

THESIS OF THE CANDIDATE FOR DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES FOR THE PERIOD 2025–2029

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Faculty of Health
Sciences

Palacký University
Olomouc



„ We think differently, we grow together.“

Dear colleagues,

I am entering the election for the position of Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences with deep respect for what you, as an academic community, have built—often despite challenging circumstances and with less recognition than our work deserves. Although we may not always be at the forefront of university attention, our importance in society, healthcare, and education is undeniable. Our Faculty of Health Science is in apparent transition today, where the needs for new collaborators, advanced and innovative applications and students' expectations are all evolving. Despite foreseeable challenges associated with this new era, there are also extraordinary opportunities that we need to make use of. With this in view, the faculty needs a new impulse, a bold vision, and the courage to undergo significant transformation—not only to keep up with change, but to become a regional and global driver of innovation in both education and healthcare.

It is both from institutional and person's perspectives, I believe it is the right time to build upon what has already been achieved to start designing a new Faculty paradigm that can honor local and regional scientific priorities. A time to plan the next steps with thoughtfulness, act with vision, and develop a faculty we can be proud of—one that is strong on the outside and cohesive within. Let us together turn this moment into a true opportunity.

Olomouc, 5th May 2025

WHO AM I?

Introduction of the Candidate and Motivation for Candidacy

I was born in 1981 in Ostrava, where I received my Bachelor's degree in Medical Investigation Methods at the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences of the University of Ostrava, followed by a Master's degree in Laboratory Investigation Methods in Public Health Protection. I completed my postgraduate doctoral studies at the Faculty of Medicine of UP and the rigorous procedure at the Faculty of Science. Later in 2020, I was appointed Associate Professor in Hygiene, Preventive Medicine and Epidemiology.

During my career development, I had the opportunity to broaden my professional and cultural horizons in many occasions. I enjoyed a six-month foreign internship within the Erasmus programme at the University of Kuopio, Finland. This experience has uncovered the power of international cooperation and trained my interdisciplinary values that I consider crucial for the faculty management purposes.

My second major international experience was a research fellowship in England, where I had the opportunity to work for several months in a research environment with a public health overlap. The international placements deepened my understanding of the European context of academic training and research, taught me to look beyond borders for inspiration and to think strategically. The year 2021 marked a major career shift for me when I was appointed as Vice Dean for Strategic Management and Quality in the Faculty of Health Sciences and Director of the Centre for Science and Research. I served as Vice-Dean for three and a half years, and I continue to lead the Centre to this day. I know Palacký University intimately not only as an academic and researcher, but also as a member of its management - I have been working here for about 15 years.

In overall, I possess extensive expertise in public health, health promotion and protection, and infectious disease epidemiology, both in Europe and in Czech Republic. I maintain long-standing interests in linking these topics with other disciplines - from environmental sciences to social determinants of health and health management. I believe that an interdisciplinary approach is the key to addressing the complex challenges of contemporary health and education. Therefore, interdisciplinarity is a natural part of my research and strategic thinking, whether it is about projects, teaching, or faculty development.

KEY EXPERIENCE RELEVANT TO FACULTY LEADERSHIP

Studied at the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, University of Ostrava: firsthand experience from a student's perspective, including issues related to internships and practical placements

Vice-Dean for Strategy at the Faculty of Health Sciences: responsibility for strategic planning, in-depth knowledge of the institutional environment

Chair of the Doctoral Study Program Council in Health Protection and Promotion and Ph.D. supervisor: ensuring the quality of doctoral education, experience in managing academic processes, and mentoring young researchers

Head of Faculty Trade Union Committees: representing staff in negotiations, active involvement in drafting internal regulations, resolving employment-related issues, and caring for the employee work environment

Director of the Center for Science and Research: comprehensive management of research activities, project support, internationalization, and interdisciplinary collaboration

Work Package Leader in large interdisciplinary research projects: expert leadership of project teams, responsibility for outcomes, managing deliverables, and team coordination

