

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

Brno, 2nd March 2017

Date, venue	2. 3. 2017, A35/211, Brno – University Campus Bohunice
Participants	J. Nantl (chair), M. Bareš, J. Mayer, J. Koča, J. Leichmann, K. Říha, R. Štefl, P. Plevka, M. O'Connell, M. Zvonař, V. Bryja, J. Friml, P. Martásek, M. Králíčková, P. Tomančák, M. Kiess, A. Tiran, L. Kunz
Guests	E. Handlířová, M. Pokorná, M. Marcolla, N. Kostlánová, Z. Novotná
Excused	O. Fojt, R. Zbořil, J. Doležel, P. Hobza
Minutes prepared by	E. Handlířová
Approved by	J. Nantl
Comments by	-

Agenda:

- a) Initiation of the Scientific Board activities for 2017 - 2019
- b) Strategic Plan of the CEITEC MU and its implementation
- c) Report on the CEITEC MU activities in 2016
- d) Budget 2017
- e) Organizational Measure – Abolition of a Research Group (Bioinformatics – H. Hegyi)
- f) Any Other Business

Minutes:

1) Initiation of the Scientific Board activities for 2017 - 2019

J. Nantl welcomed members of the Scientific Board of the Central European Institute of Technology at Masaryk University (CEITEC MU Scientific Board; the Board). The Board meets necessary quorum (18 present members, 4 members excused). All members of the Board received letter of appointment for the period of 1. 1. 2017 until 31. 12. 2019.

The powers and competences of the CEITEC MU Scientific Board arise from the provisions of Section 34 of the Higher Education Act. The role of the CEITEC MU Scientific Board, as stated in the Rules of Organisation of the Central European Institute of Technology of Masaryk University (Rules of Organisation), is to advice on strategic issues of the institute, such as strategic plan, results of the internal evaluation, organizational issues (establishment/termination of research group or a research centre) and other issues proposed by the Director.

Conclusion(s):

The Scientific Board approved appointment of K. Říha (Deputy Director for Science, CEITEC MU) and J. Koča (Science Director of the CEITEC Consortium) as vice-chairs of the Board in accordance with the Article 11 Par. 2 of the Rules of Organisation.

(By unanimous approval of the Board.)

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2) Strategic Plan of the CEITEC MU and its implementation

See Annexes 1, 2

J. Nantl introduced the Strategic Plan of the CEITEC MU up to 2020 (see Annex 1) and its Implementation plan (see Annex 2). The Strategic Plan was prepared by the Management of the institute, discussed with the Committee for Strategy and Director's Board and approved by the Rector of Masaryk University on 3rd January 2017. The Strategic Plan is further developed into the Implementation plan that is rather technical and specifies time-schedule, values of performance indicators and implementation responsibilities. The Strategic Plan was designed with the aim of the institute to become truly internationally recognized institute with good governance and offering open, international and friendly environment.

The key performance indicators were identified as:

- 1 Teaming project (with VIB in Plant science, currently being evaluated)
- 2 ERC grants
- 5 other outstanding individual research grants (such as EMBO, Marie Curie International Fellowship, Wellcome Trust)
- HR4R excellence logo
- Balanced budget with increasing share of institutional resources
- 1 new research group opened per year
- 40 % international (origin or background) staff
- 65 % articles in Q1 journals and increasing scientific impact measured by citations

J. Nantl opened the discussion.

There has been a debate over 1 new research group opened per year and dynamics of the institute. A principle "One group comes in, one group goes out" needs to be implemented in line with career system that will be adopted in 2017 and will specify conditions of group termination (e.g. based on evaluation of junior group leaders, jobs systemization rules). The institute will seek for junior group leaders within the key focus of the CEITEC MU as formulated in the Strategic plan (Precise Biomedicine, Sustainable Agriculture). Junior groups currently form a minority of groups at CEITEC MU.

