

THE START OF THE UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE TO THIRD MILLENNIUM

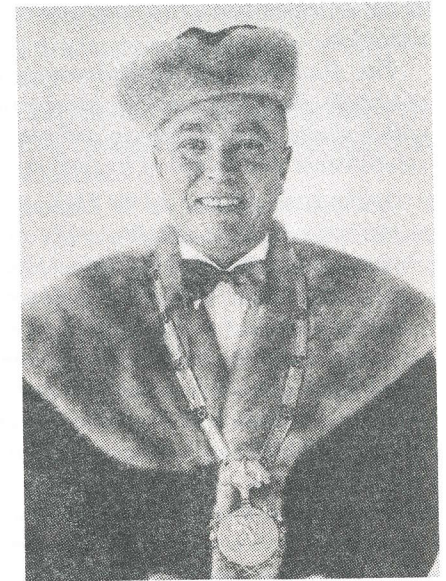
We all are witnesses of fast development of society around us, changes in political, social, economic and technical spheres. We understand that for existence of any subject in the society it is necessary to consider two major prerequisites that:

- the only constant of our times is a change which conditions and preserves*
- an equilibrium state of the given subject and environment.*

This hypothesis may be applied to universities as well. Their position is more difficult for that reason that in view of its mission they are oriented to future, expected changes. After all, by their scientific and research activities they have an implication on the future character of economy and environment and educate specialists who will contribute by their special pursuit to the development of given equilibrium state of different entities and their environment. They are striving for it at the same time in real time in the sphere of consultancy. On that account each university is a highly progressive institution, as on the basis of its primary research, cooperation with other research institutes and work with young people get ahead of the present practice. It must be, however, a little conservative, as in the sphere of knowledge it must continue in everything what has been discovered, generalized and searches for connections and trends of development.

In this view assignments of the University of Agriculture in Prague are as follows: to be priority institution preparing highly skilled specialists for individual components of agribusiness and for rural development at the level suitable for competition with foreign universities of corresponding orientation.

Long-term targets are undoubtedly the following ones: application of the latest methods of education, high-quality consulting services, development of



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fundamental and applied research, education of young scientists, fulfilment of the task as an independent examiner, initiation of meeting of experts at the university campus, to make possible the development of personality of students, teachers and other staff and creation of conditions for their self-satisfaction.

The University of Agriculture in Prague in the present time when it completes its transformation in accordance with the prepared development policy studies, has its strong and weak points and finds opportunities in its environment and threat of its further development as well.

As the strong points of the University may be considered:

- existence of new, quality study programmes and curricula of subjects comparable with foreign universities, as followed from evaluation report prepared by the University at Wageningen
- highly educated and fully-fledged staff of teachers and research workers stabilized on the basis of new competitions of tenders
- existence of numerous foreign contacts
- interest in graduates from our University
- interest of foreign partners in cooperation in the sphere of research and consultancy
- relatively high success in gaining domestic and foreign grants
- interest in the study for doctor's degree.

The weak points are for example:

- present lower expansion of basic research
- lower motivation of some young workers to rise qualification
- existing discrepancy of interests of some members of the staff due to involvement in pedagogical, scientific and research, consulting and business activities
- some misunderstanding of necessity of changes in the structure of study programmes, subjects, their diversification, just in dependence on changes of external situation, agrarian sector and situation on the labour market.

In relation to external background opportunities of further development may be found, that is in:

- enforcement of principles of market economy in agrarian sector and agrobusiness and hence by increased interest in graduates of economy and ecology
- change of structure of business entities towards finalization of production, consultancy and the entire agrobusiness
- change of property relations and changes in attitudes of the society to the functions of agriculture, particularly in view of landscape design, protection of the environment, and maintenance of infrastructure of the rural regions

- establishment of new special institutions and representation of professional specialists of school in its structures.

A partial threat may be:

- a partial underrating of pedagogical and research activities by the society
- relatively high move of young people to present more attractive occupations
- insufficient function of agrarian lobby.

Though the above characteristics is not full and exhaustive, but rather may serve as inspiration, weak points may be considered as reserves and threat as present limiting factors of the development.

In accordance with the above-mentioned in the future development the centre of attention is to be set up for materialization of long-term targets. This core of attention has to be an educational process and research activity going beyond the frame of faculties and departments and fulfilling an integration function. Educational, research and consulting processes characterize resulting behaviour of school, they represent functions of study programmes, structure of faculties, departments, service units, teaching staff and researchers. Demands for adaption to the environment induce a necessity of diversification of study programmes, bachelor's, engineer's and doctor's studies, introduction of training service and other forms of education. It is similar in necessity for diversification of the forms of research on one side, and establishment of heterogeneous research teams on the other side, what is an unambiguous competitive advantage of universities. It is necessary to understand that the road forwards is not the only and the best one, but there are many others.

The universities are composed of teachers, scientists, engineers and students. The aim of the management of our university and other faculties is to prepare such conditions that:

- everybody had knowledge, i.e. to respect fully the criterion of expertness in competitions of tenders, viva voce (to defend theses and „habilitation“ theses before examiners), research reports, etc., aimed at preparing the healthy competitive background;
- everybody might, i.e. foundation of such organizational structure, job descriptions and competence to make use of qualification prerequisites of all personnel and students;
- everybody wanted to contribute to the development of school, i.e. to start from such a psychological agreement where normative authority of school is conditioned by moral, not calculating participation;
- everybody kept up with increasing demands for level of education, i.e. to pay attention to the study for doctor's degree, scientific work, possibilities to sit for the „habilitation“ and professorship examinations (proceedings).

The condition for the above criteria consists in continuous follow-up of changes in external and foreign background as well, and connection with practice. A part of this observation should be not only sociological studies, but analyses of success in submission of applications for grants, surveys of employment rate and application of graduates, respecting their commentaries to adjust study programmes, demand for new subjects and so on.

In conclusion it should be said that fundamental task of the management of the school is to provide integration and coordination of activities of different faculties and departments through the research and consulting processes, creation the background for application of competitive relations contributing to self-materialization of all members of academic community of our university.

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