VISION – SYNERGY – RESPONSIBILITY

ELECTION MANIFESTO OF A CANDIDATE FOR DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF OSTRAVA

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Dear colleagues,

As the saying goes, you cannot step into the same river twice… In my case, one might be tempted to say that you cannot step into it a third time. Yet I am not returning to the same faculty that I had the honour of leading for two terms. Some of you may consider my decision to stand again inappropriate, difficult to understand, or even an expression of a belief in my own indispensability. Allow me, therefore, to explain briefly at the outset why I am once again presenting the academic community with my vision for the future direction of the Faculty of Science. I wish to offer a perspective on where we should focus our efforts in the coming years to strengthen our contribution to education across all generations, make a greater contribution to the development of basic and applied research, and become an institution that serves our city, region and Czechia more effectively in every area of its work—and, I sincerely hope, the world as well.

My main motivation is a sense of shared responsibility for the state of academic life at our faculty, across the university and in the Czech university environment more generally. Like you, I have been following the seemingly endless succession of crises we have faced in recent years. They affect our work and will undoubtedly continue to do so. To address them, we need a clear commitment to improving the quality of our core activities. Higher quality is precisely what can strengthen our faculty's resilience. I do not believe that the path to a stronger faculty lies in constant cuts in the wrong places and an emphasis on constraints. No one has ever cut their way to growth. Let us therefore leave excuses that blame others for our problems well outside the faculty gates and focus on the opportunities within our own control.

We must have a vision, know how to put it into practice rationally, and celebrate our successes together. This builds healthy confidence in the institution, as well as in individuals and teams. In my view, the satisfaction of a job well done is precisely what is gradually slipping away from our hurried academic world. Our rhythm is often dictated by two semesters and endless cycles of writing, submitting, revising and publishing papers.

Opportunities for scholarly debate on fundamental topics and on broader questions of academic and social life are also diminishing. Discussions are often confined to the number of papers submitted and grant applications filed. I do not wish to question the importance of these activities. Yet we must also assess the success of our collective efforts by other measures: how we have advanced knowledge; how well we have explained and conveyed a complex topic to students without lowering standards; whether we have earned recognition from the scholarly community; or whether we have contributed to a stimulating discussion with the public. We are told that we should contribute to the region's transformation. But how much do we actually know, from within our academic bubble, about its real problems or specific needs? Are we genuinely prepared for this work, and do we know what will help and how?

I could go on with further questions which, I believe, concern more than just me. Instead, let us look for answers and solutions together, so that after another four years we can say with satisfaction that the time was not wasted and that we were able to celebrate both our shared successes and those of our colleagues.

How is the world around us changing?

Fundamentally! Society's needs are changing, and science is advancing in leaps and bounds in its understanding of the world around us. We are undergoing a profound transformation associated with the development of generative artificial intelligence (AI). In our immediate surroundings, research teams with a considerable head start are growing stronger: many years ago, they were given the opportunity to build exceptionally high-quality research facilities and recruit first-rate scientists, often from abroad. We have long sought to follow a similar path, because in practice we have no other way to strengthen our teams or establish new ones. The LERCO and REFRESH projects provided the necessary impetus. Many outstanding scientists have found their way to us. Thanks to them, the hard work of all our academics and a substantial increase in doctoral student numbers, we have made our mark on the scientific map, not only in Czechia. At last, we have managed to build modern research facilities for the faculty. We might now simply wait to reap the rewards of our work. Yet research institutions around us continue to develop, so we too must not stand still. During my previous two terms, I strongly emphasised the need to develop basic research. We have achieved this shift, and modern research equipment can support it further. But we must not squander the opportunity: we must work consistently to ensure that the scientists we have recruited find a long-term home here and that the investment in bringing them here translates into the preparation of new research projects funded from external sources. I sincerely hope that key researchers will be active in this respect and set an example for younger colleagues. Developing this next phase is essential both for the faculty's future and for meeting the projects' objectives. The faculty leadership must therefore support teams and their



leaders, ensure continuity for successful teams, and identify other promising teams in response to developments in the wider environment. More intensive work with doctoral students, improving their training and seeking out the most talented applicants for doctoral study are also essential. We must, however, be courageous too: courageous not only in exploring new research directions, but also in discontinuing those that are unsuccessful or less competitive. This, too, is part of being a modern institution of our kind.

