

# STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE PROTESTANT THEOLOGICAL FACULTY OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY FOR 2021–2025

## PREAMBLE

The Protestant Theological Faculty Strategic Plan for 2021–2025 is based on the Charles University Strategic Plan for the relevant period, and also follows from the previous Long-Term Plans of the Protestant Theological Faculty for 2005, 2011, and 2016. The University's motto in the Preamble of its Strategic Plan speaks clearly:

*Excellence, autonomy, and freedom of research and teaching are principles to which we persistently adhere.*

Also, it defined five key areas for the relevant period:

- I. The best people make the best university
- II. Internationally competitive research
- III. Education for the future and education towards the future
- IV. Internationalisation as a critical prerequisite for quality and competitiveness
- V. Unity in diversity

The Protestant Theological Faculty ("PTF") aims to implement this plan in science and education, as well as in other areas which are part of its profile, and to efficiently collaborate within the University as a whole. The Faculty will focus, in particular, on the following goals:

- Acquisition and support of highly competent employees and targeted support of talented students;
- Highly specialised research in the main Christian traditions and widespread world religions, but also in the area of Christian social and community work;
- Quality education in all degrees and study programmes offered, and popularisation of research to the public;
- Intensive high-level international cooperation;
- Interdisciplinarity and collaboration with the commercial sphere.

From a certain perspective, the PTF is in a specific situation in that it is the only higher education institution in the Czech Republic providing the study of Protestant theology (in its traditional continental form) and developing this academic field in its full potential and all the individual disciplines involved. This makes the Faculty unique, but also to a certain degree isolated in our country, which leads to intensive long-term cooperation with other faculties of Protestant theology in Europe and the rest of the world. The Faculty is well aware of its specific position, and considers it a commitment and an opportunity to contribute in its specific way to the portfolio of academic fields at Charles University.

Currently, the PTF is also the smallest faculty of the University. On the one hand, this allows for creating and maintaining a close community of people who work and study at the Faculty – they know each other in person and are aware of their colleagues' activities, which facilitates efficient collaboration and creates a friendly environment. On the

other hand, in particular in the case of larger projects and in order to achieve the highest goals, the Faculty must engage specialists from other faculties or institutions. The Faculty is well aware of this fact as well, and considers it an opportunity to be open and to collaborate with others; at the same time, it is prepared to tackle any difficulties that might arise out of this situation.

## **I. THE BEST PEOPLE MAKE THE BEST UNIVERSITY**

### **Activities**

1. The Faculty will make a targeted effort to acquire highly competent employees and talented students. It will try to increase the number of foreign and visiting teachers. It will work on the quality of the study programmes offered and their promotion to attract talented students to study all the degrees available. It will give special attention students of doctoral programmes of study and new academics.

2. The Faculty will aim to organise the study so that students of different study programmes and in different stages of their degrees meet more frequently in their courses in order to promote openness, interdisciplinarity, and collaboration.

3. As for doctoral studies, the Faculty will strive to achieve excellence on an international level. All study programmes will continue to be taught also in English, and the Faculty will look for highly-competent applicants from abroad. Dissertation projects will be directly linked to the research activities of the Faculty's departments, which will support the project activities of doctoral students, as well as their activities abroad. The Faculty will also support further development of the collaboration with Czech and foreign partners in the education of doctoral students and their involvement in seminars and research activities.

4. The Faculty will implement the University's Career Code as appropriate, and will support its academics in their career growth. It will offer a wide range of opportunities for further education, promote the academics' high-level creative activities, and help them develop their teaching competences.

5. The Faculty will endeavour to improve the working conditions of its employees, and to make the time demands on their work reasonable. It will also promote equal opportunities and a healthy work-life balance, and support employees and students with special needs. As for tangible changes, the Faculty is planning a general reconstruction of all of the Faculty's premises, which means that the whole building will be modernised considerably, creating significantly better conditions for studying, the academics' creative activities, the provision of organisational and administrative tasks, and also for a closer relationship with the wider public.

