

## Academic Senate of the Faculty of Social Studies Masaryk University

*Minutes of the 207th meeting, April 30, 2020*

**The meeting was held online on the Zoom platform.**

**Present (in alphabetical order):**

- Bc. Barbora Adamková
- Ing. Rudolf Burgr, Ph.D.
- Mgr. Mikuláš Černík
- Sonya Darrow
- Mgr. Otto Eibl, Ph.D.
- Mgr. et Mgr. Vratislav Havlík, Ph.D.
- Bc. Daniel Jirků
- Katarína Kováčová
- doc. Mgr. et Mgr. Oldřich Krpec, Ph.D.
- doc. Mgr. et Mgr. Peter Spáč, Ph.D.
- doc. Mgr. et Mgr. Jan Šerek, Ph.D.

**Guests:**

- prof. PhDr. Stanislav Balík, Ph.D.
- doc. Mgr. Bohuslav Binka, Ph.D.
- doc. PhDr. Roman Chytilík, Ph.D.
- Ing. Pavlína Kadlčková, DiS.
- Mgr. et Mgr. Adéla Suralová, Ph.D.
- PhDr. Petr Suchý, Ph.D.
- doc. PhDr. Martin Vaculík, Ph.D.

**Agenda:**

- 1) Change of the rules of the admission procedure to Bachelor and Master studies for the academic year 2020/21
- 2) Accreditation materials of study programs “Global Challenges: Society, Politics, Environment”; and “Politics, Media and Communication”
- 3) Electoral Rules of the Academic Senate of the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University
- 4) Open letters from foreign students
- 5) Miscellaneous issues

Agenda approved (11 for, 0 against, 0 abstained from voting).

**Masarykova univerzita, Fakulta sociálních studií, Akademický senát**

## **1) Change of the rules of the admission procedure to Bachelor and Master studies for the academic year 2020/21**

*Dean:* He stated that the adjustment of the rules of the admission procedure is a reflection of a non-standard, specific situation. The proposed changes are based on the fact that no physical presence of the applicants in the FSS building will be necessary for the admission procedure. The FSS management is aware that this is not an ideal solution. The present proposal seeks a solution that is feasible, realistic and the least unfair to applicants.

*Vice-Dean Souralová:* She explained that the admission procedure for the Bachelor study in the new conditions will be based on two models: according to the first model, applicants who have done the National Comparative Exams at Scio company before the state of emergency will be accepted based on their results from General Academic Prerequisites (GAP, in Czech "Obecné studijní předpoklady, OSP") exam carried out in December, February and March; and Social Sciences (in Czech "Základy společenských věd, ZSV") exam, which they either have already taken or will take

in the following three terms. These applicants will have the option to state in advance that they do not wish the FSS to consider their results from the previous GAP exams. In that case the FSS will only consider their results from the Social Sciences exam which was already taken or will take place.

According to the second model, since the state of emergency has begun in March, the FSS will not consider the results of the GAP exam or of the Study Prerequisites Test (TSP). The applicants will be accepted only on the basis of their results from the Social Sciences exam. Thanks to successful negotiations, the Scio company will refund the fees paid by the applicants of the FSS, if they request it. At the same time, the deadline for the recognition of the research achievements of the applicants has been prolonged.

The admission procedure for the Master study will take place at two dates (similarly to the admission procedure to the Doctoral studies): in June and in September. The FSS management communicates with the heads of departments in order to prepare a "contactless" admission procedure, which will be based on motivation letters and other documents specific to individual departments.

*Dean:* He added, that there is an effort to have a general admission procedure for the Master studies in all of the departments. Motivation letters must be submitted everywhere. Nevertheless, the departments can decide what exactly should the motivation letters contain and what else will be considered. After the AS approves the amended conditions, they will send out a letter with detailed requirements to the applicants.

*Burgr:* He pointed out that for inter-faculty studies, applicants for bachelor studies will have to take the TSP exam anyway. He asked why in such a case the FSS would not recognize their results.

*Dean:* He said that the FSS decided to withdraw from the TSP exams due to the uncertainty associated with them, and it is up to the other faculties to cope with the situation.

*Šerek:* He stated that the universal deadline for the delivery of the documents for the admission procedure to the Master studies could cause a problem in those departments, where a bachelor thesis is required as part of the motivation letter, because the students will send their work in undefended form, they will attach an unfinished work. The study programmes should be given more freedom in relation to this deadline, which would be better even for the students. He also asked how the situation associated with the two admission procedure deadlines (June and September) would be dealt with in terms of number of the applicants, who might be accepted; and whether there will be double limits of the capacity set for the admissions.

