

Brief formulation of the goals of Michal Bulant, candidate for Dean of the Faculty of Science for the period 2026-2030

Dear Senators,
Distinguished members of the academic community,
Dear colleagues from the Faculty of Science of Masaryk University,

I would like to present to you my intentions, which I would like to carry out in my role as Dean to contribute to our joint efforts for further development of the Faculty of Science and its departments with the aim of bringing the quality of research and education closer to leading universities in Europe.

Goals in the field of Education

Motto: *"(...) to be a university demanding in its study requirements, whose graduates are successful personalities, with promising careers and an active approach to life (...)"*
(Masaryk University Vision 2028)

By its very nature, the Faculty of Science is an institution where education is strongly linked to research, to which our students are very often guided already during their studies. At the same time, we have long observed an unbalanced demand for applicants, which generally tends to decrease in STEM fields, while in most "bio" programs we are forced to reject many promising applicants. Related to this are the activities already being developed by the faculty for high schools and their students, but I am convinced that these activities need to be grasped and supported in a more systematic and comprehensive way.

During reaccreditations, I intend to support the **preparation of larger study programmes**, following typical approach of foreign universities (especially in undergraduate studies and where conditions are suitable), with more flexible movement of students between study plans or programmes (where it makes sense in terms of content, available capacity and progression of the students). The challenge in the coming period will be to meaningfully incorporate the use of **AI and big data processing** into educational offerings across faculty disciplines. Here, there is also a need for more intensive collaboration with the Faculty of

Informatics (which is likely to face a decline in interest in studying classical "programming" fields), in addition to the already accredited Bioinformatics.

In accordance with the MU Strategic Plan and the Faculty's Long-Term Development Strategy, I intend to continue to support the quality of learning and teaching, which is a prerequisite for the success of our students, by:

- Evaluate the form of the admission procedure (regarding the possibility of strengthening the disciplinary and motivational aspects).
- The role of guarantors and programme councils is crucial for the development of programmes - in cooperation with MU and national authorities and taking into account the specific situation of the faculty, the requirements for guarantors and, in particular, their powers need to be clarified so that guarantors (or guarantor teams) can actually manage the development of the programmes entrusted to them.
- In view of the strong role of professional education at the Faculty of Science, various forms of feedback from our partners (employers and graduates) into curriculum innovation and updates should be further strengthened.
- Further strengthen cooperation with lower-level schools (especially secondary schools), develop the concept of faculty schools and prepare the establishment of a clinical high school (essential for teacher training) in cooperation with other faculties (especially the Faculty of Arts).

None of us is **an excellent teacher** automatically, good teachers need to be nurtured - although we have a number of very good teachers at the Faculty (including those already awarded with the Rector's or Minister of Education's awards), I consider it important to further emphasize this component of the "first role of the University" and to share and further promote good practice in teaching:

- Appreciate teachers and improve teaching at the faculty, using the wide range of training offered by the CERPEK university centre within KompassMUNI and by supporting the community of active teachers at our faculty.
- To develop faculty programs using funding from OP JAK and other MU programmes to disseminate and support teaching innovations.
- Establish a new Vice-Dean for Learning and Teaching position, who will be responsible for developing this area and coordinating a community of active teachers in addition to formal accreditation of degree programs.

I consider **training of future** (especially) secondary school **teachers to** be an important part of the faculty's degree offerings. Here, in recent years, our faculty (after a long period of conservative approach) has seen a significant improvement in teaching specifically oriented towards future teachers, including a strengthening of the pedagogical component of education (all in line with the national concept). At the same time, it is necessary to repeatedly emphasise the need not to give up on proper subject-specific training (i.e. to oppose the voices "the most important is to prepare a good teacher personally, the subject

is secondary"). The aim should be a clear and flexible path to the teaching profession (including lifelong learning and further teacher education):

- Prepare a new accreditation reflecting the changed national standards and competency framework for teacher graduates; collaborate significantly in this especially with the Faculty of Arts.
- To continue and further develop cooperation with faculty schools and use their "experts from practice" in our own courses.
- Actively participate in national discussions, especially in the ongoing reform of the framework curricula for secondary schools and the setting of conditions for the education of future teachers, including the contract funding for these study programmes.

