

Development of the Faculty of Medicine, Comenius University in Bratislava in the years 2015 – 2022



Dear colleagues

Several of you suggested that, as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University in Bratislava, I should establish a tradition of submitting written accounts to the academic community of the faculty (AC FM CU). I identified this, in my opinion, as an excellent idea. Therefore, I would like to present to you the deduction of my work, so that you can correctly evaluate the work of the Management of the FM CU during my tenure in the position of the dean. **I hope with this we will manage to establish a tradition for the future.**

I can proudly state that in 2015 – 2019 many steps were taken that significantly helped the development of the faculty. And although since the end of February 2020, together with colleagues from the Management of the FM CU, with members of the Academic Senate of the FM CU (AS FM CU) and with many members of the AC of the FM CU, we have had to focus primarily on solving the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, **even though in the last more than the 2.5-years, we made some critical measures for the development of the faculty.** Unfortunately, the main content of our activity had to be activities aimed at ensuring that teaching continues, and those sixth-grade students can finish their studies properly. During this period, we had to coordinate all the faculty activities with the pandemic measures of superior institutions, from the Government of the Slovak Republic to the Committee for managing the activities of the FM CU during the crisis period. A special paragraph of this summary will be dedicated to the period of the COVID-19 epidemic when it was impossible to focus primarily on the development of the faculty.

Since the beginning of my performance as Dean, it was not only my intention but the goal of the entire Management of the FM CU to create conditions for the complete fulfilment of the primary mission of our faculty – quality training of future doctors. I realized that **for high-quality teaching and scientific-research activity (SRA), it is necessary to let teachers and students work in a more cultural environment and provide adequate material and technical security and reasonable economic conditions.** They were almost at the level of the lowest-paid professions. That is why we started taking action at the beginning of 2015.

All along, my colleagues in the Management and I made sure that our activities were fully transparent. I placed great emphasis **on keeping the faculty in good economic condition.** I adhered to the principle that the **actions of the FM CU, must be supported by arguments** that result from a thorough analysis of the state of individual areas of the faculty's activity. **We also tried to preserve and build on all the good things our predecessors did.**

I present the principles by which we were guided in fulfilling our duties and an overview of our activities in the chapters according to the faculty's field of activity. **The summary of our work is quite detailed. It is a relatively long text that probably not everyone will read all at once. However, any member of the AC FM CU can find an area that interests him based on the names of the chapters and focus on it.** After the paragraphs evaluating individual areas of the faculty's life, there is a section dedicated to the specifics of the faculty's activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as an overview of our commitments, which we did not have time to complete due to the pandemic.

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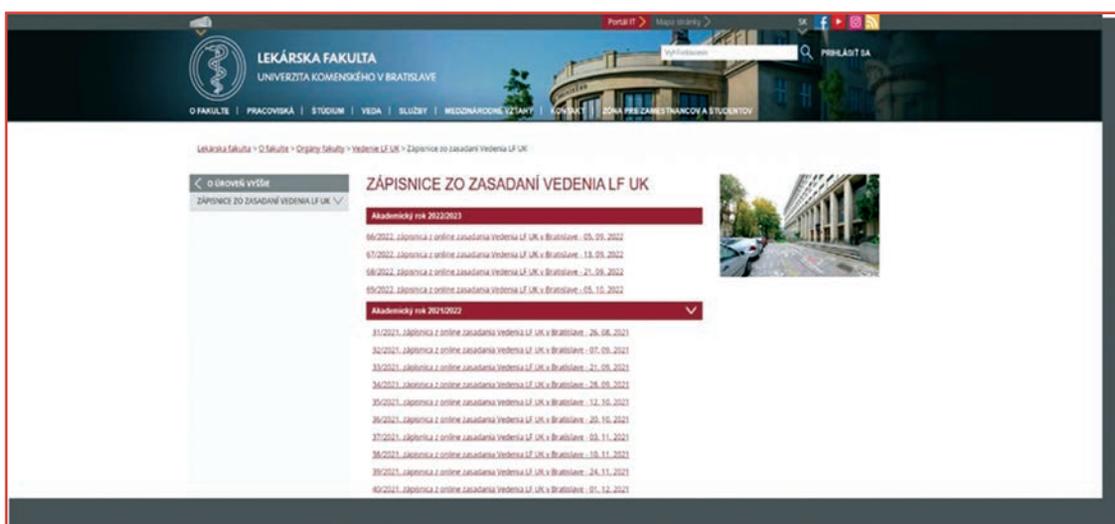
1. INCREASING TRANSPARENCY

We increased the awareness of the AO FM CU about the activities of the Management of the FM CU (M FM CU). **The minutes of the meetings are regularly and promptly published on the website of the faculty. From the first meeting, at least one student representative was regularly present**, which in previous years was rather an exception (in 2013 and 2014, out of a total of 11 meetings of the FM CU, according to the minutes stored in the archive, a student representative was present at two).

The number of meetings has increased significantly compared to previous periods, while from February 2019 until now, we had to hold meetings significantly more often due to the pandemic. Since February 2015, more than 200 M FM meetings have been held.

The members of the AS of the MF CU and, as necessary, also the members of the College of the Dean of the FM CU were regularly informed about the activities of the dean and the M of the LF.

Since the beginning of my term of office, my priority has been to ascertain the facts in all areas of the faculty's activities. The results of the analyses served us to take measures to



The minutes of the Faculty of Medicine, CU meetings are regularly published on the faculty's website.

correct the shortcomings to improve the activity wherever possible. In addition, it significantly helped us in our arguments in negotiations with superior authorities, which enabled us to ask for and often even invoke help from their side.

We have adopted several measures to ensure the maximum fairness and transparency of the admission procedure for studying at the FM CU. First, trips abroad ended,

and since 2015 admission procedures have been carried out exclusively on the grounds of the FM CU in Bratislava. The mechanism for handling test sheets has also been tightened in such a way as to exclude the possibility of unauthorized manipulation completely. In the last two years, also due to the COVID pandemic, a modern online admissions system provided by a specialized external company has been used.



The entrance exams were held in the Ladziansky auditorium.

2. INITIAL ANALYSIS OF THE STATE OF THE FACULTY AT THE BEGINNING OF 2015

Already at the first session of the FM, the relevant vice-deans were tasked with carrying out an analysis of the capacity of lecture halls and other teaching spaces, including their technical equipment and the equipment of institutes for pedagogical and scientific-research activities.

We found that in the academic year 2014/2015, 3,000 undergraduate students studied at the faculty, which strongly contrasted with 1,800 undergraduate students 15 years earlier (in the academic year 1999/2000). At the same time, we had the same but significantly more devastated premises for teaching theoretical and pre-clinical subjects.

We performed an analysis of the teaching conditions of clinical subjects in comparison with other FMs. At the same time, we found that in all six teaching hospitals, we have fewer beds available for the number of students than, for example, at Jessenius FM CU in Martin, FM UPJŠ in Košice and 1. FM of Charles University in Prague. Compared to the mentioned faculties, we lacked 0.1 beds per student, i.e. 300

beds for 3,000 undergraduate students. At the same time, our faculty annually prepares almost half of the graduates who study in the Slovak language at all medical faculties in Slovakia. In the years 2017 – 2020, it was 42 – 45%.

At the same time, we found that we have a significantly better ratio of the number of teachers to the number of students than other faculties of medicine in the Slovak Republic. In our faculty, we have one teacher for every 5.5 students. **We consider an adequate number of teachers to be one of the essential prerequisites for the quality of teaching, so we not only did not reduce the systemization of teacher positions but, on the contrary, according to the results of the analysis of the teaching load, we gradually increased it according to the needs of individual workplaces.**

Analysis of the publication activity of professional employees in the research showed us that only 2/5 employees published more than one current content publication per year. Based on these results, we changed staffing in the scientific and research activity (R&D) field. Some workers were reassigned to teaching positions, others to the positions of laboratory workers, etc.



The capacity of the premises of the institutes of the Faculty of Medicine, CU did not correspond to the number of students.

3. IMPROVEMENT IN THE ECONOMY OF FACULTY ACTIVITIES, OBTAINING PURPOSE SUBSIDIES

Since February 2015, we have strictly paid attention to the economy of the faculty's activities. And at the very beginning of my tenure, I had to make a fundamental change – specifically in the Head of the Department of Operations and Property Management of the FM. I discovered activities damaging the interests of the faculty, which I could not tolerate. From 2015 until now, this was the only significant personnel change I ordered as the dean.

We have strengthened AS FM CU's control function beyond its statute's obligations. In addition to the dean, contracts and payment orders are also signed by the chairman of the AS and the chairman of the economic committee of the AS FM CU (*"invoicing committee"*). We managed to implement several financially demanding activities in the framework of building renovations and revitalising the faculty area under significantly more favourable financial conditions than *"table"* prices. For example, the demolition of five devastated buildings in Sasinkova 2 and 4, which the University of Warsaw owned, was realized for less than

half of the estimated costs (for €174,859 compared to the official estimate of €362,937). A similar honest approach has repeatedly helped us save more money.

In addition to subsidies from the state budget and income from self-payers, we obtained financial resources for the reconstruction of buildings and grounds, as well as equipment for the faculty's workplaces, from special subsidies, which we repeatedly requested from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science of the Slovak Republic through the CU and by directly addressing the Minister of Education, who was repeatedly informed on the teaching conditions in writing and finally during his visit to the faculty. **For the reconstruction of the buildings of our institutes, we received special subsidies in the total amount of €1,575,000 (in the years 2015 – 2018, €800,000 and in the years 2019 – 2022, €775,000).** The mentioned funds covered a large part of the investments for the reconstruction of the buildings and the revitalization of the premises of the institutes on Sasinkova Street (including the replacement of windows and doors in the NTÚ (NTI) building and on Moskovska Street, for the equipment of the Institute of Virtual and Simulation Teaching, for the equipment of several institutes. We are currently implementing the procurement of equipment for institutes and departments from the funds of the PROMEGA fund (item 4B).



Dilapidated building of Parasitology.



View of the revitalized area.



Dilapidated UHB building.



The state after the removal of the UHB building. The FM CU reimbursed the costs for the removal of the building.

4. RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF FACULTY PREMISES AND ACQUISITION OF A NEW BUILDING FOR TEACHING

Immediately during the first week of February 2015, we asked the CU to allocate a vacated building on Moskovska 2 until FM CU was used. Although getting a new building for the Faculty of Medicine, CU was not easy, after a quarter of an effort, we succeeded in our intention and in May 2015, we started its renovation and classroom equipment for a total amount of €791,490.

We also carried out the necessary reconstruction of theoretical institutes on Sasinková street. On the building of old institutes in Sasinkova 2, a national cultural monument, we had the roof, attic (€500,034), facades reconstructed,



Dilapidated room of the building on Moskovska street...

and windows revitalized (€650,735). The personal elevator was reconstructed (€33,800), electrical installations were repaired at the Institute of Medical Chemistry and the Institute of Social Medicine (€98,000), the restoration and modernization of the Computer Centre cost €40,000, and also repair of the roof and interior of the building in the sports area was done (€18,000).

Further repairs and reconstructions were carried out on the Institute of Physiology, the Institute of Medical Physics, the Institute of Immunology as well as the Library of the Faculty of Medicine located in the UHB building, the Institute of Epidemiology and the Institute of Hygiene located in the Dean's office building (Aspremont Palace, a national cultural monument), where **reconstruction of social equipment and repair and restoration of the historic entrance hall and corridor of the Dean's office building at the cost of €261,000.**

We also expanded and renovated the Bratislava Medical Students' Association's premises.

We spent €1,601,197 on structural repairs/modifications/restoration of the STÚ buildings (Sasinkova 2) and the Dean's Office (Aspremont Palace).

In the interiors of NTÚ (Sasinkova 4), it was also necessary to reconstruct several institutes (i.e., Institute of Pathological Anatomy, Microbiology, Forensic Medicine, Pathological Physiology, Molecular Biomedicine, Institute of Simulation and Virtual Education, reconstruction of social facilities, etc., all in the amount of €588,048).

The revitalization of the area on Sasinková street included not only the demolition of 5 devastated buildings owned by the CU but also the destroyed and health-threatening UHB building (we reimbursed UHB the cost of its demolition – €115,879), sewerage repair, construction of parking spaces, sidewalks, residential stairs, wheelchair-accessible ramps. A new lawn was made in the yard with an irrigation system from a newly made own well, garden



...and view of the room after reconstruction.

improvements were made, new lighting of the area, a new decorative fence between the FM CU campus and the UHB campus, new garages were built, all for a total of €602,543.

