

UNICA Seminar on Alumni Relations

Hosted by Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE), 11-12 November 2025

“Partners for Life: Unlocking the Strategic Value of Alumni for Universities”

Biographies of Speakers & Chairs

Ioan-Radu PETRARIU | Dean of the Faculty of International Business and Economics, ASE; Secretary-General of Alumni ASE



Speaking at Day 1 | Welcome & Introduction

Prof. Radu Petrariu is the Dean of the Faculty of International Business and Economics at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE). Petrariu took on this role in April 2024, but has been contributing to ASE for over 17 years in various academic and leadership roles. His previous positions include Advisor to the Rector of ASE (2012–2024) and Board Member of the university's governance bodies.

In addition to his current role, he serves as Secretary General of Alumni ASE, strengthening the connection between the university and its alumni community. With a strong background in academic administration and higher education management, he has also been involved in research at the European Institute for Risk, Security and Communication Management. His career reflects a long-standing commitment to advancing education, international cooperation, and institutional development in Romania's leading economic university.

Luciano SASO | Secretary-General of UNICA



Speaking at Day 1 | Introductory Talk

Moderating at Day 2 | Session 3

Prof. Luciano Saso (Faculty of Pharmacy and Medicine, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy) coordinated several research projects in the field of pharmacology and has been referee for many national and international funding agencies and international scientific journals in the last 30 years.

Prof. Saso has extensive experience in international relations and has been Deputy Rector at Sapienza University of Rome for 8 years (2014-2022). In the last 25 years, he participated in several projects and has been speaker and chair at many international conferences.

Prof. Saso has been Member of the Steering Committee of UNICA for four years (2011-2015) and President for eight years (2015-2023) He took over the role of Secretary General of the UNICA Network in June 2023.

Rachel BRAY | Head, CERN Alumni Relations, CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research



[Moderating at Day 1 | Session 1](#)

[Speaking at Day 1 | Session 2](#)

Rachel Bray is head of the unique and vibrant CERN Alumni Programme, for which she was community manager from 2017 to 2020 before taking over management of the programme in 2021. Prior to this she worked for 8 years in CERN's Engineering Department, in the domain of Product Lifecycle Management and 9 years within the IT section of CERN Supplies Procurement and Logistics Department.

In addition to her professional duties, Rachel is president of the Association of Sports Committees of European Research Institutes (ASCERI), founder and chair of the CERN Fitness Club, and a certified Zumba instructor.

She is a graduate of the University of Rennes II (1996) and the International University of Geneva (2020) and is currently pursuing doctoral research in business administration (DBA) at the University of Plymouth.

[Abstract](#)

Accelerating Engagement: Leveraging Digital Platforms for the CERN Alumni Community

In building a global alumni network for a scientific community as unique as CERN's, we needed more than social media noise—we needed meaningful, sustained connection. Rather than rely on fragmented platforms, we implemented a dedicated community management platform to enable secure member onboarding, professional networking, thematic groups, event management, mentoring and data-driven engagement.

This presentation shares how we selected the platform, the governance and strategy behind its deployment, and how we foster active participation through targeted

initiatives, including the CAN-doers engagement scheme, which empowers alumni to co-create value through purposeful contributions.

Costin CIORA | Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Building Global Alumni Networks to Power Internationalization and Institutional Reputation



Speaking at Day 1 | Session 1

Prof. Costin Ciora is a PhD Assistant Professor at the Department of Financial Analysis and Valuation from The Bucharest University of Economic Studies. He has more than 12 years' experience in business consulting and organizational training and he is a Prosci Change Management Practitioner and Certified Professional TriMetrix Analyst.

He was a guest researcher and lecturer at Vienna University of Economics and Business, University of Alicante Spain and University Dauphine in Paris. He is the author of more than 30 research papers as well as 3 books including "Performance analysis through value creation".

Nena GRCEVA | Director Alumni Affairs, Hertie School, The University of Governance in Berlin



Speaking at Day 1 | Session 1

Nena Grceva brings 20 years of international experience in higher education. Currently she serves as Director of Alumni Affairs at the Hertie School, the University of Governance in Berlin, where she leads a global alumni network spanning 120 countries. She believes that alumni are more than graduates — they are lifelong partners, mentors, and advocates who can help shape the future of institutions and society.

