

Dear Members of the Academic Community of FAMU,

I received a letter from certain Heads of Departments and programme guarantors, which is addressed to the members of the Academic Community, for a commentary from journalist Mirka Spáčilová on Sunday, 7 February. I consider it important to give my commentary to you first.

I.

In introduction, allow me to sum up the crucial matters including a suggestion for the paths to take in the future, the possible solutions and the venues where the discussion can continue peacefully.

I believe the most important thing is that none of you, students, teachers, has to 'take sides.' You do not have to get involved in individual disputes that happen at the school, some of which may be overblown or outdated while others end up being constructive. Maybe this school has been thinking in dichotomies – the Dean v. Heads of Departments, art v. craft, Senate v. Dean and so on for too long. We do not have to play this game, and instead we can perceive FAMU again as one shared place where we discuss things that matter to us. Discussion belongs on academic soil, and as the members of the Academic Community you obviously have the right to express opinions, voice your (dis)agreement, make suggestions and critique. The Academic Senate of FAMU and other authorities are the perfect tools for communicating and seeking solutions – depending on what your suggestion is related to. Then again, we are all here at FAMU primarily to teach and to learn. Our school's official bodies have their authorities distributed democratically and are here to address various situations. This is why I am sorry that this communication began with an e-mail distributed to various addressees both within and outside the school, and that I am therefore compelled to respond to it via e-mail. That made me intentionally divide my reply into three parts. In this first part, I am trying to sum up my position and my proposal for what to do next. In the second, quite long, part I respond to the multiple details in the aforementioned letter, item by item. In the third part, I show that the school is working, that we are helping each other during these difficult times and that we even manage to develop the school. It is fine if you do not want to read the second or the third part.

I see the principal problem, illustrated by the letter signed by the Heads of Departments and programme guarantors, in the manner of communication. I do not take this lightly. I do not think that an instant miraculous solution is possible, but I suggest that we return to a patient discussion supported by arguments where we genuinely listen to each other. As the first step in the direction towards you, I will announce the next 'meeting with the Dean' towards the end of the week, where Vice-Deans and me will be available for any questions or suggestions. I will speak to the Heads of Departments at the next Collegium meeting, which is scheduled for 24 February. A meeting of the Academic Community of FAMU is planned for 24 February, 6 pm. This, however, should focus fully on the presentations of the candidates for the Academic Senate of FAMU and the Academic Senate of AMU. If there is a need to continue the discussion – and not only about the nine points mentioned in the letter – I can call another plenary meeting of the Academic Community afterwards.

II.

Specific comments on "NINE PROBLEMS OF FAMU":

I consider this form of summing up misleading and untrue information to be unfortunate, and the way that this document was distributed and that students in particular were literally scared, to be irresponsible and even destabilising. I do not know if this is part of the position and narrative of certain Senate candidates, or if it is merely a lack of communication skills, especially at a time when we all need more respect and a constructive focus on the solution.

The following is what especially puzzled and alarmed me about the text:

- - It contains a large number of untrue statements, in certain cases misconceptions and incomplete pieces of information that create a misleading image of the steps being described. A lot of that can be easily traced in the minutes from the meetings of the school's bodies. In certain points, the case is that

of simple ignorance of internal policies and legislation, which is something that could be easily explained if the signatories approached me (of course, I understand that none of us knows all of the internal policies by heart).

- - It contains repeatedly voiced concerns about changes that are coming or about to come and that the signatories perceive as something that will be misused against them in one way or another. It is immensely difficult to eradicate purely speculative concerns about something that has actually not happened but might happen one day, according to the signatories. I perceive this as a challenge for me – to try and communicate such changes more patiently and explain their benefits better.

- - I was puzzled by the fact that the letter describes matters that have actually been discussed and often also approved by all relevant bodies, which may or may not include Dean's Collegium, as principal issues. In effect, the letter often contests the work of virtually all bodies of the school, from the Academic Senate to the Artistic Council to the Rectorate's Internal Evaluation Council, which approves accreditation files, rather than my and the Vice-Deans' work.