The fountain was reconstructed and restored between the dean's building and the Medical Garden (last seen working only by the most senior faculty employees) for €11,928. Everyone can enjoy it again.

Together, we have invested almost 4 million EUROS in repairing and revitalising the faculty on Sasinková and Moskovska streets and the dean's premises in 2014-2022.

As part of the reconstruction work, we also repaired the fitness building, which, together with the tennis court, serves to improve the conditions for sports activities of employees and students.



Corridor in the dean's building before reconstruction...



...and view of the room after reconstruction.



The original ceiling in the vestibule of the dean's office before the renovation.



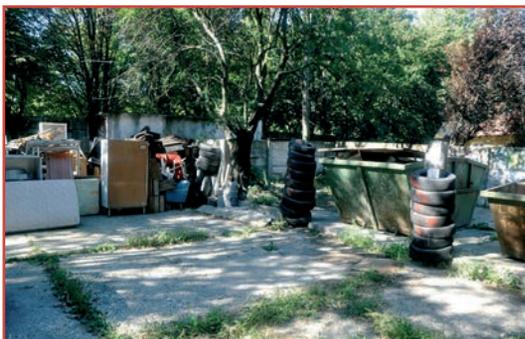
A view of the decorative ceiling after art reconstruction.



The BSM building before the reconstruct.



A view of the renovated BSM building of the FM CU campus.



Warehouse in the parking lot near the Large Auditorium.



State after the revitalization of the area.



Reconstructed and functional fountain in front of the dean's building.

5. IMPROVEMENT OF TECHNICAL AND INSTRUMENTAL EQUIPMENT OF INSTITUTIONS AND DEPARTMENTS

The analysis of the technical equipment of the institutes showed the need for investments in their equipment. **While in the years 2011 – 2014, devices for the institutes were purchased for €42,568, in the years 2015 – 2018, 11 times more funds were invested for this purpose (€471,097).** We continued to improve the spatial conditions and equipment for simulation and virtual teaching.

The most important financial items included a scanning electron microscope for the Institute of Histology and Embryology (€239,400), a birth simulator (€69,429) and a USG simulator with a realistic 3D imaging of pathological conditions (€165,504). In 2019 – 2022, we purchased additional simulators for €115,000.

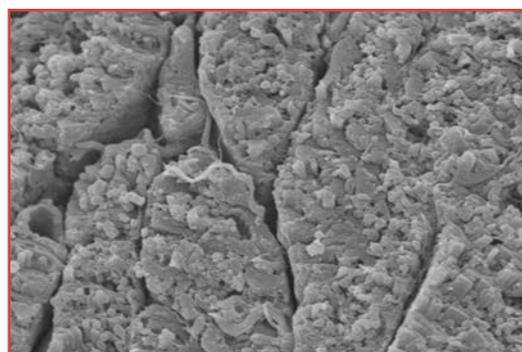


An electron microscope was purchased at the FM CU Department of Histology and Embryology.

In 2022, based on a transparent intra-faculty competition, we distributed €2,468,564 from the PROMEGA fund to 14 research teams. In addition, from this fund and other resources from the faculty, we financed technical equipment for teaching and scientific research at the Institute of Anatomy (€198,600) and the establishment of two new teaching centres at the Institute of Virtual and Simulation Education, 1 for internal medicine disciplines – €186,372, and 1 for surgical disciplines – €214,841).

In the years 2015 – 2022, we invested 8 million EUROS in the renovation and technical equipment of classrooms and laboratories, the reconstruction of buildings on Sasinková and Moskovska streets and the seat of the dean's office – Aspremont Palace, and the revitalization of the area on Sasinková street we invested 8 million €.

Other essential items were the following pieces of technical equipment: NGS sequencer (€71,988), equipment of the pre-clinical dentistry department (€43,730), two new



This electron microscope image of the myocardium.

dental sets (€32,028), archiving and visualization system for image transfer from operating rooms (Department of Otorhinolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery and Neurosurgery Department, each €27,500), instrumentation for molecular biomedicine in the premises of the BMC SAV intended for the work of the staff of the Faculty of Medicine, CU, microscopes for the Institutes of Pathological Anatomy and

Histology and Embryology (€21,000), a confocal microscope, etc. It was necessary to finance the repair of the angiograph in the Staré Mesto hospital (€61,000).

In total, we purchased equipment for €1,069,359 in 2014 – 2022. Almost half of this amount was dedicated to subsidies for the modernization of teaching.



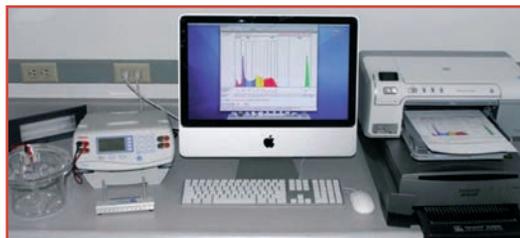
Equipment purchased for the Translational Research Unit II. Oncologic department of the FM CU and NOI.



Transfer from the operating room to the classroom at the Department of Otorhinolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery of the Faculty of Medicine, CU and DFN.



Haematological analyser Mindray BC 6200 purchased for the Institute of Immunology of the FM CU.



The Lipoprint device is used at the Institute of Medical Chemistry, Biochemistry and Clinical Biochemistry to divide lipoprotein subfractions to assess the level of atherogenic risk.

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6. IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING, ITS REFORM AND MODERNIZATION

Already at the first session of the FM, we dealt with the quality of teaching and the possibilities for its improvement. Poor participation of students in lectures was noted, so we looked for ways of more effective theoretical teaching. We decided to introduce online lectures. Their technical implementation was gradually solved, and **in May 2016, the first trial streaming of the lecture took place.** Our goal was to allow as many students as possible to watch the lectures.

The preparation above was only fully utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic, thanks to which we were able to start distance learning quickly. Later, the lectures were placed on the web so that students could access them throughout the semester, and upper-year students could also access lectures from lower years. At the same time, it was emphasized that the published lectures must be continuously updated, which will increase their quality.

There was also the possibility of modernizing teaching, significantly changing the one-way flow of information from teacher to student to interactive communication. Our goal was that, in the time allotted for the lecture, students who had already familiarized themselves with it on the Internet could discuss the topic and content of the lecture. Gradually, the theoretical teaching could be implemented as *“team-based learning”*, where students divided into groups would solve various medical diagnoses together.

At the meetings of the Faculty of Medicine, CU, **we repeatedly emphasized the need for interdisciplinary theoretical teaching** in such a way that pedagogues from other institutes and departments should be invited to lectures on individual subjects (e.g., for lectures on internal medicine, a pedagogue from the Institute of Pharmacology should be invited as needed, of pathological physiology, from the Department of Surgery; a neurosurgeon could be invited to lectures on neurology and vice versa, etc.). Such teaching

could gradually result in *“problem-based learning”* when individual medical problems would be taught in the presence of educators from several subjects.

In teaching clinical subjects, we planned to introduce *“simulated patient”* teaching, where one of the students, who would thoroughly prepare in advance and perfectly master the manifestations of one of the diseases belonging to the given subject, would rebuild the patient. His colleagues would take his medical history, analyze his condition, and suggest further examinations contributing to the diagnosis. In addition to virtual and simulation teaching, this method would partially bridge the deteriorating conditions of practical teaching of clinical subjects.

The planned study reform, its conceptual and ideological innovation, is theoretically fully prepared, some attempts were also made to implement the above-mentioned teaching innovations, but the period of COVID made it impossible for us to put the planned reform into practice. We were forced to solve problems so that teaching could continue and that students did not have to study for one semester or an academic year longer, which was especially threatening in the study program of dentistry.

Virtual and simulation teaching is one of the pillars of the modernization of the pedagogical process. It is one of the main supplementary methods for teaching medical students in general and is very helpful, especially in practical clinical teaching. Therefore, from the very beginning, **we made significant investments in its expansion within the existing Institute of Simulation and Virtual Medical Education of the FM CU and several departments. Currently, simulators and devices for virtual teaching are located in several teaching hospitals:**

1. ISVME (Sasinková) – 3 adult patient simulators, 1 childbirth simulator, 1 ultrasound simulator, and several simpler simulators for training skills
2. ISVME (Moskovská) – 2 laparoscopic simulators, 14 laparoscopic trainers with complete equipment
3. Institute of Social Medicine – several simpler simulators for training skills



Training on simulators.



Training on a laparoscopic simulator.



USG simulator.

4. Neonatology Department of Intensive Medicine FM CU and NÚDCH – 1 neonatology simulator, 2 neonatology simulators, and several simulators for training clinical skills

5. Children’s Department FM CU and NÚDCH – 1 pediatric simulator, several simulators for practising clinical skills

6. I Department of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Medicine of FM CU and UHB – several simulators, including a full-body simulator for solving complex patient care

7. I, III and V Internal departments of FM CU and UHB – 3 auscultation simulators (respiratory phenomena), 1 palpation simulator



The use of an interactive table („Body Interact“) in the teaching of students of the FM CU at The National Institute for Cardiovascular Diseases (NICD).

8. Children's cardiology department FM CU and DKC (n) – 2 simulators for training the airways of newborns and children

9. Cardiology Department FM CU and NÚSCH + I Internal Department FM CU and UHB – 2 SECTRA touch tables

10. Department of oncological surgery FM CU and OISA – 2 laparoscopic simulators.

Currently, **two new virtual and simulation teaching workplaces are being created within the Institute, one for surgery and the other for internal medicine disciplines**, as part of the Institute of Simulation and Virtual Medical Education, and a cardiology auscultation simulator is being provided.

A significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching is its purposeful organization and effective use of the time period specified in the schedule for its theoretical or practical part. We paid attention to the cooperation of the vice-deans and the study department in creating schedules with the managers of clinical subjects so that there would be no confusion regarding the time and place of lectures and internships.

Based on information about shortcomings obtained from students and teachers (meetings at the LF of the CU, discussions with ŠČAS, AS and the Dean's College), we have introduced the mandatory publication of topics and syllabi of internships so that all areas of the subject are discussed with students and that the same topic is not repeated more than once. For publishing syllabi of lectures and internships from all subjects on the website and for compliance with the content of theoretical and practical teaching, responsibility was assigned to the vice-dean for educational activities. An obligation was introduced that the internship attendance sheets should also include the topic covered during the internships.

The establishment of new departments at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases contributed to the quality of studies:

The Department of Cardiology of the FM CU and NICD

Department of Angiology of the FM CU and NICD

Department of Cardiology FM CU and NICD

7. EXPANDING STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF FACULTY ACTIVITIES

The possibilities of active participation of students in the evaluation of the pedagogical activities of the faculty have been significantly expanded by **our decision to the regular presence of their representatives (1 – 3 in number) at all meetings of the FM CU from the beginning of February 2015 until now.** The problems in the teaching process were thus identified already in the beginning. This information was supplemented by data collected through student surveys. **The methodology of preparing, filling in and submitting the student questionnaire was already discussed in 2015 with the president of SPAS.**

One of the surveys also took place during the **COVID-19 pandemic (April 2020), during which feedback from students to members of the M FM was obtained primarily at meetings and twice a week.** During the culmination of the epidemic, we also communicated daily. The survey was mainly aimed at obtaining information about the course, content and quality of distance education, but also the possibilities of students' access to teaching literature and problems with accommodation in a dormitory. Based on the survey results, an email was sent to principals with recommendations to observe the teaching time according to the valid schedule and to switch to teaching in the MS Teams environment as soon as possible. They were also sent a link with instructions on how to prepare a spoken lecture and how to upload it to MS Teams.

1796 students (60%) took the survey before the pandemic. In addition to the answers to the prepared questions, we also asked the students for verbal comments, of which there were several thousand. Their evaluation by pedagogic vice-deans and members of the Management of FM CU took several months. The students' suggestions were analyzed in detail, based on which corrective measures were taken, and the effectiveness was regularly checked.

With the measures taken, we eliminated various shortcomings:

Pedagogical vice-deans resolved student complaints about inappropriate teacher-student relationships, and if necessary, by dealing directly with the relevant teacher, in one case also with the participation of a lawyer from the Faculty of Law of the CU, and by temporarily suspending the teacher's teaching activities.

