



# Jakub Navařík

candidate for the rector of Palacký University Olomouc

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## Introduction of the Candidate and Motivation

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My name is Jakub Navařík, I was born in Přerov, I am 38 years old and I have two children. In 2015, I successfully completed my doctoral studies in physics at Palacký University in Olomouc, and since 2012, I have been employed here. In addition to my usual work duties, I have also been actively involved in municipal politics for eleven years, which has led to my current primary occupation as a released councillor of the statutory city of Přerov, where I am responsible for education, sports, and grant programs. I am an active member of the Civic Democratic Party, where I am also a member of the local and regional councils and have experience in dealing with top political representatives of the Czech Republic. At Palacký University, I now work part-time as a technical and administrative worker, responsible for scientific data management. One of my significant and visible roles at Palacký University Olomouc is chairing one of the most active labour union organizations. This has given me experience in labour law and both university and state legislation. I am also the founder of a successful spin-off business company specializing in the construction, production, and supply of specialized scientific instruments worldwide. These activities have allowed me to gain valuable knowledge in management, dispute mediation, politics, legislation, innovation, and international cooperation.

Including my studies at Palacký University, I have been involved for 20 years, and therefore I dare to say that I know this institution well enough, but I have not yet "ossified" and can offer a range of experiences from abroad and a very well-functioning municipal administration. I am convinced that my experience and knowledge could contribute to the further development of the university.

Outside of my professional activities, I am also a member of the Přerov Sokol and have been involved in volunteer activities at the Přerov puppet theatre for 30 years, where I have been the leader of the puppet ensemble in recent years. This activity has allowed me to develop my creative and organizational skills, as well as the ability to work with very diverse groups of people.

The reason for my candidacy is not a desire to become a rector but a desire to help our university and its development. I believe that my experience, knowledge, and enthusiasm for further development could be beneficial for Palacký University Olomouc.

## Analysis of the Current State of UP

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employees and students</li> <li>- Quality of teaching and science</li> <li>- Financial size and stability</li> <li>- Prestigious position</li> <li>- Portfolio of services and facilities</li> </ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unprofessional management</li> <li>- Inbreeding</li> <li>- Internal redistribution of finances</li> <li>- Unequal status of employees</li> <li>- Unequal remuneration of employees</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internationalization and digitalization</li> <li>- Development of social demand</li> <li>- Cooperation with the private sector</li> <li>- Sustainable development</li> <li>- Commercialization of scientific results</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal disputes and clientelism</li> <li>- Degeneration of the university environment</li> <li>- Litigation for unequal access</li> <li>- Financing of universities</li> <li>- Education legislation in the Czech Republic</li> </ul>

### Strengths

Among the strengths of UP are undoubtedly its exceptional personnel and economic strength. Statistical data shows that since 2015, the university has consistently had over 20,000 students, with a notable increase in recent years to over 23,000, where nearly 70% of all students have consistently been women. Regarding international students, UP has seen a significant increase from approximately 1,700 in 2015 to around 2,700, which is a positive trend. The number of graduates remains relatively stable. During the same period, the number of offered study programs expanded from 243 to 1,083, representing an increase of approximately 4.5 times. This indicates that the university is responding to societal demand by offering more specialized study programs, which can be considered one of its strengths. The university is one of the largest employers in the Olomouc region, with an increase from approximately 3,600 physical employees in 2015 to 4,200. When converted to FTE (full-time equivalent), this represents an increase from 2,800 to 3,100. This suggests a greater use of part-time positions. Even among employees, women predominate at UP.

The long-term trend of increasing applications for study, the growth in the number of international students, and the stable number of successful graduates demonstrate the high quality of education and science and competitiveness among higher education providers. Additionally, other educational activities, such as the children's university, the university of the third age, and lifelong learning programs, can be counted among the strengths in this area. UP is among the so-called Research Universities, where individual faculties and the university institute produce a significant amount of top scientific output and successfully secure funding in the hundreds of millions of CZK through project and grant competitions. Scientific teams and individual employees also regularly receive many prestigious awards for their scientific results. In the Olomouc region, UP has no measurable competition in these areas.

In terms of its budget, UP primarily manages public financial resources, with publicly available annual financial reports showing that operational subsidies from the state budget have gradually increased from approximately 2.7 billion CZK in 2015 to around 3.7 billion CZK in

2023, and total annual revenues have risen from approximately 3.7 billion CZK in 2015 to around 5.1 billion CZK in 2023. Adjusted for inflation over this period, it is clear that the growth roughly mirrors inflation, although it still lags behind. UP also possesses long-term tangible assets valued at approximately 13 billion CZK. From the above, it is clear that it is a financially exceptionally stable and resilient institution.