Previously, Nena led alumni relations at the Central European University (CEU) in Vienna and Budapest, creating programs such as the award-winning Thesis Buddy Project (CASE Circle of Excellence Award 2022, Volunteer Engagement) and supporting advocacy initiatives like #IStandWithCEU. Prior to CEU, Nena managed international higher education programs and initiatives at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) in London, the Institute of International Education (IIE), and the Open Society Foundation (OSF) in Budapest.

A recognized thought leader in the field of alumni relations and active CASE volunteer, Nena has served as a speaker, editorial board member, conference co-chair, and task force contributor. A native of North Macedonia, she has lived and worked internationally for more than two decades, speaks multiple languages, and considers herself a citizen of the world.

Abstract

From Connection to Impact: The Power of Global Alumni Communities

How global alumni communities shape institutional growth, reputation, and resilience

Drawing on her experience leading alumni relations at the Hertie School in Berlin, and previously at the Central European University (CEU), Nena reflects on how global alumni networks can shape the future of higher education. She explores their strategic importance for institutional growth, reputation, and long-term sustainability — and highlights the essential role of alumni as institutional partners, contributing ideas, expertise, and advocacy to strengthen their universities.

Through case studies from her work, including initiatives in mentoring, student recruitment, and community-driven advocacy campaign, Nena illustrates how shared values, trust, and purpose can transform a network into a truly global community.

This talk invites participants to view alumni relations not as an auxiliary function, but as a cornerstone of partnership, credibility, and enduring institutional and societal impact.

Anamaria HOLOTA | Alumni Relations & Partnerships Specialist, Alumni ASE, Bucharest University of Economics Studies, ASE

Moderating at Day 1 | Session 2

Coming soon

Eva SENRA | Vice President for Students, Entrepreneurship and Employability, University of Alcalá



Speaking at Day 1 | Session 2

Dr. Eva Senra Díaz holds a degree in Mathematics (1990) from the Complutense University of Madrid and a PhD in Economics (1998) from the Carlos III University of Madrid. She is a Professor of Quantitative Methods for Economics and Business in the Department of Economics.

She is the endorser of the research line on innovation, entrepreneurship, accountability, and evaluation of public and business policies and a member of the Academic Committee and the Quality Committee of the Doctoral Program in Economics and Business Management at the University of Alcalá. She is also a member of the Academic Committee, Quality Coordinator, and professor of the Master's Degree in Applied Economic Analysis. She

also served as Director of the Publications Service from June 2018 to September 2019. As a researcher, she has two recognized research branches and is involved in economic forecasting, statistics, and applied economics, both in the academic and professional fields. She has published in international journals in the field and supervised four doctoral theses.

Professionally, she was responsible for forecasting and Coordinator of the Inflation and Macroeconomic Analysis Bulletin at the Forecasting Laboratory of the Flores de Lemus Institute at Carlos III University for 10 years. From 2006 to 2011, she was a member of the advisory board responsible for economic analysis at the Economic Office of the President of the Government, eventually becoming Deputy Director General.

She currently collaborates with the COTEC Foundation for Innovation, forming part of the "COTEC 100" network, as an expert in statistics and economic forecasting. She also participates in the EURITO project, funded by the H2020 program.

Luis RODRIGUEZ | Programme Representatives Network Manager from the Students & Alumni Relations Unit, Erasmus Mundus Students & Alumni Association (EMA)



Speaking at Day 1 | Session 2

Luis Rodríguez Hernández is the PR Network Manager at the Erasmus Mundus Association, where he leads a global network of over 160 Programme Representatives across the Erasmus Mundus master's programmes. With a background in engineering and digital transformation, he focuses on developing sustainable alumni engagement strategies, digital knowledge systems, and cross-institutional collaboration. His work bridges technology, education, and community building to strengthen the long-term impact of

international higher education in Europe and beyond.

Abstract

The Erasmus Mundus Association (EMA) brings together alumni and students from over 250 joint master's programmes across Europe, representing one of the most diverse and dynamic networks in higher education. In this session, Luis Rodríguez Hernández, PR Network Manager, will share EMA's model for building long-term alumni engagement through decentralised leadership, digital collaboration tools, and continuous capacity-building. Drawing from his experience in digital transformation and community management, he will explore how technology and structured communication frameworks can empower alumni to become active contributors to research, innovation, and global outreach. The presentation aims to demonstrate how scalable, data-informed strategies can transform alumni relations from passive membership into a living ecosystem that strengthens institutional visibility, fosters international cooperation, and creates shared value for universities and graduates alike.

