

PETITION FOR THE PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY OF KRAKOW

Since the beginning of the current academic year, the Pedagogical University of Krakow - the oldest teacher training higher education institution in Poland - has been subject to the so-called 'recovery plan' (or 'programme'). The newly elected University Authorities legitimise the need to implement it by referring to the alleged risk of imminent financial collapse. The main measure taken under the framework of the plan involves heavy redundancies. Yet, growing evidence has come to light which challenges the assumption that there is an urgent need for drastic cuts. The Ministry competent for higher education institutions denied the necessity to introduce a 'recovery programme' at the Pedagogical University. Since there are legal provisions in force that stipulate the exact conditions to be met in order to launch the procedure [1], the Ministry thus confirmed the financial difficulties of the University are not as serious as presented by the Authorities. What is more, the Financial Statement from the Pedagogical University for the year 2020 indicates the situation is stable [2]. It seems the University employees are intentionally misled by the Authorities about the actual reasons behind the changes being introduced.

Recently under the pressure of the academic community, the Financial Director, who had been previously granted full implementing powers, has had his authority to introduce singlehandedly restructuring measures withdrawn. Unfortunately, redundancy notices continue. Employment has been terminated with academics of significant scientific achievement as well as some distinguished scholars: those highly profiled within the academia or holding managerial positions, such as, for instance, Professor Janusz Majcherek [3] or the former Rector. Contracts have also been terminated with current supervisors of PhD dissertations [4]. In one of the University departments, as many as ten academics have been made redundant (the number amounts to almost one-third of all the lecturers employed there!). Among the dismissed employees, there are five researchers whose scientific contribution to the current discipline evaluation round has been even 10-fold more significant than the overall achievement of those who continue to be employed there. Subsequently, the Authorities decided to employ other academics, including those at the retirement age, even though officially, it was this criterion - as well as the expiry of a temporary contract - that were to qualify employees for layoffs. Apart from the academic teachers and researchers also members of the administrative staff have been made redundant. The selection criteria remain unclear and leave the former employees with

nothing but a conviction that their main fault was to have worked when former University Authorities were in office.

Most of the above decisions have been taken without consulting departmental or discipline councils. Also, it was impossible for the employees who had received a redundancy notice to make an appointment with the Rector. Thus, the situation at the Pedagogical University seems to be the case of institutional rather than financial collapse.

The media coverage highlights that the process of the alleged reforms is accompanied by blatant cases of discriminatory treatment, labour law breaches [5], and deviation from ethical norms or good habits, i.e. intimidation [6], threats and bans on participation in protests [7]. The University employees are increasingly concerned about their employment prospects and the future of the institution. The changes currently introduced are likely to have disastrous consequences for the quality of teaching and research, particularly in the light of the incoming evaluation. The employees are left to wonder what may be the actual reasons for the changes being introduced, since it is now clear they are not a response to the risk of financial collapse. Various speculations that emerge cause stir among the academic community and tarnish the University public image [8].

The potential of the Pedagogical University of Krakow has been developed not only by the present academic teachers and researchers, other employees and students, but also the University graduates, as well as all those who have contributed to building its position in the material and non-material sense. Let us not allow the value and substantial scientific achievement associated with the University to be depreciated. The publicly-funded university should not be used as a framework for unethical activities or any repressive measures that prompt analogies with those taken in the past under the undemocratic regime.

We call on the Pedagogical University Authorities to reverse the detrimental redundancy decisions and open a dialogue with the whole academic community, including students who also voice major concerns and organise protests [9]. Let us not allow the Pedagogical University of Krakow to be associated with collapse! Let us work together to revive its positive image. Let us hope the University will not only survive the unprecedented crisis but also emerge from it as a renewed modern institution for the sake of the whole Polish academia!

We invite representatives of the academic world in Poland, as well as all Polish citizens and supporters abroad, to sign this petition and thus protest against the destruction of the academic community, the scientific achievement and potential of the Pedagogical University in Krakow.