Another important strength of UP is its prestige and the so-called third role in society, where it significantly contributes to the life of the regional city and, to a large extent, shapes it. As a result, the university has considerable influence in various negotiations at the city, regional, and national levels. Its prestige and significance are also demonstrated through its many international activities.

An important strength of the university is also its wide range of provided services and facilities. The library, dormitory and canteen management, provision of preschool education for employees' children, psychological counselling, and many other services make UP not only a school but an institution that takes comprehensive care of its students and employees, creating high-quality conditions for study, work, and life.

## **Weaknesses**

The most significant weakness of UP is its long-term unprofessional management and Academic Inbreeding. Both the rector and members of the pro-rector team have been selected internally for a long time, and it is not certain that quality always prevails in the election. On the contrary, it is evident that some positions are filled based on political agreements, and the managerial and organizational skills of the candidates are secondary. As a result, the UP leadership, despite its best efforts, cannot effectively manage the university because it lacks the necessary knowledge and experience. This creates an environment conducive to non-transparent management and fosters clientelist groups.

Although UP is financially very strong and resilient as a whole, it uses a flawed and unfair mechanism for internal financial distribution, favouring some units over others. As a result, the wealthiest parts of UP continue to grow richer, while the poorest parts become poorer. This flawed system also contributes to unequal employee remuneration (see below). The so-called "Opatrný fix" distributes finances using a key that no longer reflects reality, and funds obtained for science are not distributed according to the real merits of individual units, while there is a decline in scientific performance at some units and an increase at others. The general handling of financial resources is also long-term unsatisfactory, with some faculties saving large amounts of money on their accounts, even for building constructions that should be addressed by a central fund. In recent years, UP has irretrievably lost hundreds of millions of CZK due to unusually high inflation (with total funds of approximately 2.5 billion CZK and annual inflation of up to 18%, the value reduction is close to 0.5 billion CZK).

Another weakness is the unequal status of employees, both in terms of gender and between academic and non-academic staff. Statistical data shows that while the ratio and predominance of women and men among scientific and academic staff vary significantly between faculties and university institutes, women predominate among so-called other employees in all units, including central ones. The representation of women among physical employees at individual faculties ranges from 42% to 64%, with only the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Physical Culture having a share of women among employees below 50%.

Although women predominate among students and employees at UP, this is not reflected in the occupancy of leadership positions, where the trend is the opposite. The rector and all deans are exclusively men. Women are represented in pro-rector and vice-dean positions, except for the Faculty of Science, where vice-deans are exclusively men. In some vice-dean teams, women even predominate, which is true for the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education, and at the Faculty of Health Sciences, the entire vice-dean team consists of women. Although the specifics of individual workplaces must be considered, there is demonstrably unequal representation of women and men, requiring deeper analysis as it may indicate unequal treatment. Similarly, the unequal status of employees concerning their categorization as academic and non-academic staff must be considered. The objective external cause of unequal treatment is the law on higher education, which grants significantly higher rights, better working conditions, and vacation entitlements to academic staff. Unequal treatment of employees is also evident in their remuneration, which directly contradicts the law. Until recently, each faculty at UP even had its own salary tables, openly showing that people received different pay for the same work at different workplaces. This entirely illegal situation was eliminated, among other things, due to my objections, and the university now has a single common salary table. However, inequality in remuneration remains and does not seem likely to change significantly in the near future. It is also worth noting that in 2021, a survey was conducted among UP employees, revealing that approximately 30% of respondents had encountered some form of bullying at work, and 10% had experienced cases of sexual harassment. Follow-up group interviews were conducted, but their conclusions were never published.

## **Opportunities**

Opportunities for the development of UP include internationalization and digitalization, and I intentionally combine these two issues into one. Statistical data shows that the proportion of international students is increasing, as is the proportion of study programs taught in a foreign language (from 18 in 2015 to 223 in 2023). Continuing this trend is desirable, not only for international students but also for domestic students, who can better prepare for the modern international environment, where borders between countries often almost no longer exist. However, UP as a whole is generally lagging in internationalization. For example, the Academic Senate webpage in Czech and English differs significantly, when it contains only minimal information in the English version, with no resolutions or meeting invitations. The digital environment at UP is therefore not user-friendly for foreigners, and this also applies to many internal regulations and other information that is important for foreigners. Although this is not unusual in the environment of Czech universities, it is a shame – especially at a time when artificial intelligence tools can solve this more easily than ever before (just as AI helped me with translation of this document).

