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## A few words about the recent past, and a vision for the near future

I joined this Faculty of ours nearly eight years ago. It was exactly 60 years after the Second World War came to an end, and with it the lives of members of my family who, long before me, engaged in the formation of human capital in this country. Throughout the years of my affiliation, I have learned more and more about the history, glory, and struggle of my predecessors and still-serving colleagues, a good many of whom gained my respect and admiration for what they did to help make Poland what it is today: free, independent, and proud.

In the past eight years, we have experienced remarkable changes in the academic culture of our Faculty and in the surrounding environment.

We changed the manner in which we award doctoral degrees, aligning the process with the highest international standards;

We changed the manner in which we appoint new Faculty, making the entire procedure open, transparent, and competitive;

We evaluate members of our Faculty every two years, weeding out the lazy;

We appealed to the board of *Ekonomista*, the leading economics journal in Poland, to publish valuable articles in English. Several have appeared in recent issues of the Journal;

We created an award for Excellence in Publishing for young Professors and advanced Ph.D. students. The award has already been given to four talented members of our Faculty;

Doctoral students at our Faculty have published their work in international refereed journals long before they received their doctoral degrees;

And if you care to visit the website of RePEc / IDEAS, which objectively, and every month afresh, ranks the economics departments in literally every country in the world, you will find, as our Dean already intimated, that this Faculty of ours is the number one in Poland, ahead of the Warsaw School of Economics, and ahead of the resource-rich Bank of Poland, among others.

We now want to build on this strong showing. We want to establish a Center of Excellence for Research in Applied Microeconomics, where we will convert ideas running through our heads into scientific output.

We have new ideas about how a firm can organize its workforce so that people work harder at no cost to the firm; how to induce the long-term unemployed to search actively for paid employment; how the migration of skilled workers can be turned into an engine of economic growth in the country from which the migrants come. We have new ideas on why married daughters who are mothers tend to live closer to their parents than married sons who are fathers. We have new ideas on why income transfers from the rich to the poor can exacerbate income inequality. We have new ideas on how to reformulate large sections of the received microeconomic theory, on recognition that people care not only about their income but also about their relative income. We have new ideas as to what determines the remittance behavior of migrants, and why migrants are reluctant to assimilate. We have new ideas on how to explain the so called Arab spring and similar events to come. We have new ideas on why people who inherit are more inclined to bequeath than people who have not inherited, holding wealth constant. We have an idea why, given the span of interaction with others, a moderate level of

information is conducive to wellbeing, while little information or a lot of information is not. And so on.

We want to bring together the brightest 6-7 young economists in Poland in a state-of-the-art Center of Excellence. We want the Center Fellows to be free from any engagement other than scientific research. We need resources, and we need time. Help us marshal the requisite funds, be patient with us for five years, and observe us performing; first-class work does not come to fruition overnight. We appeal for donations to create the Center of Excellence for Research in Applied Microeconomics at the Faculty of Economic Sciences, University of Warsaw. Give us your support and become founding fathers, stakeholders in our dream, partners in our venture.

We will revisit the Center idea later today over dinner. In the meantime, enjoy the day.

Thank you.