Member of UP's Legislative and Legal Platform: active role in drafting and revising the university's internal regulations, knowledge of the higher education legislative framework

Member of UP's Quality Assurance Committee: participation in system-wide quality assurance and internal evaluation of university activities

Member of the team developing the Climate Adaptation Strategy of the Olomouc Region for 2023–2030: connecting public health and environmental policy, experience with strategic planning in the public sector

Member of the Public Health Emergency Task Force within ASPHER (Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region): international networking and exchange of best practices in public health and education

WHY DO I ASPIRE TO BE THE DEAN OF FHS?

Because I believe the faculty possesses greater potentials than it has yet been explored! I consider the Faculty of Health Sciences to be an exceptional academic environment—a place with tremendous growth potential, where the humanistic dimension of healthcare meets the rigor of research and technological development. I believe in an open, supportive, and academically strong faculty—one that is an active partner not only within the university, but also with regional institutions, healthcare providers, and international networks.

I see great potential in the faculty. Given the undeniable societal relevance, importance, public demand, and thematic breadth of health disciplines, I consider this potential to be among the highest across the entire university.

I see my candidacy for dean as an opportunity to combine my experience in academia, strategic leadership, and management with a vision for a strong, innovative, and open faculty—one that not only responds to current challenges, but actively shapes them, for the benefit of students, staff, and the broader society.

My goal is to create an environment that supports the growth of every undergraduate students, early-career academics, university lecturer, Ph.D. and pos—doc candidates and, non-academic staff. I aim to strengthen systematic support for research, improve the efficiency of faculty management, and enhance daily operations—from infrastructure to interdisciplinary collaboration and dialogue. I want faculty leadership to be accessible, transparent, and open to dialogue—where decisions are not made top-down but emerge from trust, discussion, and expertise. The goal is a faculty that is effective, kind (professionally, personally, administratively), sustainable, and self-sufficient.

WHY AM I SUBMITTING MY CANDIDACY AT THIS MOMENT?

“I believe now is the right time.”

The Faculty of Health Sciences stands on the threshold of a major transformation and is set to move into dignified new premises. Society now fully recognizes the essential role of healthcare professions, as reflected by the growing interest from students. Thanks to government support for non-medical healthcare fields, we will be able to increase student admissions by 20% each year. At the same time, the system for evaluating research and science is evolving, placing greater emphasis on societal relevance. This means the faculty will receive more recognition for its activities that have a positive societal impact. In addition, a record-breaking budget is being prepared for the EU's 10th Framework Programme, which can be accessed by institutions that have not previously received support.

The change in faculty leadership coincides with the arrival of a new university rector—this is a unique opportunity to align the faculty's direction with the vision of the entire university.

As I meet all the requirements for initiating the process of appointment as a full professor, I plan to begin this process soon. This will allow me to dedicate my full energy to the development of our faculty. I am ready to take on this responsibility.

MY VALUES AND APPROACH TO COLLABORATION



Openness

I want to foster an environment where everyone can express themselves without fear of judgment. I believe in the power of diverse opinions—open communication is the foundation of effective collaboration, innovation, and solving complex problems.



Transparency

All decisions and processes must be communicated clearly and remain open to feedback and scrutiny. I will strengthen regular communication with both academic and non-academic staff regarding goals, outcomes, and challenges.



Zero Tolerance for Bullying and Uncollegial Behavior

I will guarantee a safe work environment where respect is the norm. Every case will be addressed thoroughly and systematically.



Support for Interdepartmental Collaboration

I will actively encourage the sharing of resources, know-how, and inter-university cooperation. I want to break down barriers and support interdisciplinary teams and joint projects.



Engagement and Availability

I will be a dean who listens and is present. Active involvement in faculty life, regular consultations, and feedback are essential to me.



Integrity

I will make decisions based on facts, with an emphasis on fairness. I reject favoritism and opportunistic decision-making. I value long-term trust more than short-term gain.



