

Meeting of the Scientific Board of the Central European Institute of Technology, Masaryk University

Date, venue	7 th November 2019, Brno, University Campus Bohunice, A35/211
Participants	J. Nantl (chair), V. Bryja, J. Doležel, T. Kašparovský, M. Kiess, J. Koča, L. Kunz, M. Mráz, M. O'Connell, P. Plevka, K. Říha, R. Štefl
Guests	M. Pokorná, N. Kostlánová, M. Marcolla, Z. Novotná
Excused	M. Bareš, O. Fojt, P. Hobze, M. Králíčková, P. Martásek, J. Mayer, S. Pastoreková, P. Tomančák, R. Zbořil, M. Zvonař
Minutes prepared by	E. Handlířová (as instructed by J. Nantl), J. Batdorf (corrections)
Approved by	J. Nantl
Comments by	-

Agenda

- 1) Establishment of G. Demo Research Group
- 2) Strategic Plan Amendment (Per Rollam Voting Results)

Minutes

Introduction

The Scientific Board reached the quorum: 12 members were present out of 23 members of the board.

J. Nantl welcomed Scientific Board members and summarised the performance and financial situation of the Institute (see the presentation in the annex). CEITEC MU, as measured by the Nature Index, performs well in the context of the Czech Republic. If the Institute were an independent institution, it would rank 6th place among life science institutes in the Czech Republic. CEITEC MU is steady in its share of Q1 publications, while in the meantime, it's decreasing its share of Q4 papers. Its publication profile is decent in the European context, and is above the average of Masaryk University. There has been an increase in the corresponding authorship percentage. Our strategy is to produce results that are not only affiliated with the Institute, but that are "at home" here. Thanks to CEITEC MU, plant sciences is the strongest research field of the university.

J. Nantl also pointed out a positive development in the group of postdocs and their mutual cooperation with the management. Postdocs established a peer committee that is supported by the administration. The group of postdocs is very international (80 % of them are from abroad) and pro-active. The first Postdoc Retreat was organised this September, and an ombudsperson for junior researchers was appointed based on their proposal. Even though the Institute cannot meet all of the formulated requirements (e.g., permanent contracts), the discussion has been constructive and productive.

J. Nantl: The current funding period is ending in 2020, and the management is focusing on financial stability and sustainability after 2020 – being able to maintain the current institutional funding of research groups. We experienced an annual growth of institutional sources (17 percent every year), which enabled us to keep operational funding stable. We were able to create a budget surplus (budget reserves), following the multiannual financial strategy. The full support of the university management enabled the exchange of various types of financing to make it possible. In 2021, there will be an estimated total decrease of 30 mil. CZK. By that time, the Institute should have at least 100 mil. CZK in reserve funds. In order to prepare for this decrease, we have been doing structural changes, such as the amendment of the Strategic Plan of CEITEC MU. We will focus on life science, and some core facilities will be merged.

J. Nantl: We adopted new budget rules (coming into force in January 2020). The rules increased the flat rate and decreased the importance of performance funding. This is an important message for all group leaders. They know what they can expect and can adopt a grant strategy. The rules include follow-up funding for those groups whose ERC expired. The rules react to the need for stabilisation and simplification of the financial model. They were widely discussed with group leaders, and a consensus was found in the end.

J. Koča: It is known that the critical year will be 2021. In 2021, there will be no increase in the national budget for science. It is important for CEITEC to get an increase in institutional support for 2020. Has CEITEC MU included the increase of institutional support in the calculations presented?

J. Nantl: The expected increase from the state budget will be 40 mil. CZK for the whole university and was not included in the presented calculation for 2020 and 2021. From the perspective of the Institute, an increase in the MASH Award allocation would make sense. We need to be prepared that the national budget for institutional funding is not going to be increased all of the time. Group leaders need to plan their grant strategies, in which grants will make up app. 60-70 percent of their budgets. That is the only viable strategy (not only for CEITEC MU).

J. Nantl proposed a reform of the MASH Award to the Rector, which was generally accepted by the university management. There should be a Junior MASH Award (as the current one more strongly supports senior researchers to apply). That is what the Institute needs, as the strategy is to recruit prospective junior group leaders.

1) Establishment of G. Demo Research Group

See Annex 1

In 2018, there was a recruitment procedure related to the hosting letter for ERC candidates. The selection committee was (inter alia) composed of all research centre heads. We received 15 applications, in which 5 of them were shortlisted, and 2 candidates were offered the hosting letter. One candidate decided to go to Vienna, and the second is G. Demo.

G. Demo was evaluated with an A grade within the ERC Starting. That makes him eligible for ERC-CZ, and we can expect financial independence of the group. G. Demo applied for MASH as well this year. His research profile corresponds to the Strategic Plan of the Institute, including using the Cryo-EM facility.

Based on the above-mentioned (see details in the annex), it is proposed to establish the G. Demo Research Group as of 1st January 2020.

The Scientific Board had a Skype call with G. Demo. G. Demo introduced himself and his research plan. The introduction of G. Demo was followed by a discussion with the Board members.

The Skype call was followed by a discussion, in which there was a general consensus on the appointment of G. Demo as a group leader at CEITEC MU.

Conclusion(s):

The Scientific Board expressed no objection to the establishment of the G. Demo research group.

2) Strategic Plan Amendment (Per Rollam Voting Results)

See Annex 2

The members of the Scientific Board of CEITEC MU voted from 24th June 2019 to 5th July 2019 in *per rollam* voting form, based on the distributed background materials. The Scientific Board members agreed on the amendment of the Strategic Plan of CEITEC MU. The Institute will focus on life science and will not perform

material research. Also, the joint research groups with other institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences will no longer be supported. As a result, the following research groups will be affected by the termination at the end of 2020: Josef Humlíček, Jiří Pinkas, Lenka Zajíčková, Jiří Šponer, Miroslav Fojta and František Foret. The organisational change will be carried out by a separate instrument in the form of a Director's Measure.

J. Nantl: A settlement with the Czech Academy of Sciences was made in a friendly atmosphere.

J. Koča: Having life and material sciences under one roof could generate a big added value. The interdisciplinary project should be supported.

Conclusion(s):

The Scientific Board took note of the results of the per rollam voting on the Strategic Plan of the CEITEC MU amendment.

Annexes

https://is.muni.cz/do/ceitec/vedecka_rada/2019/2019-11-07/

Next Meeting (Save the Date)

12th March 2020 13:00