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# Academic community challenges public to greater activity

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## Academic community challenges public to greater activity on commemoration of 17 November

The anniversary and legacy of the historic events associated with the date 17 November were marked by Charles University in a formal meeting of the academic community on the premises of the Grand Aula of the Carolinum. Speakers focused mainly on the key, unique role played by the university in events in wider society, its contribution to the defence of civic and human independence and the democratic order.

“Indeed, history teaches us that Charles University has succeeded in overcoming a wide variety of difficult – and sometimes catastrophic – situations. None of this has broken us, only strengthened us and equipped us with the experience and self-confidence that comes from successfully dealing with problems,” said the Rector of Charles University, Professor Václav Hampl who, in his speech, challenged the academic community to make a more active contribution than has thus been the case to a wide spectrum of activities within the scope of its autonomous functioning. “So long as the community of members of our university remains unified in key matters, maintains internal solidarity and is generally cultured, so long as we can maintain a high level; of academic discourse and realised specialist interest and so long as we can motivate students and graduates to the adventure that is scientific enquiry – then we shall be able to say that, with our success, we are fulfilling the legacy and message of both major anniversaries that we are commemorating today,” said the Rector in conclusion to his speech.

A relationship to the values of education as a matter of public interest was also mentioned in the speech given by the chairman of the Hlávka Foundation, Professor Václav Pavlíček. Hlávka, as related by Prof. Pavlíček, dedicated all his assets to supporting the education of the Czech nation; he did not, however wish to limit this solely to the acquisition of knowledge, but also had the goal of ensuring the emancipation of Czech science as a means to its achieving a respected position within Europe. Professor Pavlíček emphasised the currency of this idea at a time of repeated demands to support only those fields and subjects that bring immediate economic benefit.

The complicated role of university students formed the subject of the joint speech by representatives of those students, Markéta Havelková and Josef Fontana. “On this very day, partly dedicated to the memory of active students, it is sad to have to state that there is a wide group of students who have decided, for whatever reason, to stay out of the active academic community. This grey, apathetic mass, with no interest in the functioning of their alma mater and, in a broader sense, society as a whole, unfortunately constitutes the majority of students,” they said. Both representatives also expressed regret about the small number of students interested in making a direct contribution, saying: “This is, in our opinion, a great shame and a truly wasted opportunity.” They concluded their joint speech with the hope that the number of active students increases in years to come.

As part of the celebrations of International Students’ Day, the Rector of Charles University presented, for the first time, the Jaroslav Jirsa Prize for Textbook of the Year. The prize, named after the long-term director of the Carolinum university publishing house and intended for authors and teams of authors of university textbooks based at Charles University, was awarded to:

**in medical and pharmaceutical subjects:**

A team of authors led by associate professor Dmitry Kazakov of the Faculty of Medicine in Plzeň for the publication Cutaneous Adnexal Tumors

**in social science subjects:**

Mgr. Tomáš Klíma from Palacký University in Olomouc for the Učebnice klasické japonštiny (Textbook of Classical Japanese), published by Nakladatelství Karolinum

**in the natural sciences, mathematics and physics:**

for Analýza metod pro maticové výpočty (Základní metody) (Analysis of Methods for Matrix Calculations – Basic Methods), published by Matfyzpress. The textbook was prepared by the following collective of authors: Dipl.-Math Jurjen Duintjer Tebbens, RNDr. Iveta Hnětynková, Ing. Martin Plešinger, Prof. Zdeněk Strakoš and RNDr. Petr Tichý.