Mostafa Moonir SHAWRAV | Executive Director, Marie-Curie Alumni Association (MCAA)



Speaking at Day 1 | Session 2

Mostafa is a research innovation and policy expert with 15 years of experience in academia, industry and nonprofit sectors in Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands. His diverse career path across international borders, scientific disciplines, and sectors exemplifies European Triple i-mobility. As Executive Director of the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA), he leads a 18+ person team, driving policy & advocacy, enhancing researcher career development, and

fostering a global community of MSCA researchers.

Former co-chair of the EU Science Diplomacy Alliance and MCAA chair, he has built 70+ cross-sector collaborations. He also co-chairs a working group on the COST CCA on career development for young researchers and a management committee member and training coordinator for the newly approved COST Action in Science Diplomacy. He is currently the main representative for the ERA Actions on Research Assessment and Knowledge Valorisation and secondary representative for Research Career from the Stakeholder Group 4 of the ERA Forum, highest expert level body of the European Commission.

Ionuț SIMION | PwC Romania, Partner, From Classroom to Board-room: How Alumni Bridge Academia and Industry for Sustainable | Adviser to the Vice-rector of Studies, University of Latvia



Speaking at Day 1 | Session 2

Ionuț Simion is Partner of PwC Romania. Between 2015 and 2021, Ionut was the Country Managing Partner of PwC Romania.

Currently, he is the vice-president of the Romanian Chamber of Tax Consultants. Being one of the best known tax advisors in Romania, in these roles, he is involved in discussions and negotiation with Romanian authorities on different legislative initiatives having an impact on the Romanian business environment.

In 2020 Ionuț supervised the publication of a complex AmCham report on public policy recommendations - Priorities for Romania – which comprises specific actions to encourage the development of several key sectors in Romania.

Ionut is also a member of the board of the Junior Achievement Romania, a non profit organization for economic and entrepreneurship education. He is a graduate of the Academy of Economics in Bucharest, and holds a PhD in Economics from the same Academy.

Maja DIZDAREVIĆ, Head of University Office for Students and Alumni, University of Ljubljana & Professor at the Institute of Higher Education, East China Normal University

Speaking at Day 2 | Session 3

Coming soon

Athina Frangou SELIPA | Development and Alumni Relations Officer, University of Cyprus



Speaking at Day 2 | Session 3

Athina Frangou SELIPA is a University Officer at the University of Cyprus and a member of the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO), part of the Promotion and Development Sector of the Rectorate. Since 2017, her work has been aligned with the mission and vision of both the DARO and the Rectorate, supporting the University's strategic objectives.

She previously served as Head of the Rector's Office (2007–2015) and as University Business Development Officer (2015–2017), providing strategic and administrative support to the Rectorate.

An alumna of the University of Cyprus, she holds undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from the Departments of English Studies and Business and Public Administration. Before joining the University's administration, she worked as an English and French teacher and as a translator for private companies.

Aurore SPEDICATO, Alumni Loyalty Program Project Manager, Paris Sciences & Letters (PSL)



Speaking at Day 2 | Session 3

Aurore Spedicato is a French professional living and working in Paris. She joined PSL University in June 2025, where she leads projects focused on alumni engagement and collaboration across the university's schools, alumni associations, Continuing Education department, and the PSL Foundation.

Her work includes designing and managing complex projects, coordinating multidisciplinary working groups, and contributing to ANR reporting. She is also involved in developing new services such as a PSL-wide mentoring program, a shared internship platform, and sustainable models for alumni engagement.

She has explored several digital tools and platforms to strengthen alumni communication and networking, and is currently imagining new initiatives, including diverse mentoring programs.

An engaged alumna of Paris Dauphine University since 2012, she remains active within its well-structured network of over 110,000 members.

Abstract

This contribution explores the evolving landscape of alumni engagement across PSL University. Drawing on a series of interviews with alumni associations — including AMOSAE, A-Ulm, Chimie Paris Alumni, Dauphine PSL Alumni, ADEMEC-Chartres, Rue du Conservatoire, Alumni EPHE, ESPCI Alumni, Mines Paris Alumni, ADAP, CPESMD Alumni, and ADIC — the presentation highlights common challenges, emerging needs, and opportunities for collaboration among PSL's diverse alumni communities.

It also examines ongoing initiatives aimed at fostering dialogue and sharing best practices between associations, as well as reflections on digital tools for communication and networking. Finally, it introduces ideas for future developments, such as mentoring programs and an Alumni Prize planned for 2026 to recognise outstanding alumni achievements.