



Program of Prof. Jiří Zima
candidate for rector of Charles University

A UNIVERSITY WE CAN BE PROUD OF

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE	APPLICATION
1. Subsidiarity	Decision made on the lowest competent level of authority.
2. Transparency	Open discussion based on adequate and reliable data
3. Data-driven	Evidence-based decision-making
4. Academic excellence	Leaders chosen from among inspiring, active academics
5. International dimension	A strategic necessity, not a fashionable add-on

PROGRAMME PILLARS

PILLAR	FOCUS	KEY MEASURES
COHERENT LEADERSHIP	Rectorate as a professional service centre	· Expert leadership with academic, managerial, and professional experience · Strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Education, Czech Science Foundation, Technology Agency, Czech Academy of Sciences, European institutions, etc. · Fair conditions across the University
EDUCATION	Preparing students for the 21st century	· Modernisation of the Student Information System · Interdisciplinary programmes · Support for teachers and students · Smart use of AI · Reducing bureaucracy
RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP	Pursuing excellence in science, not excellence in metrics	· Re-evaluation of the Cooperatio and UNCE schemes · Strengthening the Charles University Grant Agency · Support for young researchers, parents, and academics returning from abroad · International partnerships · Ensuring a strong voice in national and EU research policy

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER	Safe and ethical transfer	· Strengthening the role of the Commercialisation Council · Societal outreach and sharing best practices · Cyber security and physical security · Due diligence system · Coordination with security authorities
EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE	Service without micromanagement	· Comprehensive digitalisation · Smart campus · Forensic and HR audit of the rectorate · Professional public procurement · Creating the office of an administrative ombudsman
FINANCE	Creating new opportunities	· Review of the funding principles · Single rooms in halls of residence · PPP projects · Fair remuneration · Participatory budgets
SOCIAL ROLE	The “third mission” with tangible content	· Visitor centre in Celetná Street · University merchandise e-shop · Innovation of the Charles University Endowment Fund and Alumni UK · Development of the Hybernská Campus (Studentská Hybernská and Didaktikon projects) · Partnerships with cities, support for student culture and other initiatives
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	Central European Academic Hub	· Team for International Strategy and Partnerships · Cooperation with Max Planck, CNRS, Ivy League, etc. · 4EU+ Alliance and EaPUC · Development cooperation · Mobility, talent return, seed funding
BALANCE AND RESPECT	Caring for students and employees as the foundation for the future of Charles University	· Well-being, work-life balance, and equal opportunities · Employee development: mentoring and career paths · Clear benefits

Dear colleagues

Charles University is an exceptional institution with immense potential. Seven centuries of tradition, world-class research in many fields, talented students and academics, and rich international networks form a solid foundation for future growth. Yet, today we also face serious shortcomings in leadership: decisions are often made without true dialogue with faculties and departments, transparency is lacking, and long-term strategy is absent. As dean, I have experienced first-hand how systemic issues prevent us from realizing our full potential. I am convinced that the last three and a half years have shown that the current leadership is unable to properly develop this potential and uphold the good name of Charles University. That is why I have decided to run for rector.

VISION. I run for rector with a clear vision:

Charles University as an open, confident, and internationally respected university that combines tradition with innovation and prepares students for life in a rapidly changing world.

Our mission is not only to transmit knowledge, but to foster critical thinking and the capacity to respond to technological, social, and ethical challenges. Our university must be a place where students acquire the skills they need today and develop the capacity to learn and adapt throughout their lives. Only then can we nurture society and prepare it for the challenges ahead. Charles University must be a role model for society, both in terms of the quality of education it provides and the cutting-edge science it produces, as well as the values it upholds both in its governance and its broader engagement.

The legacy of Charles IV and the values built over generations do not bind us to stagnation, but to responsible leadership: leadership that honours our heritage while looking boldly to the future. My goal is to restore trust through transparent decision-making that listens, reconciles, and translates dialogue into concrete action, always rooted in data and in the strength of our academic community.