*Dean:* He replied that according to the current practice, the FSS has a limit for the Master studies for one year, and the admission procedure takes place in February and June, so it is similar situation, nevertheless it is still one admission procedure with one capacity. A universal deadline for the delivery of the documents and motivation letters for the admission procedure to them Master studies is a helpful step towards the study department of the FSS, it is a pragmatic matter.

#### **Resolution:**

**The AS of the FSS discussed and approved the amendment to the Conditions of the Admission Procedure at the FSS MU in the academic year 2020/21 as amended by the minutes. (11 for, 0 against, 0 abstained from voting)**

#### **2) Accreditation materials of study programs “Global Challenges: Society, Politics, Environment”; and “Politics, Media and Communication”**

*Dean:* He presented a proposal for the emergence of two new Bachelor degree programs taught in English language. The submitted accreditation materials of both study programs are the results of more than a year of endeavour of several dozen people whose work involves cutting and overstepping intra-faculty boundaries between the departments, which have also led to greater internal connection within the faculty.

*Vice-Dean Souralová:* She added that both study programs are based on cooperation between the relevant departments, the courses overcome the barriers between scientific disciplines and show how interdisciplinary the studied topics are.

*Vice-Dean Suchý:* He added that the establishment of these study programs will enable further development of teaching in English, which will be primarily intended for those students who enrol in them, but at the same time it will help to open up a cooperation between teachers across the faculty, to connect students of the English programs with the students in Czech programs and the students coming to the faculty from abroad. This shift will make the FSS more attractive. He expressed his gratitude to everyone who has participated on the preparation.

*Jirků*: He welcomed the emergence of new study programs and appreciated the efforts of the FSS to connect internally. He raised a question, whether these undergraduate degree programs taught in English will be paid.

*Dean*: He confirmed that studying in these study programs will be paid.

**Resolution:**

***The AS of the FSS MU agrees with the proposal for the creation of the study program “Politics, Media and Communication” (Bachelor, full-time, in English) submitted on 30 April 2020 by the Dean of the FSS and recommends it to the Scientific Council of the FSS for approval. (11 for, 0 against, 0 abstained from voting)***

***The AS of the FSS MU agrees with the proposal for the study program “Global Challenges: Society, Politics, Environment” (Bachelor, full-time, in English) submitted on 30 April 2020 by the Dean of the FSS and recommends it to the Scientific Council of the FSS for approval. (11 for, 0 against, 0 abstained from voting)***

**3) Electoral Rules of the Academic Senate of the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University**

*Dean*: The AS submitted the Electoral Rules of the Academic Senate of the Faculty of Social Studies for approval.

**Resolution:**

***The AS of the FSS MU approves the Election Rules of the AS of the FSS MU. Written rules form an appendix to the minutes. The chairman of the AS of the FSS MU is instructed to forward it without delay to the MU Academic Senate. (11 for, 0 against, 0 abstained from voting)***

**4) Open letters from foreign students**

*Dean*: He stated that the FSS management is aware of the difficult situation of the foreign students, which is in many respects more demanding than the situation of Czech students. The main activity of the faculty management was aimed from the beginning at ensuring the best possible replacement of the full-time study, when extended the examination period until the end of September. Considering the changes that have taken place throughout the whole society, the FSS is thinking of how to make easier even the next semesters for students and these measures will be consulted in detail with the management of MU. The open letters from the foreign students were based, among other things, on uncoordinated procedure connected with one of the study programs at the Faculty of Arts, MU (FF). Their decision to award scholarships, which was made last week, has an immediate impact even at other faculties. In response, the MU management called on the management of the faculties to be careful and especially to act in coordination, this afternoon the Dean of the Faculty of Arts apologized and suspended the

decision. The management of the FSS will proceed in the most individualized way, it will not accept any universal measures. All students who do not consider the online form of study to be as valuable as the full-time study, could cancel their registered subjects and not pay any fees for this semester. This should allow them to complete their studies in the future in proper contact form. The faculty management did address the situation and did realise its seriousness.

*Vice-Dean Suchý:* He added that the management of the faculty has been helpful and understanding since the beginning of the crisis. In this semester the management allows the tuition fees to be spread out into several payments in order for students to be able to pay them gradually. He emphasized that this helpfulness had always existed at the FSS.

*Havlík:* He noted that before the coronavirus crisis there was an ongoing debate on increasing the tuition fees for the English study programs, as studying at the FSS is extremely cheap in comparison to other countries. He pointed out that the FSS can not be the guarantor of a cheapest option, the coronavirus crisis has affected not only the students but also the faculty itself.

*Adamková:* She expressed her understanding that in the international context, studying at the FSS

is cheaper, however, she added, it does not help anyone right now. Some students have difficulties to pay the study fees even though they are spread over several payments, they do not have the finance for it, neither the opportunity to obtain it. Although the teaching has not stopped, some students do not have a computer or a printer. These people feel that the FSS does not care about their situation, they interrupt their studies and or give it up, because they can not afford it.

