

## Introduction of the candidate and motivation for candidacy

I am Peter Tavel, university teacher, psychotherapist, scientist, religious and priest

### History connected with our university

I have a long-standing connection with the oldest Moravian university. I studied psychology and theology at our university (I became a civil engineer before that in Slovakia) and subsequently completed my doctorate, habilitated and obtained the title of professor (clinical psychology). I have been working at Palacký University Olomouc for more than 10 years as a teacher, researcher and manager. I have been a member of the Academic Senate of the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology (AS CMTF) for a long time, a member of the Academic Senate of Palacký University Olomouc (AS UP) for two and a member of the Palacký University Olomouc Scientific Board (VR UP) for two terms. I was Dean of the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology for two terms.

### Management experience

As far as my managerial experience is concerned, shortly after my ordination to the priesthood, I became the superior of the largest monastery in Slovakia (in Košice). After moving to Austria, I became superior of the monastery in Retz, rector of the Dominican church there, and in time was entrusted with the care of two parishes. At our university I led a number of projects, and for two terms I was dean of our theological faculty. I am currently Vice Dean for Project Management and Director of the Olomouc University Social Health Institute (which I founded). I am a guarantor of postgraduate and doctoral studies, guarantor of psychotherapeutic training, principal investigator and national representative of the DIPEx methodology. I am the managing director of a limited liability company, but I am prepared to resign if I am elected rector.

### Motivation to candidacy

I have decided to run for Rector of UP because I want to contribute to making the University a modern university that promotes growth, innovation and open communication, where everyone can feel safe. I have been approached by several people in my entrusted inner circle. I'm not sure I would have gone into candidacy of my own – I probably wouldn't have considered it at all. I don't see myself as an "ideal choice". I know for a fact that there are better, more qualified people than me at our university. But they're not going into this election. I've thought long and hard about my possible candidacy. And in the end, I decided to give the nod of approval.

The dominant motivation for me is the Catrin conflict, which is definitely not just about property. I have a desire to "unfreeze" and renovate, the university. The university needs relief and change. A change of perspective. I am sorry to hear about the dismal situation surrounding the CATRIN Science Center - I confess that this fratricidal, self-destructive and senseless struggle has motivated me most to step out of my comfort zone and engage. The atmosphere at the university is not what it was just a few years ago. And I could go on. I perceive a number of things that deserve to change. I have an idea to revitalise student clubs - and students can breathe life into the whole city. I am concerned about the declining scientific production at UP. I want the university to be conscious of current issues (security,

ecology, artificial intelligence) and to take part in public debates - there are few experts from UP on CT24. I want to rehabilitate the devastated "internationalisation" and to set the evaluation of science in such a way that we can actively influence the level of our own income.

My motivation is positive. After many conversations, I am optimistic. Our university exists even after the rule of fascism and socialism and will survive the increasingly polarized contemporary society, which is unfortunately reflected in the atmosphere at our university. November 17th left us a legacy to build on.

I believe that Palacký University Olomouc can (once again) be a university where students and staff feel safe and supported. Where everyone will be open to innovation and will be used to communicate transparently. Together we can create a space for growth and modern education. My value pillars are published on [petertavel.cz](http://petertavel.cz).

## Analysis of the current state of the UP

In this analysis, I do not want to substitute annual reports or other analyses that are continuously sent to the Ministry of Education. There is no doubt that there have been improvements in some areas. I will list a few observations that are important for UP.