PROGRAM. I offer a program based on nine pillars:

1. COHERENT UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP
2. EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
3. EXCELLENT SCIENCE WITH AN INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH
4. SECURE TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE
5. EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION
6. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCING
7. ACTIVE SOCIAL ROLE
8. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
9. BALANCE AND RESPECT

PLAN. I am not making empty promises: I am offering a realistic plan based on my experience of leading a large and successful faculty and my understanding of how the university works. I believe that together we can realize the full potential of what makes our university exceptional, restoring its dignity and status in line with its historical significance and current ambitions. Charles University has always been setting the direction for Czech higher education, and we must continue to maintain this leading role as an institution.

PILLAR 1 – COHESIVE UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

The whole is responsible for the parts, and each part bears its share of responsibility for the whole

Charles University needs leadership based on trust, transparency, systematicity, and effective cooperation between the rectorate, faculties, and departments. The rectorate should be a professional service supporting the development of faculties, not a restricting power centre.

The rectorate as a professional service. The strength of the university lies in the strength of its constituent parts. The rectorate should create conditions for the prosperity of faculties and constituent parts through professional support, appropriate coordination, and shared good practice. The key is a clear division of responsibilities according to the principle of subsidiarity and the elimination of duplicate agendas.

1.2 Leadership with academic and managerial experience. The management of Charles University must not only come from the ranks of active academic staff with lived experience in research, publishing, and team leadership, but also include professionals who bring managerial, organizational, and negotiating know-how, including the ability to deal

effectively with the government, politicians, and key partners. The CU management team must understand the specifics of academic processes—from grant calls, habilitations, and public affairs to accreditation and the third role—and maintain contact with their own field even while performing their duties. Only then can they make decisions with credibility and understanding of the real needs of the academic community while strategically moving the university forward.

1.3 Decision-making based on data and transparency. The university must not be guided by impressions or personal preferences. Together with my team, I will create a unified system for working with data, facilitating prompt and well-informed decisions. Key decisions will be discussed openly with faculties and departments, with reliable and detailed data and a real opportunity to influence the direction of Charles University.

1.4 Coordination respecting autonomy. Faculties and departments are entitled to an appropriate degree of autonomy, but they also need a common strategy on key issues. Under

my leadership, the rectorate will actively create space for horizontal cooperation in areas such as IT, internationalization, and grant expertise, where sharing brings added value to all.

1.5 Strategic partnerships with key institutions. Charles University must build long-term and professional relationships with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Czech Science Foundation, the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, the Czech Academy of Sciences, CzechInvest, the Industrial Property Office, and European institutions. These relationships must not be based on personal ties,

but primarily on expertise and a shared interest in the development of science and education in the Czech Republic. Our university must be an active and constructive partner, contributing significantly to the formation of educational and scientific policy, including full participation in the preparation of frameworks and regulations for Czech higher education.

1.6 Fair conditions across the university. Fair remuneration, equal opportunities, and transparent personnel processes must apply to everyone, across faculties and departments, among academic and non-academic staff,



without any discrimination. The rector and university management must set an example in this regard. I will advocate for the transparent disclosure of university management remuneration. Leadership positions must be filled by experienced professionals who understand the specifics of the university environment, not by amateurs or servile officials. It is necessary to set up a consistent system of remuneration for senior staff, including performance indicators. The system will apply to all senior staff at the rectorate, including vice-rectors, and will be proposed within the

first 100 days of my possible appointment as rector of Charles University.

1.7 International cooperation as a competitive advantage. CU must systematically build strategic partnerships with leading global universities, stimulate and develop cooperation between faculties and departments on international projects, and support the academic and professional mobility of university staff. The international dimension is not an add-on, but a key tool for quality and competitiveness.

2. PILLAR 2 – EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Knowledge, competence, and active individuals

University education is a space for intellectual partnership between students and teachers. Charles University has unique potential given its wide range of programs and expertise, which we must utilize in an interdisciplinary and international manner. Education should be challenging, but comprehensible and meaningful, preparing graduates for life in a rapidly changing world.

2.1 Comprehensive support for students.

Together, we will create an environment where students can focus on their professional and personal development in an adequate environment available 24/7. I will increase the availability of support scholarships, significantly accelerate the modernization of the SIS, extend the opening hours of study rooms, including weekends, focus on the availability and quality of accommodation, sports activities, and facilities, prioritize the implementation of increases in accommodation and

meal allowances, and improve services for students with specific needs. Individual ability, not social background, should determine who studies at Charles University.