The initial objection regarding the dysfunctionality of the Collegium is difficult to understand because there is clear evidence: minutes of the Collegium meetings, which are accessible publicly to anyone including the students and illustrate in detail how often the Collegium meetings are held, what agenda it discusses and how many constructive ideas are brought to the discussion and by whom – refer to: <https://www.famu.cz/cs/uredni-deska/zapisy-z-jednani/kolegium-dekana/kolegium-2020/> (we are working on English translation of this section).

One can easily see that, since my arrival, Collegium meetings with the Heads of Departments have actually been held much more often than before; the meetings were organised every 14 days in the autumn when we had to discuss distance learning. In addition, Vice-Deans and I try to respond as quickly as we can to any questions, individual issues or bulk e-mail sent by the signatories of this letter since my arrival on an ongoing basis.

I have been sensitive to the difficulties in teaching due the pandemic and the Faculty management has supporting the Departments on an ongoing basis. Communication on various complications with both individual teachers and Heads of Departments is demonstrable with a lot of correspondence, and support, primarily for the Heads of Departments, was, considering the momentary difficult circumstances, provided in terms of both organisation (see Collegium minutes) and material (note the 17 classrooms prepared for distance and hybrid learning, procurement of editing suites for individual loaning, etc.), as well as in terms of methodology (training and offers of individual methodological support for distance instruction) and communication (monthly bulk e-mail containing rules, instructions and guidance; the 'instruction traffic lights' created together with the Departments for stages 3, 4 and 5 to illustrate the form of instruction comprehensibly to all students and teachers).

(1)\_a

When I took up my office on 20 May 2020, there were three priorities for me: First, contact all Heads of Departments to find out what difficulties they need assisting with when completing the current, pandemic-stricken semester. That was my first two days in the office. Second, prepare a budget for the current year, since I came when a provisional budget was in place, without the previous management team having prepared specific steps responding to the anticipated reductions in income (the trouble with the budget is described in the minutes of the June meetings of the Academic Senate and the Collegium). And third, meet all employees to get an understanding of how the school works and of its joys and woes more in-depth and individually. I was interested in the viewpoint of a chair of a panel, a Head of a Department, a senior teacher as well as a 'rank-and-file' teacher, a junior head of a workshop, an HR employee or an accountant. The interviews were fully voluntary; certain colleagues opted to not meet me, which I utterly respect. Records were made of such interviews with the consent of everyone – this was purely for my own purpose, so that I would not forget important matters. I met 199 people,

and that's a lot. Recordings were made for the purposes of written records exclusively with the consent of the interviewees. Once the recordings were transcribed (by an external contractor bound by a non-disclosure agreement) they were erased. No recording was ever – never ever – used to anyone's detriment or benefit. Based on the 199 interviews, I prepared a plan of priority steps to take and a plan of required analysis that has to be done so that I can plan systematic development of the institution and efficiently address the issues that my colleagues face. Some people referred to this activity as 'not normal' since I was supposed to talk to heads of workplaces and not to employees. I disagree with this idea – I find that everyone's voice is important. In fact, many interviewees explicitly appreciated the fact that someone wanted to speak to them; they said this was the first time ever that a Dean spoke to them, discussing not just issues they tackled at work but also a great multitude of their own suggestions for addressing them. This was immensely constructive and inspiring, and I want to thank once again everyone who spoke to me.

(1) b

I reject the notion that there were intentional attempts at slandering teachers; with some of the names mentioned, I have no idea whatsoever who was supposed to slandered them and how. Personally, I made a communication mistake vis-à-vis Mr Ivo Mathé by not discussing my intention to end his tenure as a guarantor of the doctoral study programme (DSP) in advance. That was at the beginning of my mandate; I used to read the internal policies literally, and thus awkwardly, which was my mistake. I admitted the mistake publicly in many forums and publicly apologised to Mr Mathé repeatedly. I am using this opportunity to apologise to him again for my communication misstep in June. The case involving the Subject Council was discussed and resolved by the relevant bodies and doctoral studies were not disrupted in any way. With two of the names cited, I am aware that I criticised some of their methods and/or proposed ending their involvement in certain of the 13 various committees of the Faculty. I always supported my criticism with arguments and I delivered it before the bodies of the school that are intended for this. Criticism cannot be taken as slandering or shaming.