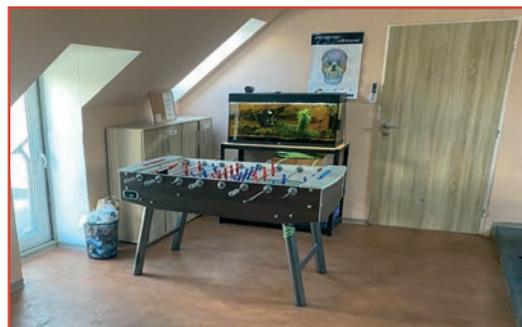
Adequate measures were taken in cases of non-compliance with the study schedule, including unequal conditions for the implementation of written exams for different study groups.

Missing textbooks and teaching texts in Slovak and English were prepared.

Problems with spaces for storing clothes and personal belongings of students during practical teaching of clinical subjects were repeatedly solved.

The principle of anonymity of the authors of suggestions and complaints was consistently observed.

We supported the activities of student associations, especially the activities of the Bratislava Medical Students' Association, which their representatives reported on at the meetings of the M FM CU. **We significantly supported the activities of the BSM: we expanded the association's premises. We financed their renovation, including replacing windows, roof repair and new equipment so that the headquarters of the BSM would be a worthy place not only for the association's work but also for receiving representatives of student associations from other faculties or from abroad.**



Renovated BSM rooms.

At the request of the students, we created a particular room for them for self-study in Moskovska street no. 2.

We solved the problems by accommodating students in dormitories with the Management of CU.

8. INCREASING THE FINANCIAL EVALUATION FOR TEACHERS AND RESEARCH WORKERS

Undignified salary conditions of faculty teachers for a long time made it difficult to get high-quality graduates, especially medical faculties, to work in the institutes. Getting a high-quality graduate of the faculty for clinical workplaces was becoming almost impossible. **We based our remedial activities on correcting the unacceptable situation among clinical educators by analysing the salary conditions of doctors, teachers of the Faculty of Medicine, CU and doctors who were full-time hospital employees. A detailed analysis - quantification of the share of doctors – pedagogues of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU in the provision of health care at departments and the determination of their share of remuneration compared to doctors-employees of hospitals brought unprecedented data:** A) in some departments, more than half of the health care was provided by doctors – pedagogues; (B) it turned out that our doctors – pedagogues

provided health care for only about a third of the salary(!), as documented by the result of analysis from one of the FM CU and UHB departments from 2017, where the doctors-pedagogues of the FM CU performed 15% of the volume health care of the departments and received only **5% of the funds** that UHB provided to the entire department for the provision of health care.

Our nearly two-year continuous argumentation with UHB representatives and the leadership of the Department of Health, above all personally with the Minister of Health, finally in 2017 was crown with success. The then Minister of Health then decided to increase the salaries of doctors-pedagogues of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU by improving their working hours in university hospitals (UN), which he enshrined in the new Articles of Association of the UH. In return, we agreed on fairer selection procedures for the positions of heads of joint departments of the FM CU and UHB. A strict parity composition of the selection committees was decided upon (further see chapter 10). **Several pedagogues described this agreement as a historical**



Článok II Postavenie prednostu

Prednosta:

- 1) je priamo podriadený rade riaditeľov. Po medicínskej stránke ho riadi medicínsky riaditeľ, ktorý zodpovedá za odbornú úroveň poskytovania zdravotnej starostlivosti v organizácii. Po ekonomickej stránke ho riadi ekonomický riaditeľ, ktorý zodpovedá za plánovanie, rozpočet a hospodárenie organizácie,
- 2) na základe poverenia štatutárneho orgánu zodpovedá za organizáciu, riadenie a úroveň zdravotnej starostlivosti poskytovanej pacientom na klinike s výnimkou prípadov zániku poverenia podľa článku I, bodu 6 druhá veta tejto časti rozhodnutia; v takomto prípade je odo dňa zániku poverenia prednostu až do skončenia jeho funkčného obdobia za organizáciu, riadenie a úroveň zdravotnej starostlivosti poskytovanej pacientom na klinike zodpovedný zástupca prednostu alebo iná osoba poverená štatutárnym orgánom organizácie,
- 3) je vedúcim zamestnancom zodpovedným za organizáciu, riadenie a odbornú úroveň procesu praktickej výučby v rámci príslušných študijných programov realizovaných na klinike a za výskumnú a vývojovú činnosť kliniky.

Strana 330

Vestník MZ SR 2017

Čiastka 48-55

- 6) So zamestnancami organizácie, ktorí sú vysokoškolskými učiteľmi vykonávajúcimi praktickú výučbu podľa zákona č. 131/2002 Z. z. o vysokých školách v znení neskorších predpisov, a ktorí zároveň poskytujú zdravotnú starostlivosť v organizácii uzatvorí organizácia pracovný pomer v rozsahu pracovného úväzku najmenej 0,50.

landmark in the history of the FM CU. The era of the so-called “school doctors” working literally “for a pittance” is over.

We directed the activities to increase the financial evaluation of teachers at the institutes to the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Slovak Republic. Since our efforts were unsuccessful despite the activity of the deans of all LFs, we decided to increase the personal evaluation across the board for all teachers of the institutes from the FM CU’s funds, representing a cost of €400,000 for a semester.

We expanded differentiated remuneration for the results of scientific research and teaching activities. We have increased the one-time rewards for publications in a current content journal with IF up to 0.99 from €400 to €500, and for each additional IF point from €66 to €100. We have increased the remuneration for publications in non-censored journals from €200 to €250, while we have also re-introduced a surcharge for an IF unit of €50. We have set the remuneration for a monograph/chapter in a renowned foreign publisher at €300 – 1,000.

the average salary €				
year	prof.	assoc. prof.	L	A
2015	1967.06	1683.08	1251.81	853.83
2016	2313.30	1847.35	1364.74	967.37
2017	2550.71	2031.26	1470.15	1057.74
2018	2772.99	2185.47	1628.26	1134.89
2019	3090.81	2468.04	1849.99	1351.71
2020	3359.87	2544.94	1914.15	1412.48
2021	3479.57	2721.16	1985.90	1447.80
Increase by	77%	62%	57%	70%

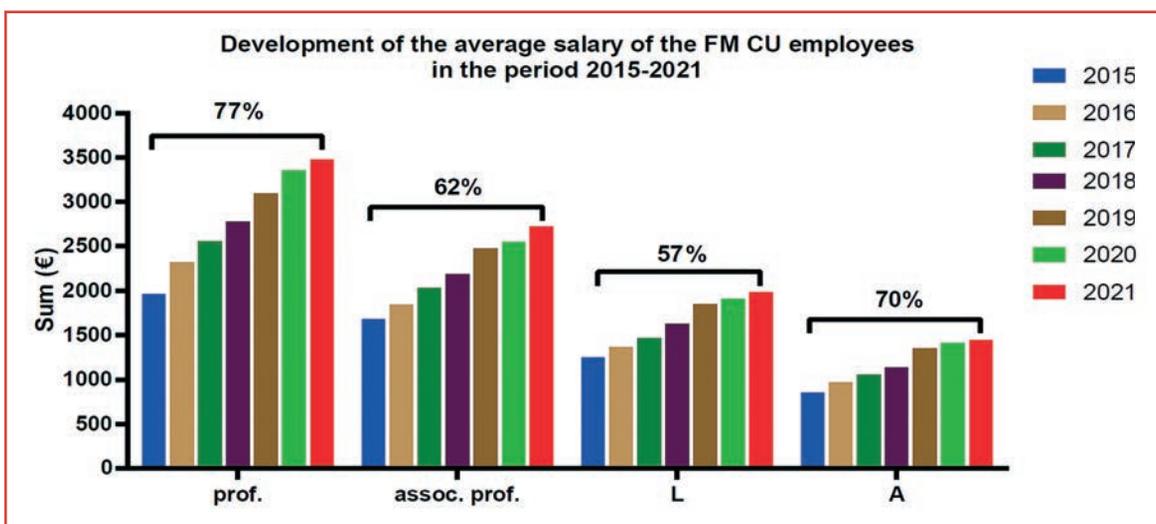
In addition, we have introduced another method of remuneration. For quality publications, we increased the personal rating for 12 months. The highest reward is €1905 per month.

Research employees, in addition to regular monthly remuneration for publishing, have a monthly remuneration increased by an additional €200 after meeting the publication criteria.

To obtain the academic title PhD, we increased the reward from €700 to €1,000 for getting the scientific rank of DrSc. from €1,500 to €5,000, €1,500 for qualification level II and €3,000 for qualification level I. We have doubled the

remuneration for obtaining a scientific-pedagogical rank, an associated professor from €1,000 to €2,000 and professor from €1,500 to €3,000. From mid-2015 to 2016, the total amount of these rewards was €279,346, and from July 2016 to June 2017 €329,000, for the following annual period, from July 2017 to June 2018, these rewards amounted to €502,800.

We have introduced new remuneration for successful supervisors of doctoral students. From July 2016 to June 2017, we paid out a total of €120,660, and this reward doubled for the following annual period (from July 2017 to June 2018). We paid out €239,400.



It is indispensable to emphasize that we implemented the above salary measures so that no teacher had his variable salary component (personal evaluation) reduced before 2015. Salaries have only increased.

Some pedagogues of the FM CU thus received almost €2,000 a month in addition to their standard salary.

In 2021, compared to 2015, teaching staff salaries increased by more than two-thirds on average. We spent

€8,648,535 on salary increases in the period 2015 – 2021, of which less than half – €4,309,909 – were used as part of the valorization. **Thus, more than half of the salary increase was realized thanks to individual remuneration for scientific research and teaching activities and a general rise in the positions of teachers in the institutes.** In addition, the salaries of clinical educators have increased based on the above – mentioned increase in their hours in hospitals.

9. FINANCIAL MOTIVATION FOR STUDENTS

Within the economic possibilities of the faculty, we also paid attention to the financial motivation of PhD students. and undergraduate students from the faculty's financial resources.

We increased **the incentive scholarship** for undergraduate students by 2 x 50 €, i.e., to the current 500, or € 300 per semester.

We doubled rewards from the 1st to 3rd place in the SSPW (ŠVOČ) sections in 2017 (from 100 – 200 – 300 to 200 – 400 – 600 €). We have introduced a new type of reward for an excellent SSPW result in the amount of €700.

When in 2020, as a result of the austerity measures of the CU, the award by the rector of the CU for **the best**

diploma thesis was not associated with a financial reward from the CU; a reward of €200 was awarded to the five students from the own funds of the FM CU CU.

We increased the number of students financially rewarded on the occasion of the IDS, t)(International Student's Day) to 3 students awarded from the CU, and we rewarded another 3 students from the FM CU's funds.

For **full-time doctoral students**, we have introduced a new scholarship *"for excellent results of publication activity"* for €1,500.

These measures also contributed to **the increase in interest in doctoral studies**. While **18** new full-time doctoral students were admitted in 2015, we admitted **50** new students to full-time doctoral studies this academic year.



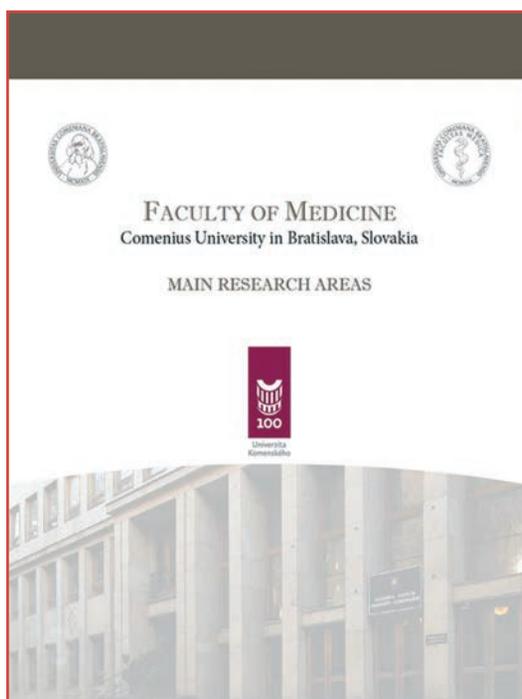
The student who won 1st place at the 60th conference of student scientific professional activity – Clinical section.

10. ACCEPTED MEASURES ON INCREASING THE QUALITY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND GRANT ACTIVITIES

At the session of the Faculty of Medicine held on September 2, 2015, a decision was made to establish a purpose-built facility of the Faculty of Medicine, **“Project Centre of the Faculty of Medicine, CU in Bratislava”**, to

intensify scientific and research activities, increasing activity in the field of grant applications and increasing the number of quality publications.