6. Thanks to the Association of Friends of the Protestant Theological Faculty, the Faculty is in regular contact with its alumni, including many former students from abroad. As for cooperation on the national level, the Faculty collaborates with several professional organisations and ecumenical associations, whose members are often the Faculty's graduates (for example, the Association of Evangelists [Spolek evangelických kazatelů]). The PTF will look for new tools and ways to strengthen these relationships and to stay in contact with, and receive feedback from, other graduates.

## **Indicators**

- Number of academics and researchers from abroad;
- Number of doctoral students, regular evaluation of their progression in their studies, and study success rate;
- International dimension and professional excellence of doctoral study programmes;
- Implementation and evaluation of the benefits of the Career Code;
- Employees' further self-education;
- Number of employees and students with special needs who have received support from the Faculty.

## **II. INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE RESEARCH**

### **Activities**

1. Based on the results and recommendations of the internal evaluation of research activities at Charles University for 2014–2018, the Faculty will aim to perform and further develop research linked to the international context of the respective academic fields.

2. The Faculty will actively use tools for the long-term conceptual development of research activities at Charles University (PROGRES, Cooperatio, UNCE, and PRIMUS programmes), and will continue to procure external funding, in particular through grant competitions, including abroad. As for the Cooperatio programmes in preparation, the PTF will take part in two programmes – Theology and Religious Studies and Sociology and Applied Social Sciences (in the field of Social Work) – using them to strengthen the institutional integration of research activities and creative teams on the Faculty and University levels.

3. The Faculty will support high-quality publications. It will publish the results of creative activities in prominent scientific journals in the given fields and in top scientific publishing houses, so that the works published have the best chance of being widely received and recognised. Depending on the specific situation, the Faculty will support the use of Open Access and other tools to promote open science. In this respect, the Faculty will take care to ensure the top scientific level of the journals published by the Faculty itself (Communio Viatorum, Teologická reflexe, Studie a texty).

4. With respect to the Faculty's profile of fields in the context of academic and research institutions in the Czech Republic, the Faculty will aim to promote international and interinstitutional cooperation, and support its staff in the further development of this cooperation. In order to manage the administrative aspects of research projects and activities, the Faculty intends to provide the researchers with institutional support, in particular through the Department of Science and Research and the Office for International Relationships of the Dean's Office of the PTF.

5. The Faculty will support its academics and researchers in improving their qualifications, in particular in their preparation for the associate and full professorship appointment procedure. It will support stays of foreign experts at the departments of the PTF, stays of the Faculty's employees at research institutions abroad, visits to scientific conferences, and engagement in international cooperation in research. The Faculty will also support the use of sabbaticals.

## **Indicators**

- Number and quality of publications, proportion of results in foreign languages and abroad, proportion of works created as a result of international cooperation;
- Number and quality of scientific conferences, symposia, research seminars, and workshops;
- Qualitative and quantitative indicators of success in grant competitions;
- Number of scientific journals published by the Faculty, which are cited in prestigious scientific databases;
- Active cooperation with departments studying related fields within internal programmes to develop research activities at Charles University;
- Specific activities in collaboration with strategic Czech and foreign partners;
- Improvement of the employees' qualifications, age, and qualification structure guaranteeing long-term sustainability and development of the Faculty's departments;
- Active engagement of academics and researchers in professional organisations, editorial boards, and scientific associations in the Czech Republic and abroad.

## **III. EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE AND EDUCATION TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

### **Activities**

1. The Faculty has an important task to accomplish in the form of increasing the number of students. One of the means of doing so that the Faculty wants to explore is to expand the study programmes taught in English to attract students from abroad. The ultimate goal is increasing the quality of the study programmes offered by the Faculty.

2. An important element of the Faculty's educational activities lies in their international dimension, and collaboration between in particular the post-bachelor programmes of study with partner institutions abroad and regular exchanges of students and teachers (especially the Erasmus+ programme and inter-university agreements). The Faculty has been welcoming a steady number of foreign students, and intends to expand its offer of subjects taught in English and to foster relationships between Czech and foreign students.