Objectives in the field of Doctoral Studies, Science and Research, Research Infrastructures

Motto: *"the world's technologies need to be filled with the world's people"* (ISAB MU 2024)

In this area, I am following up on objectives of the current faculty management formulated in *the Long-term Development Strategy (May 2021)* and the contract concluded between the Dean and the Rector linked to them (together with the outputs of the internal evaluation of research and doctoral studies), whose planned outputs are clearly and reasonably formulated as *1. Strengthening the international competence of research at the faculty and 2. Completing the reforms of doctoral studies according to the MU strategy and international standards.*

Among the strategic research goals, I select those where I consider central faculty support to be essential, including budgetary interventions:

- Research evaluation and identification of strong research topics.
- Supporting the involvement of scientists in international projects (ERC, etc.).
- Attracting new excellent staff, strengthening internationalisation.
- Building and developing capacities for excellent research, research infrastructures.

Here I welcome the proclaimed **emphasis on promoting excellence** and the first successes in the ERC area after a not very successful period (especially in comparison with Ceitec or Charles University). I believe that GAMU and the Rector's "grant office" are able to support quality applicants very well, the task of the faculty management will then be to provide support within the faculty, both in terms of project support and mentoring (internal and external).

In recruiting outstanding new staff, I intend to develop a system of **"seed funds"** to financially support their establishment, using the capabilities of GAMU and with an emphasis on long-term equality of opportunity between disciplines.

Access to research **infrastructures** is crucial for research at the Faculty - here we need to support and fulfil the intentions detailed in Goal 3 of the Faculty's development strategy, in particular to appropriately set the status and funding of the Preclinical Centre and to use the unique experience with EIRENE infrastructure coordination in the discussion on setting the conditions for the operation of infrastructures at MU, in which the Faculty of Science, together with Ceitec, should be a natural leader.

Last but not least, it is necessary to complete and continuously evaluate the functioning of the reform of **doctoral studies** and to further strengthen its interdisciplinary character - significant changes in the financing of doctoral studies are currently underway (especially with the introduction of the so-called doctoral study income), which is associated with pressure to make the selection and guidance of doctoral students more effective and to successfully complete their studies; a consistent approach to the requirement for doctoral student mobility and its support is a matter of course. Recognizing that the Faculty of Science has long been a major player in the field of doctoral studies at the university, it is necessary to work on its further development according to the agreed university policy (implementation of the supervisor standard, thesis advisory committees) and using the specific recommendations for our faculty resulting from the internal evaluation of science and doctoral studies in 2023 (restructuring of programmes into larger units, preparation of a "PhD school", harmonization of the set conditions and approach of the doctoral boards, greater internationalization).

Internal Governance objectives

Motto: *"(...) will be an example in its internal culture, in its ability to reach consensus, in the harmonisation of its components for the benefit of (...) the whole and in the integrity of the working and learning environment."* (Masaryk University Vision 2028)

In the area of internal administration of the faculty, I consider it necessary to conduct a thorough **analysis of central activities** – not exaggerating the usual emphasis on reducing bureaucracy (which needs to be kept in mind especially when dealing with external actors), I want to focus primarily on the revision of internal processes with regard to their efficiency, i.e. cost vs. utility, estimation and risk management, and especially on the division of competences and responsibilities between the dean's office and departments. I consider the role of the **directors of the departments** as crucial - the managers who, in most of the Faculty of Science' departments, take care of units comparable in size or income to smaller MU faculties. We have to set conditions for that task, whether in terms of administrative background or the necessary (real) competences. I see the directors of the departments (along with other members of the faculty management) as the most important partners of

the dean for his decision-making and I would set the frequency and form of joint meetings accordingly.

I also intend to focus intensively **on the innovation of budgeting at the faculty**, where I consider it desirable not only to distribute the allocated funds (which inevitably happens at a relatively late stage of the year), but to prepare a strategically understood budget with a medium-term (reasonably stable) outlook in cooperation with the departments' directors, enabling the departments to bridge the volatility of project money using faculty funds (partly following the example of MU's investment financing, which, unlike most other universities, is able to build from its own resources).