Social Responsibility

The faculty must be an active player in health protection, environmental sustainability, and public education. I will support activities with a positive impact on society.



Culture of Recognition and Appreciation

I will implement a system that acknowledges efforts, achievements, and informal contributions. Motivation should not depend solely on rewards, but on daily recognition of the meaningfulness of our work.



Respect for Expertise and Autonomy

I will protect the space for professional growth, career advancement, and academic freedom. I will support responsible leadership based on competence.



Humility

I believe that leadership is not about being infallible, but about listening, learning, and recognizing that the best solutions often emerge through dialogue. I see humility as the foundation of trust, respect, and a humane approach to leadership and collegiality.

COLLABORATION AS A CULTURE, NOT A COMMAND

I want to create an environment where collaboration arises naturally, not by directive. I will support the sharing of good practices, common goals, and mutual trust across the faculty and the university. Collaboration is not a tool, but a way of thinking.

OPEN AND PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP BASED ON DIALOGUE AND COLLABORATION ACROSS THE FACULTY

“True leadership is not about who has the loudest voice, but about who listens the most attentively.”

COOPERATION WITH KEY REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- OLOMOUC UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
- OLOMOUC REGION
- CITY OF OLOMOUC
- PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLOMOUC
- PRIVATE SECTOR
- NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

I want to strengthen participatory governance—important decisions must be made with the active involvement of the academic community. The Dean's Office will be open to bottom-up proposals and will actively seek synergies between departments and external partners. I see students as equal partners. I aim to foster an environment in which students have the space to influence teaching, the functioning of the faculty, and its direction.

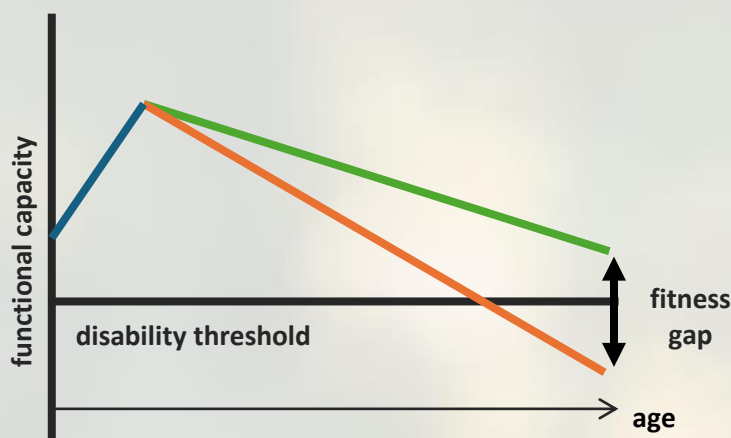
I will establish regular informal working forums where ideas and problems can be shared.

I will actively support intergenerational and interdisciplinary collaboration and create conditions for joint projects with students—not only educational, but also developmental and community-based.

An example of a shared faculty theme that should be approached with impact—in teaching, research, and the faculty's third role.

AGING AS AN EXAMPLE

Aging as a natural part of life, not as a static group of people to be cared for.



This example shows that collaboration across the faculty is both desirable and beneficial. Our themes align with the priorities of strategic documents such as RIS3 and Health 2030, which opens up opportunities for funding.

A good example of such a cross-faculty theme is the issue of population aging. Although life expectancy is increasing in the Czech Republic, the number of years lived in good health do not grow on the same pace! This trend reflects the reality that people are living longer thanks to advances in healthcare (e.g., availability of treatment for chronic diseases), but also spending more years living with illnesses that reduce their quality of life—such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and degenerative musculoskeletal conditions. Causes may include insufficient prevention, unhealthy lifestyles, or low health literacy among the population.

