

**Faculty of Economics and Management
Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra**



**Long-term Strategic Plan
of the Faculty of Economics and Management
at the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra
for the period 2016-2022**

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Introduction

The elaboration of the Long-term Strategic Plan of the Faculty of Economics and Management of the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra for the period 2016-2022 (hereinafter: FEM SUA in Nitra) is based on the requirements of the Long-term Development Plan of the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, the analysis of the current situation at the FEM SUA in Nitra, the results of the comprehensive accreditation in 2015, as well as requirements for educational and research activities of the faculty, project activities and cooperation with practice.

The mission of the FEM SUA in Nitra is to ensure further development of the faculty in order to meet the highest standards of the pedagogical process, the requirements of scientific research activities, as well as practice in accordance with the Code of Ethics of the SUA in Nitra. The aim of the faculty is to ensure quality teaching at all levels of study and the quality of teachers, to support internationalization, to establish new contacts at home and abroad and to participate in domestic and foreign projects, to provide quality research results, which will be reflected in positive faculty evaluation in accreditation processes, independent evaluations as well as in a positive media image and perception in Slovakia and abroad.

Based on the above mentioned, the FEM SUA in Nitra has identified four key areas, which are as follows:

1. Key area: Science, research and education of doctoral students
2. Key area: Education
3. Key area: Foreign relations and public relations
4. Key area: Human resources and development

1. Key area: Science, research and education of doctoral students

Scientific research activities at the faculty contribute to the education of experts in the field of economics and agriculture, therefore constant progress in the field of cognition and acquisition of knowledge requires effective coordination of research activities, the pedagogical process and professional advice.

The aim of the FEM scientific research teams is to operate primarily in the agri-food sector. The key directions of scientific research of FEM are characterized by a wide range of topics: food security, business development, rural development, sales relations, consulting, food marketing, neuromarketing, food quality, evaluation of economic efficiency of production factors and alternative energy sources (bioenergy, biofuels), taking into account the agricultural policy of the state as well as international trends in related areas.

Maintaining the intellectual and academic level is no longer sufficient in the current conditions of society's development. At the faculty, it is necessary to strengthen and stimulate the activities and creativity of young researchers, increase the efficiency and complexity of scientific training, expand students' scientific activity into systematic research work at departments and support the professional growth of young pedagogical staff.

In line with this aspect, FEM will need to focus its research activities in the coming period on:

- Compactness and integrity of research resulting from the historical development of the faculty, covering all aspects of agriculture, production, distribution and sale of food.
- Acquisition and implementation of significant research grant projects strategically focused primarily on the agricultural sector and priority areas of development.
- International cooperation, solution of joint research projects, exchange stays of students, teachers and researchers.
- Mutual direct link between research, pedagogical activities and requirements of agri-food practice.
- Systemic measures improving publishing activities at the level of doctoral studies.
- Maintaining an excellent position of FEM among the faculties of the Slovak Republic, good guarantees for the implementation of fields of study and study programs.

The following can be considered as risk areas for the current implementation of scientific research activities at the faculty:

- Declining support for economic and agricultural research and an unclear concept of research funding, especially by scientific agencies in the Slovak Republic.
- High share of solving short-term scientific research tasks and high degree of existential dependence on the orderer of tasks and state administration.

- Weak social status and activity of teachers and doctoral students.
- Low number of long-term research internships at foreign workplaces.

Due to the current concept of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Slovak Republic for funding of science and research at universities, it is necessary to focus the research capacities of FEM SUA in Nitra primarily on projects covered as far as possible outside the Ministry of Education. It is mainly about participating in international research projects supported by the EU's development and structural funds.