Another opportunity is the societal demand for education and cooperation with the private sector, where artificial intelligence will also play a significant role in the future. It is estimated that the labour market will change significantly due to the development of artificial intelligence, with more than half of the jobs that today's children will perform not yet existing. As can be seen from statistical data, UP is capable to adapt its educational program offerings to societal demand and labour market needs, which will be crucial for future development. Developing and deepening cooperation with the private sector can also bring new students from among current employees of private companies, as well as opportunities to prepare UP students for specific jobs and to solve specific problems.

Sustainable development is also an opportunity for UP, both in terms of the sustainable development of the institution itself and in terms of preparing graduates who are experts in this field, which is currently highly desirable for ensuring a quality future for society as a whole. The university should focus on sustainable development both within its buildings and overall operations, as well as in the field of science and research, which will lead to the development of new green technologies and focus on the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

An important area for the future development of UP is also the quality and systematic commercialization of scientific activities results. Although the UP Science and Technology Park partially addresses this area, there have not been significant successes compared to prestigious universities. According to public information, only 12 spin-off companies have been created at UP in the past 32 years, while a comparable number was achieved at Charles University in 5 years only.

## **Risks**

The most significant current risk, which is already partially reflected in declining of the evaluation indicators and rankings, is internal conflicts and clientelism at UP. Internal conflicts mainly concern the artificially maintained conflict between the Faculty of Science and the CATRIN institute, which seems to be maintained by only a few individuals and shows potential signs of clientelism. These virtual conflicts drain a significant amount of human resources, with employees often spending a lot of time on endless rebuttals to endless and repeatedly debunked "arguments" to fight for UP property, for which there is no real fight at all. This threatens the performance of affected employees, which can significantly impact the quality of the educational process and scientific activity. This is also related to the high risk of the most productive employees leaving for other workplaces, which would cause irreversible and potentially fatal damage in both areas. A significant risk is also the transfer of top students to other universities that allow them to have supervisors at the CATRIN institute, which the Faculty of Science at UP prohibits, and such cases are already occurring.

Another significant risk is the potential degeneration of the academic environment due to Academic Inbreeding, i.e., the fact that graduates and/or lifelong employees of the university itself are most often selected for university leadership and other important positions. This can lead the university community to close itself off in an isolated social bubble, without a critical perspective and external experience, which can lead to the gradual failure of its bodies and the destruction of the quality of education and creative activity. Signs of this can already be observed, among other things, in the inability to set up control mechanisms effectively and the inability to respond adequately and take corrective measures in case of their failure or in case of discovering illegal activities.

A very current risk is also potential lawsuits for unequal treatment of employees, both in the area of fair remuneration and in the area of bullying (as mentioned in the "weaknesses" section). Any unequal treatment of employees is a significant risk for UP, as it can generate extensive financial and reputational damage in the event of potential lawsuits. For example, a lost lawsuit in 2024 resulted in damage amounting to millions of CZK due to the dean's violation of the law against an employee, or the nationwide initiative "Hour of Truth", which highlights unequal pay and the undervaluation and disparagement of humanities at universities in general.

Other significant risks include potential political intervention in the functioning of the university, which can be financial or legislative. Potential financial intervention involves the annual preparation of the Czech Republic's budget, where, on the one hand, schools have long pointed out the underfunding of public higher education, but on the other hand, the political representation points out the unequal pay of employees at universities and the unfair and incorrect distribution of finances within universities as the reason for the poor financial condition of some fields. This issue can easily be linked to legislation by lawmakers, leading to such a law amendment that the political representation gains insight or even partial control over universities and their internal processes. An example of this is the currently discussed amendment to the Higher Education Act, which responds to specific cases of problems at the University of Economics in Prague and UP (the faculty academic senate's refusal to make a statement on the proposal to dismiss the dean). If the university cannot solve its problems and these lead to the destruction of its functioning, similar legislative changes can be expected in the future, which may bring fatal risks.

## Specific Priorities and Goals for the Term of Office

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Weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified in the SWOT analysis essentially represent the main theses of my election program and the foundations of the issues I want to focus on. In many respects, we can be inspired by examples of good practice, both from our immediate surroundings, where there are many well-functioning municipalities, and from other universities in the Czech Republic or, for example, in the AURORA alliance. I enter the election contest with three key ideas: equality, justice, and responsibility, which are reflected in all my election theses and all my actions: past, present, and future.