2.2 Graduates prepared for the future.

Studying at CU must develop not only professional knowledge, but above all, transferable skills, critical thinking, and the ability to learn throughout life. I will strengthen links with practice and interdisciplinary thinking, and focus on preparing for technological changes, including the responsible use of AI.

2.3 High-quality and sustainable study programs.

I will simplify accreditation processes, support a significant reduction in the current bureaucratic burden, and create a sustainable range of programs without unnecessary duplication. The Internal Evaluation Board and systematic support for program guarantors will play a key role.

2.4 Interdisciplinary and international education. We will support the creation of programs combining different disciplines and utilize the potential of the 4EU+ Alliance for true internationalization. We will develop high-quality programs in Czech and foreign languages and systematically connect expertise across faculties. I will promote opportunities for students and academics engaged in 4EU+ activities and offer benefits for active engagement.

2.5 Support for teachers as a priority. High-quality teaching depends on the people who deliver it. We will create a system for recognizing and developing teaching talent, mentoring for new teachers, and opportunities for further professional growth for experienced academics.

2.6 Smart use of technology. We must use digital tools and AI wisely—as a support, not

a substitute for quality teaching. We will build technical and didactic support for innovative teaching methods and use our own expertise to research educational processes. We will involve students in CU's digital innovations through hackathons, competitions, and student projects.

2.7 Effective feedback instead of bureaucracy. Together, we will create a meaningful feedback system that will truly help improve teaching. We will unify data collection through a truly modernized SIS, strengthen student participation, and eliminate unnecessary administration. This will improve the reflection of feedback and the work with its outputs, both for students and academics, so that it is understandable and strengthens confidence in its meaningfulness. Of course, this will be done with full respect for the specifics of teaching at individual faculties.

PILLAR 3 - EXCELLENT SCIENCE WITH INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

Efficiency is not in itself quality

Charles University is the largest scientific and research institution in the Czech Republic. We must build on scientific integrity, quality, and above all, the courage to ask fundamental questions. Excellence in science does not come from metrics, but from an environment that supports freedom of research and attracts talent from home and abroad.

3.1 Scientific integrity over metrics. The main purpose of research must be the advancement

of knowledge, not chasing rankings. I will support a scientific culture based on quality, interdisciplinary thinking, and the search for real synergies. Credible habilitation and appointment procedures will be the norm, as will ethical principles in all areas of research.

3.2 Professional project support. Under my leadership, the rectorate will provide faculties and departments with systematic support in obtaining grants, from providing information on all

types of grant calls to coordinating international projects. We will communicate the strategies of university-wide projects clearly and openly and distribute funds fairly between faculties and the rectorate. We will also be able to capitalize on projects that were not supported in a given call but have further potential. We will actively engage in European science policy and have a voice that is heard both at home and in Brussels (including such programs as the European Defence Fund and EUDIS/COMPASS, or their successor forms, which will help shape European science policy in the future).

3.3 GA UK and high-quality doctoral studies.

GA UK needs to be supported not only financially but also methodologically as a key tool for the development of young and promising researchers. After the reform, doctoral studies must be more effective, better managed, and more attractive to foreign students. We will promote high standards for supervisors and their application, and we will create a stable environment for research growth. Doctoral students are the future of the university. For these reasons, among others, I plan to establish a new position of Vice-Rector for Doctoral Studies, thereby ensuring that the university provides all necessary support to doctoral students, supervisors, and faculties and addresses their needs.

3.4 Support for young scientists and parents in science. We will create excellent conditions for scientists at various stages of their careers – from transparent rules and targeted support for young and promising researchers to measures for balancing work and family life. A donor program specifically for parents in science will be created within the Charles University Endowment Fund.

3.5 Sustainable funding for science. We will create a long-term stable model combining institutional resources, performance indicators,

and prestigious grants. Finally, we will revise the parameters of the Cooperatio and UNCE programs in light of current challenges and support for basic research—the debate on this change has been ongoing for at least four years. We will be more active in creating an environment for international cooperation and the arrival of foreign researchers with real involvement in teams, including inter-faculty cooperation. We will support more returns of scientists from abroad, complemented by a high-quality work and family environment. We will financially strengthen functional programs such as PRIMUS and evaluate the transformation of the DONATIO program.