1.1. Priority tasks in scientific research activities

Priority tasks in scientific research activities will focus in particular on:

- Implementation of research in the newly established laboratories of bioeconomics and neuroeconomics and consumer decision-making in the scientific research center AgroBioTech.
- Increase of publishing activity in scientific foreign and domestic journals registered on the Web of Knowledge with a higher impact factor (0.25 and more) and in journals of the SCOPUS database – which is supported by the system of financial motivation for authors publishing in categories A, B, including doctoral students.
- Publication of quality monographs and university textbooks, in terms of accredited study programs and evaluation criteria of the quality level of the monograph.
- Active participation of researchers in foreign scientific conferences and congresses, conferences and congresses of international importance, conferences whose outputs are registered in international databases.
- Organization of international scientific conferences and seminars.
- Increasing the level of the faculty scientific journal "Review of Agricultural and Applied Economics (RAAE)" and its visibility within the FEM SUA in Nitra.
- Increasing the level of processing doctoral dissertations (PhD.).
- In the field of scientific education, an increase in publishing activity and a more responsible approach of doctoral students and training institutions is expected to reduce fluctuations in doctoral studies and increase the success of completing this degree, especially in the full-time form of study.
- Actively monitor the activities of doctoral students and their outputs at the level of the department, field of study board and FEM management.
- Continue to ensure effective material stimulation of faculty staff who are investigators of projects of international research and development programs, projects of European importance, as well as investigators of research tasks at the national level with the aim of more intensive integration into the European research area.
- Continue to maintain and expand cooperation with agri-food scientific-research, expert and professional institutions.

- To improve tools motivating mainly to increase the quality of publishing activities aimed at presenting the results of scientific research activities at the faculty.
- More efficient and effective implementation of the results of scientific research work into the educational process.
- Continue to support the mobility of teachers, researchers and doctoral students in relation to foreign universities.
- To improve the outputs of scientific research and in the interest of more efficient use of funds and material and technical equipment, use of the cooperation of the departments of FEM SUA to a greater extent, as well as other faculties of the university. Proceed in a similar way when expanding cooperation with faculties of economics in the Slovak Republic and abroad.

2. Key area: Education

The main goals in the field of education are defined as follows:

- To improve the quality of education at all levels of study, preserve the position of the faculty, its superregional and international importance, to strengthen the position of graduates on the labour market.
- To increase the quality and flexibility of education at the faculty by gradually improving the internal a system for evaluating the quality of education and by using experiences from universities within the EU based on "European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance in higher education according to European standards and rules".
- To continuously satisfy the requirements of external and internal customers in the field of training, education, scientific activity and services.
- To cover by study literature all subjects taught in the Slovak language with emphasis for subjects taught in several study programs and to provide study literature also in subjects taught in English.
- To actively involve all faculty staff in continuous quality improvement.

2.1. Tasks

1 Approval, monitoring and regular review of study programs and award of academic degrees, according to standards and guidelines for quality assurance in European Higher Education Area (ESG) (innovation of study programs)

- To implement study programs after granted rights after complex accreditation.
- To prepare for accreditation the study programs in the combined form of teaching (Slovak -English version), which are currently accredited in the Slovak and English versions in study programs at the first stage of the study as International Business with Agrarians commodities and at the second level of study as Business Economics, International Economics and Development, as well as to prepare in the English and combined version the study program Agrarian trade and marketing, which is currently accredited in the Slovak version.
- To continue preparing joint FEM study programs (or FEM training modules) with leading partner's universities from abroad and to enable graduates to obtain double degree at the home and foreign partner university. As examples of these opportunities can be mentioned: Business Economics in cooperation with the University of Agriculture in Krakow, Business Economics in cooperation with Louisiana State University, USA, International Economics and Development with Middlesex University London, Transnational Study Abroad Program - SUA, LSU, Tianjin University, Kasetsart University (or possibilities and initiatives of the guarantor in other study programs, with other partners and in others forms).