### **Professionalization of University Management and Reduction of Inbreeding**

- Always select all team members based on quality, filling key positions through public competition, with the involvement of suitable external candidates (using professional headhunting agencies).
- Bring a professional manager from outside the university into the university leadership (ideally as a vice-rector) to achieve at least partial professionalization of management, inspired by the well-established management system of the statutory city of Přešov.
- Reduce the size of the vice-rector team and, conversely, allocate more time for vice-rector work. A vice-rector should have at least a 0.5 managerial position to have time to effectively dedicate to their responsibilities and not just "in their spare time." Provide management skills training for the vice-rector team.
- Close cooperation with the heads of individual rectorate departments.
- Regular meetings with deans and their training in management skills and legislation.
- Transparent and open meetings as a fight against clientelism, finding clientelist groups and effectively breaking them up.

### **Reconstruction of Internal Financial Redistribution**

- Re-evaluation of indicators A, K, and DKRVO to establish a gradual system that stabilizes the units in need and ensures a fair adjustment of the current state, which was fixed years ago, does not reflect reality, and favours some units at the expense of others.
- Gradual application of the new financial redistribution to avoid significant fluctuations and destabilization of units: part of the indicator values will remain fixed, and part will be gradually updated according to the current state of the indicators, progressively increasing the unfixed part.
- Establishment of a central construction investment fund, into which a percentage of all unrestricted income will be transferred. University units will no longer finance constructions themselves, but constructions will be carried out centrally based on priorities determined through regular meetings with deans and directors.
- Gradual reduction of enormous faculty funds to prevent their unnecessary devaluation due to inflation, and instead, effectively invest the funds in university development.

### **Unequal Treatment of Employees and Employee Matters**

- Regular meetings between the rector and labour unions, close cooperation with them, and the conclusion of a new collective agreement. For important decisions concerning employees, always request and attach the opinion of the unions.
- Immediate establishment of the position of a university ombudsman for both employee and student matters, support for the functioning of ombudsmen at faculties focusing not only on students but also on employees.
- Ensuring the availability of psychological assistance not only for students but also for employees.
- Support for the professional education of employees and the enhancement of their qualifications.
- Conduct a new analysis of equal opportunities for employees.
- Where legally possible, rectify the unequal status of academic and non-academic staff.
- Establish rules for equal pay, set a standard scope of work and job duties so that the same volume and quality of work in the same positions are rewarded equally, regardless of the financial popularity of the field.
- Hold a publicly accessible discussion between the rector and employees at least once a year.
- Support the expansion of current or establishment of another university kindergarten.

### **Study, Internationalization, and Digitalization at UP**

- Evaluate societal demand and respond flexibly by opening new study programs and closing or limiting outdated and duplicated ones, supporting the development of undervalued but socially crucial fields (e.g., non-medical healthcare fields).
- Fight for quality conditions for doctoral students, especially dignified financial support that allows talented students to live well and start families.
- Increase the number of study programs taught at least partially in a foreign language, especially English, modernize study programs, and introduce artificial intelligence tools.
- Support for cooperation and student mobility, support for international joint degree study programs, support for student associations.

- Improving services, especially quality student accommodation and other services of the Dormitory and Canteen Administration, supporting the digitization of the library, e-resources, and supporting cultural and sports activities within UP facilities.
- Regular meetings between the rector and student representatives, with at least one publicly accessible discussion with students per year.
- Create a custom university artificial intelligence tool that allows quick and efficient work with all public information, standards, and UP websites in a multitude of languages.
- Introduce at least bilingualism (Czech and English) in the records and materials for meetings of all key university bodies, especially academic senates.
- Ensure at least an approximate written translation of streamed sessions and meetings into English (e.g., AI-generated subtitles).

### **Sustainable Development**

- Support for the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and the promotion of study programs and research related to them, motivating new research and new study programs to focus on these areas.
- Support and implementation of energy-saving measures for UP buildings and operations.
- Support activities aimed at raising awareness of social responsibility and effective sustainable development.
- Support and recognition of volunteer activities.

### **Science Activities and Application of Their Results**

- Motivation for interdisciplinary cooperation, with CATRIN serving as a bridge connecting the scientific activities of the entire university for the benefit of all its units.
- Support for excellent scientific teams as one of the main pillars of a research university, support for junior research teams and junior research grants.
- Restoration of the university-wide technology transfer team with representatives from all units, their cooperation, and education.
- Implementation of Open Science standards and data management within all relevant units of the university.
- Transformation of UP Science and Technology Park and the establishment of a subsidiary "Special Purpose Vehicle" company at UP, which will focus on applying research results in practice and support the creation and functioning of spin-off and spin-out companies, in which it can also financially invest (see the example of the successful Charles University Innovations Prague a.s.).

