
Doctors-to-be welcomed by cheerful labs rather than drab barracks in Motol

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The new building housing the 2nd Faculty of Medicine's theoretical institutes has been unveiled today by Charles University Rector Prof. Václav Hampl along with faculty Dean doc. Ondřej Hrušák. The ceremony included an unofficial opening of an exhibition of paintings and photographs by the faculty's lecturers and students as well as the MotolFest music festival.

"Not a week goes by without a media report about the billions worth of EU structural funds invested in education- and science-related construction in the Czech Republic. The news scarcely mentions though whether some excellent place is cultivated thanks to that investment. We are now opening the premises of a faculty which has the best reputation among all medical faculties in the Czech Republic. I am therefore convinced that the investment in the first construction which the faculty has completed in its 50-year history is guaranteed to pay back," Rector Prof. Václav Hampl said.

The four-floor building whose façade and interior are livened up by yellow elements has been built on the site of former military buildings destroyed by fire in 2004. Students are most likely to appreciate the cheerful interior of the lecture hall a teaching lab equipped with all necessary facilities. "The Earthworm" as the building has been nicknamed has become the headquarters of as many as six theoretical institutes of the 2nd Faculty of Medicine.

"This is what I would like to wish all my colleagues from the theoretical institutes who had so far been teaching and researching on the old faculty premises: may they like the new premises and continue to succeed in contributing to the fame of our faculty," the Dean of the 2nd Faculty of Medicine, doc. Hrušák said in a thank-you address to all who had contributed to the construction. He also greeted the wife of the late Prof. RNDr. Václav Pelouch in whose honour the great lecture hall has been named.

The new modern building of the theoretical institutes has been in trial operation so far. Once relocation is completed following the ceremonial opening, the training of future doctors will start in earnest. If the faculty manages to put together enough finances, it will eventually be able to join the extension of the new faculty premises with the two endings of the colourful building to which the old buildings that had escaped fire – nicknamed by the teachers "upper and lower cigarette butt" – are linked now.

The Earthworm is not the end. The 2nd Faculty of Medicine continues building.

"Black is all the rage in contemporary architecture but we eventually opted for the pleasant yellow in the case of the external staircase of the Earthworm," the Dean said commenting on the building's colourful elements. According to architect Ing. Arch. Jan Topinka of the Domy s.r.o. studio, they serve to visually separate the colour-neutral parts of the teaching rooms from the students' premises. The construction budget finally did not allow for the completion of the original intention to decorate the central space with graphics by students from the studio of Prof. Rostislav Vaněk from the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design.

The 2nd Faculty of Medicine has so far been the only medical faculty without its own premises. The opening of the building of the theoretical institutes with the total area of 1692 square metres concluded the first stage of the faculty's development. The building costs reached 143 million crowns, with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport contributing some 118 million. As part of the next stage, the university is planning to build new faculty premises near the Motol University Hospital at the cost of 1.6 billion crowns.

The opening of the new building of the theoretical institutes of the 2nd Faculty of Medicine was a genuinely outstanding event. The festivities included the opening of an exhibition of paintings and photographs by the faculty's lecturers and students which is open to the public on weekdays.

The official part of the festivities was followed in the evening by the traditional MotolFest festival. In a club appropriately called Dr. Voják (Dr. Soldier) the old military times were not mentioned though – bands with names like Bílá nemoc (The White Disease) or Školení sester (Nurse Training) did not leave anyone in doubt as to the profession of their members.

A list of institutes relocated to the new premises:

The Institute of Biophysics, the Institute of Biology and Medical Genetics, the Institute of Physiology, the Institute of Histology and Embryology, the Institute of Medical Chemistry and Biochemistry and the Institute of Pathological Physiology