- To update the agreement with Russian State Agrarian University in Moscow (Timiryazev Agricultural Academy) on the terms of the joint study program and based on it to ensure that Slovak as well as Russian students will receive diploma at FEM SUA in Nitra in the study program Agrarian Trade and Marketing and diploma at Russian State Agrarian University in Moscow.
- To innovate existing and possibly to introduce new study programs, mainly in the field of applied informatics or finance, in accordance with new trends in education, science, with needs of society, with respecting development of social practice in order to ensure development of students' competencies and their applicability on the labour market.
- To ensure the permanent implementation of the latest scientific and methodological knowledge into the pedagogical process, especially at the 2nd and 3rd level of study.
- To permanently pay attention on improving the qualification structure of staff, increasing the proportion of holders of scientific degrees and the proportion of professors, and associate professors in the structure of teachers with emphasis on the staffing of the guarantee at individual study programs at all study levels.
- To prepare a self-evaluation report as well as an action plan of the faculty for the next years with respect to criteria for evaluating the quality of education approved by the Accreditation Commission, to apply Action plan for quality assurance in FEM conditions in the future.
- To introduce a system of regular monitoring and evaluation study programs through the established Commissions for the Evaluation of the Quality of Education of the study program, but also the teaching of individual subjects, the quality of exam tests, the topics of final theses, sufficient study literature, reassessment of feedback from students, graduates, employers, to propose changes and measures in case of general evaluation of study programs at the faculty level, with a highlighted position, but also responsibility of the guarantor of the study program.
- To continue organising joint meetings of the faculty management as well as the guarantors and co-guarantors of individual study programs and members of individual commissions study programs with students of the relevant study programs with the purpose to innovation the content of the study program, as well as the practical implementation of the teaching process.
- To continue organising meetings of faculty representatives with faculty graduates, as well as with experts from practice, in order to obtain stimulating suggestions when updating study programs.
- To organize joint meetings of current students with successful graduates of the faculty, possibly with successful representatives of practice, about the requirements of practice for graduates of the faculty.
- To address potential employers of graduates through a questionnaire survey+ in order to comment the quality of the program as well as the level of graduates of the study program.

2 Student evaluation

- Continue to pay close attention to compliance with the rules related to the implementation of training process with emphasis on the criteria and rules of student evaluation included in the Study rules, as well as directives, or in materials related to organizational security of crucial activities related to the education process at FEM SUA in Nitra.
- To continue adhering strictly the principles of ECTS at home university and within student's mobility to promote the application of the same (comparable) principles at partner's universities.
- Through the newly created grant program of FEM SUA in Nitra called Challenge Fund to support participation of students at all three levels of study in major events such as international conferences, congresses, summer schools, intensive programs, bilateral exchanges, international study programs and others, to improve and intensify work with exceptionally gifted and talented students and to involve them more in scientific research activities as well as in the educational process at departments as well as to involve students through the scholarship fund.
- To continue implementing seminars on the topic "Working with professional literature (searching and processing of sources with respect for copyright when writing the final thesis) for students writing the final theses.
- To organize joint seminars at the departments dedicated to the elaboration of the final thesis, but namely to writing thesis objective, literary review, materials and methods, own work, achieved results and conclusion.
- To continue providing the graduating students information on transition conditions from the university environment to the labour market, on the offers of employers, to participate in preparation of the Career Day at SUA Nitra and in this way to facilitate the employment of graduates in practice.
- -To increase the activity of study counsellors and disability services counsellors, who in cooperation with the study department and guarantors of individual subjects are obliged to provide students with an effective counselling service in compiling specific study plans, thus helping to guide their professional orientation.

3 Quality assurance of pedagogical staff

- To establish a commission to assess the detailed syllabus of accredited study programs included in complex accreditation in order to minimize overlapping contents of subjects and subsequently re-evaluate the contents of overlapping subjects.
- To continue in providing courses of pedagogy in higher education for young teachers, especially providing information from the field of pedagogy in higher education, adults education, psychology, sociology, sociology of education, modern educational

technologies and university didactics, paying special attention to mutual relationship between teacher and student, motivation to learn, the use of new teaching methods and the way in which students' knowledge is tested and assessed.

- To provide further training competencies and further vocational education. Increase the quality and transfer of knowledge from partner universities can also be ensured in the form of Exchange lectures and study stays at partner universities.
- To provide relevant information for self – assessment to teachers through effective information systems which are recording the results of teachers' creative activities as well as the results of the quality evaluation of the pedagogical process via anonymous questionnaires.
- To improving the quality of the educational process and to ensure the transfer of knowledge from partner universities in the form of bilateral exchange lectures and study stays at partner universities (LSU USA, and others, provided by multi – source financing).

