

Subject: Prodeko Alumni December updates

Prodeko Alumni - December update

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Dear Alumni,

Here are a few brief updates as a December special edition. A full newsletter will be sent again in January.

1. Honorary Advisory Council of Prodeko - Speed Mentoring

On Monday 8 December, the Advisory Board will organize a Speed Mentoring event, where members of the Advisory Board will facilitate small group discussions on topics they have encountered in their careers.

The Prodeko Honorary Advisory Board consists of influential Prodeko alumni and its mission is to support the Prodeko community and promote the field of IEM in various forums. The group is currently chaired by Anna Granskog.

Due to the interactive nature of the event, a limited number of places are available (10 for students and 10 for alumni). Register on December 2nd at 12:00 [here](#).

Enjoy your week!

2. Heikki Poutanen Leadership Award

We are happy to announce the Heikki Poutanen Leadership Award and the recipient of the inaugural award for 2025. The award is based on a donation by Heikki Poutanen, IEM alumnus who was accepted to the first IEM cohort in 1966.

The Heikki Poutanen Leadership Award is given by the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management to a student or recent graduate for their extraordinary contributions and achievements in leadership and people management. It can be given for acting in leadership roles or academic accomplishments in the field of leadership (e.g., bachelor's or master's thesis). The award will be given annually by a committee including the head of department and representatives from the Organizational Development and Leadership group at the department. The award also comes with a cash prize of 1000 EUR.

In the inaugural year the award is given to Olivia Rönnemaa, who is a 3rd year IEM student. Olivia has taken multiple leadership positions in different student organizations: as the Prodeko seminar czar she was responsible for organizing the 2025 Prodeko seminar on behalf of Prodeko; she is also head of global operations at Junction, which organizes one of the world's largest AI hackathons and as well as hackathons around the world in partnerships; and she was recently elected as the president of Aalto Entrepreneurship Society for 2026. She wrote her bachelor's thesis on the topic of female entrepreneurs in the startup ecosystem, identifying the barriers female leaders face in the startup ecosystem, synthesizing the leadership styles and approaches women tend to take in startups, and highlighting the importance of role models. Finally, Olivia is also a great example of personal development and how to grow into a leader by gradually taking on more and more responsibility.

The award is based on a generous donation by Heikki Poutanen, an alumnus from the TUTA/IEM program who was accepted into the inaugural class of the industrial engineering and management program at Aalto University in 1966. Based on his donation we established the Heikki Poutanen People Know It Better Leadership Fund, which is managed by the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management together with the Prodeko Fund. A committee with representatives from the department, Prodeko, Prodeko alumni and Prodeko advisory board administers the fund.

Here is a link to Heikki's story, which also describes his leadership philosophy that is now promoted by the fund:

<https://www.aalto.fi/en/news/heikki-poutanen-insights-from-my-life-and-the-philosophy-of-the-new-people-know-it-better-fund> (English),

<https://www.aalto.fi/fi/uutiset/heikki-poutanen-elamani-oivallukset-ja-uuden-people-know-it-better-rahaston-filosofia> (Finnish)

For information about donations, please be in touch with Jens Schmidt, head of department (jens.schmidt@aalto.fi) or Helena Salminen, donor relations manager (helena.salminen@aalto.fi)

3. Alumni Autumn meeting 4.12.

We welcome you all to join the Prodeko Alumni Syyskokous this Thursday December 4th at 17:00 at Vuono Group's office (Vanha Talvitie 13–15, Helsinki).

If you're interested in joining the board or the meeting itself, please let Joona know in advance (joona@soratie.fi). Meeting materials are available at request.

4. Alumni data update

Hey alumni! Please update your contact information to [matrikkeli](#) – takes only a few minutes! Especially if you have founded or co-founded a company, please add the company to your work experience and tap on the "I am a founding member". This way Prodeko and the Department will be able to keep track of Prodeko founded companies. Thank you!