

Dear friends, colleagues, students,

the holiday season is slowly coming to an end, and we are all thinking what the upcoming semester and year will be like.

### **A small retrospect after the holidays**

Before regular teaching will take place, let me briefly mention the past academic year. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude especially to all the teachers and students who participated in the educational process. Appreciation goes also to scientific, administrative, technical and other staff; to all of them for the patience and creativity with which they managed the difficult conditions of the academic year 2020/21. The preliminary report from the Rector's survey for the last completed semester (i.e., Winter semester 2020/21), in which more than 400 of our students participated, clearly confirms that MFF UK coped with the difficult situation very well. Over 90 % of the students rated the MFF UK for the overall organization of teaching during the period of covid with a grade of 1 or 2 on a scale from 1 to 5, with an average of 1.56. The communication from the side of teachers, the overall approach to teaching and the level of technology for distance education were evaluated the best (again over 90% grades 1 or 2), while only 10% of students considered the evaluated period to be wasted time from the study point of view.

From the point of view of what helped the students in learning, the records of lectures and exercises won by a large margin, followed by the attitude of the teachers, cooperation with classmates and study materials. The students used the word ZOOM as the most concise synonym of the covid winter semester, closely followed by "helpfulness of teachers" and "demanding". Thanks again for all that.

### **What's next**

On September 29, i.e. on the Wednesday after the Czech national holiday, classes will start for Winter semester 2021/22. However, according to the schedule of the academic year, we still are having the examination period, ending on September 24. According to the current announcement of the Ministries of Health and Education, it is no longer necessary to present a certificate of vaccination, underwent illness or a negative test for participants in the educational process and examinations, even if the number of people in the room exceeds 20. This announcement also sets the boundary conditions under which not only the examination period will be completed, but also the teaching period will start. However, I make this statement on September 13, knowing that there are still more than 14 days left until the start of classes.

The management of the faculty unequivocally supports that the teaching is started and performed in full-time form. However, in order not to have to "close" some lectures or exercises for illnesses of teachers or students before the possible government regulations will force it, I would like to ask you on behalf of the management to follow the perhaps already established hygienic rules. We will always try to inform you about current recommendations or regulations regarding respirators on the faculty covid page. At the moment, there is an obligation to wear respirators in the common areas of the MFF UK

buildings, with the exceptions that can be found on the mentioned covid page. Prevention is also important; this includes adequate room ventilation (where possible) as well as thoughtfulness - people with symptoms of respiratory illness or any feeling of health discomfort should restrict their presence in the MFF UK buildings and seek medical advice.

### **Towards bright future, hopefully**

The school is also prepared for a scenario in which teaching would have to be converted again to a distance or partially distance form during the semester. The MS-Teams platform is available to all academic staff, and all licenses of the popular ZOOM used in the spring have been extended so that their full versions are functional at least until the spring months of 2022. According to the committee preparing teaching schedule, switching to a partially distance form is in principle possible for most classes, especially in the first two years of study, with some specific exceptions where minor shifts in the schedule would be necessary. I believe that you would understand such changes.

Considering the results of the above-mentioned survey, it seems that the recordings of lectures and exercises help students significantly. Therefore, in the upcoming semester, please consider recording, too, or, if the lecture does not differ much from its last year's variant, make available the recordings made a year ago. A large number of enrolled students, who, in addition, completed their secondary school studies remotely, will again require some additional pedagogical effort. As in the last year, the faculty will continue with a project of student guides and their pedagogical partners by employees, the so-called VUS. We believe that this will help.

I wish you the best possible start of the next academic year.

Mirko Rokyta  
Dean  
September 13, 2021