3.6 Strategic international partnerships.

The UK will leverage its historical position to build long-term strategic partnerships across continents and cultural circles. We will continue to actively participate in the 4EU+ and EaPUC alliances and, where appropriate, initiate new alliances focused on Central and Eastern Europe. We will systematically establish cooperation with leading global institutions, from the Max Planck Institutes and CNRS to Ivy League universities in the US and Asian research centres. The ambition of Charles University should be to become a Central European centre for discussion on the ethical aspects of AI and biotechnology. Through development cooperation with universities in countries with historical ties to the Czech Republic, we will contribute to building a positive image of the Czech Republic in the world.



PILLAR 4 – SECURE TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE

A stable environment and innovation for society as a whole

Charles University must balance openness to international cooperation with the protection of know-how and institutional integrity. The transfer of knowledge into practice must be strategic, transparent, ethically grounded, and built on a solid foundation of security.

4.1 Strategic management of knowledge transfer. I will strengthen the role of the Commercialization Council, which will clearly oversee the activities of CPPT UK and CUIP. We will de-

fine competencies, update the spin-off strategy, and increase the benefits for the university. Transfer must be transparent, linked to the third role of the university, and support the sharing of good practices between faculties.

4.2 Cross-sector cooperation and social impact. We will systematically develop cooperation with public administration, university cities, businesses, and civil society. We will involve institutions such as CzechInvest, the Industri-

al Property Office, and patent offices. We will support education in the field of intellectual property and the transfer of technological and non-technological knowledge. We will actively enter the European debate on key challenges such as Europe's defence capabilities, security, and strategic resilience.

4.3 Ethics and sustainability of transfer. Transfer must be economically sustainable, with transparent financial flows and a clear separation of academic and business roles. Ethics and trust must be an integral part of the system, not just an add-on. We will modernize these measures and rules and ensure compliance with the public interest.

4.4 Comprehensive security measures. We will promote cyber- and physical security – from data protection and digital infrastructure, including obligations under the Cybersecurity Act (NIS2), to crisis scenarios and security at public events. We will expand the security department to include sensitive technologies and introduce systematic training for employees and students. We will also provide organizational, structural,

and financial support to faculties in this area.

4.5 Institutional integrity and due diligence.

We will introduce a system of due diligence and zero tolerance for conflicts of interest. We will prevent employees from engaging in business activities that are in direct conflict with their job responsibilities, introduce checks on suppliers' property ties, and strengthen the education of research and project teams in the areas of ethics and security.

4.6 Coordination with public institutions.

We will ensure effective communication with security agencies, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Charles University will be an expert partner in the field of technological independence and will contribute to national and European debates on research security, with security serving as an intelligent framework for cooperation rather than an obstacle to it.

PILLAR 5 – EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION

Administration is assistance and support without unnecessary burdens

The rectorate and central bodies of Charles University should not directly manage faculties and departments, but rather create a functional framework for their development. The task of central administration is to be a reliable partner, an effective mediator, and a professional background that ensures coordination and the smooth running of the university without micromanagement.

5.1 Comprehensive digitization of the university.

We will anchor digitization in a unified concept with a clear schedule and project management based on priorities, the needs of faculties and departments, available capacities, and planned financing. The basis will be a gradually created open system architecture of the university, describing and connecting infrastructure, data, applications, agendas, services,

and competencies in the necessary detail and context. We will streamline the management of the CU IT Department, which will be involved systematically and in a planned manner (not ad hoc according to personal preferences). We will connect the filing service, e-mail solutions, intranet, SIS, and personnel and economic agendas. We will create a functional “smart campus” where everything can be done conveniently from a mobile phone or computer without unnecessary bureaucracy. In the first 100 days after our appointment, we will establish the principles of project management, describe the areas of the rectorate and determine their managers, select three priority areas where we will create the basis for system architecture, and apply the principles of project management, and systematically involve or, alternatively, reform the IT Department of Charles University.

5.2 Transparent management and professional public procurement.

We will introduce control mechanisms to prevent conflicts of interest and strengthen the responsible use of public funds. We will duly comply with legal requirements, in particular the Act on the Right to Digital Services, which imposes an obligation to enable digital transactions and provide digital services. We will complete a forensic audit of the rectorate, conduct a personnel audit of the rectorate, an audit of material tasks, and an audit of the effectiveness of foreign travel. We will review the organizational structure within the rectorate relating to investments, large construction projects, projects, and public procurement, and create a simpler departmental structure.