The petition was signed, among others, by:

Prof. **Bolesław Faron**, Rector Emeritus, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Prof. **Henryk Żaliński**, Rector Emeritus, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Prof. **Michał Śliwa**, Rector Emeritus, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Prof. **Kazimierz Karolczak**, former Rector, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Assoc. Prof. **Katarzyna Potyrała**, former vice-Rector, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Prof. **Bogusław Skowronek**, former Dean of the Philosophy Faculty and former vice-Rector, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Prof. **Mariusz Wołos**, former vice-Rector, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Prof. **Jacek Chrobaczyński**, former vice-Rector, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Prof. **Jan Suchanicz**, former vice-Rector, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Assoc. Prof. **Roman Malarz**, former vice-Rector, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Prof. **Tadeusz Budrewicz**, former vice-Rector, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Prof. **Grzegorz Przebinda**, Jagiellonian University, former Rector of Vocational State College of Stanisław Pigoń in Krosno, an external member of the Pedagogical University Council

Prof. **Michał Paweł Markowski**, Jagiellonian University and University of Illinois, Chicago

Prof. **Czesław Porębski**, Professor Emeritus, Jagiellonian University

Prof. **Joanna Tokarska-Bakir**, Warsaw University

Prof. **Tadeusz Gadacz**, AGH University of Science and Technology

Prof. **Ireneusz Krzemiński**, Warsaw University

Prof. **Stanisław Obirek**, Warsaw University

Prof. **Jan Hartman**, Jagiellonian University

Prof. **Janusz Czapiński**, Professor Emeritus, Warsaw University

Prof. **Czesław Porębski**, Professor Emeritus, Jagiellonian University

Prof. **Andrzej Żbikowski**, Warsaw University

Prof. **Mirosława Marody**, Warsaw University

Assoc. Prof. **Agata Bielik-Robson**, IFIS PAN, University of Nottingham, University of Warsaw

Prof. **Andrzej Szahaj**, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

Prof. **Magda Potok**, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań

Prof. **Magdalena Heydel**, Jagiellonian University

Prof. **Adam Chmielewski**, University of Wrocław

Assoc. Prof. **Piotr Bartula**, Jagiellonian University

Prof. **Paweł Starosta**, former vice-Rector, University of Łódź

Prof. **Krzysztof Gorlach**, Jagiellonian University

Prof. **Andrzej Kaleta**, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

Prof. **Leszek Balcerowicz**, SGH Warsaw School of Economics

Concerns about the situation at our University have been expressed in writing by:

Discipline Councils of Social Sciences, Culture and Religion Studies, the AGH Humanities Faculty
<https://www.facebook.com/WH.AGH/photos/a.302720916406798/4319479228064260/>

Department of Philosophy, Cracow University of Economics
<https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,27102791,uek-w-obronie-zwalnianych-pracownikow-z-up-to-pierwszy-gest.html>

Ombudsman
<https://www.rp.pl/Kadry/305249926-Rzecznik-o-zwolnieniach-krakowskich-profesorow.html>

Prof. Grzegorz Przebinda, Institute of Eastern Slavonic Studies, Jagiellonian University, an external member of the Pedagogical University Council

<https://forumakademicke.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Krzywda-ludzka-w-Uniwersytecie-Pedagogicznym-w-Krakowie.pdf>

Polish Sociological Association

<https://pts.org.pl/stanowisko-zarzadu-glownego-pts-wobec-ostatnich-wydarzen-na-universytecie-pedagogicznym/>

[1] <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/InterpelacjaTresc.xsp?key=C2WJ3G&view=null>

[2] <https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,27133705,uczelnia-nie-grozi-bankructwo-czyn-niegodny-poslowie-z.html>

[3] <https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,27083906,prof-majcherek-o-zwolnieniach-na-up.html>

[4] <https://www.facebook.com/wolnanauka/photos/pcb.250878396823780/250876353490651/>

[5] <https://naukawpolsce.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C87778%2Ckrakow-bedzie-kontrola-pip-na-universytecie-pedagogicznym.html>

[6] https://www.rmfm24.pl/fakty/polska/news-zastraszeni-profesorowie-plan-masowych-zwolnien-kryzysowasy.nId,5256985#crp_state=1

<https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,27133258,uniwersytet-pedagogiczny-donosi-do-prokuratury-jego-wladze.html>

[7] <https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,27111675,protest-studentow-up-wolali-wolny-universytet-nie-dla.html>

[8] <https://www.newsweek.pl/polska/spoleczenstwo/kolejne-czystki-na-universytecie-pedagogicznym-w-krakowie-pis-przejmuje-up-w-krakowie/9y1x230>

[9] <https://krakow.naszemiasto.pl/krakow-studenci-universytetu-pedagogicznego-protestowali/ar/c1-8288648>