hospitality I received from the University of Szczecin and this amazing department. I'm in awe of the tremendous amount of labor that went into building this kind of radio studio, as many large-channel radio organizations might not have access to such sophisticated technology and expansive programming. Naturally, building a studio of this caliber required a lot of work; please tell me what motivated you to do it

-I am grateful to the entire team for the work done and wonderful words. I am glad that your visit was inspiring and that you enjoyed your stay in Szczecin. You brought only good memories and plans for the future. I hope that this will be an impulse to establish cooperation between the University of Szczecin and Northern University. The creation of NiUS Radio, similar to university television, was directly related to the creation of the Center for Media Education and Interactivity at the University of Szczecin. Before becoming a director, I was the representative of the Rector's Magnificence for the creation and management of this unit. Answering the question of what the motivations were, we must first say a few words about the Center itself. My task was to prepare a concept for the functioning of such a unit and to define goals tasks and development prospects. The concept was very ambitious. One of the main points was to build modern and professional university media, starting with the radio station of the University of Szczecin. I put not only all my journalistic experience and management skills into launching it, but above all, my heart. I am passionate about radio and I think I know a little about journalism. Then you don't count the hours or feel tired. Thanks to the support of the Rector and the support of the members of the entire Rector's College and my closest colleagues, I was able to set an incredible pace. Within a few months, we managed to create everything almost from scratch. I came up with the name NiUS Radio, we prepared a logo and a coherent graphic concept, we built an internet portal, and we started working on the schedule. We modernized the radio studio and invested in high-class equipment: computers, microphones, recorders, a console, cameras, etc. Money is important, but the most difficult thing is always building a team and creating an editorial office - including a student editorial office. We officially launched on December 6, 2021. Today you

can listen to us all over the world using the website, but also applications for mobile devices with Android and iOS systems. Based on the infrastructure, we have also created a radio workshop where teaching classes are conducted - practical workshops and internships are held. Journalism adepts - apart from professionals - will be offered individualized workstations: multimedia boards, laptops, and editing programs. The next step was to create a television directed by editor Beata Mikolajewska-Wieczorek.

**-Upon entering, I can immediately feel that a professional team works here. How do you choose your team members and who can join you? Is the studio available to all students?**

- It's a truism, but it's people who make radio. The most important thing is the team. Those I invited to cooperate believed in my idea and got involved in this project. In the beginning, I also asked for support from the best specialists in Poland: sound engineers, IT specialists, and technicians. We all had one goal: to be the best academic radio station in Poland, but we also wanted to simply be a good radio that has an interesting offer for the inhabitants of Szczecin, the region, and the country. We have a long road ahead of us and a lot of work. We not only talk about what is happening at the University of Szczecin, present the scientific achievements of our University's employees, but we also go beyond the framework of university science. Therefore, our studio hosts interesting artists, and people who create everything that is happening in Szczecin and the country. We cooperate very closely with the socio-economic environment. We attend conferences, as well as music festivals, exhibitions, and theater performances. We have joint projects with journalism faculties of other universities, including foreign ones, but we also work closely with Szczecin theaters and the police. All the tasks we carry out have a common denominator: broadly understood media education and opportunities for our students: new contacts, and new competencies. Development and progress. The people who work at NiUS Radio are professionals and enthusiasts at the same time. They have been connected for years with the media: public and commercial. They can work not only in front of a microphone. They write great, but they also feel good in the world of multimedia. You just have to love this job. I choose people for the team who do not rest on their laurels, and who still want to develop and be better. We learn from each other and share our experiences. It is a responsible job, but also demanding and stressful. We operate under time pressure. It can be stressful at times. Fortunately, the atmosphere in the team is good. From time to time, we announce job competitions to which people associated with the media market in the region apply. We also give opportunities to our students. Someone who is doing an

internship with us may join us in the future. Several people are working at the Center who we taught this profession almost from scratch.