5.3 Professional management of the rectorate.

We will proceed with the personnel and professional stabilization of the rectorate and define clear competencies and roles, including the positions of departmental managers. We will conduct an audit of the structure and activities of the rectorate, eliminate duplicate agendas,

and strengthen its role as a moderator between faculties. We will incorporate regular evaluation of the rectorate with maximum transparency, publishing data and relevant information.

5.4 Effective sharing of resources and expertise.

We will utilize the professional potential of the faculties and departments and create platforms for sharing capacities, information, and opportunities. We will support the exchange of experiences and the dissemination of best practices across the university. We will focus on the systematic management of so-called open data so that data is described, reliable, and reusable across the entire institution. We will reduce excessive bureaucracy and establish an “administrative ombudsman” for proposals to simplify processes.

5.5 High-quality internal communication.

I believe that by working together, we will build a trustworthy and effective two-way communication between the management, the faculties, and other departments. I will insist on sharing information that the university or the general public is entitled to under the law or internal regulations. Key decisions will be shared in context and in advance, with detailed supporting documentation and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including trade unions. I will also insist that materials submitted by the university management to its bodies (the Academic Senate, Internal Evaluation Committee, Scientific Board of CU, Board of Trustees) are submitted at the appropriate level and in a manner that always allows for proper discussion and debate. Changes must arise from open discussion, not from shock tactics. In my team, I will have one representative from both the undergraduate and doctoral students to ensure that feedback from all student groups is heard at the heart of decision-making.

PILLAR 6 – STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

Why wait for opportunities – we should create them!

The strategic development of Charles University requires a modern approach to financing that combines institutional support, performance principles, and active acquisition of external resources. It is not enough to point out underfunding – CU must create new opportunities itself, manage its assets effectively, and build partnerships with long-term benefits.

6.1 Modernization of financing and fair distribution of funds. We will update the principles of financing, simplify the structure, review duplicate items, and prepare a medium-term financial plan. At the same time, we will push for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to prepare a medium-term financial plan as well. We will complete the revision of the A/K/C model, review historical criteria (e.g., the Coefficients of Economic Cost), and revise and, if necessary, redirect the financing of the Cooperatio and UNCE programs in a more targeted manner. We will establish a fair model for the allocation of external funds that better supports faculties, prevents double financing of administration, and guarantees equal participation in strategic projects.

6.2 Investment in infrastructure and asset management. I will manage large investments (Albertov Campus, Motol, MEPHARED, Vele-slavín) transparently, minimizing the impact on faculties. The priority will be the systematic development of the infrastructure of Charles University Dormitories and Refectories based on

an audit of the services provided, with a focus on single and double rooms, with high-quality common areas and support for more affordable student and employee housing, ideally also in cooperation with municipal rental agencies and other partners. We will modernize refectories and sports facilities, including sustainable catering and evening operation. We will review the university's assets and find truly effective uses for them, examine and utilize the possibilities of PPP projects, and develop important sites such as the Hybernská Campus, Krystal, and other suitable properties (Poděbrady, Mariánské Lázně, Zahrádky, etc.).

6.3 Fair remuneration and a high-quality working environment. Together with the faculties, departments, and unions, we will work on fairer remuneration across the university and on supporting the growth of wage rates and benefits. In cooperation with the unions, we will review the collective agreement as a tool for systemic improvement of working conditions and strengthening the competitiveness of Charles University as a prestigious employer.

6.4 Generating income and entrepreneurship. We will strengthen our ability to generate our own resources through property, commercial services, knowledge transfer, and innovative projects in line with our academic mission. We will make better use of CU's existing profits and invest them in long-term development, becoming a model in the search for suitable paths to

economic, social, and environmental sustainability and energy savings.

6.5 Strategic development and support of talent. We will create a coordinated system of talent support, from identifying individual potential and mentoring to financial support for promising projects. We will link talent sup-

port with international opportunities and the long-term development of academic careers at Charles University and with the application sphere. We will seek models for financing more affordable housing for students and employees and involve the academic community through participatory budgets.

