"It is in the interest of the Board of Trustees and the University that those who work at the UP live well"

Energy prices, a unified university performance evaluation system and strategy - we talked to Professor József Bódis, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of UQF, among others, about these topics.  
  
I would like to clarify the Board of Trustees' relationship with the University. Am I right in saying that the Board of Trustees can set directions, tasks, indicators for the University, things that it sees fit, but the University manages the implementation of these as it wishes?  
Yes. Our basic ambition is to have a single channel of communication. This is not because we insist on hierarchy, but so that there is no chaos. The university is a huge institution by nature, with 21,000 students, almost 5,000 of them foreign, 8,600 employees, and a very large number of sites and cities. This has to be managed. If we add to this an element of uncertainty, where we are still saying what we think and waiting for the results, it would not be effective. Therefore - and this was agreed by the rectorial leadership - we decided to have a single channel of administration/communication between us to strengthen consistency. This does not mean that we do not want to meet with students, it does not mean that we do not go to faculties, institutes, different events. The world is more colourful than that. But the main decisions that determine our work will always be taken through the Rector's leadership. I do not want to limit the autonomy of the university in any way, because I grew up in it, and I would even say that I am a child of it. We would like to see this autonomy developed.

What do you mean by autonomy?

Everything that is education, research, innovation, training. We don't want to interfere in any direct way, that's not our job. Our task is to strengthen institutional performance. The change of model has brought many innovations to the universities concerned. One is that they have changed from trustees to asset holders. The possibilities for funding have been broadened, because in addition to the previous funding based on education, there is now also funding for academic quality, infrastructure support, etc. A performance approach has emerged. For example, in priority areas of training, student drop-out rates should be reduced. If we look at the progression rates of students in the normal curriculum, there are still some minor and major pitfalls, and not only because of natural drop-out. When we talk about indicators such as these, they are at university level, but they are aggregated at the level of disciplines and faculties. If there were a degree course with, say, a 50 per cent drop-out rate, that could make the institutional situation much worse. So we have to watch how the indicators develop in certain faculties. In the spring, we drew the attention of the heads of four faculties to certain negative trends and asked them to present what action plans they had to remedy them. There is also a normal level of drop-outs; zero will never be zero, nor should it be. But I do not think it is normal to have a drop-out rate in a subject that exceeds the normal limit. There, this needs to be addressed, for example by introducing a mentoring program and other services and measures to help students progress in their studies.

In terms of academic performance, I think we are doing reasonably well in terms of the proportion of students.

The period since the change of model has been short for the UP to make a significant step forward in terms of academic performance, as research is time-consuming. However, we see that the trends are good and that what the university has undertaken is very likely to be met.   
What about the uniform performance appraisal system, which is also the basis for the second 15% salary element?

The Board of Trustees expected the performance evaluation system to be operational at the University of Pécs from January 2022 - and unfortunately it is not.

We had to realiZe that working this out on an institutional level is a harder, slower task than anticipated. I know that the basis of the performance evaluation system has been approved by the Senate and is being implemented. Some faculties, building on their previous experience, have made good progress and have been able to complete it, while other units have not so much. I think we will be satisfied if by the end of 2022 the performance appraisal system is in place.  
But what would be the point of this? It came together relatively quickly that we needed a new pay structure - but it was no longer clear to all employees what they would have to deliver above and beyond the new guaranteed basic salary. A performance appraisal system only works well if it is possible to know, on an individual basis, how much the guaranteed wage is and what additional tasks the person will have to complete to receive the additional elements of his or her wage.  
  
It is in the interest of the Board of Trustees and the University that those who work at theUP live well and that this is reflected in their income.