**-I want to imagine your audience how many students study at Szczecin University, and do you have any statistics: how many students listen to you?**

- We are the youngest academic radio in Poland, and at the same time already compared to those who have been operating on the market for many, many years. We have caught up with the best in a very short time, but we are still developing dynamically. We have a lot of humility in us. Our mission is primarily to educate students and promote the University of Szczecin, striving for high audience numbers and participation in the media market is in the background. Of course, I am very happy that more and more people are listening to us - and not only those associated with our University. In less than 2.5 years, we have produced over 1,000 podcasts and our website has been visited by 200,000 people. There are nearly 350 videos on our YouTube channel, as we also produce programs in audio-video format. We have become a recognizable brand not only on the academic forum but also in Szczecin and beyond. Students and employees of the University are part of our audience. There are certainly several thousand people interested in our program. University of Szczecin

in recruitment 2024/2025 offers education in over 80 fields of study as part of first-cycle (72 fields) and second-cycle (56 fields) studies as well as uniform master's degrees

(5 fields of study), as well as postgraduate studies. People interested in studying can apply for 91 full-time studies and 27 part-time studies. Last year, nearly 6,500 people applied for admission to universities. Suffice it to say that classes in broadly understood media education are conducted in almost all fields of study.

**-What is the direction of your programs and whether the students' interests are taken into account when choosing the programs? Are there cases when students come to the studio and offer to prepare this or that program?**

- NiUS Radio's schedule includes programs on science, culture, and sports, as well as journalistic forms, interviews and discussions with experts, and a popular science section. We're transmitting 6 hours of live programming. We present news in Polish English and Ukrainian. An integral element is the website [www.niusradio.pl](http://www.niusradio.pl), which is very popular. In addition to podcasts, we have published several thousand pieces of information, over 10 thousand photos, and hundreds of materials in audiovisual format. NiUS Radio for promotion and brand building also uses YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, where dedicated materials also appear. Students who come to us can start their adventure with journalism.

They have different ideas and can implement them under the supervision of professionals. Sometimes they want to start working on the radio, but they don't know where to start. Then we talk, suggest solutions, and propose certain topics. Not everyone has to perform in front of a microphone. On the radio website, we also present written interviews, reviews, stories, and text reports. If someone can take photos, they have a chance to present them. If someone is passionate about graphics or film, they can also try their hand at us. We live in an era of media convergence. Radio today is completely different than it was two decades ago. Everyone can pursue it. I am happy when young people who have completed an internship or internship want to stay with us longer. If you want to test yourself and then work in this profession, this place is for you.

**-Do you have cooperation with other radio companies?**

-Of course, we are constantly establishing new contacts and implementing interesting projects not only with radio stations. Over the last few months, we have signed letters of intent on cooperation with the Faculty of Journalism of the National University of Lviv. Ivan Franko, the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, and with Radio "Niepodległości", with the help of Dr. Mirosława Rudyk from Ukraine, who is in our team. We participate online in conferences and seminars organized by universities in Ukraine. In May 2024, we organized an international seminar on citizen journalism and democratic processes, to which we will invite journalists from Poland, Germany, and Ukraine. We hosted people associated with the BBC, Reuters, Deutsche Welle, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Polish Radio, and Polityka. We were recently visited by representatives of the University of Mombasa in Kenya, who, like you, would like to come to us for internships and make radio together.

We may sign a cooperation agreement with a university from Germany. Materials produced by NiUS Radio and UNIWIZJA are also broadcast on state television and radio. I want to develop our cooperation with other entities in the media sphere so that we can derive mutual benefits.

**-Can we say that through this studio you are creating your school of radio journalists? If so, what qualities of a journalist are the most important for you and first of all what do you teach your students?**

- We emphasize theory, not practice. First of all, we teach students in the fields of Journalism and Social Communication and Media Communication and Management. People employed at the Center also lecture in other fields. It would be wonderful if our commitment and work effects could be defined as a "school of radio journalists" in the future. As I already said, we have been officially operating for less than 3 years. We still have a very long road ahead of us. Nevertheless, I am proud that we managed to educate several people who, after graduating, found

work not only in the media of the University of Szczecin. During classes, I try to make people interested in the profession of a journalist and show that it can bring a lot of satisfaction and that thanks to it we constantly develop and meet interesting

people from whom we can learn. It's a profession, but also a mission. I always say that those who want to serve society in the future and contribute to respect for the truth

should be guided by journalistic ethics. From the canon of appropriate behavior, I emphasize the most important: the journalist's objectivity and impartiality, defense of democratic values, avoiding bias, reliable verification of information and quoting interlocutors, honest acquisition of materials; respect for privacy and human dignity, responsibility for one's words and concern for the well-being of recipients, and finally, a prohibition of corruption-generating activities. In regards to practical skills, I share all my experience, which is crucial in this profession. I wish they would be better than me one day. I remind them that humility is also necessary in all this. I repeat: you are only as good as your last program.