PILLAR 7 – ACTIVE SOCIAL ROLE

The university as a bridge of trust – between expertise, values, and public interest

Charles University should establish itself in its third mission of the university on the basis of a well-thought-out strategy with realistic steps and real content. Activities in the third mission must be effective and sustainable, cover a wide range of topics, and have a long-term impact. The strength of Charles University lies in the breadth of its disciplines and its tradition. It is necessary to overcome fragmentation and manage projects professionally and systematically.

7.1 An open university with a unified presentation. We will create a visitor centre on Celetná Street in Prague and make historical spaces, including Karolinum, accessible to the general public. We will develop a connected popularization offer across Charles University – from museums and botanical gardens to the Hybernská Campus. We will launch a functional e-shop with university merchandise and ticket sales. We will focus even more on modernizing web and communication channels for a clear presentation of CU's third role based on quality and social significance, not on the personal PR for elected officials.

7.2 Alumni network and an innovative endowment fund. We will support the development of active alumni networks, including international outreach. Graduates will be involved in mentoring, cooperation with industry, and support for university initiatives. We will innovate the Charles University Endowment Fund to provide greater support for parents in science, university and faculty projects with the possibility of targeted donations, which will strengthen the financial independence of interesting projects, especially socially relevant topics in Ph.D. studies.

7.3 Education and popularization of science for all generations. We will develop more programs for talented high school students, U3V, and interactive educational formats involving CU students. The successful Didaktikon project will become firmly established within CU and the Hybernská Campus. We will continue with projects such as FameLab and the Charles University Junior University, and we will support selected regional activities with an emphasis on real social impact rather than the number of events. We will use

AI for a database of topics and formats and ensure professional coordination across the university.

7.4 Strategic partnerships with cities and support for student culture.

We will develop real cooperation with university cities (Prague, Plzeň, Hradec Králové) and selected regions in building their identity. We will participate in Prague's plans to build university sports facilities with possible use for the public (e.g., a university hockey stadium). We will utilize the potential of student projects to improve public spaces and contribute to sustainability and interconnect these activities with the Charles University Volunteer Centre. We will strive to develop the Pragademia project and expand it to the Hybernská 2 building, with the aim of creating a stable platform for communication between the city and Prague's universities. Cities are key partners both for university infrastructure and academic life, as well

as for establishing research topics. Charles University will therefore take the initiative in promoting Prague as a true university city, following the example of European centres (Vienna, Linz, etc.). We will also direct third-role projects toward applied research, support for student culture, and addressing common societal challenges.

7.5 Professional coordination and sustainability of projects.

We will establish a functional structure at the rectorate to coordinate the third role, with an emphasis on project selection, their connection to teaching, economic sustainability, and real benefits. We will focus on quality over quantity and the use of feedback. Successful projects can gradually transition to the non-profit sector with a guaranteed share for Charles University, and we will link them to the visitor centre's offerings for more sustainable financing.

PILLAR 8 - INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Charles University as a bridge between tradition and the future, between the Czech Republic and the world

Thanks to its history and current position, Charles University has unique potential to become one of the key European universities of the 21st century. The international dimension is not an addition to domestic activities, but a strategic necessity. Our vision is for Charles University to be a Central European academic hub, a centre of excellence for the region of Central and Eastern Europe, united by tradition and innovation, education, science, diplomacy, and humanistic values.

8.1 Professional organization of international cooperation.

We will ensure the coordination of international activities through a strengthened team of experts, which will function as strategic support for management in building the CU's international "brand": it will prepare materials for diplomatic and partnership negotiations, propose and partially implement CU's international strategy (prioritization of regions, types of partnerships, goals in mobility and internationalization), negotiate strategic

partnerships, and promote CU's visibility in European and global networks, including 4EU+, EUA, Coimbra Group, etc. At the same time, it will actively support scientific teams in establishing new international collaborations and work closely with CU management to ensure that the international agenda is integrated and not fragmented. I will place greater emphasis on the activities of the international advisory board with representatives of leading world universities and systematically involve the Czech academic diaspora in supporting CU abroad.

8.2 Strategic partnerships and global networks. We will maintain and establish new long-term partnerships not only in research but also in teaching – from prestigious universities in the US to European alliances and leading Asian research centres. We will support joint programs, joint degrees, and shared campuses. We will hold regular bilateral summits with partner universities with the aim of involving Charles University in global research networks and attracting top scientists to Prague.