This development is problematic because it increases pressure on the healthcare system, limits population productivity, and diminishes overall quality of life. To reverse this trend, our non-medical health disciplines are absolutely crucial—particularly nursing, physiotherapy, nutrition therapy, public health promotion and protection, social work, psychology, and many others. Improving or reversing this adverse trend will require connecting these fields and developing comprehensive strategies focused on prevention and health promotion across the entire population.

WHAT WE REALLY EXCEL AT

- + We have an outstanding team of passionate teachers, researchers, and clinical experts
- + There is a strong and growing interest among applicants to study here
- + All study programs have clearly demonstrated social relevance
- + Teaching is high-quality, practical, and based on real-life clinical situations
- + Graduates find employment in the field and tend to remain professionally active
- + Our students are motivated, empathetic, and ready to help
- + The faculty has a strong foundation of cooperation with hospitals and other healthcare institutions
- + Thematically, the faculty is well-covered—in both teaching and research activities

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE OPENING UP BEFORE US?

- * New dignified facilities
- * Increasing emphasis on quality and accessibility of care – our fields are key
- * EU funds and calls for research and modernization of teaching
- * Collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine and University Hospital Olomouc in joint projects
- * Possibility of accreditation of new study programs (especially interdisciplinary ones)
- * New partnerships abroad and with the application sector
- * Digitalization as a tool for simplifying routines and administration
- * Non-medical healthcare professions as a great opportunity for growth
- * New internal salary regulations increasing competitiveness
- * COARA – shift from bibliometric to qualitative assessment more favorable to social sciences and humanities
- * Transformation of the Western concept of academic work towards social relevance, increasingly reflected in project calls
- * OLIVIE (Healthy Living Region initiative)
- * Aurora Alliance
- * Untapped potential of the faculty's public relations
- * Development of impact-oriented research agenda
- * The third role of the faculty and Citizen Science
- * Concept of so-called "dual education"
- * Creation of English versions of existing study programs
- * Systematic work with alumni
- * International mobility beyond ERASMUS (for students, academics, and non-academics)
- * Transfer of best practices in dean's office management from other UP faculties
- * Attracting young postdocs through MSCA PF projects (including from the USA)
- * Technological and digital transformation
- * FHS topics featured in all key national and international strategic documents

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

Analysis of the Current State of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Palacký University

DEVELOPMENTAL SHORTCOMINGS

- We sometimes encounter complexity in internal processes and communication
- Limited space for systematic mentoring of early-career academics
- Research activity is unevenly distributed and often relies on enthusiasts
- The spatial layout of the faculty is suboptimal
- Technical equipment is currently limited
- Lack of career development support for students starting at the undergraduate level
- Low number of successful postgraduate graduates
- Significant brain drain of competent young professionals
- Generational gap – lack of trained successors for teaching and research
- Limited self-sufficiency in program guarantorships (dependency on external institutions)
- Research performance (in terms of excellence – few Q1 and Q2 journal outputs, etc.)
- Fragmentation of job contracts (dispersed professional engagement)
- Lack of staff motivation incentives (no well-developed bonus system for teaching, research, and project work)
- Dissatisfaction with communication
- Absence of informal platforms for dialogue with faculty leadership
- Insufficient strategic reallocation of resources
- Low student cohesion in some areas
- Untapped potential in internationalization
- Insufficient capacity of the Center for Clinical Practice (e.g., delays in signing contracts)
- Insufficient number of projects (developmental, networking, educational, and research)

WHAT WE NEED TO WATCH OUT FOR

- ! Staff exhaustion – overload and burnout threaten all who dedicate themselves to helping others
- ! Imbalance between practical demands and teaching capacity
- ! Staff turnover, loss of capacity
- ! Operational obligations related to building maintenance
- ! Demographic decline (expected in approximately 10 years)
- ! Aging academic staff
- ! Instability of higher education funding
- ! Competition between faculties
- ! Current state of the funding distribution methodology at Palacký University (UP)

SPECIFIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS FOR THE TERM OF OFFICE

