

# ELECTION PROGRAMME

## of a candidate for the position of Rector of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava for the period 2021 - 2025

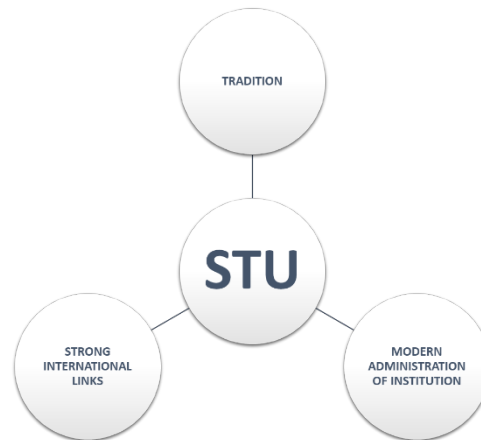
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### Introduction:

- Having worked in academia for a long time as a university teacher and performing in several self-governing positions, I recognise both, the strengths and weaknesses of this University, as well as the modern administration of the foreign universities I have visited.
- In my point of view, the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (STU) represents a strong university subject, respected in Slovakia and in the European area.
- STU has the potential to become an internationally recognized technical university with active and successful students, teachers and researchers; a university that respects and is proud of its own rich traditions, with high-quality and effective teaching and researching activities conducted in a demanding working atmosphere of the fair interpersonal relationships. Based on its traditional pillars, the University is open to wider international cooperation, in line with the current European Union challenges, i.e. environmental protection, cyber security and fighting the pandemic.

### The supporting pillars of my election programme are:

- Tradition,
- Modern administration of the institution,
- Strong international links.



**The aim is to create and maintain an ATTRACTIVE AND MOTIVATIONAL ENVIRONMENT for students, teachers, researchers, staff and collaborators from external institutions.**

**TRADITION.** We are not starting on a green field, we must realise the success and efforts of our predecessors who ensured the transformation of Slovakia into a modern industrial country. It is necessary to develop all the positive achievements that have been attained in this University throughout its history, along with the reputation it has gained in the scientific and industrial circles at home and abroad. It is necessary to strengthen our historical identification with our direct predecessor - the Mining and Forestry Academy founded in Banská Štiavnica (Schemnitz, Selmecebánya) in 1762. Let us fasten on the great scientists, engineers and artists who had worked in this territory in the past. Thanks to all of them, regardless their Slovak, Hungarian or German/Austrian origin, we can successfully develop our activities today. Let us continue specialising as a technical university providing the space for the development of both, the traditional and new, modern technical, engineering and artistic disciplines.

**MODERN ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTION.** The optimum costs and the maximum output effects are significant for the high-quality performance in the pedagogical process and research. These are conditioned by the cooperation of all the University departments. In order to meet the goals of the Institution in two main areas of its activity - pedagogical and scientific research, it is necessary to immediately analyse the current situation, and reflect on the necessary and useful changes resulting from the analysis. I maintain that higher efficiency can be achieved by precisely defining the duties and responsibilities of all workplaces and employees on the one hand, and by creating the conditions for everyone to perform the assigned tasks in a quality manner, while bearing responsibility for the performed activities and attained results, without disturbing other workplaces and other employees. The university teacher is expected to teach

and research, the researcher to investigate, and the administration to create the optimum conditions for those activities.

Elected academic officials, heads of workplaces come and go, while the Rector's and Dean's Offices remain. It is necessary to professionalize the individual workplaces of the Rector and the Dean's Offices so that the teachers, researchers and also students feel those units as their support instead of an administrative obstacle in dealing with routine matters. The professionalization of processes and further deployment of the information and communication systems provide a space for reducing the number of administrative and technical staff as well as academic officials who often perform their functions without previous experience and even the minimum education or predispositions in the field.

It is high time for the common consensus of the new management of the University and Faculties, in order to design and implement the new, modern and symmetrical administrative structures of the Rector's Office and Faculties, to re-consider and re-organise a better and mutually beneficial distribution of competencies between the Centre and Faculties, and to improve communication between the University entities. The application of modern principles of science management is a cardinal question of success, quality and effective progress of the University. The economic activity of the University, investments and the construction of new laboratories and research centres must be well planned.

**STRONG INTERNATIONAL LINKS.** In today's world, university must participate in the opportunities offered not only by the common European research area, but also by the world leaders overseas and in Asia. We must attempt to attract foreign students on the basis of our results in science and research, and expand the selection procedures for filling the positions of associate professors and professors immediately to the nearest abroad. The focus in the future must be on our involvement in forming a common European Research Area - our participation in the international projects, particularly those within the institutes as HORIZON EUROPE, KIC EIT and ESA, where funds are accumulated in unprecedented amounts. Unless our teachers, researchers and students travel and the windows of our laboratories are lit late into the night, unless English is spoken in the corridors, lecture rooms and classrooms of our Alma Mater and we are wanted by the postdoctoral students from the countries of high economic development, the discussion on rating and ranking of this University among the top five in the world is completely out of question. The path to international recognition leads only through quality and efficiency. Individual workplaces - faculties - must move from competitive struggles towards cooperation, in order to achieve the best results in science and research. My ambition is to elevate this intention to our common and major objective. In the future, every student and employee of the University should straightforwardly identify with their Alma Mater - their University, be proud of being its part and develop the feeling of ownership, regardless the field of study, study programme or workplace.