3. The Faculty wants to continue to develop the existing international block courses with partner universities (Heidelberg, Bratislava, Erlangen, Bonn, Tel Aviv, Marburg, Atlanta).

4. The Faculty will endeavour to further develop and increase the quality of study materials for distance learning, and the dramatically evolving area of e-learning as such.

5. The Faculty will strengthen cooperation with the commercial sphere on several different levels: in the form of practical training of students in church and secular organisations and in public administration, since practice is an essential element in the study of social work; in the form of courses of further professional educations (Association of Hospital Chaplains, Diakonie, Remedium Praha o.p.s., churches, bodies of state administration, etc.); in the form of life-long learning courses; and last but not least, in the form of research and collaboration with external experts from practice in the given fields.

6. Since life-long learning and the university of the third age are key elements in the Faculty's implementation of the "third role of universities", and also an important channel for the popularisation of its research results, the Faculty will focus on consolidating the newly created wide range of courses offered in Prague and other regions of the country in the coming period.

7. The Faculty will work on the presentation of its activities at events organised by academic institutions (Junior Charles University, Researchers' Night, Science Festival, etc.), as part of invitations to give lectures to state, non-state, and church organisations, or in the form of appearances in the media and other awareness-raising activities.

8. The Faculty recognises the need for quality and appropriate self-presentation. To this end, it will intensively work on its website and improve its content, create a full English version of the Faculty's website, further develop its social media accounts, and create other promotional materials (leaflets, videos, interviews, small promotional items) in order to present the entire range of its research and pedagogical activities.

9. The Faculty will, in collaboration with the University, strive to improve the feedback provided within the student evaluation of teaching .

10. The Faculty will motivate its students to achieve excellent study results and to successfully finish their studies by, for example, organising a competition of students' works with prizes (the Dean's award for best works in all degrees of study), and it will try to provide space and support for student projects.

11. Given the size of the Faculty, it will support an amicable approach to students, individualised accompaniment, and successful completion of studies. In addition to the personal contact between teachers and students, the student pastor with her pastoral, educational, and practical activities will help to achieve this goal. She is part of the academic community thanks to the collaboration with the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren.

### **Indicators**

- Number of students;
- Number of study programmes taught in English;
- Number of foreign students;
- Number of students at internships abroad;
- Number of international block courses;
- Number of students in part-time study;
- Up-to-date and actively used materials for distance learning;
- Number of graduates from all degrees of study;
- Number of further professional education courses;
- Number of life-long learning courses and university of the third age courses, and the number of participants in these courses;
- Increasing the number of student evaluation of teaching forms submitted.

## **IV. INTERNATIONALISATION AS A CRITICAL PREREQUISITE FOR QUALITY AND COMPETITIVENESS**

### **Activities**

1. The character of the Faculty described in the Preamble predetermines its emphasis on internationalisation. The unique profile of the fields studied at the Faculty within the Czech Republic means that partners can only be found abroad. This is both an opportunity and a commitment for the Faculty. Internationalisation and international relationships are therefore part of all of the Faculty's activities on all levels. Many of them have therefore already been mentioned earlier.

2. Internationalisation is very important, in particular, in research: the Faculty intends to continue developing collaboration with a number of foreign universities and institutions, and to promote high-quality publications in foreign languages.

3. The Faculty will focus more on attracting highly competent employees from abroad and on hosting specialists.

4. The Faculty will make use of its wide network of foreign contacts to provide as many opportunities for the mobility of students and employees as possible. It will further support the existing international projects (international block courses, archaeological excavations in Israel in collaboration with Tel Aviv University and Heidelberg University). The Faculty will, of course, further support and develop internationalisation. If it wants to fulfil its mission and remain an important player in theology and today's society and culture, it cannot restrict its activities only to the Czech context, Czech discourse, and Czech reception; the Faculty must contribute with its specific perspective to the global debate, and at the same time, enrich and revise its activities in the Czech Republic with the influences from abroad.