VISION

A Sustainable and Self-Sufficient Faculty

MISSION

High-Quality Education in Healthcare and Research
with Real-World Impact

GOALS

Within the Framework of Three Core Pillars

I. Educational Pillar: A High-Quality and Motivating Learning Environment

I.a Expand the Range and Availability of Internships for Students across the Moravia and Silesia regions through Strategic Partnerships

I.b Support Talented Students with Research Potential – Systematic Identification and Mentoring (student research projects, internal grants, team involvement)

I.c Accredit Study Programs in English, with Priority on Doctoral Study Programs in Nursing and Health Protection and Promotion

I.d Maintain and Further Develop Efficient Teaching Processes with Minimal Administrative Burden and Maximum Support for Academics

II. Internationalization: Global Experience as Standard

II.a Ensure a Foreign Partner for Each Department (1–3 partners depending on size) to support mobility, research collaboration, and joint projects

II.b Establish 1–2 Key Strategic Partnerships at the Faculty Level with Universities within the EU

II.c Integration into the AURORA Alliance and International Associations (ASPHER, ENNE, ENPHE) in Teaching, Research, and Strategic Development of the Faculty

II.d Link Academic Career Advancement to International Experience (PhD, habilitation), with an Emphasis on Quality over Length of Stay

III. Science and Research: Impact, Relevance, and Collaboration

III.a Define and Systematically Support Shared Research Topics

III.b Introduce a New Incentive Model (projects, publications) focused on quality, collaboration, and impact

III.c Establish R&D Coordinator Positions at each department, responsible for mentoring, grant application support, etc.

III.d Support Interdisciplinary and International Research within and beyond UP

III.e Systematically Develop the Postgraduate and Habilitation Environment support for postdocs and future program guarantors

DEAN'S OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

STRUCTURAL STRENGTHENING AND REASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY DISTRIBUTION

Audit of the activities of individual departments (HR, finance, study office, clinical practice center, research, internal affairs office).

Improvement of the finance department—identify weaknesses (e.g., workflow, competencies, leadership), implement reorganization or targeted staffing reinforcement.

Strengthening the Center for Clinical Practice and Teaching—propose the creation of a junior position or assistant role to increase capacity and improve response time.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession plan: identify and select candidates to succeed employees approaching retirement. Mentoring, agenda sharing, gradual transfer of responsibilities.

Ensure transfer of know-how through internal documentation and shadowing.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PROFESSIONAL PROJECT SUPPORT

1 FTE for international grants, 1 FTE for domestic grants, 0.5 FTE financial manager, 0.5 FTE impact manager.

Implementation of a project helpdesk, informal “project coffee” sessions, academic staff training, monitoring of calls, and active opportunity scouting.

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE STUDY DEPARTMENT AS A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Due to its excellent functioning—assign a mentoring role to the study department for sharing best practices.

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Training of department heads in team and project management. Regular internal newsletter (including English version).

Foster a culture of open communication, clear feedback channels. Introduction of “Lunch with the Dean” (a weekly open session for informal interaction)

ADVISORY BOARD (EXTERNAL FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL)

Composition: representatives from practice (hospitals, insurance providers, public health), alumni, international academics, and healthcare management experts.

Purpose: reflect on strategic directions, support the relevance of study programs, enhance reputation and networks.

Meets once per year; outputs provided as recommendations to the Dean.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Digitization of faculty administrative processes as a foundation.

Faculty digital strategy: competency tracking, digital agenda processing, and data analytics for decision support.

Adoption of best practices from other faculties at UP.

INTERNSHIPS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND ADMINISTRATIVE NETWORKING

Opportunities for administrative staff internships at partner universities (e.g., Erasmus Staff Mobility).

Support for staff professional development. Proactivity is key—we don't seek reasons why something can't be done, we look for ways to make it work.

Support for building inter-university networks and sharing best practices across similarly sized faculties in the Czech Republic and abroad.