Former Head of the Registrar's Office Ilona Sejkorová ended her employment at her request; the reason she gave in a personal conversation with myself and the Vice-Dean for Student Affairs was her health. If her departure was motivated by anything else, she never communicated such reasons to anyone of the current top FAMU officials. When Ms Sejkorová explained her personal reasons in detail, she asked us for discretion, and the Vice-Dean and I respect her wish; we found her reasons so undisputed that it was our duty to grant Ms Sejkorová's wish without any reservations, even though she left at the beginning of September, which is the busiest month on the agenda of the Department.

Jan Čeněk chose to leave the school after the new management team arrived. I was sorry about that; I wanted to contact or meet him (we never met before or after) but I was not successful.

(2)

Under both AMU and FAMU Statutes, the term of office of a Head of the Department is three years; after three years, a tendering procedure is supposed to take place. Pavel Rejholec's tenure ended in June 2020 and I prolonged it without a tendering procedure, which was contrary to the Statutes. Mr Rejholec and I discussed the situation openly, we consulted the Rectorate lawyer (and I consulted the Academic Senate of FAMU) regarding the best steps to take next, which was to end this unlawfully extended mandate and make a new call for tenders, which is what is happening at present. In other words, not only did I never try to remove him from the office in an inappropriate manner – I actually appointed him again straight away, without a tendering procedure.

Ondřej Zach's three-year tenure ended in September 2020. Since he had informed both me and FAMU International of his intention not to run for the position again, I asked him to stay on board until June 2021 as a head-in-charge, so that we can navigate the changing and unpredictable situation at FAMU International together. This set-up suited Ondřej Zach, and a new tendering procedure will be called in February 2021 to give the new Head enough time to take over the agenda. I consider this decision to

postpone the tendering procedure and authorise Ondřej Zach, which suited him professionally as well, to be managerially correct and useful with regard to the Department.

I repeatedly asked both gentlemen to take part in the tendering procedure (the first time was at a meeting on 16 September). Pavel Rejholec agreed; Ondřej Zach does not want to vie for the position of the Head of the Department anymore.

As I have said earlier, I will comment on the tendering procedure for the position of the Head of the Department of Cinematography separately on Thursday.

(3)

The Dean's Collegium is, under the Statutes of AMU (clause 13(4)) and the Statutes of FAMU (clause 5(3)) an advisory body to the Dean. That does not mean anything shaming or marginalising. I do not see a conflict between the Collegium being a partner and an advisory body. Minutes of the Collegium meetings show clearly how much discussing the Collegium does. Everyone who ever wanted to say anything on the matter or suggest a solution, ask a question or point to potential alternative ways was always given floor. Everything is captured in the minutes. Just notice how much the opinion of the Collegium is relevant for the study agenda as well as for other topics that decisions are to be made on (for instance, look at the topics of distance learning, rates for agreements to complete jobs and agreements to perform work, open days, forms of admission procedures, assignments for hands-on exercises, and so on and so forth).

Hands-on teaching has been forbidden for a long time due to government resolutions (except individual work) and the Faculty management always acts in accordance with current legislation and repeatedly proposed operational solutions for the different stages of the PES scale, which were discussed at Collegium meetings. Following thorough discussions with the Head of each Department in January, the Faculty management has prepared a set of eight principal points for the upcoming summer semester regarding changes in organising instruction with regard to the build-up of hands-on exercises that could not be completed. In fact, the management of FAMU has been proactive in terms of hands-on exercises on AMU level – for example, see the minutes of the meeting of AMU's Departments for Student Affairs dated 21 January, item 10, or the current letter to the Ministry of Education with a request for an individual exemption from the ban on hands-on art instruction, which I initiated and which was sent by the Rector today, following a discussion at the Dean's Collegium and then at the Rector's Collegium.