The material **“Main Research Areas”** was developed, which contains data on the most crucial research activities of the faculty to inform the FM CU workplaces of each other and the external environment, which should facilitate the conclusion of joint scientific projects.



Main Research Areas brochure.

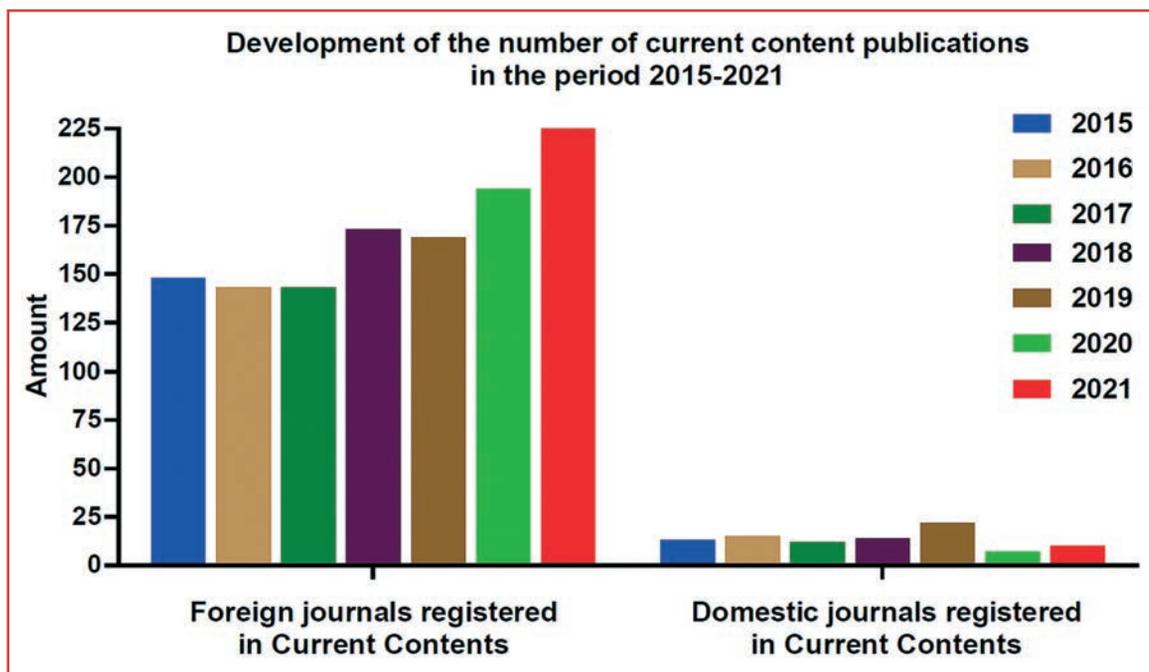
The principle was adopted that research staff should publish two publications of equivalent quality to CC publications per year.

The measures taken, including an increase in financial remuneration for a successful SRA (see point 5), led to an increase in grant activity and the number of high-quality publications, which significantly impacts the number of the faculty’s subsidies from the state budget.

The number of grants:

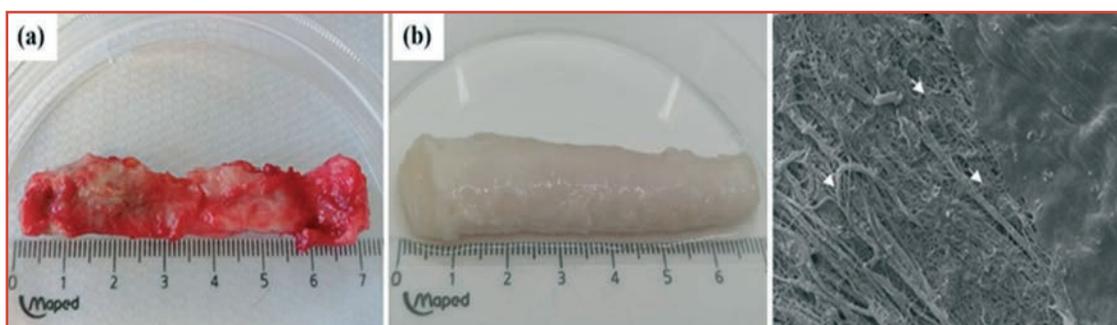
- APVV 2019: 40 (€ 906. 987), 2020 45 (€1,488. 825), 2021 43 (€1,377. 503),
In 2021 the second most successful faculty of CU;
- VEGA 2019 47 (€ 565. 094), 2020 40 (€ 644. 636), 2021 49 (€611. 923),
In 2021 the second most successful faculty of CU;
- KEGA 2019 9 (€ 107. 721), 2020 12 (€126. 479), 2021 13 (€126. 932),
In 2021 the most successful faculty of CU.

A call for the institutes and faculty departments was issued for the PROMEGA fund. Based on the assessment of the results of a transparent intra-faculty competition, the results of the research team’s scientific and research activities and the achieved significant responses, **14 intra-faculty projects were selected, for which capital expenditure on equipment in the total value of €2,468,564 was allocated.**

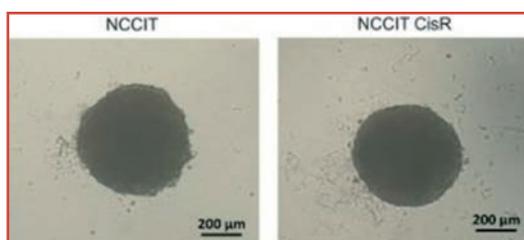


Differentiated remuneration for publication activity led to an increase in the number of suspended publications published by the staff of the FM CU.

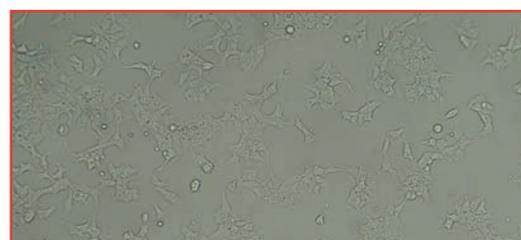
Some results of scientific and research activities at the institutes and departments of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU



An acellular urethra can serve as a scaffold for subsequent colonization with autologous cells to prepare a functional biological replacement of the urethra (Institute of Medical Biology, Genetics and Clinical Genetics, FM CU and UHB).

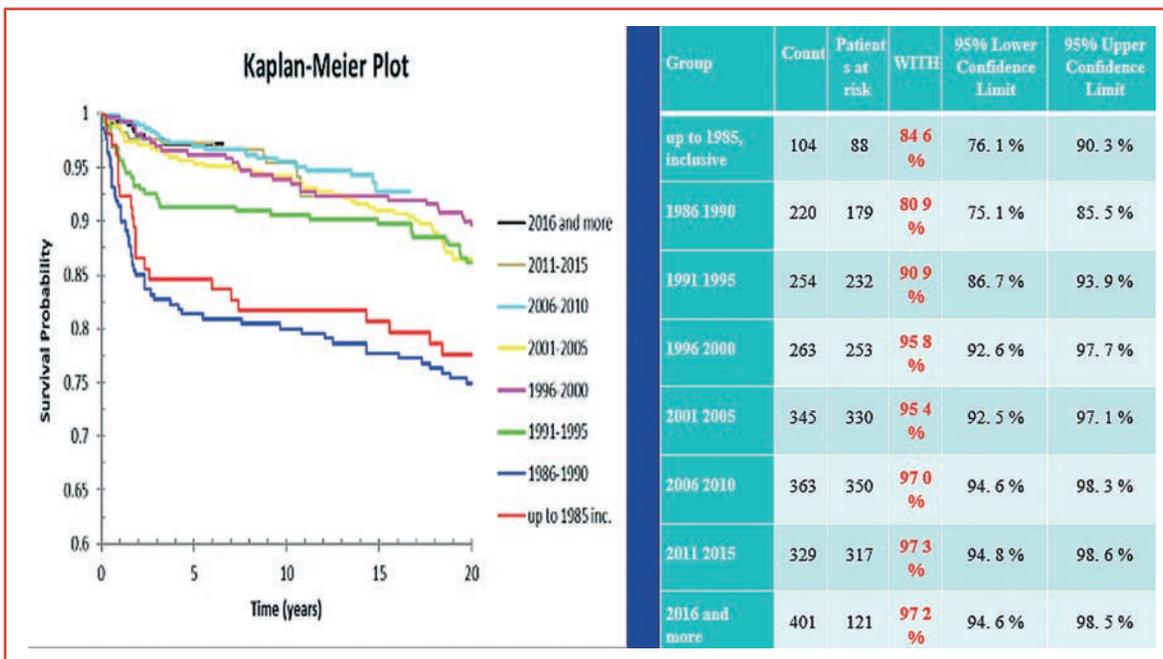


NCCIT and NCCIT CisR – 3D cultures of embryonic testicular cell lines and cisplatin-resistant ones derived from them (II. Oncological department of the FM CU and NOI).



NCCIT objective – 2D cultures of embryonic testicular cell lines.

**Development of 5-year survival
(own file – 2279 patients with testis tumour in the years 1970 – 2022) 84.6 – 97.2%**



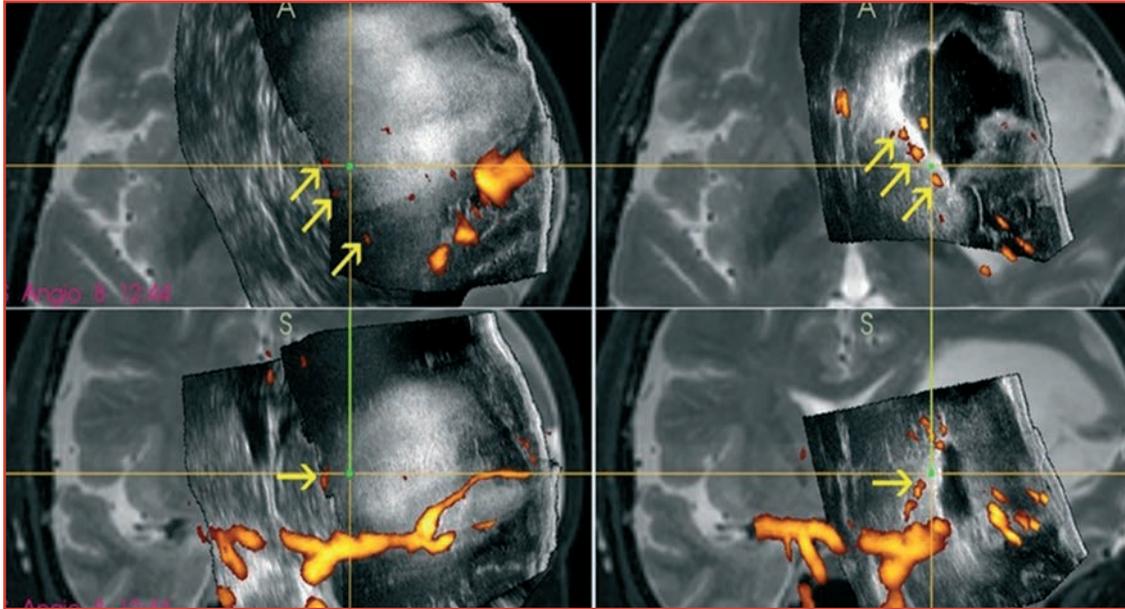
We consider this development to be highly favourable, mainly thanks to constant progress in early diagnosis and effective treatment of this malignancy within the framework of urological oncology (I. oncology department of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU and OISA).