### The atmosphere of latent conflict

The current state of latent conflict at the Faculty of Science and Catrin has several levels. One level is the property division. Several of the proposals put forward by the Rector were not approved by the AS UP. So far, it has not been possible to find a way that both sides would accept. The second level is emotional. Both sides of the conflict live in different optics and decisions are influenced by feelings of injustice, unfairness, envy. This is related to increased levels of paranoia and hostility. I would venture to say that even if the first level (material) is resolved, the second level (emotional) will still persist for a long time. The way forward is mutual self-reflection, dialogue and reconciliation. The third level is the polarization of the atmosphere in UP, within the individual faculties, which affects the decision-making in the various boards on different agendas. The fourth level is doing harm externally. I am convinced that the conflict damages the reputation of UP and serves as a pretext for reallocating individual funds and obtaining grants. I would add a fifth and perhaps most important level: because of the chronic conflict and hostile atmosphere, members of the academic community lose their joy, enthusiasm to create, hope, lightness and commitment.

### Students and their needs

In the last two months, focus groups have been conducted at all faculties of UP in order to determine the needs of students. Here is a short summary of the main findings.

- **The burdensome topic of the conflict between the Faculty of Science and Catrin.** Students of multiple faculties feel harassed by the conflict between the Faculty of Science and Catrin. They do not understand the conflict and feel that more important issues are not being addressed. They "don't care about politics" and feel that teaching and students are overlooked. The students of the Faculty of Science are

being drawn and indoctrinated into conflict by individual teachers. They are afraid of expressing their opinion (neutrality, indifference) on the grounds that it would backfire on them. Students also feel the tension between individual teachers.

- **Poor quality of teaching.** Students were critical of individual teachers. They feel that evaluation is meaningless because it has no impact and no consequences. They are not interested in evaluation.
- **Lack of awareness.** The way of informing about individual events at UP is complicated and it is difficult to find out what is organized at individual faculties and departments. They would prefer a portal with an overview of all events.
- **Communication between faculties.** Communication between faculties is fragmented, which complicates access to internships and inter-faculty activities. Students request more consistent and timely information about key events such as state exams and internships.
- **Obsolescence and lack of clarity of technology platforms.** Technology platforms such as STAG, Moodle and faculty websites are often cluttered and outdated. Students prefer a more intuitive environment and up-to-date information, ideally shared via social networks, especially Instagram.
- **The lack of clarity of the Newsletters.** Newsletters are not fulfilling their purpose, they are overflowing and missing key information. Students would appreciate, for example, a monthly newsletter, highlighting the essentials for the whole month or 14 days.
- **The impersonal approach of the teachers.** The personal approach of lecturers varies - it works better in smaller faculties than in larger ones where students feel anonymous. Conflicts between lecturers negatively affect the learning atmosphere.
- **Inconsistent rules for practices.** Approaches to internships are not uniform - at some faculties they take place during classes, at others in students' free time. Students also criticise the unclear rules for recognition of internships for international students.
- **Lack of cooperation of external teachers.** External teachers often do not reflect the needs of students and do not update study materials. This leads to frustration and loss of motivation.
- **Under-appreciated research collaboration.** Research collaboration should be transparent. Students demand clear conditions for collaboration if they are to contribute their time and work to the teachers' research.
- **Improving mutual relations.** Mediation and supervision could help resolve conflicts between teachers so that they do not interfere with the learning process.

### [Declining trends in science](#)

Recently published international rankings show a downward trend for our university. There are other indications. The university's scientific research is declining. Even the level of Internal Grants Agency (IGA) support shows a downward trend. As an example, I present (Figure 1) an overview of the development of IGA funding for 2019-2024 by faculty (the best performing faculties are declining in the long term). Figure 2 shows a comparison of how the decline is reflected at each institution compared to 2023 (UP is below average).