Under the Act on Tertiary Education, the supreme body of the school is the Academic Senate of FAMU; the other bodies are the Dean, the Artistic Council, the Disciplinary Committee and the Secretary. The 'Dean's Collegium' is not mentioned in the University Act at all; it has no legal powers or role. Its role is defined by the Statutes of AMU and the Statutes of FAMU. Still, the Collegium plays an important role at FAMU. All comments from Collegium members are debated. Sure, certain comments and ideas are not accepted or are not accepted in full, and some of those not accepted suggestions are mentioned in the letter on '9 points.' Personally, I consider the Academic Senate of FAMU a more appropriate forum for signatories to submit their suggestions to. As seen in the minutes of its meetings available at <https://www.famu.cz/en/official-desk/minutes-of-the-meetings/as-famu-minutes-of-the-meetings/minutes-of-the-meetings-as/minutes-2020/>, many issues mentioned in the letter were discussed there and (re)solved (e.g., student evaluation, Game Design, doctoral programme, former Dean's personal disputes, etc.). Unfortunately, the letter's signatories almost never attend the Senate or discuss their complaints in the appropriate venue, or they simply refuse to accept other bodies of the school having a different opinion. Not accepting differences in opinions and the democratic division of power between various self-government bodies of the school means destabilising the school irresponsibly.

(4)

The concurrence of dual study programmes is currently common at all universities in the Czech

Republic, and stems from the recent amendment of the University Act (in force from 2016) and the necessity of re-accrediting former programmes; this situation is currently at FAMU in terms of both BcA and MgA programmes, as former programmes with students registered are still running while new programmes are already in operation.

The new doctoral study programme (DSP) was approved by all relevant bodies of the school, including the Internal Evaluation Council of AMU, in a fully regular manner and for the first time. In addition to certain changes in content (in particular, greater reliance on methodologies of audiovisual media research, systemisation of teaching practice and significant credit emphasis on subjects associated directly with writing dissertation theses), it also newly offers the opportunity to study (and receive doctoral scholarships) for four years.

Since the approval of the DSP on 28 January 2021, the Vice-Dean for Science and Research has been contacted by eight prospective applicants for studies, although the promotion of the admission procedure had not started yet, which we consider a huge success (in 2020, a total of seven applicants applied for the 'old' doctoral programme, with two admitted; in 2019, the admission was not opened at all).

Artistic doctorate, i.e., doctoral studies that can be completed with a work of art, is a complex issue. I was initially somewhat sceptical about art/research doctorate, in particular for financial reasons. I try to listen to different opinions, and in this matter, I accepted the arguments of the Academic Community members who wanted this type of doctorate. For example, in my response to a report from the work group that internally evaluated the existing DSP from early January 2021, I state clearly that I agree with the findings of the work group and that I consider it desirable for us to accredit a doctoral programme focused on artistic research in the future. Nevertheless, I am aware that this plan will require a deep and extensive discussion, because it will require making a decision on how the doctoral output of art research is to be financed and whether this should be at the expense of certain bachelor or master exercises.

Furthermore, the signatories object that the Vice-Dean for Science and Research holds no doctoral or associate professor degree. The Vice-Dean does not manage the doctoral programme. The guarantor of the doctoral studies – the chair of the Subject Council – is responsible for the doctoral studies. The Vice-Dean is in charge of the studies in organisational terms. Vice-Dean Helena Bendová holds no degree but has written and/or edited several books, which is something you cannot say about most members of the current Subject Council; a doctoral student supervised by her won the prestigious first prize in the national Jacques Derrida Awards last year for the best project in humanities and social science.

Helena Bendová was appointed a member of the subject council for the new doctoral programme on the basis of approval of the Artistic Council of FAMU and the Internal Evaluation Council of AMU. Her appointment is entirely in accordance with the internal regulations of the school and the Government Ordinance on the standards for accreditation in tertiary education. It is one thing to say that signatories simply personally hate her holding that position, and another to suggest in a misleading way that she does not satisfy statutory requirements for the office she holds.