M. Bareš raised a question of reasonable size of the institute in terms of number of research groups. Current number of 35 research groups seem to be too big according to M. Bareš. J. Nantl estimates that CEITEC MU could be slightly smaller institute after 2020 (but probably no less than 20-25 groups) with a role of CEITEC ISAB to identify candidates for termination if financial exigency requires so. The situation is complicated by national funding system, we have no forecast of national funds next to 2020 The Management will work on various scenarios of development.

P. Tomančák recommended to pay attention also to gender balance in the Strategic Plan and its implementation. Increasing percentage of female group leaders is a task for years and it is very hard to break the trend of "leaky pipeline".

J. Nantl: CEITEC MU is active in HR policy issues incl. gender policy. As a partner of EU-life consortium, CEITEC MU is involved in the LIBRA project that aims to increase the representation of women in leadership positions in science. The Board members agreed that conditions must be set up favourably to enable work-life balance of researchers. As a matter of institutional interest we need to get best talents and offer her/him good working conditions.

A. Tiran presented a solution that works in Vienna where a child care facility is offered and it is a strong incentive to get new people. J. Nantl considers strengthening relationships with local municipalities in Brno (these are providers of municipal child care facilities) as a more viable solution in current conditions, and prefers outsourcing rather than running of own facility. This is the model that works also in Max Planck in Dresden, as informed P. Tomančák. M. O'Connell informed about a survey done at

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the Campus of Masaryk University that proves very high demand of employees and students for such a facility here at the Bohunice Campus.

The existence of joint research groups need to be solved yet more systematically in 2017. It is very sensitive issue to be dealt with faculty/external research organization. Share of joint research groups creates and will create only a minimum of groups of the institute, it is not the primary model for research groups.

Conclusion(s):

The Scientific Board takes note of the Strategic Plan of CEITEC MU up to 2020 and the Implementation Plan.

(By unanimous approval of the Board.)

3) Report on the CEITEC MU activities in 2016

See Annex 3

J. Nantl presented a report on the CEITEC MU activities in 2016 with special focus on science (Research report 2016). See Annex 3 for detailed information and data. The scientific performance of CEITEC MU corresponds to the standard of the most performing research institutes of the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic and approximates in terms of quality similar research sites in other countries. There is a positive trend not only in quantity, but especially quality of publications (63 % of publications in Q1 in 2016 compared to 37 % in 2011). CEITEC MU was also successful in obtaining grants financed from international resources (see PPT, slides 9-10). For the future, CEITEC MU wants to be a place where inventions are made and become more profiled.

The institute was active also in area of research infrastructure. In September 2016, the operation of long demanded core facility of cellular imaging (CELLIM) has been launched. This facility is primarily driven by internal demand. In 2016, all the core facilities were for the first time evaluated within the scope of the internal "review" of the core facilities pursuant to the approved rules of internal evaluation. This internal review will be annually repeated. The general outputs common for all CFs, as well as recommendations applicable for individual CFs, shall be implemented in the course of 2017.

J. Nantl presented work that is being done to establish functional bioinformatics core facility. This is one of the most pressing issues for 2017 in area of research infrastructure with K. Říha as person responsible. Regarding hardware, Masaryk University offers service of high quality. The principle issue for CEITEC MU is therefore staffing, esp. finding proper head of the facility. There is a seed budget of 2,5 mil. CZK for 2017 (app. 89 th. EUR).

In 2016, 13 new students were admitted to CEITEC PhD School, selected in an international two-round tender. The best eight students received a scholarship from the budget program of CEITEC PhD School. The scholarships for the other students are fully guaranteed by their mentors. In the course of 2017, the statute of CEITEC PhD School will be redefined and adopted so that it is possible to admit all successful applicants in the program whose mentors are employed by CEITEC MU, thus significantly increasing the capacity of the admitted doctoral students enrolled at CEITEC PhD School. There was about 60 candidates in 2017 that are from various countries (not a specific country from which would majority of applicants come from).