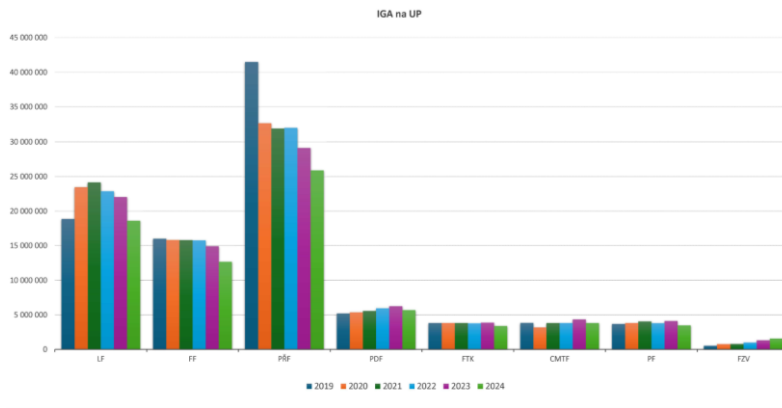


Fig. 1. Overview of IGA funding development for 2019-2024 by faculty.

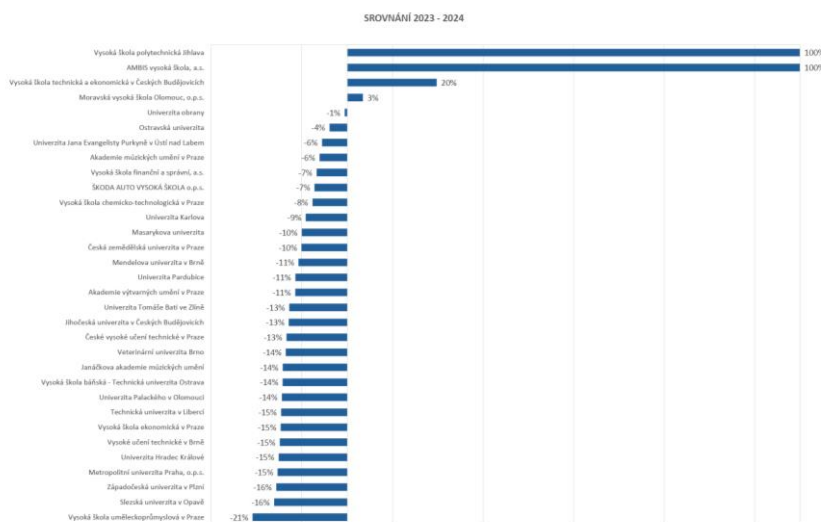


Figure 2: Decline at each institution compared to 2023.

### Inequalities in academic pay

The analysis<sup>1</sup> of inequalities in academic pay shows that there is no one factor alone that explains the pay gap, and there is no one measure that can straighten out the discrepancies (p. 4). At a number of universities, the analysis identifies a faculty that is significantly behind the others – at UP it is the Faculty of Science (p. 21). Figure 3 shows the differences between the different disciplinary groups of the faculties in the support of VVI (p. 36). Similar differences are also shown in the share of the salary that is generated by the economic intensity coefficient.

<sup>1</sup> Stiburek, Šimon et al. An analysis of differences in academic staff salaries between faculties of higher education institutions in the Czech Republic. 2024.