(5)

Since my arrival, I along with the Vice-Deans for International Relationships and for Student Affairs have been focusing thoroughly on the agenda of international students, who are an equally important part of the school. Step by step, we are working towards ensuring that both formal and informal communication is thoroughly bilingual (internal regulations and important documents, all bulk correspondence from the Dean's office, newsletters and Facebook). There were several direct meetings on the topic of international students – for example, with all students of Montage. International students are also invited to the meetings with the Dean and we are preparing the appointment of a student ambassador for each of the accredited international programmes.

International students of accredited programmes may use different types of scholarships (Faculty's

social scholarship, grants for scientific activity or for excellent creative achievements). The fact that they cannot receive results-based scholarships is not the Dean's decision – this stems from AMU's Scholarship Rules.

Along with the Vice-Deans, we have taken many organisational steps since my arrival that address international programmes with the same priority as the Czech ones (e.g., professional promotion of the admission procedures for such programmes, contract revisions, online student registration, translations of relevant documents into English, etc.), and we also consistently communicate many of such activities with the management of AMU since they are coordinated at the Rectorate level.

The situation of international students is generally the same as for students in Czech programmes. Hands-on teaching is currently prohibited by law. The Vice-Deans for International Relationships and Student Affairs along with me have been focusing on the situation of international students and their specific needs virtually all the time. In addition, we focus on development of international relationships with output primarily in the form of masterclasses delivered by major global filmmakers.

If anyone from any Department feels that the Dean or the Vice-Deans should address other issues, they approach the Vice-Dean for International Relations ad hoc and the Vice-Dean solves the issues consistently. Neither me nor the Vice-Dean know what exactly the letter's signatories suggest the Vice-Dean should have done but did not.

(6)

Game design is a new field of audiovisual art that is evolving rapidly, and FAMU as a prestigious school with an ambition to become a vanguard in this field should not lag behind. The instruction includes TV series, web formats and various quality TV genres. Game design has been part of the major film schools in the world for many years. There is huge demand for this programme among applicants who have been requesting FAMU for information on the admission procedure for two years. Considering the ubiquity and strong position of video games in creative industries, the school management really wants to promote the creation of games with an artistic value and social responsibility. This is also why we will educate professionals in this field who, in addition, are much in-demand on the labour market.

The plan for accrediting the new Game Design programme at FAMU was, in my opinion, an excellent decision made by the former management. The former Dean presented the plan for accreditation, which includes an introduction of the budgetary, personnel and capacity parameters of the new programme, to his Collegium. The fact that Game Design has passed all stages of the AMU approval process guarantees its quality. For almost four years, the preparatory team worked on the accreditation of the programme, which was subsequently discussed and fine-tuned based on the input of all relevant authorities. When the file was approved, the plan for establishing the workplace that would cover the programme (Department of Game Design) was submitted to and approved by the Academic Senate. The preparation for the accreditation was financed fully from the OP RDE (without any burden on FAMU budget), and the equipment for the classroom required by the Department is being procured from this programme this year. (For the sake of completeness, let me add that the admission of the initial students in the first year of study is one of the indicators of having met the obligations under the OP RDE, and if no students were admitted the Faculty would face a huge risk of penalty that could amount to as much as the amount of funds already invested in the preparation.)

It is logical and inevitable that Associate Professors and Professors, experts in the exact field required, are in short supply when it comes to entirely new study programmes. With Game Design, this circumstance was repeatedly discussed with the relevant approving authorities, and they approved Prof. Jan Bernard as the guarantor – entirely in compliance with relevant regulations – while stipulating that the term of validity of the accreditation would be five years, with an emphasis on the fact that, in the meantime, someone with greater professional connection with the industry may habilitate and become the guarantor. Witnesses will certainly remember that a HAMU professor used to lead the

Department of Sound Design at the beginning. This is a natural way of emancipation of young programmes that represent development and new shifts.

