

## From the Desk of...

### Rector Krzysztof Pawłowski

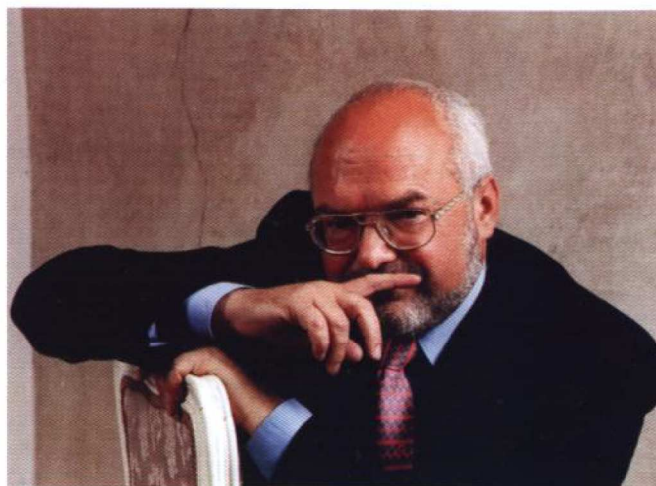
Dear all,

For the first time in many years I allowed myself a true leave during Christmas – 7 days without work, just relaxation, including a few fabulous days with my Patrik. Although I usually leave writing publications and studies for Christmas, this year I was so tired after a couple of intensive weeks that I applied my "Rector ban on work during Christmas" to myself as well. Nevertheless, my drive for professional activity is always there and I wrote this feature on New Year's Eve morning, getting back to work since a few important texts were waiting for me. This article will not be typical – usually New Year's Eve texts are light, pleasant and happy, yet today I would like to talk to you about serious things. The matter concerns our future, i.e. the future of the School and hence yours as well.

At the beginning of December I was informed that the "Puls Biznesu" ("Business Pulse" magazine) editorial team along with the Johnnie Walker brand and Diageo company nominated me for the, awarded since 2003, "Keep Walking Award 2006" together with four other nominees included Zbigniew Drzymała – the owner of Groclin Auto, Piotr Mularuk from Yeti Films, Roman Rojek – co-owner of the Atlas Group and Ryszard Szpikowski – the creator of Work Service). One of us will get the main prize: the "Striding Man 2006" title. Nominations were accompanied by interviews for "Puls Biznesu", published also on the magazine's webpage. As usual, readers could post their comments on the interviews. Out of curiosity, after a few days I entered the website and had a look at the opinions posted about the interview with me. I found 11 comments: 10 of them very positive (what is interesting is the fact that the most enthusiastic were those of bachelor studies graduates who did their master's at the best Warsaw universities) and 1 critical. I cite the latter in the footnote with no changes, except for orthography.\* It is not really important whether it really comes from a student or not, still it is worth a response from me.

For years now I have observed

two types of reactions regarding our School: enthusiastic and very critical. What is interesting is that few opinions are 'lukewarm'. That's good – our School is distinctive, has a unique image and is different from other Polish universities. The characteristic fact is that the best opinions I hear or read are of our graduates or often of 1<sup>st</sup> year students. For several years we have been surveying the level of students' satisfaction through special questionnaires. We carefully analyse your opinions and being aware of them I could ignore this single critical comment. Since it concerns the future, I will still refer to it. First of all, WSB-NLU has systematically been developing – for nearly 10 years we have been committed to a consistent HR policy based on the development of our own people. I can firmly state that we are the first to do that in Poland and the results exceeded our expectations. Now, in the two oldest departments and in the Foreign Languages Department we have 155 employees, only 23 of them coming over from other cities as they work at other universities as well. During the last 8 years, as many as 21 assistants got their doctorate titles. We are fully independent from public universities in terms of employing assistants and adjunct professors. A few of our assistant professors received habilitacja (post-Doctorate diplomas) scholarships from the Rector and we will be celebrating our first habilitacja in the near future. A few months ago we received the II degree scientific category for our Department of Management (such a high category was granted only to two private universities in Poland). We are convinced that our College of Management and Business, the most important college, will achieve an independent status (i.e. will employ only its own independent staff members) in the years 2010-2012. Obviously, the HR situation in the two other colleges, Political Science and



Psychology, is much more difficult and just as it is true in any business, a few years are needed to achieve HR stability. At every university the most important is the academic staff and I can say with satisfaction that in 2014 I will leave to my successor a safe school with its own, young and dynamically developing staff.

While it is true that the past two years brought poorer student recruitment, this is has been the case only for the full-time programmes. This is a bad situation and we are taking concrete steps to overcome these tendencies. You will be able to see the results in February. Problems with student recruitment are no surprise and we were not the only ones to suffer. There are several causes of difficulties: population decline and a lower number of 19-year-old pupils; fierce competition with public universities increasing the number of recruited students on free programmes; strong competition between 300 (!) private universities, often selling diplomas for low tuition fees and not demanding too much work; finally: more and more young people studying abroad. This is not a healthy market and a few years will pass until the situation is normalised, i.e. the first 100 universities collapse or are closed by the National Accreditation Commission. We have long been preparing for that moment. Our answer was an earlier than others selection of staff members, early rounding up our capital investments and a firm participation in the market of European projects (since 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 we have won 13 projects amounting to more than 27 million PLN). Our aggressive response to the competition of public universities is the fight for the most well-prepared and talented candidate students



through offering one year of tuition-free studies for several dozens of people. If these students achieve an average grade above 4.6 they will be further exempted from tuition payments. Another response is the opening of a new, attractive major, Psychology. It would take a lot of space to describe the most important academic initiatives that have increased and will continue to increase the quality of studies at WSB-NLU. There is no sense, however, to list them here since you can feel consequences of these actions everyday.

I must admit that the last sentence of the cited comment made me laugh ("The good times of WSB are over, now it is all going downhill"), given that the School submitted, as a European project, the most ambitious Polish initiative – "Miasteczko Multimedialne (Multimedia City)" and created its own cluster of 51 multimedia companies from all over Poland in just one month this summer. Is this how institutions going downhill behave? It requires a large amount of ill-will or

foolishness (and this is not what I suspect of my students) to draw such conclusions from what is going on at School. I don't think the author of this comment will be brave enough to reveal his/her identity. Still, I propose a bet that WSB-NLU will not only be in existence in 2014 but also will be with a better staff and in a better capital situation than it is now. The stake is 100 bottles of one litre of golden Johnnie Walker.

I won't even comment on the insinuations regarding the "system ruling the school". This is because you won't find as transparent a financial policy as the one at our School in any other Polish university (public or private).

Finally, best wishes for all the Ampersand and InBlanco readers for the year 2007. To both editorial teams – have a fabulous year, great friends and high results for both exam sessions and then, fantastic holidays.

Your Rector

**P.S.** By the way, this is a great symptom of the "downfall" of WSB-

NLU – in such a small university at the end of the world, students publish their own two magazines in two languages on such a high factual-editorial level that now, these are definitely the best student magazines in Poland. I had no way out – the texts will be shared since I don't want to take part in the competition which of the two magazines is better.

\* "A lot of what has been is overrated. I don't know who makes good money here: is it the people who must be well-earning, so as to attract them here in the first place, and without whom there isn't and will never be a school, or the people who earn well, because they are close to the arrangements, which exist in the school. Without the necessary changes, the school will cease to exist in 2014. Each year brings with it a smaller number of students and smaller involvement on the part of the school's authorities. The good times of WSB are over, now it is all going downhill." Student [translated from Polish]



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