

Ladies and gentlemen,
dear colleagues, dear guests,

already for the fifth time our faculty's management have decided to invite you to this New Year's meeting for all our staff, supporters, friends, cooperating partners and representatives of companies that in the previous years have shown our institution many a useful service, or have taken care to make it run smoothly. All together we played our part in making our institution's assessment a success in 2011.

First let me wish you at the beginning of 2012, good health, peace in your families and workplace and of course a lot of personal and professional success.

Here is an opportunity for a brief recap and also the possibility at least in a wider sense to indicate what the leadership of the faculty, all of you present here and myself want this faculty to become.

Briefly and concisely, the ARRA Agency has noted that we have taken a large step, when we in the ranking of technical faculties have progressed by 10 positions into the first third of the best among the technical faculties. Among the STU's seven faculties we are in fourth place. I must emphasize that this is not because of a significant reduction in the number of students, but especially due to the improvement of a higher quality of our work's outcomes - publishing activities and an increase in the financial capacity of our research work. If we talk about reducing the number of students, this is mainly due to a demographic development in Slovakia, in any case, it has not been reflected on our payments. Here is some information for our honorable guests: three years ago we had, in all forms and levels, approximately 5400 students and by the 31st of October 2011 we had 3800 students, so we are still most likely the largest faculty in Slovakia.

During the past year, under the rules of the comprehensive accreditation in 2009, we have been reaccredited 17 study programs at all three levels, due to the age of supervisors or for granted accreditation for one run. For re-accreditation we had 14 proposals which were approved without any problems. Problems arose for the remaining three study programs, after careful consideration we did not ask for accreditation in the study programs in the field of engineering pedagogy, although we were the only technical faculty to have been successful in the past providing these programs. We do not want to make excuses, but the original guarantees of these pedagogical study programs, after consultations the accreditation committee refused to accept them. A short explanation: the original guarantees in 2008 were based on the professor from the technical field and associate professor from the pedagogical field. Currently, the Accreditation Commission requires the opposite, such as, a professor from the pedagogical field and a second supervisor and an Associate Professor from a technical field. After several months of futile searching we could not meet these requirements. Consequently, this was very hard for the faculty. The original Institute of Engineering Pedagogy and Humanities had to be gradually transformed from September 2011 to a lecturer's cabinet. Engineering pedagogy at the faculty finally ending on the 31st of August 2012, by defending the last diploma theses on the incriminated study programs. I am going to ask the question which these days is probably of little interest to people: "Will the pedagogical faculties in Slovakia educate teachers of technical subjects for our secondary technical schools and vocational schools to the same level as we did? "

The answer must be given by competent officials, unfortunately it will probably be too late.

A very similar situation with us and also in the whole of Slovakia, is in the field of study programs relating to quality engineering. With the leave of two supervisors at the end of last year, the study programs of production quality will probably be forced to be reaccredited. As a result of this we will have to reaccredit this study program in another context, for example, as a part of materials engineering technology or materials engineering.

With special satisfaction I can say that our engagement in applying for funding from the EU structural funds has a long and continuous nature which is still extremely successful. By the way, within the last month we applied and are applying for projects, totaling 58 million Euros. This is the level of funding, which currently represents the faculty budget for five years. It is almost unbelievable, that this time this also includes the officially authorized construction activities and the activities amounting to almost 23 million Euros, this means two fully equipped constructions at our campus on Bottova Street.

We decided to start discussing the quality of the educational process in all levels and bodies of the faculty. The ultimate goal is for a significant reduction of pre graduation leavers from study, nearly 50 percent of imatriculated students of the faculty leave before graduation. Firstly, it is understood as a waste of taxpayers' finances, last but not least, it is one of the important discussions relating to the reduced number of candidates for study because of demographic trends to stabilize state students at the faculty and thus to ensure long-term financial stability of our institution. The main question in this context is: This profile of graduates is called for today by the private and public sector, where most of our graduates find their careers. It is still comparable to 20-30 years ago, when the important part of our pedagogic judgment makers graduated at university. We realize that at that time the elite from secondary schools studied, this was 10-13 percent of the yearly population. It is surely a shock to many of you that: today nearly 70 percent of young people in Slovakia study. If based on the premise that each generation's samples are valid according to Gauss's law of distributed random variables, it means that at that time and also today, the number of gifted and excellent students is comparable, we cannot apply the old procedures of 30 years ago in the present pedagogical process. If we say that it is not possible to reduce the level of education, we will at least, in the future, have to define it instead of talking about it as an imaginary variable. In this context, we do not want to repeat the known facts that the best students from Slovakia study abroad. The Czech Republic states that almost 25 000 students from Slovakia and studying of technical fields is not popular right now, due to their difficulty and complexity. Whilst mentioning Gauss, the application provides insight not only on students' success, but also the quality and the pedagogical capability of individual teachers, as we do not want to demonize teachers, students or Gauss law.