PROPOSED VICE-DEAN POSITIONS:

Vice-Dean for International Relations and Internationalization

Vice-Dean for Research, Development, and Doctoral Studies

Vice-Dean for Education and Lifelong Learning

Vice-Dean for Practical Training

Vice-Dean for Legislation, Strategic Management, and Development

VISION FOR THE LONG-TERM DIRECTION OF THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Three priorities cut across all three pillars (educational, internationalization, and scientific). They are:

GENERATION GAP

PROJECT AS A TOOL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL AGENDAS

IMPACT ORIENTATION

In terms of long-term direction, these meta-themes will have the greatest impact on whether the faculty will be successful.

When we look at what could or should happen over the next 10 years, I firmly believe that the Faculty of Health Sciences will have its own independent new building on the Olomouc University Hospital campus, provided that its necessity is demonstrated. This can only be determined based on analyses using internal data as input. This is a long-term goal that cannot be achieved within a single term of office of the dean, but preparations can be made for potential successors.

In the long term, the faculty should aim to obtain habilitation and professorship rights. In terms of interfaculty cooperation, the faculty should move towards new accreditations of study programs for which there is high demand and which can only be established in cooperation with other faculties (e.g., the Faculty of Medicine or Faculty of Science) or with another university. These include, for example, programs such as Medical Laboratory Technician, Dental Hygiene, Biomedical Engineering, etc.

I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT IN THE LONG-TERM HORIZON, OUR FACULTY WILL BE:

- An academic leader in the education of non-medical health professions in the Czech Republic;
- A center of research with real impact;
- An internationally connected institution;
- An organization with professional management and an open culture;
- A responsible and sustainable partner to society.

CURRENT KEY CHALLENGES WHOSE OVERCOMING IS THE PRIMARY PREREQUISITE FOR MOVING IN THE DESIRED DIRECTION:

- Complete the ongoing reconstruction and construction to ensure a modern, inspiring teaching environment;
- Successfully implement the new Internal Salary Regulation at the faculty;
- Maintain the motivation and energy of all staff amidst changes;
- Address the generational gap by supporting students and young academics and creating conditions for their growth;
- Improve internal communication so that no one feels "left out";
- Improve external communication with stakeholders (not only within UP);
- Build stronger research teams and support their development and student involvement in research;
- Strengthen strategic partnerships with the Olomouc University Hospital and the Faculty of Medicine of UP.

MY COMMITMENTS IF ELECTED AS DEAN 2025–2029

COMMITMENTS WITHIN THE PRESENTED PILLARS

I. Educational Pillar



- I will ensure the expansion of the internship network throughout Moravia and Silesia;
- I will introduce a system for targeted identification and mentoring of students interested in research;
- I commit to maintaining and further developing the faculty's excellence in teaching by addressing the generational gap;

II. Internacionalization



- I will create conditions for more intensive international mobility;
- I will establish at least two strategic partnerships with European universities at the faculty level, focused on joint programs, mobility, and research activities;
- I will establish an international advisory board for the faculty;

III. Science and Research



- I will ensure the faculty's active participation in prestigious international research within European framework programs;
- I will create an interdisciplinary fund for joint projects and expand the faculty's grant activity portfolio;
- I will build support for data management and open science as an integral part of the faculty's research infrastructure.



COMMITMENTS RELATED TO MYSELF

- I will resign from the position of Director of the Science and Research Center;
- I will initiate the process of appointment as a professor.

COMMITMENTS RELATED TO MANAGEMENT



- I will introduce a new bonus model to motivate employees;
- I will implement career plans for all employees;
- I will establish positions of interdisciplinary cooperation coordinators at the faculty;
- I will organize regular informal meetings for sharing best practices;
- I will create an open platform for student feedback and initiatives;
- I will promote work-life balance for my employees.

"If we now seize the opportunities being offered, we can transform the faculty into a place that becomes a natural partner in discussions about the future of healthcare and the university itself.

I believe we have the strength and courage to take the necessary steps. And that we will take them together."