1 Education

Universities tend to take pride in their stability and continuity. This is precisely why they often resist passing trends and preserve values that have stood the test of time. Yet we should not confuse stability with inertia. The fact that we do not embrace every novelty does not mean that we can afford to ignore changes that are fundamentally transforming the world around us.

In the near future, we face a substantial decline in applicant numbers. We should therefore have begun thinking about the future of our degree programmes long ago. Innovation proceeds slowly, and we are often unwilling even to update curricula on an ongoing basis. Course syllabuses that have remained unchanged for many years are not uncommon, even when developments in the discipline clearly call for change. We have programme boards, yet we often postpone curriculum innovation until accreditation is due for renewal. With few exceptions, discussions do not take place continuously, and preparing accreditation documentation is reduced to a bureaucratic exercise. Even then, little of substance often changes: why adjust anything when the previous accreditation went through smoothly? A more detailed discussion of content sometimes begins only when accreditation is not granted on the first attempt, and even then it meets resistance. Why? Rather than looking for causes on our own side, we attribute the problem to ill will on the part of NAÚ or RVH.

I have encountered this attitude many times. I am convinced that the time has come to think carefully about what we want to teach our students, why, and how—and to make this a routine part of our academic work. This also raises the question of our readiness to integrate AI into teaching and beyond. AI is certainly not a short-lived fashion that we can afford to ignore, but a phenomenon that will significantly influence our future. Are we ready for it?

How we teach is primarily up to each of us. This is part of academic freedom, whose importance and need for protection we hear about so often today. Yet freedom always comes with responsibility. Academic freedoms were not established so that everyone could do as they please, but to protect education and research from external political or

ideological pressure. Freedom in academia is not a privilege without limits, but a commitment to strive for the best possible education, research and service to society.

There are three faculties of science at long-established universities in Czechia that offer very comprehensive science education. We certainly maintain high standards in many disciplines, but this may not be enough in the future. These faculties have substantial capacity and, like other competitors in the regions or at technical universities, can attract our prospective applicants. For many years, these competitors have been developing a distinctive profile not only in environmental disciplines, but also in computer science and other science-based applied fields. Sentiment and a belief in our own uniqueness will not suffice in this competitive environment.

The next generation is looking for attractive subjects, good career prospects and perhaps also an unconventional range of study options. Our programme portfolio should reflect this: it must distinguish us from others in at least some respects. In science, we want to excel and rank among the best. Do we have the same ambition in education, one of the main reasons our institution exists? Do we have a good understanding of the educational landscape of Czechia, Europe and the world? I fear we do not. And that is before we even consider our ability to anticipate future needs.

We must know which programmes to develop, how to teach them and how to present them to prospective students. We need to rethink who our students are in the second quarter of the twenty-first century. We must focus not only on school-leavers, but also on older working-age groups. Are we ready for them? They too face a rapidly changing world. What will we offer them? The development and innovation of degree programmes should not take place only when we secure external project funding. We should regard it as a normal part of our everyday academic work. It is our responsibility to society and to our students, and also an opportunity to set trends rather than merely catch up with them.

I propose to:

a) establish the position of Vice-Dean for Educational Innovation, who will improve conditions for teaching development, respond to trends in tertiary education, lead an interdisciplinary working group, and encourage discussion and the sharing of good practice,
b) integrate AI tools into teaching in accordance with the principles of academic integrity and make the best possible use of their educational benefits,
c) initiate regular discussion of the challenges of the present and the coming years,
d) move towards institutional accreditation, ideally in all areas of education currently covered by programme accreditation, so that we can respond more effectively and with less bureaucracy to labour-market needs—our competitors are not standing still,

e) connect disciplines with practice by establishing clear practical links in appropriate courses, so that students understand how they can use the knowledge and skills they acquire,
f) develop modern lifelong learning programmes, introduce genuinely distance-based teaching at the faculty and become a leader in this area, drawing on both the potential to increase student numbers and the need to raise educational attainment among the Czech population,
g) transform the dOUčko project into a genuinely systematic instrument for equalising access to study and improving teaching quality, particularly by involving students from follow-up master's and doctoral programmes as teaching assistants.