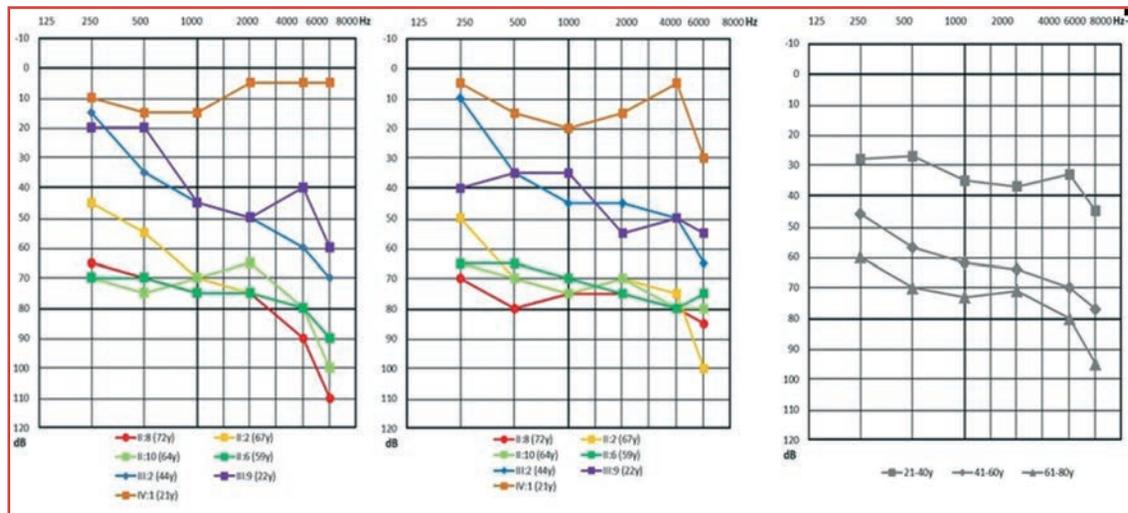
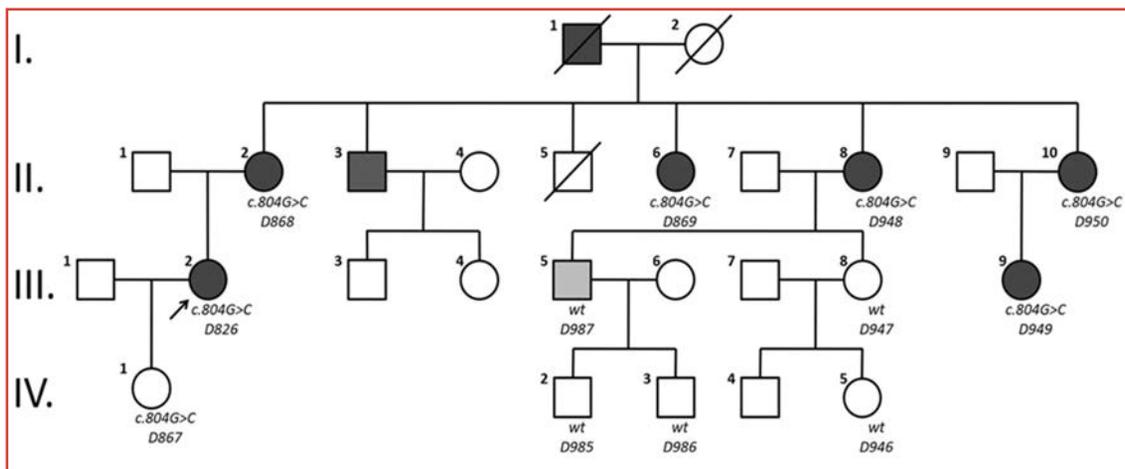
The innovative laparoscopic technique of spleen-preserving resection at the Department of Paediatric Surgery of the Faculty of Medicine, CU and NÚDCH.



Endoscopic resection of a tumour at the Department of Oncological Surgery of the Faculty of Medicine, CU and St. Elizabeth Cancer Institute.



Visualization of lenticulostriate arteries during the resection of a glial brain tumour (left before, right after completion of resection) using 3D navigated sonography (Neurosurgery Department of the Faculty of Medicine CU and UHB).



Discovery of a new pathogenic variant in the EYA4 gene in a family with a familial occurrence of progressive hearing impairment. Above – family tree, below – audiometry results for carriers of the gene variant (left and middle) and the model of hearing impairment progression in individual decades of life (right). (Department of Otorhinolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery FMCU and UHB).

11. DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Faculty of Medicine, CU, actively cooperates in scientific research and teaching activities with the following foreign universities. The current Management of the FM CU has expanded international cooperation but, of course, also continued the valuable work of the previous management:

- **New York University, School of Medicine, New York, NY** – By Memorandum of Understanding on the academic exchange of workers between the Faculty of Medicine, CU and the New York University School of Medicine signed in 2014, intensive cooperation developed. On its basis, in the years 2016 – 2018, the training of teachers of the Medical Faculty of the University of Bratislava in Bratislava was carried out for the introduction of simulation teaching on sophisticated patient simulators in the form of “hands-on learning” in the form of case studies and practical skills training, as well as the training of our teachers for the introduction of teaching using Objective Structured Clinical Examinations. In addition, since 2017, doctoral students of the Faculty of Medicine, CU, have been participating in research stays lasting several months at NYU workplaces. In 2017, representatives of the FM CU visited NYU, during which we held talks with the dean of the NYU School of Medicine, Robert I. Grossman, MD, about reform and new trends in medical education.

In the years 2016 – 2018, there were repeated stays of academic officials and teachers of NYU with lectures for students and teachers of the Faculty of Medicine, CU: Vicky Harnik, MD, PhD – Associate Dean for Curriculum, Ruth Crowe, MD, PhD – Director, Integrated Clinical Skills, Tom Riles, MD, PhD, Daniel M. Lugassy, MD and Grace N, MS, CNM, RN.

- **Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA** – Multiple PhD. students of the Institute of Molecular Biomedicine of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU completed several months of study stays at this institution.

- **University of Tennessee, Memphis, TN**

- Lecture stay of the professor of the Neurosurgery Department of the Faculty of Medicine, CU and UHB at the University Neurosurgery Department in Memphis

- Study stay of the assistant professor of the Neurosurgery Department of the CI and UHB at the University Neurosurgery Department in Memphis

- **School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences, University of Texas at Dallas, Dallas, TX - Staff**

As part of active research cooperation, the Psychiatric Department of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU focuses on social cognition in patients with severe mental disorders

- **The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway:** Neurosurgical Department of the FM CU and UHB, International (Norway, Germany, Italy,

Slovakia) multicentric study “*Ultrasound Imaging in Brain Tumor Surgery with the use of SONOClear Acoustic Coupling Fluid (ACF) Mimicking Brain Tissue.*”

- **Osteopathic Medicine (USA)** – written agreement and cooperation at creation of the MPH programme

- **Pediatric Haematology Oncology Unit, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, PA** – regular video conferences with



Awarding a commemorative medal to prof. Mary Ann Hopkins, Director of Education for the Clinical Sciences NYU School of Medicine.



Awarding of a commemorative medal to Elizabeth Robinson, exchange coordinator between NYU School of Medicine and FM CU.

the staff of the Department of Paediatric Hematology and Oncology, FM CU and NICD”

- **University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, PA** – Employee II. oncology department of the Faculty of Medicine, CU and NCI received a Ruth Crawford Mitchell fellowship at that institution

- **Dept of Medicine, Indiana Cancer Center Pavillion, Indianapolis, Indiana** – a collaboration with II. by the oncology department of the Faculty of Medicine, CU and NIC

- **Catholic University of Croatia**, cooperation on the project (New) ethical and social challenges of digital technologies in the health care domain (Digit-HeL) with the Institute of Social Medicine and Medical Ethics

- **University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust**, collaboration on an NIHR-supported project with the Department of Otorhinolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery FM CU and UHB

- **University of South Florida, Tampa, FL**, prof. Dha Zhi Wang as a visiting professor at the University Comenius

- **EUROPEAN CANCER ORGANIZATION, Belgium** + 41 other partners from EU countries – cooperation on the “*smart Card Application improving cancer survivors’ quality of life*” project, in which the Department of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology of the Faculty of Medicine, CU and NÚDCH is involved

As part of the Interreg SK-AT project, the FM CU cooperates with universities in Austria:

- **The University of Vienna, Department of Nutritional Sciences Austria**, cooperation on the bilateral Interreg SK-AT project “*Nutrition and healthy ageing – NutriAging*” with the Institute of Medicinal Chemistry, Biochemistry and Clinical Biochemistry, LFU

- **Medizinische Universität Wien, Austria**, cooperation on the bilateral Interreg SK-AT project – “*Integrated cross-border medical teaching of virtual and traditional anatomy*” with the FM CU Anatomical Institute

- **Within the framework of The European Cooperation in Scientific and Technical Research (COST) project, the FM CU collaborates with foreign institutions on several projects:**

- **University of Helsinki, Finland** “*Improving biomedical research by automated behaviour monitoring in the animal home-cage (TEATIME)*” with the Institute of Molecular Biomedicine

- **University of Muenster, Germany** “*Network on evidence-based physical activity in old age*”, with Institute of Hygiene FM CU

- **University Hospital Essen, Germany** “*Converting molecular profiles of myeloid cells into biomarkers for*

inflammation and cancer (Mye-InfoBank)” with the Institute of Pathological Anatomy FM CU

- **Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain**, “*Therapeutical applications of Cold Plasmas (PlasTHER)*” with the Institute of Molecular Biomedicine

- **Academisch Ziekenhuis Groningen, Netherlands**, “*EuropeanNetwork to Advance Best practices&technology on medication adherence (ENABLE)*” with the Institute of Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology of the FM CU

- **Trinity College Dublin, Ireland** “*Perinatal Mental Health and Birth-Related Trauma: Maximizing best practice and optimal outcomes*” with the Institute of Epidemiology FM CU

- **Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway** “*Towards an International Network for Evidence-based research in Clinical Health Research*” with the Institute of Social Medicine and Medical Ethics of the FM CU and with the Institute of Hygiene of the FM CU

- **Vienna Biocenter Core Facilities GmbH, Austria** “*Brillouin Light Scattering Microspectroscopy for Biological and Biomedical Research and Applications (BioBrillouin)*” with the Institute of Medical Physics, Biophysics, Informatics and Telemedicine of the Faculty of Medicine, CU

Several foreign professors gave lectures at the Faculty of Medicine, CU, outside the above-mentioned international cooperation. Prof. Gassman (Switzerland), prof. Seeman (Czech Republic), prof. Djonov (Switzerland), prof. Vainer (Russia).

12. PROBLEMS OF THE HOSPITAL RÁZSOCHY AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH PENTA HOSPITALS

Following the efforts of the previous Management of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU, headed by the dean, prof. MUDr. Peter Labaš, CSc. for completion or construction of the Rázsochy Hospital, right at the beginning of February 2015, the new Management of the Faculty of Medicine, CU, asked the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic to enable the active participation of faculty representatives in the creation of the project of the new University Hospital in Bratislava. Since then, countless negotiations have occurred with MHSR representatives at various levels, from ministers to heads of individual departments, at the beginning without any tangible results.

That is why we together (the chairman of AS FM CU and dean of FM CU) invited the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic to the meeting of AS FM CU, which took place on 26 September 2017. At the meeting, the Minister presented to the members of the Senate the Development Concept of the Bratislava University Hospital and the proposal for the construction of the new Bratislava University Hospital. He also expressed his opinion on the need to preserve the Staré Mesto Hospital and on the slowing down of the Kramáre Hospital – only after the new hospital is built.

In 2017, I was appointed as a Supervisory Body (SB) member of Rázsochy Hospital. After my repeated requests for an explanation of the unacceptable delay in the construction of the Rázsochy Hospital and failure to respect even the several times changed deadlines. For the establishment of new, binding deadlines, in 2018, the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic reduced the number of SB meetings from 4 to 1 per year, reduced the number of members from 5 to 3 and thus, the activity of DO de facto ended.

Negotiations between the Faculty of Medicine of the CU and the then-rector of the CU with the Minister of Health regarding the construction of the new UHB took place in January 2018 since we were not notified of specific steps towards the construction of the hospital on 20 February 2018 the AS FM CU discussed this topic with the participation of invited representatives of Slovak medical organizations (LOZ, SLK, SLS). AS FM CU adopted a resolution calling on the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic to (A) stop activities leading to the slowing down of the UHB Staré Mesto and Déer Hospitals – submit all documents relevant to the preparation of the construction and for the construction of the new UHB to the FMCU academic community – immediately draw up a medical plan for the new UHB and interest in the staff of FMCU departments to prepare the design of the new UHB – determination of the parameters of the new UHB according to the criteria that are met by the most medically effective terminal hospitals of Western European countries and to – determination of the shortest possible dates for the construction stages. Together with all Slovak institutions, we decided to address the Minister of Health with a joint letter, in which we warned him on 1 March 2018 that

“postponing construction for any reason, when a competing project of a financial group in Bratislava’s Bory is growing, becomes a serious problem for the Slovak health sector and is unacceptable also for us representatives of the broadest professional public.”