4 Study resources and resources for supporting students

- To prepare editorial plans so that the subjects are sufficiently covered by the appropriate literature and subsequently pay more attention to the fulfilment of the publishing plan.
- To continue creating opportunities for study and internships for foreign and domestic students.
- To expand the number of subjects enabling special lectures hosted by expert from practice.
- To increase the number of subjects taught in a foreign language as well as study programs taught in Slovak language.
- To create an exercise room in order to expand application of knowledge from practice in the teaching process in selected subjects within the nationwide project Universities as engines of development knowledge society – “University students to practice” , as well as to innovate these subjects (for example, in cooperation with DA teaching with the support of the SAP system), but also as a space for certified student education (e.g. CISCO Academy, Microsoft, Adobe, Information security and more ...).
- To increase activating forms of teaching in connection with the change in the scope of teaching lectures and exercises in some subjects by using teaching based on practical experience, project-oriented teaching, modelling using various computer programs, model approaches, computer aided decision systems, information development education together with critical evaluation of the obtained information, virtual forms of education, video conferencing technologies, case studies, economic games, etc.
- To improve teaching by making effective use of available ICT tools such as interactive whiteboards, smart notebooks, visualizers, all available means for e-learning - LMS Moodle, etc.

- To gradually improve access to information through full informatization of all areas of higher education and the introduction of new technologies, expansion of e-learning forms of education, improvement of Wi-Fi connection in Pavilion S, but also further improvement of material and technical support of the educational process.
- To continue improving the conditions for the material support of the educational process including information and software security.

5 Information systems

- To implement a new, more efficient system for providing relevant information for self-evaluation of FEM SUA teachers in Nitra.
- To create a functional system for monitoring the employment of graduates of the Faculty of Economics and Management in practice in cooperation with labour offices according to study programs.

6 Public information

- To update promotion materials in electronic as well as in print version for effective awareness of future applicants, intensify the promotion of study programs directly in selected regions or at selected secondary schools, etc. in collaboration with our successful students.
- To intensify cooperation with selected secondary schools also through the Day of Undergraduate for high school students from collaborating high schools.
- To add information for applicants on the faculty website about individual study programs, especially about successful graduates, or photographs of students' lives the program.
- To intensify activities leading to a higher interest of foreign students to study at FEM SUA in Nitra.

3. Key area: Foreign relations and public relations

3.1. Foreign relations and public relations goals

- Internationalization and faculty networking, to support existing membership in important foreign associations and provide a framework for the entry of the faculty and/or its staff in international and professional associations EAAE, IAAE. To develop international relations and international cooperation of the faculty with the aim of EU program participation as well as participation in bilateral and multilateral agreements. The goal of our faculty is to maintain the status of a recognized faculty in the international competitive environment.
- To support participation of the faculty in international educational and research activities, promotional events, educational fairs and elsewhere which will increase competitiveness of the faculty in the European and international research and education scope. To place the main emphasis on the participation in the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes with the intention of raising the number of sending and receiving students in the long term.
- To encourage the interest of the researchers and the teachers of the faculty to participate in a broader way in teacher mobility, to apply for the EU Structural Funds projects from the point of view of increasing professional and language competence of the teachers and growth of their share in providing study programmes at foreign universities.
- Public relations area and promotion of the faculty in external environment shall become one of the main tasks in the upcoming period. It is necessary to develop relations with public and private institutions more intensely, to prepare the concept of effective communication with the public, secondary schools and universities abroad, for example, in Serbia, Croatia, Romania, Ukraine, Russia and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, etc.) with the goal to increase student recruitment.
- To continue extending bilateral and multilateral cooperation based on agreements with foreign universities and research centres.
- To support educational activities of the faculty on international level in both quality and quantity with the main focus on partner institutions not only from within the EU countries but also from faculty networking; it is a priority to provide a framework for teacher mobility and teacher participation as visiting professors at foreign universities. We will seek support in the current schemes – Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus as well as in the international MBA studies - International Business and Commerce. Improving the promotion of the faculty to the applicants at FEM on University Portal website (Portál VŠ) from which the information is copied to faculty web (so that the information is input only once and promoted at various locations), but also at University Portal news subpage or conference and seminar webpages.