*Vice-Dean Suchý:* In response, he stated that the FSS management is looking for a suitable, adequate solution that will help the students and at the same time will not harm the faculty and students in the next years. There are many differences among the study programs, *inter alia*, in obtaining of their cost. If the FSS wants them to maintain, the faculty cannot go bankrupt during this period. The faculty management works on supporting its students, but it can not act in a way which will endanger teaching in the next semester or next academic year. He refuses the theory that all the students are in a crisis, a solution will be set up for their individual needs. on an individual basis.

*Dean:* He agreed that the FSS is not the last option that will save everyone from injustice. It is for these cases, that the students can interrupt the study, or cancel the registration of subjects and therefore do not pay the tuition fees. Unfortunately, it can happen and probably it will happen,

that the crisis will affect a wide range of human destinies, including the fact that someone will not graduate in her or his chosen program. However, even before the coronavirus crisis, some people could not afford to pay for a semester or for an academic year of study at the FSS. At this moment he can not imagine a different solution than the one already mentioned: a support system for those who are in real need and an individual approach.

*Vice-Dean Binka:* He emphasized that none of the members of the FSS management is indifferent about the situation of the foreign students. Its members want to think about how to

help the students, however at the same time, they are limited in a certain way. It is not possible to take steps that would be devastating for the FSS or another faculty. The English programs are designed at the FSS in such a way in which they do not generate profits: revenues and costs are approximately the same.

*Černík:* Relating to the topic of communication, which was mentioned in the open letters, he asked what the next steps will be towards the students who initiated the letters.

*Dean:* He replied that his response to the open letter included an invitation to the meeting via the Zoom platform. He assumes that the initiators of the open letters will attend it, if they want. He is really sorry to obtain a complaint about insufficient communication from the side of the FSS., he did not understand it. He holds the opinion that the communication was to its maximum extend fast, helpful, correct and non-aggressive.

*Havlík:* He recommended to be very specific in open letters so that the criticism included in them will serve its function. Without specific cases it is difficult to start improving.

*Černík:* He made sure he understood correctly that the response to the open letters was the invitation for meetings via the Zoom platform.

*Dean:* He clarified that the invitation to the meeting was reminded as well in the response to the open letter. He does not think that there should be some other answer than this.

*Eibl:* He summed up that the FSS management is aware of the difficult situation of all its students, and it is looking for a solution which will improve their situation in the future, but at the moment there is nothing more what could be done in this regard.

## **5) Miscellaneous**

### **a. Interpreting of the AS of the FSS meetings and translation of the minutes in IS**

*Adamková:* She informed that the interpretation of the meeting and the translation of the minutes into English is being made by Veronika Dombrovská. The English version of the minutes of the last meeting is already available in the Information System (IS).

### **b. Questionnaire on the transition to distance learning**

*Adamková:* She said that the questionnaire for the FSS students regarding the transition to distance learning should be ready by the end of next week.

*Vice-Dean Souralová:* She expressed her gratitude for the energy put into the questionnaire by the members of the AS Student Chamber.

### **c. Student representatives on program boards**

*Jirků:* He informed that the AS Student Chamber is still looking for student representatives in the program boards.

### **d. Decision of the Dean of the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University No. 2/2020**

*Šerek:* He reacted to Article 4 of the Decision of the Dean of the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University No. 2/2020 of 28 April 2020, according to which the final state examinations will take place exclusively online, without the presence of the students in the FSS MU building, until the end of June 2020. He brought up three controversies, which in his opinion greatly violate the principle of equality of the final state examinations:

According to the first, the responsibility for the equality of the final state examinations is transmitted on the side of the students. If the FSS declares maximum helpfulness to students in this non-standard situation, the requirement of technical equipment seconds the unequal socio-economic background of students.

The second complaint concerning the online version of the final state examinations is that students must answer without preparation as with the online exam it is not possible to have half an hour of written preparation. This procedure is non-standard for any type of oral examination and it will effect the students unevenly: to those suffering of more anxiety it can influence their performance greatly.

The third complaint is the possibility of non-standard situations that will arise during the final state examinations (typically failure of the internet connection), the approach to such issues must be decided. Either it is possible to place an extreme burden on the students, when they will be absolutely responsible for everything that happens during the final state examinations - which is wrong and against the methodology of the MU Rectorate - or at the other extreme, teachers will not be able to prove that the examination was not performed regularly.