Subsequently, I asked the Minister of Health to create a Working Group for Medical Planning of the new UHB (WG), composed of representatives of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU and community-wide medical organizations (LOZ, SLK, SLS). Based on his consent and subsequent request, on 12 March 2018, I proposed 11 members of the working group (in alphabetic order). prof. MUDr. Miroslav Borovský, CSc. (Representative of the FM CU), doc. MUDr. Daniel Böhmer, PhD. (The chairman of the AS FM CU); Dr.h.c. prof. MUDr. Ján Breza, DrSc., MHA SLS president); doc. MUDr. Peter Jackuliak, PhD. (vice-dean of the FM CU), doc. MUDr. Soňa Kiňová, PhD. (Representative of the FM CU); MUDr. Marián Kollár (SLK president); prof. MUDr. Juraj Payer, PhD., FRCP (1st vice-dean of the FM CU); prof. MUDr. Ján Pečeňák, PhD. (Representative of the FM CU), prof. MUDr. Juraj Pechán, PhD. (Advisor to the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic); MUDr. Peter Visolajský (LOZ chairmain LOZ) a seba. The Minister of Health accepted the proposal.

Based on the authorization of the academic senate, I repeatedly informed the public about the situation surrounding the new UHB and presented the demands of the faculty in several media (Rádio expres – 9. 2., Hospodárske noviny – 5. 3., RTVS 1 – 6.3., Zdravotnícke noviny – 8. 3., Aktuality.sk – 29. 3.).

After its appointment by the Minister of Health at the beginning of the working group for medical planning of the new UHB (WG) began its activity by comparing the bed fund at UHB, with the total bed fund in Bratislava and the Bratislava region, with the situation abroad. The results of the analysis served us to develop the concept of the medical structure of the new UHB.

Meanwhile, on 22 March 2018, there was a change in the post of Minister of Health. We addressed the newly appointed Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic with a letter dated 26/03/2018, in which we emphasized the importance of the new UHB, which should correspond to the status of the terminal hospital of the state, which can handle all challenging conditions from all over Slovakia. We requested the submission of all documents relevant to construction preparations and documents for the decision to demolish the existing building, as well as regular information to the public at quarterly intervals. However, our demands were ignored, just like our demands about the institutionalization of WG. The Minister of Health did not accept the WG status proposed by us.

Based on the performed analysis, WG repeatedly submitted proposals for the concept of a complex hospital corresponding to the standards of university hospitals in the surrounding countries. The new Minister of Health regularly rejected these. At the same time, we repeatedly commented on the proposals of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic for the workplaces of the new UHB and their

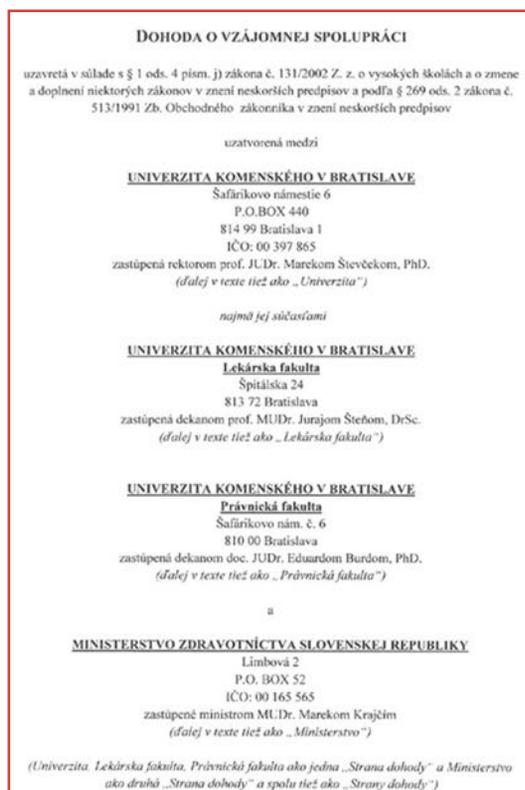
bed capacities, which were presented to us without giving the concept of the individual hospitals that are part of the existing UHB, for which we repeatedly and unsuccessfully requested the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic and the management of the UHB.

The Minister of Health finally presented us with a dilemma: either the construction of a new UHB in two stages or no new UHB. Under compulsion, we finally agreed to a two-stage building. At the same time, we requested that the project of the construction of the first stage also include the construction of complements (SVALZs) for both stages – to make it clear that the second stage is also planned.

There were many negotiations and meetings of the PS with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and various health ministers but without minutes and clear conclusions.

On December 18, 2019, we sent a letter to the new Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, who also managed the Ministry of Health, in which we asked him to “*meet and inform about the state of construction of the Rázsochy National Hospital, as we learned from the media about the procurement of the project, while the public had no idea either what the project is in the end?*”

The only real result of our activities was the demolition of the rough building of the hospital in Rázsochy.



The agreement between the CU/Faculty of Law of the CU and the Faculty of Medicine of the CU with the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic regarding cooperation regarding the construction of the Rázsochy hospital

The next round of negotiations began after the new Minister of Health appointment in March 2020, who established the Steering Committee of the National University Hospital Rázsochy (RV). As a member of the RV, I was tasked with developing a proposal for medical professionals who were to create new versions of the concepts of the trades to be represented in the NUNR. Medical experts met with representatives of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic on the grounds of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU in September 2020. Subsequently, they developed the required concepts, which they then consulted with the staff of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic.

To speed up the ongoing procurement activities for the construction of the now-demolished building of the new UHB, Comenius University and its two faculties – Law and Medicine – offered additional help to the Ministry of Health. **On 15 July 2020, the CU/Faculty of Law CU and FM CU signed an agreement with the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic on cooperation regarding the construction of the Rázsochy hospital.** The employees of the Faculty of Law, in consultation with UVO, drafted a legal document enabling **the simplification and acceleration of the administrative procedures for the construction of the new UHB and the preparation of the – Lex Rázsochy.** As part of this agreement, the concepts of the medical departments mentioned above were also developed.

After the following change at the head of the Ministry of Health, on 1 April 2021, on 9 April 2021, I sent a letter to the new Minister of Health – an appeal for the need to urgently implement the project for the construction of the new UHB in Rázsochy, but without response. Since then, not a single meeting of the Board of Directors has been held, and the proposal for the components of the new UHB Rázsochy, in which pedagogical and scientific research activities should be implemented, which I forwarded to the defunct Board of Directors, could no longer even be discussed. Similarly, **the concepts of departments drawn up in 2020 and subsequently consulted with the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic again** remained without any real impact, as well as the “*Medical concept of the new University Hospital Rázsochy*” drawn up by expert teams of individual specializations in 2017 with a large share of experts from the Faculty of Medicine, CU).

After many attempts to break through the ineffective activities of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic in the field of the implementation of the project for the construction of the new UHB in Bratislava, we wrote a letter to the chairman **in August 2021 in cooperation with all Slovak medical organizations, other essential personalities of medical practice and science in Slovakia and abroad, as well as several students of the Government of the Slovak Republic with an urgent call for the construction of a new UHB, to maintain the perspective of improving the conditions for the practical teaching of clinical subjects at the Faculty of Medicine, CU, and thereby increasing the quality of the training of almost half of the future doctors. The latter graduate from our faculty every year. Since we**

did not receive a response to this letter, we published it as an open letter. This appeal of more than a hundred signatories also remained unanswered.

Subsequently, we founded the initiative **Let's save healthcare in the capital – for the whole of Slovakia (Initiative)**. Our demands related not only to the construction of the new UHB but also asked for improving the conditions for health care at the departments where subjects are currently being taught. Instead of the required development of existing departments, in 2018, we saw pressure to reduce them or even to cancel some hospitals that are part of UHB. 621 out of 1,440 beds in UHB teaching hospitals were threatened with closure. **We were also forced to fight to save hospitals' reduced activities, which are carried out by the departments of the Faculty of Medicine, CU and UHB. With the help of Slovak medical organizations, we resisted pressure from the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic to separate the Staré Mesto Hospital from the UHB**, which was even supposed to be implemented in such a way that the separated hospital was to manage itself independently, while it was not supposed even to use the property in which it provides health care – which many saw as the beginning of the end for this hospital.

The success of the Initiative, as well as the long-term "struggle" for the Rázsochy hospital, can be attributed to the decision of the Slovak government to include the construction of the new UHB in Rázsochy in the Plan for the Renewal and Sustainability of Slovakia, within which the Slovak Republic has the opportunity to use hundreds of millions of EUROS. A hospital with a capacity of 653 beds is to be built, with the possibility of building another facility with 500 beds. And even though we thereby went back 4 – 5 years, when the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic began to officially communicate the decision to build a hospital with approximately 600 beds with the promise of its completion in the second stage, **we prevented the real threat of definitively not approving the Rázsochy construction**, which was hovering over us during in recent months (since the opinion of the Ministry of Health of the SR "*Rázsochy may or may not stand*" resonated in society).

In this context, it is also necessary to comment on the practical teaching of clinical subjects in the private hospital Bory, which will be implemented soon. This question was

also raised at a meeting of the Management of the FM CU regarding whether the conclusion of a contract between the FM CU and the Penta financial group regarding teaching in the hospital under construction in Bory is being considered so that it does not happen that we do not conclude a contract with them, but, for example, SZU (for details, see the minutes Management of FM CU No. 20/2021 dated 5 May 2021).

For this, however, it is necessary to quote the current Minister of Health's published opinion on the question in an interview with the daily Postoj on 22 July 2021 of the new Rázsochy hospital and teaching possibilities at the Bory hospital. He said: *"It is a university hospital, so it must also have a research and development centre, which Bory lacks. In short, it's a hospital for business, so I'm not even pushing for us to buy Bory and turn them into Rázsochy. That is not even possible"*. The minister repeated this position during our meeting at the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic on May 2, 2022, where I asked him precisely because I considered it my duty to inform the AS FM CU about the possibilities of negotiations with representatives of Penta Hospitals. In particular, I was worried that the possible negotiation of the FM CU with Penta Hospitals could not be perceived as the fact that the FM CU does not need the new UHB Rázsochy.

The most serious fact in this context is that **we have not yet received a response to our repeated, basic questions asked during meetings with representatives of Penta Hospitals, to which we were invited by the CU Management (which Penta Hospitals addressed).** These were simple questions:

1. **What workplaces will there be in Bory Hospital, and what will their bed capacity be?**
2. **What will the spatial and technical conditions be there for teaching medics? and**
3. **What will be the labour-legal status of teachers there, and how will senior staff be appointed to the positions?** And that is not even after the vice-chancellor of the CU sent them the practical teaching contracts that the Faculty of Medicine of the CU has concluded with the teaching hospitals, which they requested at the meeting on 31 January 2022. Of course, as soon as we receive the answers to the above questions from Penta Hospitals' representatives, we will present them to the AS FM CU meeting.

13. EFFORTS TO GET FAIR CONTRACTS WITH UHB – THE FIGHT FOR THE BASIC INTERESTS OF THE FACULTY

At the very beginning, it is necessary to clearly state that a possible loss in the long-term collision between the interests of FM CU and UHB and succumbing to pressure from UHB and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, would have unforeseeable consequences for the FM CU, which we would feel for years. There would be a degradation of the role of FM CU in society, and the way back would be challenging and perhaps never possible. As evidenced by the following lines, fairness is about only one thing. Fairness towards our faculty – patients, students and employees, fairness in compliance with valid agreements and fair and standard mutual relations, which is usual in developed Europe. The fact that we did not succumb to enormous pressure in this “struggle” is not proof of our reluctance to come to an agreement (on the contrary, in 2017, we agreed correctly and only then the agreements began to be violated), but proof that we are not even under the pressure they were unwilling to betray the interests of the faculty.

Paradoxically, the beginning of mutual relations with UHB and MH SR was highly favourable. Already in April 2015, we held a joint meeting of the representatives of the FM CU with the Management of UHB, at which we discussed the following range of problems: the duties of clinical educators of the FM CU in UHB, the structure of departments and institutes of pre-clinical departments, coordination of the selection process for heads of departments and institutes, implementation of practical teaching, harmonization of the names of departments in the organizational rules of UHB and the statute of FM CU, legal aspects of students’ access to medical documentation. After the positions were clarified, relations between the FM CU and UHB were standard, and practical teaching at the departments and institutes of the FM CU and UHB proceeded smoothly. On 10 April 2017, the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic signed a favourable opinion on the concurrence of full-time doctoral and specialization studies, which significantly helped full-time doctoral students at clinical workplaces. There were also no problems with the selection procedures for filling the positions of heads of departments. Not only were the valid contracts respected, but the FM CU also gentlemanly observed the Charter of the UHB, where the founder of the UHB (that is, the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic) established, by mutual agreement, an increase in the salaries of doctors – pedagogues of the FM CU (until then unacceptably low), as well as the method of selecting the heads of joint departments of the FM CU and UHB.