2 Science and Research

In recent years, we have built substantial research facilities—LERCO. This represents a major opportunity for research development, but also a risk if we fail to make use of this enormous investment. The building and its laboratories give us wings, so to speak. Team leaders must determine the direction and an appropriate pace, while the right team composition and ideas will provide momentum. I am fully aware of the project's focus on applied research. Yet this should neither constrain nor discourage us. For many researchers, it is unfamiliar territory, but it is also an area that can take the faculty forward once again. I continue to believe that we cannot succeed as a research-oriented faculty without high-quality research. If we also enhance our appeal to students, especially doctoral students, through the prospect of careers outside academia where research is put into practice, that can only be positive. Research and doctoral study are inseparably linked. Here too, however, we must move beyond clichés and outdated assumptions. We must ask questions about the direction of doctoral education and our graduates' career paths. How many have a realistic chance of becoming academics or researchers? Do doctoral subject-area boards and programme guarantors have a clear idea of how many such positions exist at home and abroad? What value does a doctorate have in today's labour market outside academia and research? These are fundamental questions that we may be avoiding—or, worse still, not asking at all—even though they determine how and for what we prepare our doctoral students.

I do not want our research teams to abandon so-called basic research, which a number of politicians and university officials now question in a biased manner. Contributing to our general understanding of the world is among universities' most important tasks. At the same time, we cannot overlook society's demand to translate the results of fundamental knowledge into concrete innovations. Without them, we as a society will not successfully meet the challenges of our time. By this I mean seeking all solutions that can help improve

decision-making or teaching, bring innovations in biomedicine, or develop collaboration with technical and artistic disciplines.

Preparing the next phase of the ongoing LERCO and REFRESH projects is of crucial importance to the faculty. We must launch an open discussion of the themes of LERCO II and RESCUE. We must ensure that none of the faculty's potential is overlooked and view these projects as a further impetus for the development and sustainability of our research teams.

I propose to:

a) strengthen the role of basic research in the faculty's future development and emphasise its importance for practical applications, including in subsequent phases of the LERCO and REFRESH (RESCUE) projects,
b) review the use of the Research Support Fund and initiate the use of its resources to support doctoral students as well
c) change how students perceive the career prospects associated with doctoral study and map employment opportunities for its graduates,
d) strengthen and better coordinate support for doctoral students, not only within the doctoral school, and promote more intensive sharing of good practice across doctoral subject-area boards, supported by coordinated management of this area,
e) create a faculty strategy for the fair evaluation of research positions established through development projects and define a procedure for retaining these positions and reducing the risk of losing important staff members,
f) strengthen project-support positions specialising in key European and international projects awarded through highly competitive calls.

3 Applied Research and the Commercialisation of Results/Activities

Cooperation with the public and private sectors is an important part of university activities. A university should not remain secluded in an ivory tower, merely commenting critically on social and economic developments. It should actively engage with them. Cooperation with the public and private sectors enables us to influence the development of the country, the region and individual organisations while also securing resources for the faculty's development. From personal experience, I know that practitioners want concrete solutions.

I regard high-quality basic research—or, more precisely, the expertise and capabilities of our research teams—as the foundation of applied research. I object to the biased promotion of the idea that anything not directly applicable is of little value and that we should not pursue anything that cannot be commercialised. Unfortunately, this view,



which has spread in recent years, does not improve the situation but instead deepens frustration. Moreover, efforts to increase our competitiveness in applied research are barely accompanied by stronger support services.

What we describe at the university as applied research and the transfer of knowledge, discoveries or inventions into commercial practice often takes the form of routine professional services. Activities predominate at the faculty that generate additional salary income in the short term but offer little substantial added value to the institution over the longer term. The main benefit of genuinely high-quality knowledge transfer should be a substantial increase in revenue that reduces our dependence on public funding, such as institutional allocations and grants. We need to identify activities suitable for commercialisation in a targeted way, but not at any cost. Frankly, we are not yet able to carry out applied research with high added value on the scale required, as many excellent universities do, and in my view we have not created the necessary conditions for it either. We have the foundations, but we are not advancing quickly enough. We are unable to identify our own potential consistently, present it externally, or map organisations that might be interested in cooperation. If this area is to be a pillar of our contribution to the development of Czech society and the economy, we cannot continue as we are. This is especially true where commercialisable outputs form part of monitored project indicators. Our transfer efforts are predominantly a response to these project requirements rather than a natural part of some teams' work. This type of research also faces criticism at more established institutions, such as technical universities, which are closer to practical applications and have greater potential. Even in the Czech environment, however, recurring income from valuable intellectual property is not yet widespread. Let us not give up on this area, but create the conditions it needs.