**-I would like to ask you to tell me about your professional activities, what path did you take before reaching this radio station?**

- My path was long and bumpy, but also very satisfying. I started work in the media very early, when he was just over 18 years old. I fell in love with the radio without knowing that it would be a love for life. No holidays, vacations, weekends or holidays.

For 5 years of my studies, I was associated with Radio Zachód in Zielona Góra, and after obtaining my master's degree with Radio Szczecin, I went through all levels, from reporter, publisher, radio host, publicist, and finally boss. During my studies, I also wrote for local work and cooperated with national media - both in terms of newspapers and other large radio stations. I appeared on television from time to time, although working on the silver screen was never my goal. In the meantime, I wrote 10 books, received several significant awards, and defended my doctorate. I'm also passionate about science. After over 20 years of journalistic work, I needed some change and adrenaline. I wanted to change something in my life without completely breaking up with my profession. I started looking for new development opportunities

and something that will still give me satisfaction. Because I like challenges, I decided to resign from my job at Radio Szczecin and commit my future to the University of Szczecin. In April 2021, I became the Rector's Plenipotentiary

prof. Waldemar Tarczyński for the creation and management of the Center for Media Education and Interactivity. I also invented NiUS Radio and, naturally, I became its director. This is not just conceptual or team management work. You

can often hear me on the air or see my name as the author of the information. I try to support the team, but the truth is that I still like this job. I'm addicted to talking into a microphone.

**-In what format do you imagine the cooperation of your radio studio with other universities, particularly with the Northern University?**

- Of course, we would have to develop a concept and formula together. I think that what connects us and opens the way to formalized cooperation in student education

in journalism fields and ensuring that they start their careers being perfectly prepared for it. By cooperating with universities from abroad, we try to enable students, PhD students, research workers, and media workers to apply for internships and journalistic internships with us, under the terms of applicable law and the conditions specified in written arrangements between the parties. Together, we organize media and scientific events (seminars, workshops, conferences, etc.) in stationary or hybrid form, and we promote the creative achievements of students, academic teachers, and journalists by providing access to our online platforms, materials, and media content to which we own the rights. We inform you about interesting projects taking place with our partners. We implement joint media projects and initiatives in line with modern standards and technology communication. For example, our podcasts are or can be, broadcast by the Lviv University radio, and we, in turn, promote the materials of FRANKO TV. There are many possibilities and I trust that we will develop our model so that we will formalize cooperation with Northern University soon.

**-Artificial intelligence has begun to replace many professions. Today, using artificial intelligence, they have also started writing news and even developing scripts and articles. What will you do if one-day artificial intelligence begins to process complete media content instead of us journalists?**

- Artificial intelligence can already be very useful when it comes to preparing jingles, voiceover work, or musical settings of individual broadcasts. Exploited wisely, it can be a very useful tool that makes our work easier. There is, of course, the other side of the coin, a much darker one. Processing media content, creating fake news, social bots, disinformation, etc. - this is already happening before our eyes, and many algorithms generating false information are being created using AI. I hope that artificial intelligence will not replace us completely.

After all, radio is primarily about personality and people, not holograms. Even the most perfect machine cannot replace it. Well, and if I'm wrong, I would like this revolution not to happen too quickly. Then it will no longer be my concern.

**-Dear Professor, thank you very much for the interesting conversation. Surely, no artificial intelligence can replace the warm human relations and the positive emotions I felt while communicating with you and your staff. I am sure that the culture of our joint work these days will be preserved during the future cooperation of our universities.**