The deterioration of relations between the FM CU and UHB occurred after the exchange of the Minister of Health in 2018. Both the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic and the UHB have made offensive comments on the employment-legal status of the heads of joint departments

and UHB, as well as pressure to limit the work competencies of the heads of departments in the field of health care.

By way of amendments to the Charter of Establishment of the UHB (that is, by way of changes to its agreed wording), the new leadership of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic began pressure to reduce the requirements for the qualification prerequisites for the position of head of the department and to replace objective criteria with vague, subjectively evaluable formulations, which would allow political nominees to dominate the process of filling the positions of head of departments. The Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic ignored the fact that UHB’s Founding Charter binds UHB exclusively, but not CU or FM CU, which guaranteed to respect UHB’s Founding Charter in the agreed wording from 2017, not in another (see chapter 5 for details). Moreover, around the same period, the UHB management arbitrarily stopped honouring the still valid contracts on practical teaching and the selection procedures for the positions of heads of departments from 2014. At the same time, these contracts are crucial – the Act imposes their existence on Universities and the Act on Health Care Providers (that is, the two primary laws of both institutions) as a basic tool for regulating mutual relations between them.

Despite all the hardships, we tried to agree, and on 6 June 2018, together with the then-rector of the CU, we sent a letter to the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, reminding her of the proposal of the Amendment to the Charter of the UHB, which was supposed to unacceptably change the selection criteria for the positions of heads of departments.

From the grounds of the FM CU, we have repeatedly objected that the head of the department, without a scientific-pedagogical rank (as it was imposed on us), cannot fulfil the duties that follow from his title and position. For example, a head without the scientific-pedagogical rank of associated professor or professor cannot lead doctoral students and may even adversely affect postgraduate studies; he cannot ensure the necessary qualification growth of the department’s staff and the associated implementation of high-quality clinical research and development of the field; that, paradoxically, he can decisively interfere with the publication activity by requiring his written consent to publish any results of clinical work, even among those colleagues who have a scientific – pedagogical rank.

We emphasized that university hospitals must provide comprehensive health care in full range (most often, this duty is anchored in internal regulations), from which it follows that university hospitals, as terminal hospitals, have to deal with common diseases in addition to (A) rarer diseases, or diseases for which the treatment has not yet been developed, the so-called “guidelines” or standards, or these are still being developed; (B) highly complicated conditions, when patients are affected by several diseases that complicate the treatment. The term “university healthcare” is also used for this (highest) type of healthcare, while clinical biomedical research is integral to it.

We emphasized that in treating patients of the university hospital, in addition to standard health care procedures, new

procedures must also be used in compliance with the highest possible safety principles and strict monitoring, especially by inclusion in clinical studies. It significantly improves treatment results, especially for cancer patients and not just in them.

As arguments, we used the results published by world-renowned institutions (e.g. National Comprehensive Cancer Network) as well as bitter experiences from the Slovak Republic (e.g. the statement of the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine UPJŠ from 4 February 2019: *“The period during which the departments were run by primary doctors and not heads of departments led not only to the devastation of medical education but unfortunately also the level of health care, many top doctors left the UN, the number of doctoral students decreased dramatically, the ranking of the UN decreased.”*)

In this context, we argued that our approach to university health care and the necessity of scientific quality in its provision, apart from being the standard everywhere in developed Europe, is even supported by law. According to § 26 of the Act on Health Care, **biomedical research** must be scientifically justified, meet generally accepted criteria of scientific quality, and be conducted under the guidance of a qualified researcher.

The comments of the representatives of the FM CU, the former and current rector of the Faculty of Medicine, the AS of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of the Slovak Republic, students, deans of all 4 medical faculties of the Slovak Republic, who first in a letter and then in an open letter to the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic stated: “There were very serious reasons that led us to write the open letter. The implementation of ZL 02/2019 in practice can seriously disrupt the activities of departments of medical faculties (hereafter FM) and university hospitals (hereafter UN) for many years, not only in the field of teaching and research and development activities but also most importantly, in healthcare itself in university hospitals, where patients with the most complicated conditions are treated.” This opinion was also ignored. When comparing the correct agreement with the leadership of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic from In 2017, the whole situation was bizarrely impressive – as an attempt by the new leadership of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic to politically dominate the joint departments of the FM CU and UHB at any cost, which they seem to consider as their own, while the departments have always been among the basic organizational units of the FM CU in terms of its statute, and their common character is enshrined precisely in the contract on practical teaching, the existence of which is mandated by law.

To achieve the correction of the illegitimate state, we have made a significant and permanent effort. However, written urgencies from CU and FM CU addressed to UHB and MH SR were ignored. Finally, we even considered unilaterally announcing tenders, as we are entitled to such a step by the still valid contracts on practical teaching and tenders. Nothing obliges us to respect the arbitrarily changed founding charter of UHB – that is, another organization. However, **at the joint meeting of the management of the CU and FM CU** held

on 7 January 2021, we decided that we would still try to negotiate with UHB and would not implement the intended call for tenders for the time being.

The management of UHB finally agreed to the negotiations. **At the first meeting on the CU grounds, the FM CU dean offered a welcoming step towards UHB. Contrary to the provision in the current contract, according to which the dean of the Faculty of Medicine CU “addresses the seventh member of the selection committee”; I proposed that the seventh member of the seven-member committee be jointly selected by the dean of the Faculty of Medicine CU and the director of the medical facility from experts in the relevant medical field.** Suppose they do not agree on the person of the seventh member within five working days. In that case, the seventh member of the commission should be chosen from two proposed nominees, one proposed by the dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU and one proposed by the medical facility director, by drawing lots. **This provision should have been signed by CU, LF CU and UHB as an Addendum to the Contract on selection procedures for the positions of heads of clinical workplaces (Amendment).**

We have always emphasized that if we lose control over the activities of clinical workplaces, the following will be at risk the development of medical departments, publication activity will decline, the qualification growth of teaching staff will be slowed down, the accreditation of the faculty will be at risk, the ranking of the university on an international scale will be reduced, the accrual for subsidies from the state will be reduced budget, the quality of teaching clinical subjects will decrease.

On 11 May 2021, a meeting was held between the dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU and the chairman of the AS of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU with the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic, whom we informed on the current problems of practical teaching of clinical subjects, on its unfavourable prospects for the near future (according to information from UHB), and the issue of the construction of a new UHB in Bratislava.

Subsequently, we were only one step away from signing an amendment that would suit both parties. However, in May 2021, there was another change in the position of UHB director, and the amendment, which the AS FM CU approved in the meantime, was not signed. It was followed by negotiations with the new director of UHB. On the 11 10 2021, a meeting was held at UHB in the presence of Minister of Health V. Lengvarský and State Secretary K. Szás, at which the rector of the already compared the situation to agony and asked what continuity is at UHB. Since the situation was still not resolved, the CU’s rector and the FM CU dean, in this regard by letter dated 8 December 2021, addressed the director of UHB again.

It was only in 2022 that the director of UHB presented an entirely new draft of contracts on practical teaching and selection procedures for the position of heads of departments, which contained completely unacceptable wording. According to the text of the contracts, the departments were not joint facilities of FM CU and UHB, the head of the department could be dismissed without the consent of FM CU, and other

unacceptable provisions. **The still valid contracts on practical teaching and selection procedures concluded between the CU, the FM CU and UHB have been unilaterally not respected** by UHB for a long time (although it did not terminate them), which is evidenced by the unilateral proposal of new contracts – at the same time, article VIII of the current Contract on practical training clearly states that *“disputes or disputed issues are committed to being resolved by mutual negotiation and agreement, in the form of a written amendment to this contract”* – indeed not new contracts.

The UHB lawyer JUDr reviewed draft contracts. M. Káčerík, the lawyer of the FM CU Mgr. V. Aľušík, the director of Finance of the FM CU A. Kubíniová and the dean of the FM CU J. Šteňo. After sending the comments in writing, we also presented them orally at a meeting of representatives of the CU, the FM CU and the UHB Management on 14 September

2022. **We are currently waiting for a written response to our comments**, which, according to the agreement at the meeting, should have already been delivered to us.

Therefore, the illegitimate state of filling the positions of the heads of the vast majority of clinical workplaces of the FM CU and UHB remains in force in various forms. The illegitimate state threatens the labour-legal position of the heads, who are in office without legal support. The FM CU dean has no legitimate option to act in the event of the withdrawal of authorization by the director of UHB. And in particular, the sword of Damocles hangs over us, that the FM CU will have self-administration (e.g. reach to the joint departments of the FM CU and UHB) only de jure. Still, de facto, it will be utterly dependent on other entities.

14. OTHER LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

A. Act on Universities

On the initiative of the dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU, a meeting of the deans of some faculties of the CU was held at our faculty regarding the amendment to the Act on Universities, at which we adopted **the Declaration of the Deans of the Faculties of Public Universities of the Slovak Republic, which contained the intention to prevent the liquidation of the self-governing nature of the faculties, which was threatened according to the proposed amendment to the Act.** Many deans gradually signed the document. Subsequently, 83 of the 106 faculties of the Slovak Republic public universities joined the protest, which ultimately helped prevent the complete liquidation of academic freedoms at the faculties. **Our Students in SPAS FM CU also played a very positive role in solving this problem, for which I sincerely thank them again.**

B. Internal Quality System (ISQ)

Alignment of the faculty's internal regulations with the ISQ of the university

- Criteria for habilitations and inaugurations
- The long-term intention of the development of the FM CU
- Creation of the Accreditation Board of the FM CU
- Creation of the Order of Study Program at the FM CU

Accreditation

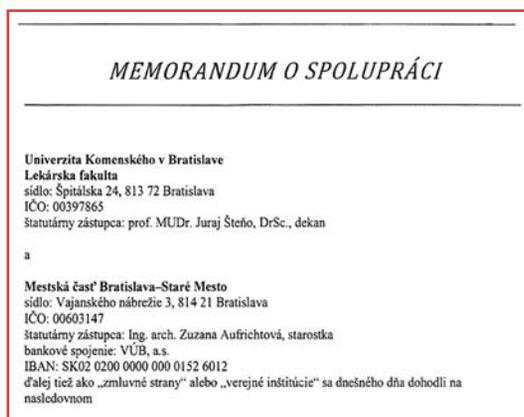
- As part of the accreditation, new 3rd-degree study programs were approved: Medical, clinical and pharmaceutical biochemistry, Medical microbiology and immunology, Medical biology and clinical genetics.
- Internal evaluation reports of the currently implemented SP

C. Miscellaneous

To obtain subsidies for the revitalization and preservation of **the national cultural monument of the dean's office building – Aspremont Palace, which is a national cultural monument**, we approached the Old Town district. We met with the mayor on 31 May 2019 and signed a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University and the City of **Bratislava-Staré Mesto.**

From our funds, we financed the restoration of the entrance areas of the Aspremont palace, reconstruction work in the institutes in some offices and the repair of social facilities. However, the preliminary budget for the reconstruction of the entire building is almost 3 million. EUR exceeds the faculty's current financial capabilities without jeopardizing its activities. That is why **we applied for a financial subsidy from the Slovakian Recovery and Sustainability Fund via the CU.**

On 21 June 2021, the dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU participated in the meeting of the deans of the Faculty of Medicine with the state secretary of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, MUDr. **Kamil Száz, who represented the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic in solving the issue of financing the medical faculties of the Slovak Republic**, especially concerning the possibility of increasing the number of students studying in the Slovak language. Subsequently, we were asked by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic and later also from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Slovak Republic to supply documents – economic data on the management of the faculty, which were supposed to be the basis for determining the amount of the subsidy increase from the state budget for the FM. **Despite providing the required data to both ministries, the required system change has not yet occurred.**



15. CELEBRATION OF THE FACULTY'S CENTENNIAL

The hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University in Bratislava was dedicated to a three-day celebratory event associated with comprehensive national media coverage. The Commemorative Medal of the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University was issued, the ceremonial presentation of which to personalities of the faculty, Comenius University and social life was part of the centenary celebrations. The main events were three ceremonial gatherings:

The festive working day of the Faculty of Medicine, CU, on 17/9/2019, during which the following was presented:

- Ceremonial lectures on the history of the FM CU,
- Greetings from New York University – prof. MUDr.

Ján Vilček, prof. Mary Ann Hopkins Induction of the founders of the Faculty of Medicine, CU, into the Hall of Fame of the Slovak Medical Society Raut for employees and students of the faculty in front of the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Medicine, CU.