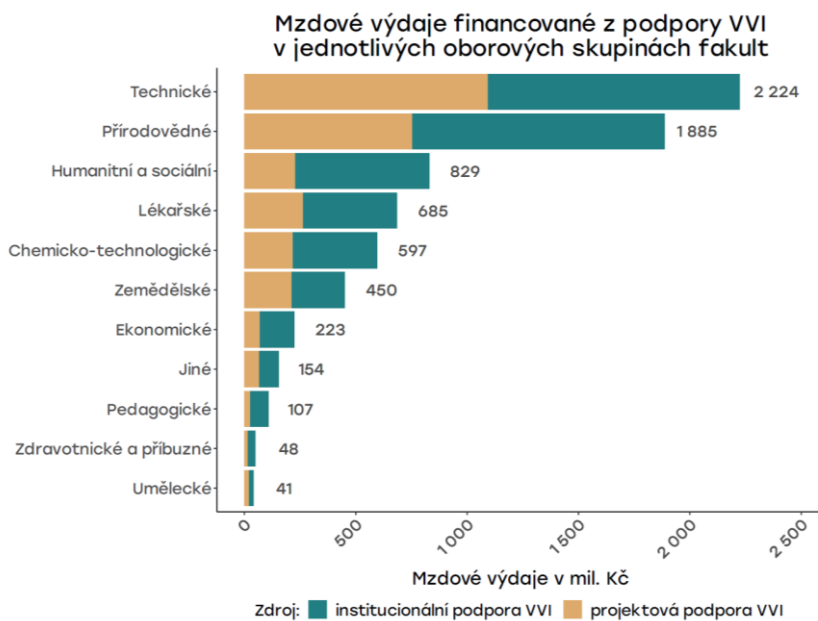


Fig. 3: Differences in salary expenditure for individual faculty groups.

When considering how to approach the comparison of inequalities in the wages of academic staff, it is necessary to take into account similar analyses and it will also be necessary to set uniform criteria for individual positions at UP.

### Specific priorities and objectives for the term of office

My goal is to develop a modern, inclusive and dynamic university that provides an environment for students, academics and other staff to grow and innovate. A university that thinks first and foremost about the social impact of what it does. I want to promote open communication, transparent decision-making and collaboration across faculties and disciplines. With years of experience in psychotherapy and counseling, I know how important mental health is. I want to help create a university where students and staff feel supported and safe.

#### The case of the Faculty of Science and Catrin

Goal: Within a year, resolve a burning issue that harms everyone.

Within a year, I will solve a problem that has long burdened the university internally and externally. I consider the case of the Faculty of Science and Catrin to be a key problem for our university. I do not consider a substantive and legal solution to be sufficient. The key is reconciliation and emotional rapprochement.

Specific steps:

1. Actively enter into negotiations with both sides and with the senators of the UP Academic Senate (half a year of intensive work) so that the negotiators will be accepted by both sides.
2. Expose myths and half-truths, communicate openly and with dignity, and gain the support of the academic community.

3. Make a decision (while maintaining the applicable legislation and regulations). Better to make a decision with a mistake than not at all.

### Teaching and students

Goal: Listen more to our students and change the structure of the programs we offer. They need to be more reflective of future needs.

I will focus on the primary mission of the university - education - and its connection to the needs of society. In particular, I would like to listen to the students who founded the Strike Committee on 17 November 1989 and brought about key changes in UP's modern history. The students of that time brought an ethos of freedom and change to the campus, which they, led by Rector Josef Jařab, managed to bring to life in a short period of time.

Specific steps:

1. Create a communication platform for regular meetings with students (e.g. regular coffee with the Rector).
2. Reconsider the number and focus of study programmes (to take into account the trends of the Ministry of Education and to support current needs, e.g. in the field of informatics or health care).
3. Encourage the creation of other forms of learning (e.g. greater use of online environments, artificial intelligence (AI) or micro-certificates that respond flexibly to societal challenges).

### Science and research

Goal: Our university must once again become a scientific research leader. We will reverse the current trend.

We must do everything we can to reverse the downward trend in science, research and innovation. It is reflected in various indicators. Although the university is increasing in some absolute numbers, it is decreasing in relative numbers within the country.

Specific steps:

1. Create a simple and transparent way of evaluating and rewarding science.
2. Focus on current challenges (EU security, climate change, AI, ageing population).
3. Support activities that are in the spirit of the forthcoming science evaluation methodology (ERC, Horizon, foreign cooperation, etc.)

### Sources

Goal: I will start working on changing the approach to university funding. I will look for resources outside the traditional areas.

I will focus on finding resources outside the Ministry of Education – from other ministries, from abroad, from the private sector and from the municipalities. If the university responds to the needs of society, the volume of these funds will naturally increase..

Specific steps:

1. Support the establishment of spin-offs, respectively the implementation of current legislation.
2. Create conditions for win-win collaboration so that ideas are not taken outside the university.
3. Active communication with the political, social and business sectors.

### Staff

Goal: I will systematically change employee remuneration so that it is fair across the university.