The readers of this text can take a look at the qualification of the artistic councils in their decisions and debates in the minutes of the AC meetings. The minutes regarding the decisions of the current Artistic Council related to Game Design can be found under the date 6. 8. 2020, and older ones can be found in the minutes of 8 Oct 2018 and 21 Oct 2019 (refer to <https://www.famu.cz/cs/uredni-deska/zapisy-z-jednani/umelecka-rada/> (we are working on English translation of this section)).

(7)

I find it beyond comprehension why the signatories consider old disputes involving former Deans of FAMU to be a principal issue endangering the current functioning of the school, how exactly this affects the work of the signatories in their Departments, and why they constantly try to pull myself into those disputes. In accordance with a recommendation from the Ethics Committee, I invited Mr Vít Janeček in January to consider apologising. The results of the EC meeting were announced in January. Therefore, I find it strange (in the very least) to consider it a crucial problem of the school that this issue was not discussed at the only Collegium meeting held since then, which had to discuss urgent issues concerning the ending of the current semester and the structure of instruction in the next one. Studying and teaching must be the priority for discussions and solutions at all times.

(8)

Evaluation of teaching provides an important opportunity for students to express their opinions, which can be taken into consideration when pondering the development of study programmes. The evaluation should take place following every semester and be an integral part of the teaching process. It is focused differently (on individual subjects only) from the internal evaluation that focuses on Departments and curricula thoroughly from different perspectives. (Student evaluation was introduced in the Czech Republic at the insistence of the Ministry of Education and the University Council. It was a prerequisite for uniform control over tertiary education in the EU. For example, it is a prerequisite for a diploma to be recognised abroad; this certificate known as the Diploma Supplement Label was bestowed on AMU in 2009.)

Evaluation of the individual subjects using questionnaires has been a standard matter at Czech tertiary schools for many years. It was introduced at AMU within the KOS in 2006 (for FAMU, see the minutes of the Collegium meetings that discussed this dating back to 2006), it has existed for 15 years and it is nothing new. We just revived it along with the Vice-Deans. The Heads of Departments were informed about the evaluation at the Dean's Collegium meeting on 16 December 2020 (see the minutes) where they also learned that a meeting with student ambassadors on the topic would be held in January, and they were also asked to inform their teachers and to encourage the students to give their feedback. Instead, some Heads started claiming within their Departments in January that they did not know about the evaluation. The Vice-Dean who is in charge of coordinating the evaluation offered the Heads of Departments another meeting for 15 January but his call remained unanswered. Since we all perceived the urgency of further communication, it was discussed by the Collegium on 3 February.

Evaluation does not pose a 'paperwork' burden because the Departments are not involved in any way except for simply informing the students. It is a key tool for reflecting on study programmes. And it is needed even more because the semester was non-standard, since it can yield inspiring insights that may be useful for the Departments' planning of organising instruction in the summer semester.

(9)

Creating a safe environment and caring for the observance of rules for respectful conduct, human rights, equality, sexual harassment, abuse of power etc. was stated clearly in my election concept. Our Faculty psychologist provides support for our students and teachers alike. In addition to her, I

established the ombudswoman position. There is not much experience with this concept in the Czech Republic yet; it is a standard option in various forms in universities abroad. The pilot introduction of the position has to be tested and subsequently reflected upon (which is currently planned for five months afterwards). I am not opposed to any suggestions or changes, as the case may be. Yes, in the future, the ombudswoman may be elected by one of the Faculty or Rectorate bodies. I admit that one of the reasons why I found an ombudswoman to be in charge of mediating disputes and to care for students with special needs was that the number of persons who approached me directly with sensitive issues and cases in the past nine months was huge, and resolving those cases is simply beyond my capacity (and, in addition, I am not supposed to do this). However, I perceive very urgently that it is necessary to pay attention and give time and care to those people within our Faculty. As far as the model for cooperation between the Faculty psychologist and the ombudswoman is concerned, I consulted, for example the Konsent association, which prepared a workshop for our students on avoiding sexual harassment and has experience with models used in international universities. I also consulted the newly elected Rector on this; she embraced the idea and she also sees it as a pilot project that could eventually be extended across AMU – of course, following a stage of testing, reflecting and development/changes as needed. If the signatories are concerned that this type of issues will be addressed at our school to a greater extent and are trying outright to discourage students and colleagues from approaching the ombudswoman for help, I consider this to be extremely problematic.