### **External Relations**

- Close cooperation with universities in the Czech Republic for mutual inspiration, development, and examples of good practice, as well as for joint negotiations with political representation.
- Cooperation within the AURORA alliance and other international areas.



## Rectorate's Management Strategy

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A strong university needs a strong and professional rectorate that everyone can fully rely on. Therefore, it is necessary to review its functioning, identify problematic or non-functional components, and make the necessary corrections. This is an area that would greatly benefit from a professional manager in the vice-rector's team, or alternatively, the services of high-quality external audits can be utilized. The main points I would focus on are:

### **Rector's Team**

As stated in the election theses, I require that members of the vice-rector's team have at least a 0.5 managerial workload dedicated to their vice-rector agenda. Team members will be trained in managerial skills. Team members will be selected through a competition to ensure the team is composed of the best.

### **Organizational Structure**

The entire organizational structure needs to be reviewed, evaluating the performance of individual sections and the quality of their activities. For example, I believe that the Internal Audit department repeatedly fails in its activities and delivers poor results. If the executive is to rely on control and audit, the quality of the respective section must correspond. Furthermore, I can imagine merging the legal department and public procurement to streamline their activities. I also have doubts about the change that took place in a highly non-transparent and hasty manner in the position of the UP bursar. The review of the organizational structure should take place in 2025, with potential new settings from the beginning of 2026.

### **Transparent Communication and Cooperation**

Regular meetings of the rector and their team with the heads of rectorate sections and their counterparts within the university units. Open and fair communication is necessary, without behind-the-scenes negotiations and politicking. Only in this way the credibility that rectorate has lost in recent times can be restored.

### **Efficient Use of Resources**

Emphasis must be placed on the efficient use of resources within all UP units including rectorate. This includes financial, material and human resources. Currently, there are many duplicated agendas at UP, and I am convinced that their effective mutual cooperation is not functioning, which needs to be addressed. Part of the efficient use of resources is also the intention to create a central investment fund managed by rectorate and used based on the prioritization of actions according to agreements with individual university units. The rectorate budget is currently perceived as high, which can be justified by providing services and support to components – however, these must have the quality and scope corresponding to rectorate's financial demands, and I am not convinced that this is currently the case.

### **Cooperation with Academic Self-Government**

Open and effective communication with the academic senate. Materials for meetings will be delivered on time and with necessary quality, or they will be postponed. They will be published to the maximum possible extent so that all employees and students can familiarize themselves with them. Regular meetings of the rector with senators to obtain feedback and constructive

criticism. Regular participation of the rector in the meetings of the academic senate committees so that members can ask questions about the submitted materials.

## Long-term vision for UP

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We must invest in our students and staff, providing them with the best possible education and support so that they can reach their full potential. Our university should always offer top-notch study programs that are up-to-date and reflect the latest knowledge and trends in various fields. At the same time, we should support the professional development of our staff through training, workshops, and other educational activities.

As a research university, we must also focus on developing our research capacities. This includes not only supporting existing research teams but also creating new interdisciplinary teams capable of addressing complex problems of the modern world. We should further aim at obtaining prestigious grants and funding that will enable us to carry out ambitious research projects. We are already beginning to succeed in this, and it is desirable to help each other and learn from one another.

In the area of innovation, we should more effectively support the transfer of technology and research results into practice. It is necessary to motivate both staff and students and to create conditions for the establishment of spin-off companies and startups that will utilize our research results and bring them to market. The university should not only be a place where new ideas and innovations are born but also a place that can realistically bring them to life and apply them in society.

An important aspect for the future is also international cooperation, where we should strive to establish new and strengthen existing partnerships with leading world universities and research institutions. This includes exchange programs for students and academics, joint research projects, and joint study programs. Our university should be open and accessible to the world and actively participate in the global academic and research community.

Last but not least, we should also pay attention to sustainability and social responsibility. Our university plays an extraordinarily significant role in the region and can easily become a social leader in sustainable development, ecological and social responsibility.

**If we want to be truly successful, we must not set low goals and be merely a regional school. Palacký University Olomouc should strive to at least match Charles University in terms of quality in education, research, and innovation, and to strengthen its position and prestige. This vision is ambitious, but I believe that with our high-quality students, staff, and excellent facilities, we can achieve it together. Let the next Nobel Prize that comes to the Czech Republic go to our university.**