

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Charles University in Prague has begun the first phase of constructing its campus in Hradec Králové. Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Professor Miroslav Cervinka, gives his thoughts on the opportunities this will provide

The Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové opened on 25th November 1945 as the first university faculty in East Bohemia. Being a part of the prestigious Charles University meant that it was possible from the very beginning to establish both a high-quality teaching staff and an effective departmental structure and, for its entire existence, the Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové has been among the top Czech university institutions.

A new chapter in the history of the faculty started this year when, on 30 June, Josef Dobeš, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports in the Czech Republic, granted the subsidy that enabled the 'Teaching and Research Centre of Charles University in Hradec Králové' project to proceed. The goal of the project is to construct the first buildings that will make up the future campus of the medicine and pharmaceutical faculties.

The new 6,800 m² site for pedagogical and research activities will help to increase the quality of teaching and research on all levels and ensure maximum linkage of its research and other activities within the practical application sphere.

Total project expenditure amounts to approximately €16m and 85% of the construction of the centre will be financed by the EU via its European Regional Development Fund, with the remaining 15% coming from the budget of the Czech Republic. The funding comes from within the Operational Programme Research and Development for Innovation (Infrastructure for University Teaching Connected with Research).

The centre is expected to become operational in September 2014, in time for the 2014/2015 academic year, and represents one of the most significant events in the 66-year history of the faculty.

Achievements

The faculty has excelled in both education and research activities in recent years. The activities of the faculty cover all levels (cycles) of university education and the faculty has also been accredited for several bachelor programmes involving nursing, healthcare and physiotherapy. The main emphasis is on master's degree study programmes in general medicine (which take six years) and dentistry (five years) and currently there are over 1,300 students enrolled in these programmes.

Since 1992 the faculty has organised master's degree medical study programmes conducted in English for international students. This year almost 300 international students are studying



Miroslav Cervinka, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové

at the faculty and the curricula of Czech and English study programmes are entirely parallel and fully comparable with the current international standard.

The clinical instructions take place in the University Hospital, Hradec Králové, therefore allowing us very close, long-lasting and fruitful co-operation with the hospital. Determined students can take part

in research activities in all departments and clinics during their study, and they are encouraged to present their research results at the yearly organised students' scientific conference.

In the last three years of study, the best students have had the opportunity to undertake work experience in a hospital abroad, both within the EU and the USA, where the faculty co-operates with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

Accreditation

Another key aspect of the teaching activities are our Doctoral (PhD) study programmes. The faculty has accreditation for 20 programmes covering all major fields of theoretical and clinical subjects. Currently there are about 300 PhD students studying and working in several research areas.

We are also very much involved in the harmonisation of the PhD programmes within the EU, and since 2004 the faculty has organised the annual International Medical Postgraduate Conference. During the conference the best PhD students from 12 member states present their results, which we believe is an effective way to harmonise the quality of PhD programmes with the EU and promote communication among EU students.

Contemporary

The Faculty of Medicine has a long tradition of research as well, with activities aimed to provide solutions to the most up-to-date problems for contemporary medicine. In the coming years, the



healthcare system in the EU faces an ageing population and related health problems, lifestyle diseases, lack of financial means, and a common emphasis on personalised, individualised medicine.

The focus of the faculty's research is aimed in three specific areas, the first of which is the prediction of the effect and toxicity of therapy, including the importance of the individual adjustment of drug doses in oncology and the prediction of responses to therapeutic procedures.

Research into the field of lifestyle diseases is the second key research area and is aimed mainly at the problems of sudden cardiac death and specification of risks, but also at the pharmacological and non-pharmacological prevention of such events. This research is further geared towards both experimental and clinical conditions of myocardial regeneration.

The problems of metabolic and molecular manifestations of ageing and related metabolic and nutritional problems form the third research area. This includes the area of reparation and regeneration processes.

These research activities are supported by a number of national and international grants. Revenues from national R&D competitive grants, from international grants and from contract research, amount to approximately €3m per year and members of the faculty are producing more than 300 original scientific articles in

prestigious international journals every year which can be seen at www.lfhk.cuni.cz.

First step

Our current achievements at the university campus constitute only the first step towards our goals. The faculty is now preparing another project which represents a substantial shift in the future scientific life of the faculty, and we would like to provide greater opportunities for the further development of all faculty employees, and the students of the doctoral study programmes. Additionally, an extensive experimental base has been prepared for spin-off projects.



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