

MINUTES OF AN ONLINE MEETING OF THE FAMU GRANT COMMITTEE

11 December 2023 at 2:00 pm

Attendees (degrees omitted): Helena Bendová, Palo Fabuš, Jakub Korda, Tomáš Oramus, Kateřina Svatoňová (online)

Absence excused (degrees omitted): David Čeněk (submitted notes), Andrea Slováková

AGENDA

1. Assessment of the applications for the Research Team Competition
2. Assessment of the applications for the Student Grant Competition (SGC) – refer to separate minutes

1. Assessment of the applications for the Research Team Competition

The FAMU Grant Committee (“FAMU GC”) discussed all 7 applications submitted as part of the research team competition for the years 2024–2026 during the meeting with the following results:

Jan Bernard: FAMU Films 1946–1970: Chapters from aesthetic and production history

A well-prepared, methodologically solid project useful for the history of FAMU and, in more general terms, the history of Czech cinema. The 1946–1970 period is potentially very interesting with regard to the social influences, the New Wave etc. This is a rarely discussed topic that can be inspiring for present-day FAMU with regard to the settings of hands-on exercises. In terms of methodology, the project is classic, with somewhat lesser benefits for the development of current thinking. A nicely prepared, specific, and detailed application written by experienced researchers who are planning a publication and a conference as the project output. Certain members of FAMU GC would welcome the project to include the digitalisation of FAMU students’ film and making them accessible. However, the GC understands that digitalisation would increase the budget significantly. The application now covers primarily personnel and conference costs (the latter being almost negligible). FAMU GC recommends to carefully consider the promotion of the output and making at least a part of the archives accessible. There may be project weaknesses in the workload of certain team members, which could compromise the timely submission of their parts of the output.

The project was supported.

Jindřiška Bláhová: Comfy Viewership: The ‘comfort media’ phenomenon and emotional support of audiences

The current topic of mental health is intriguing not only for research (due to the breadth of the possible perspectives – aesthetic, psychological, cultural/societal) but also with regard to the current state of research at FAMU and linkage to instruction (the project includes the preparation of two courses and a workshop). This is very powerful considering the amount of research output planned primarily for international publication in prestigious periodicals, offering a chance for excellent records in the RIV. A good team with good research results in the long-term perspective. Outlook for a subsequent application for a larger grant (such as Horizon Europe). The application covers all the proposed priorities.

The project was supported.

Tereza Czesany Dvořáková: Workload and its effects on selected filmmaking professions (not only) in the context of FAMU

This research project into the current and relevant topic of cinema professionals' wellbeing is well-conceived, with good orientation in the literature on the topic etc. However, the research sample, its size and the parameters for selecting the respondents are not defined, although they are essential for the budget and for assessing the overall project benefits. The team has five members, but only the main researcher works at FAMU: while the rules permit such structure, this competition is focused primarily on the internal development of the Faculty and its employees. The interdisciplinary structure of the team is a good match for the project plan (a psychologist, a sociologist), plus the team could include a representative of the film industry capable of reflecting on the research sample and the reality in the industry. The main researcher has not submitted the output of another project under an AMU grant. There is potential for obtaining external grants including the GAČR. The GC eventually did not recommend the project for support, also because the rules and the available funding only allow for choosing two projects, but it suggests that researchers try to obtain funding for the project from other sources (for example Czech Film Fund, APA, etc.) considering its relevance for FAMU students and the Czech cinema in general.

The project was not supported.