However, a further provision, which is not yet sufficiently exploited, are our doctoral students. We have 200 in full-time study and almost another hundred in external study. A doctorate week is scheduled at the end of this month, where our PhD students from six institutions will be mutually notified about their work and will look for links to specific cooperation between institutions. We have set clear and simple limits for the doctoral publications, which within one year or at the most two must be of a significantly much higher quality, for example, we will require a minimum of 3 registered outputs in the electronic databases; therefore students can defend their dissertations.

I arrived at this point to thank the management, staff and workers from all the economic administrative staff and of course their teams. They are consistently implementing a challenge to management of the faculty for conduct of a high level of professionalism in their work and the introduction of internationally comparable standards in their daily work. The service offered to our students and employees by the faculty can now effectively withstand any criticism and I am personally extremely proud of the level of these offered services. We are talking about thousands of students, hundreds of employees and millions of euros. The management of the faculty will continue to support the mobility of the administrative staff in the high level EU institutions as well as their involvement in projects from Structural Funds, which even themselves successfully initiate, administer and implement. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, our success can not be thought of without our partners from the government, public and private sectors. We assume that the partnership is beneficial for both parties. Allow me to designate crucial institutions from abroad and from Slovakia, although it is clear to me that it is not possible at this point to appoint all: County and Town of Trnava, DELCAM with it's gift of several million Euros, Beakert, JAVIS a.s., VUJE a.s., Orange Slovakia, Prva zvaračská a.s., ŽOS Trnava, Helmholtzzentrum Dresden-Rossendorf, IFW Dresden, TU Dresden, TU Ilmenau, Univerzita Miskolc, Univerzita Zagreb-Varaždín, University Kecskemeth, University Koethen-Anhalt, State technical univesity Iževsk, Universidad Martha Abreu Santa Clara, aswell as many other partners from the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, Poland, Serbia and Croatia.

Surely there is more which could be mentioned here, we will have more to boast with and complain about here. Let me outline where the faculty's management identifies the key areas for the coming year:

- The fulfillment of the ambitious plan of building a campus on Bottova Street.
- Consistent preparation for a comprehensive accreditation in 2014, in view of the now reactivated, interrupted process of the novelty university law.
- To ensure sufficient resources for 5 percent of the faculty's co-financing projects from structural funds, which may already in the near future become a KO criterion for the faculty; it may also paralyze the financial operation due to the late returns of projects.
- Preparation of FP8 project with foreign partners in institutions for the period starting in 2014 – more than 50 Billion Euros have been allocated to the joint European Research Area
- Development of a quality system for the faculty with an emphasis on individual processes to improve the quality of the educational process and the rebuilding of the teacher-student relationship to a partnership including involved talented students into research that are already in the second stage.

I would like to use this occassion and invite a new member to our faculty 's team – professor Jurči. He is our outcomming and our doctor philosophy. After his

successful activities in the private companies abroad he returned to the academic career at ČVUT Prague and was inaugurated as a full professor three years ago in the field of materials science and engineering. Welcome by us Professor Jurci and I promise you, you will be by us very busy.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me finish by thanking you all for all the positive things you have given to the faculty in the past year that have lead me to believe that your enthusiasm, commitment and identification with the faculty in the coming year will not falter. Once again I wish you good health and luck.

And last but not least: Ladies and gentlemen, let me take this opportunity to give a special and warmest congratulations to Professor Balog, who now, on this day is 63 years of age. Thank you for your work to the faculty and the Institute on behalf of the leadership of the faculty and also personally as the Dean and a friend. Mnoga ljeta, Karči! Živjo