I propose to:

a) work with the relevant Rector's Office department to improve access to support in this area directly at the faculty, primarily to meet the needs of ongoing projects,
b) comprehensively map potential customers and commissioning partners within and beyond the region,
c) establish a faculty scout position or a team of scouts to maintain contact with organisations that put research into practice.

4 International Cooperation

I regard international cooperation as one of the pillars of a modern university institution, and it should naturally permeate all the faculty's activities and functions. We should distinguish between two interconnected dimensions: internationalisation at home and

internationalisation abroad. Although closely linked, their relative importance changes over time. The faculty will monitor trends in the European education area and in the Czech environment and respond to them in coordination with the university.

An absolutely essential imperative in internationalisation is to create an international environment and integrate international staff. This in itself is a driver of the faculty's development in many other activities. As the number of staff from abroad increases, I therefore consider their fuller involvement in faculty life essential. At individual workplaces, they generally integrate well into research and perhaps also into departmental life, but at faculty level they still tend to remain on the sidelines. Integration into the Czech environment is not easy for them. Mere declarations about creating an ideal environment are not enough. In practice, we have not created conditions for their career progression into management (leadership?) roles. By involving them more in everyday faculty life and other academic activities, we can connect their experience more effectively with our environment and support further internationalisation.

Academic mobility is undergoing a transformation. Exchange mobility once became the backbone of university internationalisation; today, its position is changing and becoming less dominant in response to shifting student preferences and uncertain European and national budget frameworks. Other, more flexible and shorter mobility formats are coming to the fore. The faculty must nevertheless continue working to ensure that long-term mobility remains an accessible part of study, while gradually offering, planning and developing additional formats. Within Europe, it must also continue to develop incoming mobility to individual departments, including so-called credit mobility, which can have a fundamental impact on the internationalisation of domestic degree programmes and on creating an international environment for students and staff.

We want to make international experience available to the widest possible range of students, including those whose circumstances do not permit long-term travel in the form of semester-long stays or professional placements abroad. We will therefore focus on embedding an international perspective directly into Czech-taught degree programmes and will deliberately develop flexible and inclusive forms of internationalisation within departments—particularly blended intensive programmes (BIP) and collaborative online international learning (COIL). To make this development work effectively, we will also establish faculty-level support for teachers wishing to innovate their teaching in foreign languages or international teams.

I consider it crucial that the faculty also develops its international degree programmes. At present, the faculty offers only one degree programme in English (Mathematics). Given the region's future demographic changes, this poses a risk to the stability of income from educational activities. JDP programmes are a particular case: they have the potential to become a priority at both EU and Czech levels and, thanks to their comprehensive

international dimension, can also have a profound transformative impact on individual departments and the faculty as a whole.

The aim should be to conduct a thorough analysis of the capacity and opportunities for accrediting and delivering new degree programmes that must attract interest and succeed in an extremely competitive environment. To this end, the faculty will also prepare administrative and institutional frameworks for delivering and sustaining such programmes, drawing on domestic experience and that of other Central European universities.

My aim is to establish a responsive and efficient support system within the Dean's Office that takes on as much of the administrative burden as possible and ensures the long-term sustainability of international activities. I will clarify communication between the Dean's Office international department, departmental coordinators and the university's Centre for International Cooperation (CMS), and support systematic training for administrative and academic staff in this area. I will advocate increasing the faculty's share of staff mobility across the university. I will also establish close cooperation between faculty leadership, heads of departments and programme guarantors in strategic decision-making on internationalisation within the faculty's core activities.

Another important opportunity is the faculty's more intensive involvement in the NEOLAiA alliance of European universities. The project was in preparation for many years, and European funding was secured following a further attempt. I approach the building of such partnerships exclusively from the top down with some caution. Nevertheless, cooperation already established can provide a starting point for greater involvement by our faculty, individual teams and departments in research projects, shared facilities, and student and staff exchanges.