My intention to analyse the activities in detail and to innovate the budgeting is also led by a look at the not entirely favourable development of the faculty budget structure over the last ten years (judging at least by looking at the available basic budget parameters), where, with a slight increase in revenues (PVČ by about 70 % overall, IP DKRVO by about 80 %), the faculty centralised costs have almost doubled (compared to the often problematised MU centralised deductions, which have increased by 50 %). At the same time, there has been salary stagnation in key academic positions of professors and associate professors over the last five years, where, unlike most MU faculties, the median total salary has only increased by units of percentages, and the Faculty of Science has thus moved from its position as one of the university's "salary leaders" closer to the university average. Moreover, in lower academic positions (especially lecturers), increased competition from regional educational sector can be expected, where a salary increase mechanism is set by law.

Objectives in Social Contribution and Communication

Motto: *"When you're in love, you want to tell the world. This is the essence of science communication."* (Carl Sagan)

In my experience as a person who has been involved in **supporting** and working with **talented pupils** for more than a quarter of a century (first in mathematics, gradually adding a coordinating role for other, mostly student, activities), the Faculty of Science is very active in reaching out to potential students and especially in working with them professionally. We are essential co-creators of successful projects (Bioskop, MjUNI, Festival of Science, etc.) and students under the guidance of the Faculty of Science staff are very successful, e.g. in SOČ competitions. I also appreciate the existing support provided by the Faculty of Science management for these activities in the form of co-financing of grant projects or student scholarships. Nevertheless, I believe that a more systematic anchoring of these activities is in order, so that they can function predictably and (with the awareness of the irreplaceable role of enthusiastic and active students) under the guarantee of the faculty, necessary in the times of increasing formal demands from the external environment. I see the analogy of the Touch Econ program, successfully implemented at ESF, as another suitable activity for final

year high school students, introducing them to the fields and environment of the faculty, which could also convince them of the suitability of studying here.

I would like to further encourage the **development of activities to strengthen the visibility** of the Faculty of Science in the public, especially by supporting colleagues who have the gift and ability for public outreach and popularization of science. In addition, I intend to establish and develop collaborations with key (especially regional) actors for the development of awareness and interest in the natural sciences - Vida!, JCMM, the STEM project, the Association of Secondary School Principals, etc. - and especially with our successful alumni as the best ambassadors of the quality of our Faculty of Science.

Finally

Motto: "The Faculty of Science of MU has the ambition to become the faculty of first choice in the Central European region for those who want to obtain a specialised and interdisciplinary science education, participate in innovative research pushing the boundaries of knowledge and the quality of life of current and future generations, and find meaningful employment in emerging fields on the regional and international labour market."
(Faculty of Science Vision)

Dear colleagues,

During the two terms of office under the current Dean, the Faculty of Science (as well as Masaryk University, universities in general and the whole society) has been facing many challenges coming from the external environment, which could not be taken into account in the strategic plans of universities or the programme goals of their managements. Despite the need to cope with these challenges, we have continued to develop successfully as a university thanks to our vision, commitment and shared values.

I consider my candidacy as an offer to the faculty community to take advantage on the knowledge and experience gained in the faculty leadership (Vice Dean 2001-2010), in the MU Academic Senate (Chairman 2012-2015) and in the University leadership (Vice-Rector since 2015). In all these roles, I have significantly contributed to important transformation steps, which included, among others, a major transformation of the Faculty of Science structure (research evaluation 2006, new Statute and budgetary rules of the Faculty of Science, largely still applied), and at the MU level, especially the implementation of the system of quality assurance after the amendment of the Higher Education Act in 2016. In my work, I always had in mind the benefit of the whole institution or workplace for which I was working with a vision of long-term goals. Also, thanks to this, I was successively approached with the above-mentioned job calls or to various national forums and working groups (see attached CV). I would do the same if elected and appointed as Dean of the

Faculty of Science - I am prepared to devote all the time needed to thoroughly discuss the necessary steps and then devote my energy and experience to work for the Faculty and the realization of the goals proposed above.

My ambition is to build a friendly and motivating environment, where activity in favour of the Faculty is encouraged and rewarded, for the fulfilment of the Faculty's vision.

If I gain your trust, I will be very happy to serve the faculty in this spirit as Dean.

Brno, 12 September 2025



Michal Bulant

