Dear subscriber,

We wish to inform you about the most exciting events and opportunities for furthering your science-led activities and exchange ideas with peers and growing innovation network.
If you wish to recommend this newsletter to your colleagues and community, use this link.

Awards and Recognition

2026 Rectorate's Reception: The 2025 University of Cologne awards celebrating academic excellence and social impact were presented during the annual Rectorate's Reception. Prof. Dr. Ruschewitz of Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry was honoured with the inaugural "Transfer into Society" award for the "Raumschiff Erde" laboratory. The Rectorate's Reception featured insightful addresses from City of Cologne Mayor Derya Karadag and Federal Minister of Education Karin Prien, who delivered a keynote speech highlighting the university's vital role in research and public engagement. Information on all awardees can be found here.

University Startup Your Idea Contest (SYIC): Hosted by the Gateway ESC this years' finale spotlighted science-led innovations that translate academic research into high-impact ventures. In the "Product Level" category, FreshX Technology secured first place and €2,000 for their handheld device that assesses the freshness of meat and seafood in seconds, while LipoFluddy earned second place and €1,000 for a novel fluorescent dye that visualizes cellular lipid degradation in real-time. By bridging the gap between laboratory concepts and market-ready products, the event showcased how university-driven research serves as a critical engine for entrepreneurial excellence.

Contests, events and networking

6th Transplant Day: TRANSPLANT is a cross universities collaborative activity of the excellence cluster CEPLAS fostering knowledge transfer between academia, society, and industry in the plant sciences. The theme for the 6th TRANSPLANT DAY event on **April 15** was "Sowing Knowledge: Transforming Excellent Research into Future-Proof Education.". In addition to engaging presentations and an inspiring panel discussion, the event provided ample opportunity for networking and lively exchange.

Prototyping Lab: Gateway ESC start-ups and researchers across faculties can now access specialized prototyping resources at the University of Cologne's PC-Pools, featuring a **3D Printers** with Ultimaker S5 and a **Raspberry Pi Lab** equipped with over 50 units for IoT and sensorics development. The facilities also include a **VR/XR Lab** with high-end hardware like the HoloLens 2 and Varjo XR-1, perfect for creating immersive proof-of-concept demos or application development. Detailed information on official PC-Pools website.

Upcoming Events, Workshops and Competitions

KickStart at TH Köln: Apply by **May 24, 2026** for Gateway KickStart, the prototyping funding program designed to help you turn your innovative ideas into a viable business model. This program is now open to students from all Gateway universities in Cologne and offers financial support, expert coaching, and access to infrastructure like the MakerSpace at TH Köln. Submit your application, to take your startup concept to the next level.

AFQC 2026 Challenge: The DLR Quantum Computing Initiative **on May 27 and 28** at The Frame in Dusseldorf is an annual conference that brings together experts from the quantum computing ecosystem for a participative program featuring hands-on workshops and discussions on industrial relevance and business adoption. Participants can engage with startups, researchers, and policymakers to help define what it takes to get ahead with quantum technology. For the full agenda and to register for this event please visit the official website.

Fourth Sustainability Forum at the University of Cologne titled *Sharing a Planet Sustainability Transitions and Environmental Justice* will take place on Tuesday, **June 16** at the main building. This interdisciplinary event features scientific lectures on environmental humanities and economic geography a panel discussion on ecological responsibility and four interactive workshops ranging from resilient city research to sustainable business models. Students researchers and staff are invited to engage in this dialogical space and visit the accompanying poster gallery showcasing local sustainability initiatives.

TU Dresden summer school: join to transform patented inventions into viable business models within interdisciplinary, international teams at the fully funded program in Saxony open to advanced students and researchers in STEM or Business—apply by **May 20.**

HIGH-TECH.NRW Demo Day: **On June 3** at the TUV NORD campus in Essen witness ten pioneering deep tech startups from North Rhine-Westphalia present their solutions. Participants can look forward to startup pitches competing for 20000 Euro in prize money as well as an exhibition of innovative prototypes and networking opportunities with industry experts. This event highlights the strength of the regional ecosystem and offers insights into the technological developments of tomorrow. Register and find more information.

YES Worskhop June 16: online workshop **Prototype your Research** hosted by the Gateway ESC of the University of Cologne will help researchers explore the innovation potential of their scientific work. During this session detailed information on local support offers and accessible prototyping labs in the Cologne-Aachen region will be shared to help you realize your science led innovations. You can also join upcoming events like Strengthening Resilience on June 30 or Navigating Team Dynamics on July 3 to further develop your professional skillset. Learn more and register before **June 13** for these free programs through the events calendar .

Innovation2business.nrw Qualification Seminars: The network is offering a series of free qualification seminars through June 2026, including research security sessions and a trade secrets protection seminar on May 5. Researchers, students, and university staff are invited to participate in these sessions to strengthen their understanding of intellectual property and legal protections. You can view the full summer semester schedule and register for these upcoming events.

Thank you for your continued support & interest.

Best regards,

The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Transfer Team

Prof. Dr. Annette M. Schmidt (annette.schmidt@uni-koeln.de)

Dr. Dadhichi Paretkar (d.paretkar@gateway-unikoeln.de)