8.3 Central European leadership and European alliances. We will actively participate in shaping the European higher education area through the 4EU+ and EaPUC alliances. Our geopolitical position allows UK to be the voice of the region in important European discussions on the future of university education and research policy.

8.4 Support for talent and development cooperation. Thanks to the return of Czech scientists from abroad, we will expand the range of study programs in foreign languages and strengthen mobility not only for students and academics, but also for administrative staff. We will develop development cooperation programs with universities in countries where the Czech Republic has historical ties or current diplomatic priorities, and we will use international networks to strengthen the Czech Republic's soft power through academic excellence.

PILLAR 9 – BALANCE AND RESPECT

Health, well-being, and fair conditions for the entire academic community

Charles University can only be strong if it is a good place to study and work. We will strengthen a culture of caring for people, from accessible health and psychological support to creating conditions for a balance between professional, academic, and personal life, to the development of sports and a healthy lifestyle. Well-being, fair conditions, and equal opportunities for all members of the academic community are not an addition, but the foundation of a functioning and prestigious university.

9.1 Well-being. My ambition is to strengthen the prosperity and well-being of the entire academic community and staff. I also want to expand access to healthcare (including mental health care) for students by creating a university healthcare centre. Furthermore, I intend to actively promote a balance between study, work, and personal life and develop a culture of healthy lifestyles, including sports activities at university sports facilities.

9.2 Employee career development. Charles University must be a place where people can develop both professionally and personally. We will specifically support employees at the beginning of their careers and ensure clear prospects for growth and further education. I will also promote equal opportunities for all members of the academic community as the basis for its long-term strength and attractiveness. The potential of our people is the university's most valuable asset, and we must work with it conceptually and with vision.

9.3 Openness and fair rules. We will do our utmost to ensure that Charles University is truly open to all who have the ability and motivation to succeed. I will strengthen support for students with specific needs and economically disadvantaged students and establish clear rules for a fair environment. We will conduct an audit of student services, including accommodation, and adjust our processes and offer support.

9.4 Systematic support for students and employees with specific needs. Assistance must be systematic, accessible, and flexible. We will further expand our professional resources, including psychological and counselling services as well as technological and methodological equipment, to enable equal access to study and employment. We will actively identify and remove barriers (physical, digital, and organizational). Support for students will be available from the recruitment of applicants to the completion of their studies. We will also focus on HR support for employees with specific needs. Charles University will thus become an even better example of an institution where anyone with ability and determination can succeed.

9.5 Modern and transparent benefits. The range of benefits offered at Charles University

must be transparent, modern, and responsive to current needs. Employees and students must have easy access to information about opportunities such as healthy lifestyle support, sports programs, and discounted travel. The goal is to create a system that motivates, facilitates everyday life, and promotes sustainable behaviour.

9.6 Alumni. A strong university is built on a community that extends beyond its walls – on graduates and friends at home and abroad. I intend to strengthen ties with those who have studied at Charles University and give them more opportunities to be part of university life, whether through mentoring, professional contacts, or social events. At the same time, it is important to draw inspiration from international experience in working with alumni and to develop targeted fundraising, which can help support university projects. CU graduates and supporters need to know that their energy, experience, and willingness to help are a welcome and integral part of our academic community. I still see untapped potential in working with graduates, even though many are trying and doing a good job.



CONCLUSION

The key to success is not an individual, but a strong and balanced team with a clear vision. I offer experience in leading a large faculty, openness to criticism, and a leadership style based on work, humility, and respect for the university community, not on power. The election of the rector is a choice of direction – I will strive for mutual reconciliation and unification of our academic community, offering the opportunity to restore Charles University's dignity, social standing, and trust.

The program I am presenting is based on the real possibilities and needs of the university. Charles University has all the prerequisites to become not only a respected Czech institution, but above all an important European academic centre. The way forward requires the courage

to change what does not work and at the same time to protect what makes us strong.

Let us build together a university we can be proud of. A university that combines seven hundred years of tradition with a vision of the future and prepares its graduates for the challenges of the 21st century.

Jiří Zima

Candidate for Rector of Charles University

*Thank you for the photographs used
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web: jirizima.cz
email: jiri.zima@natur.cuni.cz
instagram: [@mravenecz](https://www.instagram.com/mravenecz)
Facebook a LinkedIn: Jiří Zima