I propose to:

a) establish a discussion club for colleagues arriving from abroad and create opportunities to learn more about their professional interests and life experiences,
b) map the situation of colleagues who have joined us from abroad and create a realistic model for their academic development at the faculty, extending beyond research,
c) bring representatives of new staff into the Dean's advisory structures through a working group led by a vice-dean,
d) analyse further opportunities for cooperation with universities abroad and initiate discussion about them—ideally through jointly delivered degree programmes,
e) initiate and support the preparation of English-taught degree programmes and JDP programmes, assess our capacity and engage an international recruitment

agent—but base the process on documented evidence and analysis so that we do not expend energy on projects that are unrealistic from the outset,

f) initiate deeper cooperation with selected departments at universities abroad to strengthen science education didactics at the Faculty of Science,
g) evaluate the faculty's involvement in the NEOLAiA project and seek additional partners across universities,
h) integrate elements of internationalisation into degree programmes and maximise the contribution of the international dimension to teaching,

5 Students

During my almost thirty years at the Faculty of Science, I have had the opportunity to meet many wonderful young people. Working with them and being able to contribute to their development while also developing myself has always been—and remains—immensely fulfilling. The setting and the needs of the younger generation are changing, but I firmly believe that university students retain their desire for knowledge and their determination to use the knowledge and skills they acquire to change the world around us. Student engagement also contributes to this. I see the university and faculty environment as a microcosm in which much can be achieved through students' academic work and civic involvement. This also sustains an important tradition of Czech university life associated with 17 November 1939 and 1989. I am extremely pleased that our students take part in discussions on issues affecting society as a whole and help shape a shared responsibility for public affairs. I greatly value the work of our student associations and welcome our long-standing cooperation on educational events for younger and older generations and on science outreach. It is inspiring to see the commitment with which younger colleagues bring specialist topics to the public during Researchers' Night, Earth Day celebrations and other events in which the Faculty of Science traditionally participates.

Education rests on cooperation between teachers and students. This may sound like a tired cliché, but in everyday teaching I am repeatedly reminded of its importance. I see this cooperation as essential if our work together is to be fulfilling for both sides. Discussions about teaching reveal different perspectives: teachers point to students' attitudes to study and low attendance, while students highlight a lack of coherence in teaching, excessive demands, or content that they feel does not meet practical needs. Both sides must be heard. Teamwork does not emerge automatically or simply by repeating established procedures. A basketball team continually practises passes and game situations, individual players develop their fitness, and the coach looks for new tactical options. We can approach the development of cooperation in teaching in a similar way. Do we give it enough attention? Do we understand the conditions in which we

work, and are we prepared for them? Can we recognise opportunities and problems and provide support to individuals and the whole team?

What role can and should the faculty's coach—the dean—play in this cooperation? In my view, the dean must maintain an ongoing overview of opportunities to improve student support. The dean needs to know how both the younger generation and older students, for example those in lifelong learning programmes or distance study, respond to teaching. How do they respond to changes in curricula, course content and, above all, teaching methods? We should monitor this feedback systematically and evaluate it together with students. We continue to encounter shortcomings in the way evaluation surveys operate. We therefore need to open a discussion with students about their design and use. They are an important source of information for strengthening our cooperation.

University life is not limited to study, however. Another form of cooperation is the building of professional and personal relationships that may be even more important to our graduates' futures than the content of teaching itself. Universities regard these connections as an important foundation for successful careers. This is one reason why they typically have a vibrant culture of student associations, why many successful start-ups emerge from student projects, and why graduates develop a strong bond with their alma mater. This aspect of university life also deserves our attention.

I propose to:

a) strengthen cooperation between students and teachers and support mutual learning—create a more effective tool for immediate two-way evaluation during a class or after a series of classes in a course, responding decisively to student passivity, absence from classes, difficulties understanding the material, or feedback on a topic's relevance and usefulness,
b) involve students more extensively in the faculty's governing bodies and create the position of Student Secretary as a student representative within faculty leadership, with clearly defined responsibilities,
c) support student association life and help revive less active associations,
d) develop the social responsibility and professional relevance of student activities by involving students much more extensively in solving real-world tasks or directly in project delivery,
e) involve students in faculty activities through paid positions as well, including the creation of teaching assistant positions,
f) involve student members of programme boards in assessing evaluation survey results and in reviewing measures taken to improve teaching,
g) introduce a Dean's Award recognising student activities in the faculty's core areas each year.

6 Staff

The faculty's most valuable asset cannot be found in its budget or inventory lists. It is the people who come into its classrooms, laboratories, offices and study rooms every day, fulfilling its mission through their work, knowledge and energy.