**What are the key objectives in the spectrum of our activities for the next four years? What are the essential tasks in the spectrum of our activities for the next four years?**



## Field of Education

Thanks to the standing Management of STU and Faculties, we can allege a solid state of the University accreditation of the study programmes and habilitation and inauguration procedures that are ready to comply with the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education Standards of the Slovak Republic. The wide range of study options on offer is certainly attractive to the applicants for the engineering, technical and, to a limited extent, artistic studies. The task for the future must be a better involvement of Bachelor degree students in the project and research activities of individual workplaces, along with an individual approach to gifted and talented students. I perceive the chances and opportunities for efficiency growth in the extent to which we will manage in the future to:

- Eliminate duplications and deviations in the structure and dotation of the identical and similar study programmes,
- Introduce massive project teaching of specific subjects in the Master and Doctoral study degrees,
- Integrate the most successful Master and Doctoral degree students into the pedagogical process and scientific research projects,
- Implement an individual approach to students, especially those of the Master and Doctoral degrees,
- Attract foreign students for the entire length of their studies - ideally to achieve 8-10% of foreign students in the portfolio,
- Open study programmes in English as quickly as possible.

## Field of Research and Development

The alpha and omega for strengthening our output in science and research will be to attract in the coming years dozens of young scientists from Slovakia and abroad, and prepare an attractive enough environment for them, so that they do not end up with our neighbours in Austria and the Czech Republic. This is, of course, conditioned by the significantly higher success of our workplaces in obtaining domestic and foreign grants. Best practices from abroad reveal that almost 50% of research fellows working at comparable institutions are involved in time-limited projects for a definite period of time (2-4 years), while being also funded from those projects. It will be necessary to open a discussion on using the available funds for the establishment of autonomous research institutes of the University. The University Science Parks and Research Centres were the right stroke in the past; unfortunately, as stated by the Supreme Audit Office in 2019, the government policy failed to ensure their further sustainable development. We will accelerate the establishment of stronger cooperation with our close partners – the University of Comenius (UK) and the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), as well as the City of Bratislava along with the Bratislava Self-governing Region (BSK) and the Trnava Self-governing Region (TTSK), and with anyone who would express willingness to cooperate meaningfully with us in the European Research Area (ERA).

## Field of Internal Management and Administration



Personnel audit of the STU Rectorate of 2019 provides a solid basis for fundamental organizational changes in the management structure of the University. It should result in the jobs systematization at the University. Also discussed can be even the intrinsic system of financial remuneration of the University staff, and thus potentially abandon the obsolete table limits of remuneration in the public sector. Individual management sections must be filled with high-quality professionals with advanced communication skills in foreign languages. It is necessary to fasten on the progressive procedures started in 1989, when STU was a pioneer in deploying the academic and economic information systems in the Slovak universities. Unfortunately, the trend has decelerated; currently, the entire sections of administration and management are performed manually, and urgently call for electronics. What is more, individual University sections utilise different information systems and procedures in the same area of management. We have even failed to introduce a general electronic signature for the internal purposes of University. Revision of the processes that have been accumulating for a long time is an inevitable pre-requisite for eliminating administrative bureaucracy and increasing productivity of the administrative apparatus. The changes will be essentially accompanied by attractive motivational tools (success based salaries).

An acute objective that will certainly appear in the short term horizon is to settle up the historical anomalies in terms of the establishment of pedagogical and research workplaces at the STU Rector's Office. The solutions must be radical, yet

they must not depreciate performance of the University. There, too, the solution must be preceded by a broad discussion and the search for an acceptable consensus.

I will pay the maximum attention to involving the heads of the University workplaces into the STU management, so as not to give the impression, as in the past, that workplaces are omitted from important decision-making processes. In the future, vice-rectors should represent a strong executive body promoting the solutions adopted by consensus in the University Management in a proper format.

### **Field of Employee Satisfaction and Attractiveness for Students**

Employees are the driving force of progress, it is therefore inevitable to provide them with at least the minimum benefits through the social funds, to complete the financial support for the STUBÁČIK, a University kindergarten project, and to open the discussion on establishing an elite primary school at STU for technically gifted and talented children, at least for the first four grades, as it successfully works in the Czech Republic.

The career and personal growth of employees must be stimulated in all available ways, so that their work at STU was strongly motivated by a clear schedule of the career promotion phases at the time of their top scientific and pedagogical performance. I intend to launch an initiative to legislate the so-called junior professorships, as has been the case in the Federal Republic of Germany for almost two decades.

The students, as co-creators of their own development, should regain the historical "universitas" - free-thinking associations of free-thinking people. This involves, among others, intensification of international mobility and internationalization of studies via creating an attractive study environment at STU, introducing new English-language study programmes and providing a wide range of extracurricular activities in our student dormitories.

### **Field of Building an Internal Quality System**

The elaboration and approval of the STU Internal Quality System (IQS) represents only the first necessary step on the path towards permanent quality improvement. We are currently harmonizing study programmes within the STU parts. The decisive stage will be the implementation of IQS into the University life, and the continuous monitoring of our still unresolved crucial Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). There will presumably be more than 100 of them, in order to perfectly and widely reflect our progress in the monitored periods. Therefore, it will most likely be necessary to consider the position of Vice-Rector, including the related Division, for Internal Quality System, to guarantee independence of the quality monitoring processes from our wants and wishes which may be miles away from real life. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic has announced a grant call for this purpose; the project is being prepared now.

### **Conclusion**

The common denominator in each of the above-mentioned pillars is innovation, with critical thinking being its tool.

Let me mention just a few clues that should be no longer ignored if to proclaim ours a modern and proactive technical university:

- Race to Zero
- Green University/Green Faculty
- New European Bauhaus
- Industry 4.0
- Cyber Security
- Open Access
- Paperless University/Faculty
- and, of course, a whole host of others.

These are the challenges that will decide whether we will be perceived and recognised in Slovakia, in Europe and in the world.

**Let's together create conditions for meaningful collaboration. I promise to build a wide space for the opinion exchange, dissemination of knowledge, its sharing and promotion.**

**Vivat, crescat et floreat Academia, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava!**