As a solution, he suggested allowing a limited personal presence form of the final state examinations, without physical contact of the students with the teachers. Students would be personally present in a room in the FSS building, from where they would communicate online with the examination commission, whose members would be separately in other rooms, technical background would be provided by the FSS, the students would have the opportunity to prepare. If good safety and hygiene measures are taken, the risk of infection is extremely low. On the criticism that this form does not exclude the risks associated with travel, he stated that students would be able to choose whether they want an online examination from home or a limited version of examination with personal presence, which would address the most significant disadvantage. Regarding the objection of the double method of examinations, he stated that it already exists in comparison with the final state examinations of this and last semester. He concluded that he proposes to abolish the exclusivity of the online form of the final state examinations due to its unfairness, when there is a possibility of a safe option of the final state examinations in the FSS building.

*Dean:* He pointed out that not all students have to join the final state examinations in June, since they are given the possibility to postpone them until September without incurring a fee. To agree with an option of final state examination with personal presence of a student would be short-sighted, as it assumes a benign development of the situation, which is, however, unpredictable. The decision on a single model, to which the FSS will provide a maximum support, made well

in advance, will avoid eventual need to adapt to possible changes all of a sudden. The management of the FSS is aware that the online form is not ideal, but the management did not want to postpone the final state examinations completely or to base the final grades on the average of grades from last years of one's study. The possibility of preparing for the oral exam is of course better, but at the moment the FSS is not able to guarantee it, so this minimum mode was chosen.

*Šerek:* He noted that the unpredictability of the development of the situation does not preclude to start optimistically prepare an alternative, more advantageous option.

*Dean:* He said that the chosen solution allows students to prepare without a doubt about how their final state examination will take place.

*Vice-Dean Binka:* He added that if the FSS wants to support its students, it should do that in the form of ensuring them about the exact rules according to which the final state examinations will take place and do so in advance. The proposal to make the examinations more comfortable from this point of view brings a greater risk than the Dean's decision about the non-ideal online form.

*Vice-Dean Vaculík:* He stated that he was a supporter of making the rules of the final state examinations as soon as possible and unambiguously so that everyone can rely on them. He does not want the FSS to be in a situation of changing the rules every week. The clearer the rules will be, the greater certainty they will provide. In the final state examinations, the commission may take into account the impossibility of a prior preparation.

*Černík:* He raised a question, whether it would not be possible to provide a compromising solution: a space accessible to all students for the purposes of final state examinations, such as the Central Computer Study Room.

*Dean:* He replied that there is no debate about such an option at the university level. Disinfecting the rooms, including computer keyboards, is not that easy.

*Šerek:* He repeated that students should have the option to choose the form of their final state examination. In his opinion, disinfecting the room and ensuring safe hygienic conditions is technically possible.

*Dean:* He stated that no head of any department has problematised the chosen solution, the FSS management has discussed the final decision several times before taking it. There will be a methodology which will contain the details.

*Šerek:* He expressed his interest in participating in writing the methodology.

*Burgr:* He asked, when the methodology could be expected to be available. He also asked how the management of the faculty relies on the possibility of monitoring the students during a written examination, specifically through proctoring.

*Chytilék:* He replied that the methodology would be ready by mid-May.



*Dean:* He stated that the methodology will include a recommendation to examination boards not to give a time for preparation during the oral exams. In any case of examination, it is necessary to be as careful as possible, which is also a way to protect students.

**Resolutions:**

**2020-4-30/1**

**Resolution:**

The AS of the FSS discussed and approved the amendment to the Conditions of the Admission Procedure at the FSS MU in the academic year 2020/21 as amended by the minutes.

(11 for, 0 against, 0 abstained from voting)

**2020-4-30/2**

**Resolution:**

The AS of the FSS MU agrees with the proposal for the creation of the study program “Politics, Media and Communication” (Bachelor, full-time, in English) submitted on 30 April 2020 by the Dean of the FSS and recommends it to the Scientific Council of the FSS for approval.

(11 for, 0 against, 0 abstained from voting)

**2020-4-30/3**

The AS of the FSS MU agrees with the proposal for the study program “Global Challenges: Society, Politics, Environment” (Bachelor, full-time, in English) submitted on 30 April 2020 by the Dean of the FSS and recommends it to the Scientific Council of the FSS for approval.

(11 for, 0 against, 0 abstained from voting)

**2020-4-30/4**

**Resolution:**

The AS of the FSS MU approves the Election Rules of the AS of the FSS MU. Written rules form an appendix to the minutes. The chairman of the AS of the FSS MU is instructed to forward it without delay to the MU Academic Senate.

(11 for, 0 against, 0 abstained from voting)

---

Mgr. Otto Eibl, Ph.D.  
předseda senátu

doc. Mgr. et Mgr. Jan Šerek, Ph.D.  
místopředseda senátu

Bc. Daniel Jirků  
místopředseda senátu

Zapsala Kristýna Blahová