It is therefore very important that they have a high-quality working environment. By this I do not mean coffee machines, relaxation areas or other employee benefits. These may make the day more pleasant, but they do not create trust. Trust develops when leadership acts openly, predictably and fairly, when rules are clear and applied equally to everyone, and when the faculty actively prevents bullying by managers, workplace bullying by colleagues and other toxic behaviour.

I consider it essential to protect those in a weaker position and those facing inappropriate conduct. I can assess employment-related cases objectively and take swift action where further harm is threatened. This is a highly sensitive area, and I will not conceal the fact that it is among the most demanding aspects of management. Nevertheless, I believe that timely action and good cooperation with managers can prevent many negative situations or mitigate their effects. Protecting students and cooperating with those responsible for this agenda at university level, in accordance with established principles, are equally important.

Personal development must be grounded in the values of academic integrity. Twelve years ago, both the faculty and the university took an unequivocal stand against academically improper practices. Yet we are once again reminded that strengthening academic integrity is a continuous process that we cannot abandon.

Reducing the risk of losing the specialists recruited through the LERCO and REFRESH projects is essential to the faculty's long-term sustainability. Naturally, we cannot guarantee the retention of 100% of positions. We do, however, need appropriate evaluation and motivational tools to preserve, as far as possible, the contribution these projects have made to strengthening the faculty's staffing. The active role of the staff themselves is, of course, crucial.

Balancing personal life and a professional career is another important issue. I consider support for women returning from maternity or parental leave particularly pressing.

We have either completely given up on maintaining contact and building lasting relationships with our graduates, or made no progress in doing so. They are an absolutely vital human network for us and a window into professional practice and public life more generally.

I propose to:

a) establish rules and conditions for women academics and researchers to return smoothly to their careers, including support in terms of time, organisation and funding, and ensure clear responsibility for supporting this agenda within the team of vice-deans,
b) restore the sharing of good academic practice across the faculty, reopen discussion in the Scientific Council on the future of our main research directions (involving the Council in evaluation), and create opportunities for younger colleagues to meet across disciplines to discuss science, academic work and changes in teaching,
c) eliminate the risk to the faculty associated with the departure of key staff linked to development projects,
d) consistently comply with, and genuinely implement, the University of Ostrava's ethical and legal regulations,
e) build a distinct alumni identity for the Faculty of Science at the University of Ostrava,
f) introduce a Dean's Award recognising staff activities in the faculty's core areas each year.

7 Facilities and Infrastructure

I assume that the LERCO research facilities, together with the completion of the refurbishment of Building A, will finally stabilise the faculty's very tight space situation. Even so, we should have a realistic vision of further expansion. I am pleased that, building on earlier ideas, the redevelopment of our botanical garden has begun, albeit without the refurbishment or rebuilding of the villa for now. Conversely, I see it as a shortcoming that we are not discussing the construction of Building K on the current PrOlUka site, although it remains on the university's investment list. It could also create entirely new conditions for modern forms of teaching. If we genuinely want to transform teaching methods, we need appropriate classrooms. The faculty lacks shared facilities of this kind, and adapting spaces built many years ago is not an ideal solution, although we must not abandon refurbishment and renewal. A vision for Building K emerged approximately five years ago, but preparations have made no progress since then, not even at the discussion stage. Similarly, preparations for refurbishing Building C have stalled. Nevertheless, I welcome at least the partial improvements in conditions for the departments based there. My experience suggests that we should have at least one or two feasibility studies ready, continually seek funding sources and prepare projects for implementation. Ongoing maintenance of existing premises and strategic planning of their adaptation and renewal remain a matter of course.

I propose to:

a) complete projects already under construction, reduce the risks of cost overruns and missed deadlines, and ensure high-quality investment and construction supervision in cooperation with the relevant Rector's Office units,
b) initiate discussion of the needs of departments housed in Building C and prepare a feasibility study for its refurbishment,
c) continue revitalising existing premises, particularly classrooms, and prepare a strategic document for this area,
d) launch a faculty-wide debate on constructing Building K with the aim of completing a functional campus complex at Hladnov,
e) promote the quality of our premises as an important foundation for well-being at work and continue participatory activities across the faculty.