The festive working day of the Faculty of Medicine, CU, on 18 September 2019:

- Ceremonial presentation of commemorative medals of the Medical Faculty of the CU to the dean of the faculty
- Expert lectures from institutes and departments of the Faculty of Medicine of the CU,

- Ceremonial meeting of the academic community of the FM CU on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the FM CU on 19 September 2019.



Banquet in Moyzes Hall.



Ceremonial address of the rector of the CU M. Števíček.



Former deans of the FM CU in Bratislava.



Ceremonial meeting of the academic community of the FM CU in the Auditorium of the CU.



Awarding of commemorative medals.



Video speech by Prof. Vilček before the ceremonial presentation of commemorative medals of the Comenius University.

16. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF THE FACULTY DURING THE COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic will suddenly change the nature of our work from the end of February 2020 to the struggle to maintain teaching and to enable 6th-grade students to finish their studies by the end of the academic year and lower-grade students to advance to higher grades. We were lucky that **we had already solved the technical side of the live streaming of lectures**; a trial lecture took place back in 2016. It made it much easier for us to implement distance learning, the necessity of which came like a bolt from the blue.

We found ourselves in a situation where **it was also necessary to deal with practical teaching by distance methods**. In addition, there were duties for several educators and students in the framework of helping the entire society in the fight for the protection of health and lives in a society-wide context. Once again, I want to draw attention to the dedication of many of our students. **Their determination, immediate readiness and willingness to help were exemplary. It was a sign that they were morally ready to fulfil a lifelong mission, and I am proud of them.** I have repeatedly expressed this publicly in writing and various presentations and speeches, including graduation speeches, to our graduates and their relatives. Here I want to use the opportunity to repeatedly thank all students, teachers, administrative and technical staff, and employees of the Computer Centre of the FM CU for the dedication and responsibility they showed in these challenging conditions.

In addition to the non-stop solution to the teaching course, we also had to fulfil other obligations. We continued the reconstruction and modernization of the institutes, the innovation of their technical equipment. We established 3 new FM CU departments, dramatically expanded the technical and spatial conditions for virtual and simulation teaching through a transparent intra-faculty competition, distributed funds for capital expenditures for theoretical and clinical workplaces, we have prepared applications for

new PhD study programs, we have prepared materials for the upcoming accreditation of all SPs that we are currently implementing, we have also prepared other materials that result from our obligation to fulfil the principles of the Internal Quality System of the University of the Slovak Republic according to the regulations of the accreditation agency of the Universities of the Slovak Republic. Most of these and other activities are listed in the relevant sections of this material. In the next part of the chapter, I will recapitulate only the activities and organizational measures we have carried out during the past two and a half years to maintain the course and quality of teaching and activities in the framework of helping the entire society in the fight against the pandemic.

A new way of teaching, distance learning, initially caused a lot of misunderstandings and confusion. **To eliminate deficiencies in teaching, the Management of FM CU dealt with this problem at every session, which was convened significantly more often than in the past. Pedagogical vice-deans and SPAS representatives regularly reported on teaching at institutes and departments at meetings.** In addition, it was the duty of the study vice-deans to submit a report twice a week to the dean of the FM CU on the progress of distance teaching. In cases of problems, e-mails were sent to the FM CU workplaces with instructions to guide the teaching process.

Due to the quarantine measures, it was decided that for the graduates of the FM CU from 2020, scanned diplomas will be sent to their official faculty email addresses. **After repeated communications with the Management of the CU, with the students and with the Committee for managing the activities of the faculty in the crisis period, the graduations in 2020 did not occur.** The faculty also ensured the apostillation of diplomas for international students.

From the beginning, students of our faculty were invited to help in the fight against the pandemic. **In addition to helping in hospitals, they significantly helped with testing for the SARS Cov2 virus, worked in NZCI call centres, in social service homes, etc.** We expressed the opinion that the help of students in hospitals and outside them must be tied only to solving the COVID-19 crisis. We entrusted the



Students of the FM CU participated in the testing of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students' part of AS (SPAS) with coordinating student aid, which was initially chaotic.

The management of the FM CU has repeatedly considered the possible impact of actively helping students in their studies and the possible threat to their health. **We have repeatedly emphasized that in addition to the help of our entire company, it is necessary to pay attention to study obligations (especially passing state exams), and students must be sufficiently protected while helping in hospitals and departments. We demanded the conclusion of voluntary contracts of individual hospitals with students.**

In cooperation with colleagues from the Faculty of Science, CU, our students also participated in **developing and constructing a ventilator for artificial lung ventilation in crisis conditions. The functionality** was tested at the FM CU Institute of Simulation and Virtual Medical Education.

In the next academic year 2020/2021, the pedagogical activity of the faculty was governed by the Methodological Guidelines of the Rector of the CU according to the documents of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic *"Manual of measures for schools and school facilities"* relating to universities and student dormitories with application to the CU conditions. We dealt with the possibility of PCR testing of international students, which according to the superiors of the institution, was legally impossible.

We have established the procedures for the implementation of theoretical teaching:

1. The lecturer can narrate PowerPoint lectures.

They will be made available to students on the Internet (MS Teams) no later than 48 hours before the time specified for the lecture in the schedule and left on the Internet until the end of the semester. **When the lectures should be delivered according to the schedule, a discussion between the students and the lecturer on the topic of the published lecture will take place via the Internet.**

2. Streaming lectures in real time, simultaneous recording and subsequent publication in MS Teams. Behind this for this purpose, workplaces were provided with an adequate Internet connection.

Practical teaching at the theoretical stages took place in a hybrid form: the introduction to practicals was published on the Internet, and the second part took place face-to-face at institutes.

We flexibly adapted teaching methods (face-to-face, distance learning, hybrid) to the current situation: the number of positively tested students and employees, as a result of the negotiations of the Pandemic Commission, the College of Epidemiologists, the Crisis Staff of the CU and the Crisis Committee of the FM CU. We took measures so that at least 6th-year students of general medicine and students of dentistry could complete the practical teaching of clinical subjects by face-to-face methods. The methods of practical teaching of clinical subjects were finally decided by the opinion of the head of the department after approval by the guarantor of the subject.

We recommended solving the problems that arose due to changing teaching conditions, depending on the changing epidemiological situation, in a logical sequence: using the

powers of grade teachers, vice-deans, and references in the study department. If necessary, with the help of the FM CU's management directly from the FM CU's dean. **We have repeatedly solved problems with students' accommodation in students' dormitories and asked for RCU for exemption.**

Regular analyses of the course of distance undergraduate education in Slovak and English carried out weekly showed that the teaching was evaluated positively by most students. The deficiencies that occurred at the beginning of the winter semester were gradually eliminated.

At the time of the legislative obstacles, which temporarily prohibited face-to-face practical teaching of higher grades of Dentistry students and 6th grade General Medicine students, we turned to the Management of the University of the Slovak Republic, the Chief Hygienist of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, the Legislation Section of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic with the request for the earliest possible adoption of measures that would enable face-to-face practical teaching of clinical subjects. It was also necessary to obtain an exemption from the curfew for students at a time when they could complete face-to-face practical teaching.

On 3 November 2020, the rector of the CU received a letter from the Health Education Section of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic – Information on the organization of the practical part of teaching in health study fields, which allowed the practical part of teaching in the final years of health study fields to be carried out in person.

The practical teaching of dentistry had to continue exclusively through distance methods. Therefore, on **15 February 2021, I asked in writing the Minister of Health for permission to teach clinical and pre-clinical subjects in the study programme Dentistry and Dental Medicine.** Finally, face-to-face teaching of ZL and DM was allowed, and **last year's graduates could complete their studies by the end of August.**

Based on the request of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic due to the worsening of the epidemic situation **at the beginning of the summer semester of the academic In 2021/2022, GM students of the 5th year started teaching with "compulsory summer practice"** in the relevant clinical fields from 15. 2. 2021 to 12. 3. 2021 and planned tuition started then.

We solved organizational and logistical problems after the return of students studying in AJ to SR after the end of their mandatory summer internship completed in their home countries. We solved **the problems with the unavailability of vaccination of international students** against COVID-19 in cooperation with the Commission for the management of the activities of the FM CU in a crisis pandemic situation. We organized the implementation of distance learning during the mandatory quarantine after their return to Slovakia.

Based on the students' requests, in the summer of 2021, we implemented additional teaching of theoretical subjects face-to-face to compensate for the adverse effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It met with a very positive response from the students.

Organizational measures within the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic

A room in the building on Moskovska Street was reserved for the mandatory isolation room for the FM CU.

Following the rector's orders issued in connection with the epidemiological situation of COVID-19, the dean's **orders on work performance from the employee's home were received.**

On 30 October 2020, mandatory area testing of the Slovak population for SARS-CoV-2 was carried out for employees of the FM CU and administrative staff of the CU, which, after the initial rejection of the superior authorities, was finally **allowed after the intervention of the dean of the FM CU in the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic.** On 23 January 2021, further general testing of the employees of

the FM CU took place on the premises of New Theoretical Institutes (NTI).

Continuous testing of students who participated in face-to-face teaching of clinical subjects was carried out at the departments of the FM CU. If necessary, the FM CU procured antigen tests.

On the 25. 1. 2021, a letter from the deans of all 4 medical faculties of the Slovak Republic was sent to the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic, for the attention of the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic and the Minister of Education of the Slovak Republic, with the request to include in the vaccination program against COVID-19 even those teachers of the Faculty of Medicine. They do not work in all workplaces, so it is possible to resume face-to-face teaching of as many students as possible as soon as possible.

17. PLANNED ACTIVITIES WHICH, DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, WE DID NOT REALIZE OR REALIZED ONLY PARTIALLY

As often happens in life, we do not manage to realize all our plans fully. Of course, the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on this fact. Nevertheless, it would not be right not to mention them briefly.

Reform and modernization of the study

Although we have clearly formulated studio innovation goals and methods, we have only partially succeeded in implementing them. Online teaching methods have been fully implemented in practice, and virtual and simulation teaching has expanded and improved in quality.

The planned introduction of innovative teaching methods was supposed to fundamentally change the nature of the teaching process by changing the predominantly one-way flow of information from the teacher to the students to an interactive teaching method. We have repeatedly discussed the introduction of Problem-based learning, Team-based learning, **OSCE and an interdisciplinary approach to teaching at the Faculty of Medicine CU meetings, and we have prepared a comprehensive document on teaching reform. In the constantly changing epidemic conditions, which significantly reduced face-to-face teaching and required the help of students in the fight against the consequences of the pandemic, their implementation was not possible.**

Reform of entrance exams

As a result of the pandemic, we have introduced an online form of entrance exams for applicants to study at the FM CU. In addition, we planned to expand the exams to include questions from physics. So far, 750 questions have been finalized for both language mutations. As a result of the organizational problems of teaching in the conditions of the epidemic, they were not included in the exams for applicants to study in the academic.

Student polls

According to the decision of the CU's Quality Council, the CU faculties had to perform student surveys for the previous academic year until 30 July 2022. At the FM CU Management meeting on 20 April 2022, a member of the faculty management was entrusted with the preparation of the survey, the results of which will be anonymised. On 31 May 2022, its course was planned for the first half of June 2022 via MS Teams.

Correction of the illegitimate state of filling the positions of heads of departments of the Faculty of Medicine of the FM CU and UHB.

Despite the enormous efforts of the representatives of the FM CU and the significant help of the representatives of

the CU, whose activities are mentioned in point 8, due to the negative approach of the management of the UHB and the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, the unacceptable situation has not yet been rectified so far and negotiations continue. The FM CU cannot afford to "lose" this situation, the consequences for our faculty would be highly negative and apparently irreversible.

Alumni programme

In 2018, we decided to reactivate the Alumni programme. Our goal was to deepen the spirit of belonging and pride in the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University in Bratislava. In addition to the gold graduations 50 years after graduation, which took place three times, we even held a diamond graduation for graduates from 60 years ago. An exciting and rare tradition began to emerge.

In addition, there were also informal meetings after less than 50 years, sometimes even outside of round anniversaries. Such was also the meeting on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the FM CU, at which the rector of the CU, Professor Marek Števček, addressed the participants.

However, the limitation of gathering during the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible for us to develop it fully.



A meeting of the graduates of the Faculty of Medicine, CU (1985 – 1991) after 30 years.

Bratislava, October 2022

**prof. MUDr. Juraj Šteňo, DrSc., IFAANS
Dean of the Faculty of Medicine CU in Bratislava**