



UNIVERSITY
OF WARSAW

University Council

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING

1-2, 15 October, 2020

Video-conference

Meeting on October 1st

On October 1st the ceremony of the inauguration of the academic year of 2020/2021 took place. Members of the Council watched the broadcast of the event online.

Meeting on October 2nd

Members of the University Council present at the meeting:

Prof. Janusz Bujnicki,
Prof. Pearl Dykstra,
Prof. Poul Holm,
Prof. Krzysztof Redlich
Marynika Woroszyńska-Sapieha
Katarzyna Zajdel-Kurowska
Kamil Bonas.

Members of the Rector's team present at the meeting:

Prof. Alojzy Z. Nowak – Rector,
Prof. Sambor Grucza – Vice-Rector for Cooperation and Human Resources,
Prof. Ewa Krogulec – Vice-Rector for Development,
Prof. Sławomir Żółtek – Vice-Rector for Students and Quality of Teaching
Prof. Zygmunt Lalak – Vice-Rector for Research

Before the discussion with the rector and vice-rectors started, the agenda was adopted unanimously with one change (the meeting of the University Council started with the rector and the vice-rectors meeting, all other matters were postponed). After that, a quick *tour de table* took place and was followed by a discussion on important topics for the University. The Council continued the meeting with Prof. Nowak, and discussed items indicated in the agenda.

The discussion started with specific issues including:

- recent developments at the University related to the COVID-19 pandemic,
- cooperation between the Council and the Rector's team in the context of developing a new strategy for the University.

Regarding the crisis management caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the following developments and challenges were presented and discussed:

- The mode of courses in the fall semester (blended learning; only courses that require direct contact would be held in classrooms, laboratories, etc.)
- IT systems and tools need to be unified and manageable and able to fulfill all the different needs of the units.

- As the University is a huge and complex organization, spread throughout the city of Warsaw, it is not possible to have one strategy of logistics support for the case of Covid-19 outburst among the University community. A more complex strategy is needed, based on the local context. For example, the division of UW into several campuses helps limit the spread of the virus. The spread of the virus may be also limited by the Rector's decisions to close the dormitories for renovation (some dormitories are already closed, others will be closed soon for modernization).
- Approx. 50-60% of the administrative staff work from home.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on research carried out at the University. It also poses new challenges to the Excellence Initiative (IDUB), as many of the planned actions included various forms of mobility.

The next point of the discussion regarded the strategic issues and consisted of the exchange of views on how the Council can support the University, the Rector, and the Rector's Team. The discussion of strategic areas included the following points:

- The University of Warsaw is on a path towards becoming a research university. This is a strategic goal set during the previous Rector's term, which is supported by the current Rector and the Rector's Team, as well as the Council. One of the mechanisms involves the Excellence Initiative, where the Council is expected to nominate the representatives of the Steering Committee.
- The recruitment and training of undergraduate and graduate students need to be adopted to the specifics of the research university, with the emphasis on the high level of training.
- Strengthening the University cooperation with the business sector is a very important direction, and the new opportunities pursued by the Rector include developing strategic partnerships with major industrial entities in Poland, aiming to support collaborative research, open new possibilities of training for students and university staff and to create new workplaces.
- Strengthening medically-relevant research at the University, including strategic partnerships.
- Strengthening the aspects of a *green* University, promotion of environmentally friendly projects, biodiversity, and saving natural resources.
- Strengthening the University as a place of debate and discussion open to different opinions and values systems, and protecting against discrimination.
- Improved management of real estate matters at the University. AS an example, further internationalization of the University depends in part on the successful efforts of the University to provide appropriate accommodation to its international guests and students
- Improving the management of financial data, improving the knowledge-based decision-making.
- Improving the handling of documents, towards the electronic way of communication.

The next part of the meeting was devoted to two aspects of the Rector's activities: involvement at the University, including special roles in different programs, and involvement outside the University.

The Rector explained which of the additional activities (beyond the regular house-keeping duties of the Rector) he finds most important for the University. He also explained his planned continuation of commitments with the business sector in his advisory roles, as these are going to be essential for developing the trustworthy relationships between the University and the business and industry partners necessary to meet the strategic goals of the University. The matter of the University autonomy and the necessity to protect it from the undue influence of the business entities was discussed. The Rector asserted that his additional involvements are transparent, they pose no conflict with his role at the University and that they are likely to be beneficial for the University, as exemplified

by his previous successful activities engaging the business sector to support the University. The Rector stated that he will resolve immediately any arising issues that may be related to conflicts of interests.

As the time planned for the meeting run down, Prof. Bujnicki paused the meeting and informed members of the Council that the discussion and the meeting will be continued as soon as the suitable date is identified.

Meeting on October 15th (continuation of the meeting on October 2nd)

Members of the University Council present at the meeting:

Prof. Janusz Bujnicki,
Prof. Pearl Dykstra,
Prof. Poul Holm,
Prof. Krzysztof Redlich
Marynika Woroszyńska-Sapieha.

The meeting on October 15th started with adopting changes in the agenda as the meeting on October 2nd was paused and decided to be continued on October 15th. The changes were adopted unanimously.

The minutes from the previously held meetings were adopted unanimously with one remark from Pearl Dykstra to check the text for use of the words „plan” and „program” especially in the context of the Multiannual Plan.

Prof. Bujnicki informed present members of the Council that he has been in contact with Katarzyna Zajdel-Kurowska and Kamil Bonas to receive their point of view on the matters that were going to be discussed during the meeting.

The meeting with the Rector and Vice-Rectors held on October 2nd was summarized. The members of the Council expressed their views on the points discussed with the Rector, in particular on the extent of the Rector's involvement outside the University, the potential benefits thereof, and the potential conflicts of interests (real or perceived) that may result from such interactions. The Council noted that Prof. Nowak was elected by an overwhelming majority of elector votes, while his involvement outside the University was publically known, indicating that his business involvement is clearly accepted among the University community.

The Council concluded that the Rector would ideally dedicate 100% of his/her time and energy to the University, but in case the external top-level advisory positions held by the Rector can benefit the University, appropriate rules and procedures should be introduced to enable such involvement in a transparent manner. The Council agreed that a statement needs to be issued to recognize the need of the UW to continue strengthening the business-university relationship together with a pressing need to develop rules for handling potential conflicts of interest between the University executives and the business sector.

Subsequently, the task-related allowance for the Rector was addressed. The Council discussed the wording of the resolution and adopted it to fit the wording of the law on science and higher education. The Council concluded that the current Rector's special duties, especially considering the challenges at the time of the pandemic, are comparable to the special duties of the previous Rector, and agreed to grant the task allowance at the same level compared to the sum of the other components of the Rector's salary as it was in the previous term. Prof. Bujnicki ordered voting on the resolution and it was passed unanimously.

In AOB the matter of the political aspect of the Inauguration of the Academic Year was raised what was a result of press comments on the ceremony that took place on October 1st.

As there were no other issues raised, Prof. Bujnicki formally closed the meeting.