### **Indicators**

- Number of incoming foreign students;
- Number of international block courses;
- Number of internships for employees abroad;
- Number of foreign publications;
- Number of foreign academics and hosting researchers;
- Number of international projects;
- Development of new activities and initiatives on the international level.

## **V. UNITY IN DIVERSITY**

### **Activities**

1. Just like in the previous area, the Faculty's general framework is determined by its character: Being a small faculty, the PTF depends on cooperation with other institutions and external collaborators. Going beyond its boundaries and creating its own identity in a wider context is thus a natural part of the Faculty's existence as such.

2. Despite its distinct profile of fields studied, and factual relation to the Protestant theological tradition, the PTF is a faculty that goes beyond individual confessions. Although it is closest to the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, many teachers are members of different Christian confessions, or are people without any confession, which is also true for applicants and students. The PTF has long been known for its ecumenical openness, and many members and supporters of non-Protestant churches have chosen this school specifically for its openness and critical thinking. Dialogue between different perspectives is considered and fostered at the Faculty as an enriching and beneficial

element for everyone involved. By fostering open dialogue and critical thinking, the PTF wants to contribute to the fight against prejudice and bias, and to cultivate scientific knowledge, factual discussion, and thereby the general level of education in the Czech and international contexts.

3. To a certain degree, theology is an inherently interdisciplinary field, which integrates individual disciplines focusing on the historical, systemic, and practical aspects of Christian life and thinking. The areas of social and community work, including, for example, the issue of social business, contribute to this interdisciplinary character with its specific perspective and specific professional focus. Given its nature and internal structure, the Faculty is therefore inherently united in diversity. It aims to further apply this experience to its study programmes in the future, building on their overlaps, which could improve the efficiency and quality of the instruction, as well as interdisciplinary cooperation within the University. The PTF intends to use its unique potential to promote greater interdisciplinarity and cooperation across academic fields.

4. Sustainable development is an important part of the functioning of the Faculty as such on several different levels:

- The Faculty must make a systematic effort to give special attention to its doctoral students and young and perspective academics. External specialists are also an important part of the Faculty's life. The PTF will focus on engaging more external experts in teaching and research.

- From the economic perspective, the Faculty benefits from being seated in a single building. It has been focusing on cost-saving management of energies and equipment. A key event is the planned general reconstruction and modernisation of the building (2022–2023), which will provide students, employees, and visitors with a pleasant environment for learning, teaching, research, services, and administrative tasks.

- In addition to human resources and the facilities, permanent sustainable development is certainly hampered primarily by funding. The Faculty wants to give adequate remuneration to its employees, but the budget is very limited. Until now, half of its income for research activities depended on grants and projects. In the coming period, it will be necessary to stabilise the financial situation. The key role will be played by the number of students, which must be increased. It is also necessary to continue the effort to achieve excellent research results, obtain grants and projects from external providers, and look for opportunities for financing from new sources.

5. The very well equipped and functioning library has always been an important part of the Faculty. The Faculty's task for the coming period will be the improvement of the quality of the services provided by the library, development of its technological infrastructure, maintenance of the library collection, accessibility of electronic texts and databases, as well as new acquisitions and other library services, which the PTF has been providing to thousands of visitors each year.

6. The Faculty is thankful to be part of Charles University, and with its modest size, it welcomes the possibility to use University's infrastructure, and to collaborate with the Rectorate of Charles University, which is extremely helpful in dealing with the administrative burden weighing on academics. As part of Charles University, the PTF intends to strengthen and further develop its cooperation with the University's central bodies and offices, as well as other units of the University.

## **Indicators**

- Modernisation of the building (general reconstruction);
- Wage growth;
- Proportion of institutional and project funding for research activities;
- Acquisitions for the library collection, provision of professional library services, digitalisation, and accessibility of electronic sources;
- Number of courses available in different study programmes and other elements of interdisciplinary integration in the instruction.

The Strategic Plan was discussed by the Research Board of the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University on 28 June 2021.

The Strategic Plan was approved by Academic Senate of the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University on 29 June 2021.