

## Tec Querétaro shares inclusive innovation project in Belgium



Howest University in Belgium is practice-oriented, particularly in game development  
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Stephanie Colina

Engineering can become a tool to improve lives.

In line with this vision, **Professor Ivo Neftalí Ayala García**, from the School of Engineering and Sciences at the Tec's Querétaro campus, took part in the **International IT Week at Howest University of Applied Sciences** in Belgium, where he showcased **projects focused on supporting people with disabilities designed** by Tec students.

The international event, held from **March 9 to 13**, brought together academics, students, and IT partners **for a week of academic collaboration, innovation, and networking.**

During the program, the professor participated as a **speaker and academic collaborator** for the **“Design for Disability: Engineering Empathy”** workshop, during which he shared the Tec’s experience with developing support devices for people with disabilities.

***“We shared how our students are developing technology that can improve the lives of people with disabilities,”*** said Professor Ivo Ayala.



*Professor Ivo Ayala presenting projects developed by students from Tec Querétaro in Belgium. Photo: Ivo Ayala*

## **Applied engineering with social impact**

*“It all began with an invitation from a university called Howest. It’s a STEM-focused technological university that focuses heavily on applied research and development,”* explained Professor Ivo Ayala.

According to the professor, **Howest is an institution with a strong focus on technology and applied development**, particularly in areas such as **IoT** (Internet of Things), multimedia, and smart device development.

His presentation focused on showcasing **projects** developed by Tecnológico de Monterrey students in conjunction **with training partners, primarily with the Querétaro Center for Integrated Rehabilitation**.

These **projects seek to address** real-life **rehabilitation** needs by designing devices that **facilitate therapies, foster independence, and contribute** to enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities.

*“During the discussion, I talked about our experience collaborating with training partners, whom we’ve been working with over several years developing therapeutic assistive devices,” said Professor Ivo Ayala.*

Through this experience, the professor demonstrated how **engineering translates into tangible solutions**, specifically in rehabilitation and support systems for people with disabilities.

*Professor Ivo Ayala presenting the project to students in Belgium. Photo: Ivo Ayala*



## A scalable collaboration

The visit provided space for open discussions **with academic leaders at Howest** to explore new **opportunities for cross-institutional collaboration**.

*“We found several opportunities for collaboration. One of them is a program whereby Howest students would spend a few weeks in Querétaro, after which our students would travel to Howest to complete the project,” shared Professor Ivo Ayala.*

Although the exact date is still being finalized, the professor said that **a preliminary four-week collaboration is tentatively scheduled to take place during the winter**.

*“There’s a lot of interest on their part in increasing collaboration. They’re familiar with us, they’re acquainted with our work, and they’ve expressed interest in collaborating with us,” added Professor Ivo Ayala.*

***“We shared how our students are developing technology that can improve the lives of people with disabilities.”***

## International experiences for students

*“We believe that exposing students to this kind of international experience, where they engage and collaborate with students from other universities, is essential to their professional development,” said Professor Ivo Ayala.*

The professor also highlighted Tecnológico de Monterrey’s global reach, noting that **it was the only participating university from outside Europe and from Latin America during this international week.**

*“We were the only university from outside Europe and the sole representatives of both Mexico and Latin America,” he said.*

According to the professor, this visibility broadens the Tec’s institutional recognition and paves the way for **future academic collaboration.**

*“I think it’s important to be present, to stay visible, and to ensure recognition of the Tec,” he said.*

*Engineering students with Professor Ivo Ayala at the Tec in Querétaro.  
Photo: Stephanie Colina*



# Breaking paradigms for collaboration

Beyond the academic component, the experience also offered the chance to reflect on the cultural challenges that can arise when working with institutions from other countries.

According to the professor, **a major hurdle in international collaborations is initiating conversations** without preconceived notions or bias.

*“The greatest hurdle is the perspective we bring to the table. We started the collaboration with preconceived notions, but fortunately many of those negative preconceptions have proven false,” he explained.*

Participating in **International IT Week** did more than strengthen the partnership between our universities; it also positioned **Querétaro’s projects** as models for how **technology and engineering** can foster **inclusion and enhance quality of life**.

*“We anticipate positive outcomes and will provide more detailed updates on this partnership soon,” the professor concluded.*

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