
The Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen Celebrated Its 65th Anniversary

Memories, optimism about recent successes, and concerns about the future of the plans for the construction of the faculty's campus all resounded throughout the celebrations of the 65th anniversary of the foundation of the Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen. Among those came to wish it the best were representatives of Charles University and other Czech and Slovak institutions of higher education, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Health, and the city of Pilsen.

Rector of Charles University, Professor Václav Hampl wished the faculty to "fulfill its ambitious goals both in research and education." He then added: "I hope that the faculty will stay true to the ancient idea of university as a community of students and professors, who are seeking true knowledge together." Mr. Hampl mentioned the historical context of the foundation of the faculty, but he mostly focused on its current scientific accomplishments. He stressed the faculty's 6% share of the university's publication output in the Web of Science database and the successes its students have had in international competitions, such as the recent 10th annual Awards for Chemistry, Pharmacy and Medicine, handed out by the Nobel Prize in Chemistry laureate Jean-Marie Lehn at the French Embassy in Prague.

"In a certain way, the fate of the university and its faculties copies the history of the nation as a whole", said the Dean of the Faculty, Dr. Boris Kreuzberg, while summing up the history of the faculty. "The era of Normalization was the proving ground for people's moral integrity. Some of them failed and others proved to be honest, and the latter often had to pay for it." Three of the latter, namely Professor Jiří Heřt and assistant professors Martin Šolc and Petr Fiala, received Memorial Medals of Charles University from the Rector. Professor Heřt recounted: "I was active in the dissent, but I did not feel like a criminal who wants to overthrow the regime. I was convinced that the regime was wrong and I wanted there to be a more democratic system". Of his involuntary 19-year stint as a general practitioner in Chomutov, he said with a hint of irony: "Maybe I was more useful to my patients that I would have been to the faculty."

The celebration concluded with reception of memorial diplomas and medals by significant members of the faculty and a vocal performance by Dana Hažmuková.

The Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen was founded by the Decree 135 of the President of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Edvard Beneš, on October 27, 1945. As of now, the Faculty hosts around 2,000 students, one fifth of which study in English. By 2014, two new research facilities for 600 million CZK are planned to be built near the Faculty's hospital in the Píseň neighbourhood of Lochotín.



P.K.

Translation: Jaroslav Švelch