CEITEC MU wants generally to improve the experience of junior researchers in CEITEC. One of our aims is to improve platform of junior researchers.

Internationalization of staff and students is crucial topic for the institute. There was 28 % international staff in 2016 (47,5 % of PhD students, 36,8 % of postdocs and 23,1 % of group leaders are from abroad).

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There has been a discussion on how to increase internationalization of administration staff. The starting point is to advertise new positions as opened to people with international background (if the position does not require knowledge of Czech language). There must be very systematic and targeted approach to get administration staff with international background. This will be important for the culture of the institute.

The institute adopted rules for jobs systemization in 2016 that set a standard size of groups within minimum/maximum limits. There are also articles specifying that majority of people in group should be junior researchers. The aim was to ensure viability of research groups.

In 2016, there were 190 events organized at the institute. Among the most prominent, there were Nucleic Acids and Immunity conference and Dach-FIB workshop.

CEITEC MU introduced internal Awards: 1) For extraordinary scientific contribution (senior/junior), 2) For extraordinary contribution to the development of CEITEC MU, 3) Event of the Year.

Conclusion(s):

The Scientific Board takes note of the report.

(By unanimous approval of the Board.)

4) Budget 2017

See Annex 4

J. Nantl presented a proposal of the budget 2017 as previously deliberated by the Director's Board. The structure of types of funding is very complex with several types of sources while none of the sources in itself constitutes more than a quarter of the total budget of the Institute. Total budget for 2017 is proposed to be 609,4 mil. CZK (app. 21,8 mil. EUR) with 78,2 % of research funding, 19,4 % of institutional costs and 2,4 % undistributed reserve.

Members of the Board asked for the amount of levy paid to the university. There is a settlement with the university incorporated in the current university financial rules that takes into account presence of special purpose grants (NPU II, research infrastructure projects), and that reduces level of paid levy from 2017. In 2016 the levy was 52,8 mil. CZK, in 2017 the levy is 41,9 mil. CZK.

The long term challenge is that the institute is driven mainly by projects, and financial planning and management is therefore a very complex issue.

Key strategic issue is what the research assessment system will look like after 2020 and how the institute will be rewarded by the national funding on institutional basis.

M. Kiess and J. Friml pointed out that uncertainty in financing is always handicap for research organization in recruiting new people. Therefore CEITEC MU needs to formulate its own strategy how to ensure financial stability for research groups, especially while hiring new group leaders from abroad.

J. Friml said that this could be one task for the Scientific Board (topic for next meeting) – how to attract best candidates to the institute despite uncertainty of Czech national system of science funding.

Conclusion(s):

The Scientific Board takes note of the budget 2017 with no objections.

(By unanimous approval of the Board.)

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5) Organizational Measure – Abolition of a Research Group (Bioinformatics – H. Hegyi)

See Annex 5

According to Article 11 Par. 3c) of the Rules of Organisation, the Scientific Board was requested for statement on abolition of a research group Bioinformatics of H. Hegyi. The group of H. Hegyi does not meet the requirements of the jobs systemization rules with only 1,0 FTE size of the group. In combination with the fact that the group did not receive any grants, the Director's Board expressed recommendation to terminate the group in accordance with Art. 7 Par. 6 of the Measure of the Director no. 4/2016 (effective date 31st March 2017).

Conclusion(s):

The Scientific Board takes note of the proposed termination of the Bioinformatics group with no objection.

(By unanimous approval of the Board.)

Next meeting:

Autumn 2017 (to be scheduled).

Annexes:

- 1) Strategic Plan of the CEITEC MU up to 2020
- 2) Implementation Plan of the Strategic Plan of the CEITEC MU up to 2020
- 3) Key Performance Indicators of the Strategic Plan 2020
- 4) Budget model 2017
- 5) General Recommendations for CFs from the Internal Review 2016
- 6) CEITEC MU Activity Report 2016
- 7) Dissolution of Bioinformatics group
- 8) PPT presentation

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