8 Sustainability

Alongside social responsibility, humanism and democratic principles, sustainability and environmental responsibility have become pillars of higher education in recent years. Who better to champion this principle than faculties of science? Our activities have a clear impact on the environment. In recent years, we have made little progress in reducing energy waste and strengthening energy self-sufficiency. Energy-saving and other sustainable technologies are easier to introduce in new or refurbished buildings. In these cases, moreover, we must meet certain sustainability principles as a condition of funding. Other steps still depend largely on our own initiative. At the same time, we must consistently maintain high expectations for a pleasant study and working environment. Many improvements can be achieved at minimal cost, for example by not filling shared spaces with unnecessary materials and discarded furniture. I am also disappointed by the continuing defects in the paved surfaces in the refurbished Tyl Park. We are among its main users, but I am not sure whether we bring these problems to the attention of the municipal authorities. Such everyday steps are also part of caring for a sustainable environment.

I propose to:

a) systematically prepare sustainable projects in the area of energy and other commodities,
b) involve students on the Urban and Landscape Sustainability degree programme in improving sustainability at the faculty,

c) continually monitor the condition of faculty property, repairing and renewing it in accordance with sustainability principles,
d) listen to good ideas and suggestions from students and staff and support their involvement in the sustainable operation of the faculty.

9 Faculty Leadership

From previous experience, I know that trying to achieve a great deal with a small team does not always deliver the expected results. I therefore propose defining individual vice-deans' portfolios more narrowly while expanding the faculty leadership team. As in research, university management faces a growing number of issues that require specialist knowledge and sustained attention. If we want to provide high-quality support to students, academics and researchers, we must adapt the division of responsibilities accordingly. More narrowly defined portfolios will also give members of the leadership team greater scope to continue their own research and teaching. The proposed division of responsibilities could be as follows:

a) Vice-Dean for Research
b) Vice-Dean for Doctoral Studies
c) Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs
d) Vice-Dean for Didactics and Educational Development
e) Vice-Dean for Internationalisation and External Relations
f) Vice-Dean for Projects and Cooperation with the Application Sector
g) Student Secretary
h) Faculty Bursar

The proposed composition of the team draws on my many years of experience as well as my knowledge of the management of faculties abroad with a similar focus and size.

Heads of departments also play a fundamental role in leading the faculty. I regard them as key figures, and my approach to their selection will reflect this. During my second term, I introduced international recruitment competitions for these positions. In retrospect, I believe we were somewhat ahead of our time, but I also expect this approach to filling such posts to become standard sooner or later. I intend to retain the current structure of faculty departments, which I consider fully functional. I am, however, open to discussion of possible expansion or a different arrangement. Any change must be based on a demonstrated need and thorough discussion with those affected. I would like to change the way heads of departments are selected: a representative of each department, elected by its staff, should sit on the selection committee. Similarly, I would welcome student involvement in selecting new candidates for academic positions. Why not, for example, ask students to evaluate a demonstration lesson and incorporate their feedback into the

selection committee's assessment? Similar principles apply at many prestigious universities.

I propose to:

a) revise the structure of vice-deans' portfolios and further professionalise their teams, thereby reducing the risks associated with managing too many areas of responsibility at once,
b) establish advisory bodies composed of departmental staff on the basis of participation and expertise,
c) involve representatives elected by departments in selecting heads of departments,
d) involve students in evaluating demonstration lessons delivered by new candidates for academic positions,
e) consistently apply the 'once-only' principle when collecting data for administrative purposes,
f) further professionalise the Dean's Office support services and develop cooperation with Rector's Office units,
g) support cooperation and mutual understanding between the faculty, the Dean's Office and the Rector's Office, and improve the efficiency and quality of services through shared learning.

In Conclusion...

Dear colleagues,

With humility, hope and optimism, I offer you, for the third time, my experience in identifying problems openly and directly, finding solutions, securing support and putting ideas into practice. I am deeply convinced of the necessity of discussion, although, as someone born under the sign of Aries, I can also be stubborn. I have eight years of experience as dean and many years of experience leading a department. I have led numerous projects, both small and large, and brought together colleagues from different disciplines. I can appreciate a well-reasoned argument, accept an alternative solution and acknowledge my own mistakes. At the same time, I dislike excuses that something cannot be done, and I reject behaviour that harms those in a weaker position. I dislike insincerity, evasion of responsibility and shamelessness. Over eight years, together with my team and many of you, I contributed to the faculty's development. I can work with anyone who sincerely wishes to help achieve a shared goal. We can achieve our common goals only by working together. I trust that you will join in this cooperation and that, after the next four years, you will value my work for the faculty and we will take pleasure in what we have achieved together.

Ostrava, 1 November 2026

