

# FROM SCIENTIFIC SPHERE

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## Half a century of Faculty of Economics and Management in Nitra

### *50. výročie založenia Fakulty ekonomiky a manažmentu v Nitre*

The 20th century in Slovakia was characterized by a quantitative development of university education. A rising interest in university study, a changing structure of careers, a growth of social prestige and growing requirements on qualified economic management created the space for the existence of new educational institutions.

1959 was a historical year in our university's calendar; the year when PEF (Faculty of Operation and Economics) was founded and it was oriented to agricultural, economic and management sciences. The established faculty has changed from its modest beginnings into presently one of the six biggest faculties of the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra and one of the recognized economic-managerial faculties in the Slovak Republic.

A 50-year-long tradition of the faculty can be characterized by particular periods of development in which the institution went through deep internal changes. Originally the Faculty of Operation and Economics was constituted on the basis of two departments of former Faculty of Zoo-technology, namely Department of Agricultural Economics and Department of Organization of Socialistic Agricultural Enterprises. Educational activities from the very beginning have been oriented to upbringing of professionals in agriculture – operation economists and in academic year 1974/75 a new study branch – Automatic Systems of Management was developed. After 1989 in accordance with social changes, essential changes were made regarding the content and organization in university education. New study programs and specializations were broadened with the aim to improve the quality of upbringing the graduates and thus raise their competitiveness in a developing labour market. In 1997 the original Faculty of Operation and Economics was transformed into the present Faculty of Economics and Management, which name describes more precisely its educational work.

Since its foundation, the faculty has educated more than 14 thousand graduates who, by their professional and human qualities, represent the faculty at various

managerial and other demanding positions, not only all over the country but also abroad.

Presently, the Faculty of Economics and Management has more than 2 500 students at the bachelor, master and doctoral studies. Their professional profile is formed by 11 departments within 8 bachelor study programs (Business Economy, Business Management, Business Trade, Accountancy, Quantitative Methods in Economics, International Trade with Agrarian Commodities, Economics and Management in the Agrisector, Teaching of Professional Agricultural Subjects), 4 master programs (Business Economics, Agrarian Trade and Marketing, Quantitative Methods in Economy, Economics and Management in the Agrisector) and 2 doctoral study programs (Business Economy and Management, Sectoral and Cross-Sectoral Economics). With pleasure, we can state, that at present the faculty has been an inseparable part of the town of Nitra and the Nitra region for half a century of its existence and thanks to its professional activities, it is acknowledged by professionals and public in the whole Slovakia and also abroad. Professional contacts, which our faculty maintains, and the arising international reputation arising from it, lie in the organization of scientific events recently organized not only on the domestic ground of the faculty but also abroad, in cooperation with prestigious professional and academic institutions (FAO workshop 2004, Curtea de Arges, Romania 2007 in cooperation with the University of Economy, Kyiv, Ukraine 2008 in cooperation with the National University of Natural and Environmental Sciences, Krakow, Poland 2009 in cooperation with the Agricultural University in Krakow), participation in international scientific and educational projects (6RP, 7RP, Socrates/Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, CEEPUS, Grundtvig, ASO, International Visegrad Fund), scientific activities of students and intensive academic mobilities of teachers. Employees of the faculty successfully participate in grant projects organized by the Slovak Ministry of Education and institutional research, the results of which are used

in teaching, publishing and advisory activities in their professional field.

At the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, the question of the content and quality of university study arose. Our faculty did not avoid this question. It is assumed that universities, as the highest part of the educational system, will become the main source of producing, maintaining and offering the theoretical and scientific knowledge. It issues from their traditional functions which have been changing due to the social phenomena as globalization, sustainable development and European integration. The whole history of the faculty, from its foundation up to the present time, has been marked by the permanent quantitative and qualitative changes which significantly influence the character and the face of the faculty. Namely in the 90s and at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there was a very strong demand for the reconstruction of its educational content connected with the module system and credit systems of assessment. Attention has been paid mainly to the development of key competences of the graduates through team work, individual assignments and problem solving tasks, improving language and computer skills.

Regarding the more intensive and effective enrolment in the life-long education in the European education space, a prompter reaction to the calls for the international educational and scientific research, three more centres were added to the Information Technology Centre of the Faculty of Economics and Management, as individual specialized places, and that is the Centre of EU programs, the Life-long Education Centre and the Centre of Excellence.

The nearest and also further perspective of the faculty will mainly depend on the knowledge we can

provide to our graduates. Its quality will be determined by new ways of teaching, conditions of education, new approaches in evaluation and the innovation of curricula. In accordance with the demand of our present labour market and the internationalization of economic life, at the beginning of the academic year 2007/2008, we launched a new English study program (Bachelor program – International business in Agrarian Commodities) and since the academic year 2008/2009, we launched a pilot year of international Master study of the V4 countries in Business Economy program (in cooperation with the SGGW Warsaw, Poland, the CULS Prague, the Czech Republic, and the University of St. Stefan in Gödöllő, Hungary). In the academic year 2009/2010, we are planning to launch the MBA study “Agribusiness and Commerce” in cooperation with the University in Wageningen, the Netherlands. The faculty organized language teaching for teachers in the frame of the support of teaching professional subjects in English language and some of them successfully passed the Unicert exam and others are still preparing for it. In cooperation with the Slovenská sporiteľňa, a.s, there will be a new study room opened, equipped with the economic literature aimed at raising the qualitative level of conditions for teaching in English.

During the half century of its existence, the FEM has built a wide professional background regarding the number of employees, graduates and excellent students who create the basis of the future positive changes. Therefore, we believe that due to the well conceived study programs and the high professionalism, our auditoriums will never be half-empty and unused.

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