

“Innovation requires a vision and a lot of action. That makes ETH the ideal environment for the next generation of leaders”



After growing up in Paris, Patrick Anquetil came to ETH Zurich to study mechanical engineering. He then completed his doctorate at MIT and later received an MBA from Harvard Business School. Today he serves as CEO of Portal Instruments in Boston.

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ETH alumnus Dr Patrick Anquetil is an innovator and founder of several medical technology companies. He tells us why he'd like to be a fly on the wall in the office of the ETH President and explains what philanthropy means to him.

What was your first thought when you woke up this morning?

DR PATRICK ANQUETIL - Where is my coffee?

Which are the three best apps on your smartphone?

Superhuman, Uber, and Nike Run Club.

What does your weekend look like?

Weekends are about putting the week behind and refocusing on personal wellness and family. We try to make them fun for our kids and an occasion to reconnect and experience something together. On a personal side, I like to start the weekend with an 8 a.m. run, spin or yoga class on Saturdays. It sets the mood for the whole weekend.

Can you tell us a highlight of your career so far?

Starting three companies in the medical device space, and relentlessly trying to make a difference in patients' lives.

If you could shadow someone from ETH Zurich at work for one day, who would it be and why?

President Joël Mesot. I would love to know what his days look like and what it takes to lead a complex institution such as ETH where you have to manage different demanding stakeholders while defining a vision for the future of Switzerland and the world.

What is one of your best ETH experiences so far?

Attending lectures in the main building of ETH. The experience is like entering a holy place.

In your opinion, how is ETH perceived in the US?

Outside academia, ETH is by and large not well known by the general US population. Not even the fact that Albert Einstein attended ETH. As alumni, it is our duty to change that.

What does philanthropy mean to you?

Philanthropy is an opportunity to engage with causes and institutions one believes in. Supporting the next generation by building resources and mentoring them is critical and our duty.

Why do you support talent and entrepreneurship at ETH?

Innovation requires vision and a lot of action. Blending theory and practice, ETH is the right environment to teach the next generation of leaders and to let them explore and innovate.

If you could slip into your younger self as a student: Would you do everything the same again?

Of course! Unlike in the movie "Back to the Future", there is only one version of me and it is the result of my experiences, failures, successes, lessons learned, and people I encountered. I can't redo this and change any of that and expect to "be me" again afterward.

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