I'll address the pay gap between faculties. I will also listen much more to technical and economic staff - they have little representation on university boards and their needs are overlooked.

Specific steps:

1. To make up for differences in staff remuneration caused by the adjustment of the economic intensity coefficient of study programmes.
2. Reconsider the allocation of the outdated „A+K“ contribution (from 2013).
3. Restructurise the Rector's Office and help streamline the work of the technical and economic staff. I consider the Rector's presence at the Rectorate to be important. The principle of regular open doors with the Rector.

### Rectorate management and management strategy

I see the Rector's Office as the central administrative and management body of the University. It provides comprehensive support for the academic, research and educational activities of all eight faculties and other university units, such as research centres, the university library and halls of residence and canteens. Its main task is the strategic management of the University, the implementation of key projects and the administration of operational matters so that the University can fulfil its mission to be a centre of learning, science and social progress.

The organizational structure of the Rectorate<sup>2</sup> is a proven structure and in my opinion there is no need to change it (at least at the beginning). Another thing is the occupation of each area by the respective vice-rector. In all likelihood, I do not intend to nominate any of the current vice-rectors. In selecting vice-rectors, I will base my selection on what the candidate has already accomplished in his or her lifetime in the relevant area. I have a few types, but I do not intend to make them public at this stage. After numerous interviews, I have also

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<sup>2</sup> The organisational structure of the Rector's Office consists of. It provides administrative support to the Rector and his/her College. **The Economic Department.** It manages the University budget, ensures financial flows between faculties, controls management and prepares financial reports for the University management and control bodies. **Strategic Development Department.** Plans the long-term goals of the University, submitting grant applications and managing projects funded by European and national sources. **Legal Department.** Provides legal support to all faculties and units of the University. **Department for Science and Research.** Coordinates scientific activities at the University, promotes cooperation with research institutions and the business community and manages grant projects at national and international level. **Department of Communication and PR.** It is responsible for the promotion of the University, managing the website, communicating with the media and organising various events.

developed a list of people I definitely do not intend to approach. On the evening of Jan. 22, I will invite all senators to discuss the prospective vice rectors and I will listen sincerely.

## Vision of the long-term direction of UP

In the stated "Specific Priorities and Goals for the Term", the concentration is on the main challenges and future directions that will set and the long-term direction of UP:

- 1. Flexibility of education.** Introducing new study programmes in online and English environments that reflect the needs of the current labour market. Use of more flexible forms (e.g. micro-certificates).
- 2. Social relevance.** Sensitivity to societal needs (e.g. security, ecology, AI, ageing, Ukraine) in both education and research. Increased engagement in solutions and in society-wide discussion of current issues.
- 3. International status.** Raising the prestige so that the University is recognised not only in Europe but also globally. International cooperation. Focus on grant resources from abroad. Identify countries for foreign cooperation also in the field of education.
- 4. Environmental sustainability.** The aim is to reduce the energy consumption of buildings, increase recycling and promote green activities.

### A challenge for science

The Government is currently developing the *Concept of Institutional Support for Excellence at Selected Universities and within the Czech Academy of Sciences* (hereinafter referred to as the "Concept"), which aims to increase the competitiveness and innovation-based economic growth of the Czech Republic. This Concept should be the goal for the direction of science at our University as well. Especially the emphasis on excellence (ERC, Horizon, internationalization etc.). Each university has its own motivations, which are reflected in its own trends. At the university level, students and teachers can use the predictive and stabilising methods of teaching..

### Establishing a long-term and stable remuneration methodology

In 2026, the EU directive will bring major changes to the way workers are remunerated. While one impact will be to level out some of the differences between staff in the same positions in different faculties, this change will have a much deeper impact on staff demands and job descriptions.

In the long term, this will lead to a new work culture and job evaluation, which will increase the competitiveness of job offers, especially in faculties where incomes have been lower. A methodology is needed at UP.