III.

The letter signed by certain Heads of Departments and programme guarantors may make it appear like our school is not in good shape and we have not achieved anything since last May when I assumed my position. I am not claiming that everything is perfect at all times and I do not want to do any self-promotion, but I still consider it important to recall some of the positive achievements during that period for the sake of emotional balance.

We have done a lot of work since May 2020, including in cooperation with all Heads of Departments and programme guarantors. Along with the Vice-Deans, we combine crisis management at a time when Government regulations are ever-changing and when artistic education whose hands-on part requires group activities is struggling with prohibitions with ongoing work on “standard” agenda and attempts at qualitative improvements and development on a daily basis. Of course, I imagined the development faster and more extensive, but the priority for our everyday agenda must be and is the most consistent care for the safety, health and the best possible course of instruction that can legally be done. To that end, we equipped 17 classrooms for distance and hybrid teaching before the start of the summer semester, prepared ‘traffic lights’ for teaching along with Departments to clearly indicate in schedules what subjects will be taught and in what forms during stages 3, 4 and 5 of the PES scheme. We prepared a FAMU PES table based on the ordinance of the Ministry of Education for tertiary schools. For the preparatory stage of mentoring delivered by global film celebrities, we used the momentarily available form of online masterclasses (Yorgos Lanthimos, Carlos Reygadas, Albert Serra, Rodrigo Prieto). The accreditation of a new four-year doctoral programme was prepared and approved by all the relevant authorities; the team that had been preparing the accreditation of the new Game Design programme for four years has taken all the preparatory steps all the way to the announcement of the admission procedure; in addition to the Faculty psychologist, we introduced the position of the ombudswoman to help with mediating disagreements and assist students with special needs. I introduced regular monthly meetings with the Dean; *FAMU News* sums up important dates and the developments at our school every month; and urgent information is distributed via e-mail to everyone once to twice a week. We are working on more proactive promotion of the school, which has already resulted in a major increase in the number of applicants for almost all Departments. In science and research, the areas of ongoing support have been systemised, a new call for organising a student conference was made; new rules of procedure for the Publishing Committee were prepared and edition ranges from the audiovisual field were planned, one of them with an emphasis on the individual filmmaking

professions. In international agenda, inter-school agreements are being systemised; agreements with international students are being unified; dozens of issues that international students were faced with in our country for which Departments needed assistance or support from the management have been addressed ad hoc. Student agenda at a time of accreditation for all programmes is immense, and the dedication and systematism of the Vice-Dean for Student Affairs is giving the organisation of studies orderliness and quality.

I do not want the text of '9 points' to become a source of disagreements and hate at the Faculty. I read it repeatedly, thought about it, and I decided that my answer would not just be an eradication of the compilation of allegations; I opted to approach every point as an explanation of the issue and, where possible, to describe how the matter can or will develop further. I am convinced that this is a constructive path to take. Each problem can be described and viewed from multiple sides, and it is possible to offer solutions that can be discussed with zeal for the matter. I wrote my answers in good faith that the signatories of the letter are willing to solve issues and that they do not wish to escalate them to a point where they become unsolvable. I am looking forward to further cooperation with them.

I thank you for reading this and for thinking about it collectively; I thank the teachers for their tremendous energy in tackling new forms of instruction; and I thank the students for cooperation and communication and incessant contact with the school and between themselves.

I wish you and your loved ones good health.

The text was written with contributions from Vice-Deans.

Andrea Slováková

Dean

10 February 2021