- The interconnection between theory and practice aimed at increasing FEM student mobility regarding professional internships in cooperation with the Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU and the OECD.
- In the area of public relations promote the faculty effectively to the public, in the media, at exhibitions and fairs with the goal of disseminating information about new study programmes and benefits of studying in all forms of study.
- To increase the number of foreign students in complete study programmes at bachelor's and master's level at the faculty.
- To continue improving the quality of the faculty website so that it is not only a reliable and useful source of information for the students of the faculty, but also serves the faculty presentation to the public.
- To use effectively modern ways and forms of faculty presentation by the means of social networks - Facebook, Instagram, YouTube.
- To increase the promotion of the faculty abroad also in the form of promotional videos in the English version on the FEM website.
- To innovate promotional and information materials about the faculty in Slovak as well as in a foreign language.
- Continue to organize the "FEM Open Day" and "FEM Undergraduate Day" events.

4. Key area: Human resources and development

4.1. Human resources

Objectives:

- To achieve at FEM that human resources represent a tool for synergy in the activities and creativity of the faculty's intellectual capital, but also an institutional mechanism for change and development at the strategic, managerial and operational levels.
- To create a creative, innovative and research-oriented working academic environment at the FEM SUA in Nitra and to develop its own system of performance evaluation and remuneration of creative faculty staff by using differentiation based on targeted and clear evaluation of each employee's performance, which will motivate greater activity and quality.
- To stimulate employees in activities that contribute to accreditation performance, competitiveness in national and international evaluation and improvement of its image.

Priority activities:

- Ensuring favourable conditions for ensuring the permanent and continuous development of human resources of the faculty in relation with its mission, plans, priorities, goals and tasks.
- Building the human resources of the faculty so that it is possible to implement specific steps to build a structure of human resources of the faculty, which will be effective both in terms of its guaranteed use and autonomous development, research and education.
- Creating a motivating environment through performance-related special rewards and personal evaluation. Use the MER information tool for recording and reporting the performance of employees in research, education and project activities.
- Ensuring the continuous development of knowledge, skills and competences of employees. To motivate and support the cooperation of teachers with the practice.
- Optimizing the age and qualification structure so that the continuity of scientific-pedagogical generations is ensured and that all preconditions for quality fulfilment of the faculty's mission are ensured.
- Maintaining and further developing a positive working climate based on a functional organizational and management structure, constructive interpersonal relationships and organizational culture.
- Adherence to the principles of health and safety at work through regular trainings.

4.2. Area of technical-material development and informatization

Objectives:

- To continue the current trend of innovation of information and communication technologies – to provide students with information infrastructure with a good background for acquiring and disseminating knowledge, so that after graduation they gain the ability to effectively use these technologies and participate in their further development.
- To effectively raise, distribute and use financial resources.
- To participate with the management of the SUA, the departments of the FEM SUA and CIT on the development of external and internal spatial conditions, provision of modern didactic technology and relevant educational infrastructure, to monitor this area as a subject of permanent interest of the faculty.
- For the implementation of investment construction, to use the possibility of multi-source financing with a significant representation of resources from the EU structural funds.
- To increase cooperation with practice.

Priority activities:

- Annually achieving a balanced or surplus management of the faculty, use the surplus as a financial source for further development of the faculty.
- Using opportunities to obtain alternative sources of funding, including entrepreneurial activities and the provision of further education.
- Maintaining, modernizing and protecting the university property entrusted to the faculty.
- Participating in the completion and further improvement of spatial and material-technical equipment of workplaces to be able to fulfil the goals set by the faculty management as a whole so that this equipment is adequate to the requirements of teaching, education, science, research and services (lecture rooms S, AS-31, classrooms AS-04, AS-05, AS-06 and others).
- Participating in the beautification of the internal and external common areas of the faculty.
- In cooperation with the university management, participating in the completion and development of a modern information and communication infrastructure with a subsequent link to regional and national activities and its own subsystems available through the faculty website.
- Contributing to the development and effective use of subsystems of the UIS system of the university.

- Developing and strengthening the faculty's relations with institutions, the business community, professional organizations and the third sector.
- Continuing to support the purchase of software licenses needed for teaching, self-education or in-service training for students and teachers and the development of faculty presentations.