Michal Reich: Assessment of stressors and mental health (MH) challenges for specific filmmaking professions, and development of methodology for self-care and mental health education at film universities

An important topic, relevant for the development of FAMU as well as for the film industry environment in the Czech Republic in general. It has potential for being incorporated in the instruction and processes at FAMU. It has the ambitious goal of creating a methodology for a one-year self-care and wellbeing seminar for cinema professionals. It is connected to real life and professional training thanks to a LOI from APA (a closer tie to real-world experience than

the aforementioned project with a similar focus). However, the GC is concerned that it is not a good idea to involve only students as respondents if the objective is to point out the stressors that filmmakers tackle during their careers and help them to prepare for this type of stress. Students represent a sample more capable of identifying stressors of different types (related to studying at a film school rather than having an actual professional career). Also, the project is not specific enough in terms of the content of the articles and the actual form of the one-year seminar focused on mental health – as in what new revelatory insights in particular it will offer. Certain GC members believe the suggested psychological methods of working with students have already been explored and established. Eventually, the GC did not recommend the project for support, also because the rules and the funding available only allow for choosing two projects from among the applications, but it suggests that the researchers try to obtain funding from other sources (for example the Czech Film Fund, APA etc.) considering its relevance for FAMU students and Czech cinema in general.

The project was not supported.

Lucie Králová: Use of self-experience teacher training in response to specific requirements in teaching directing at KDT FAMU and KALD DAMU

This narrowly specific project focused on the development of a method of teaching directing that uses self-experience methods will be beneficial to the Departments mentioned, but its benefits and general validity outside of them are quite low, and the project is too narrowly specialised for a three-year period. It is unclear as to its research method; the authors intend to use explored and established methods such as dialogical acting and various types of mindfulness techniques, but it is not clear what new topics they will explore. The topic is useful and practical, but the project is not definite enough and the research questions are too vague and appear only suggested rather than defined. The planned focus groups are problematic in terms of the choice of the respondents since they include the researchers. The planned output is a technical book, 'Teaching Condition and Teacher's Personal Growth as the Prevention of Burning Out and a Source of Exploratory Journeys', with the rest of the output being educational (a conference, workshops). There is a risk the output will not be eligible for registration in the RIV if existing methods – rather than entirely original research results – are presented at the conference and workshops. The GC appreciates the practical focus of the research, its currency with regard to mental health, and its linkage to instruction, but has its reservations with regard to the actual research as explained above.

The project was not supported.

Marek Jícha: DIGITALISATION OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC RECORDINGS AND FURTHER SUPPORT TO RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY OF THE RESEARCH TEAM OF THE ADVISORY AND ANALYSIS CENTRE (CPA)

A detailed and technical project whose output is to be two methodologies, an article, and two workshops. The application shows that one of the methodologies is de facto completed now – which is why the GC perceives the promised output as lacking considering the total budget and the three-year duration of the project. The project's weakness is low relevance to instruction at FAMU, students' needs, and the development of the current and innovative audiovisual thinking. The project is de facto focused on the long-term financing of the CPA unit. In the GC's opinion, the unit should pursue its own complementary economic activities and focus primarily on external grants such as those from the NPO and NAKI. The application only vaguely mentions the notion that the researchers would subsequently apply for grants with external grant agencies. The main researcher is reliable in terms of delivering valuable output, and it is desirable for CPA to continue applied research focused on digitalisation, but in the context of this competition, the GC prefers other projects.

The project was not supported.

Martin Stecker: Archive of FAMU's Department of Photography: processing and research

The application is related to the much-needed and useful organisation of the archive of the Department of Photography, which could result in great benefits for the history of FAMU. Its contribution to the development of the current knowledge and incorporation in teaching is lesser, however. The application actually suggests that the project is not a proper research project per se; a detailed description of the research part is lacking (the content of the two planned books; what exactly the researchers intend to explore, and how). It appears that the applicants' primary intention is to process, digitalise, and catalogue the archive of student photographs at the Department of Photography, create a database, and conduct a series of interviews. Aside from devising the cataloguing procedures, the actual research is described rather briefly. The planned output is valuable (two technical books) but the description of the books is too brief and vague. The application lacks information on the degree to which the KF archive has already been processed as part of the previous DKR project led by Josef Ledvina, which was not completed due to the Covid-19 pandemic (the exhibition could not take place, but the archive has been organised to a certain extent).

The project was not supported.

Written by: Petra Horká

Verified by: Helena Bendová