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## **From the Higher Teachers' School to the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce – the path of the Kielce scientific community towards a classical university**

Tradition plays a significant role in the life of a university. These traditions consist of achievements of generations teachers educating students at the higher education level, their research and discoveries, participation in determining the level of social and economical development of the region in which they found themselves

(Markowski, 2009, p. 11).

The roots of the history of higher education of primary school teachers reach back to the interwar period. Following Poland regaining its independence, the education authorities faced the necessity of rapidly providing an appropriate number of teachers for the dynamically developing primary schools. At that time, education of teachers and educationalists was provided by state and private teacher training institutions inherited in the wake of the partition and established on the grounds of the “Decree on education of primary school teachers in the Polish state” (Decree). These institutions admitting young people between 14 and 20 years of age were not always able to comprehensively prepare them for the arduous and responsible work of a teacher and completing education in a teacher training institution did not grant the right of admission into a higher education institution (Bródka, 1969, p. 176). Under the circumstances of the extreme staff shortage, unqualified persons, who received supplementary courses, were also admitted to these institutions (Kulpa, 1963, pp. 34–41)<sup>1</sup>. Thus, it would

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from the 5-year teacher training institutions and supplementary courses the 2-year preparatory classes for candidates for teaching positions (called “preparands”) existed following conclusion of the First World War.

appear that in these difficult material and political circumstances this solution could be deemed as perfectly adequate. However, the progressive education community already treated these forms of teachers' education as transitional and believed that attention must be drawn to and efforts must be focused on establishing a pedagogy higher education institution which would provide comprehensive vocational training for highly qualified teachers of not only secondary schools but primary schools as well (Bródka, 1969, pp. 174–179)<sup>2</sup>. Here we must note that attempts have been made at providing higher education to teachers who were supposed to teach in secondary schools (Chodakowska, 1995, pp. 155–157)<sup>3</sup>.

These postulates were to an extent taken into consideration in the education reform of 1932. On the grounds of the *Act on the education system*, two-year teacher training colleges and three-year secondary pedagogy schools replaced the existing teacher training institutions. However, this solution did not satisfy the expectations of teachers' community (Grzybowski, 2000, p. 36). To meet these expectations to a certain degree, the Teachers' Institute of the Polish Teachers' Union in Warszawa, the institution akin to a correspondence/full-time higher education school, was established to replace the existing University Courses in 1932. Two faculties operated within the framework of the Teachers' Institute: Pedagogy and Social Sciences. The education in the Institute lasted 4 years – the first two years were devoted to studying the general topics, the following two were devoted to a selected specialisation (Wołoszyn, 1978, p. 149; Starościak, 1972, pp. 43–49). The second institution providing higher education to teachers, prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, was the Institute of Pedagogy in Katowice. Its establishment was a result of the need to provide the management staff and school inspectors for schools in the area of Śląsk incorporated into the territory of Poland; this staff was to ensure that education in these areas will

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<sup>2</sup> For the first time the postulates concerning providing teachers with higher education emerged during the Assembly of Polish Teachers in Radom in 1916. These postulates concerned the two-year vocational training/education provided on the foundation of secondary school competences. Another postulate was put forward during the Assembly of Delegates of Teachers' Associations of the Crown, Poznańskie and Galicia in Kraków in 1918. At that time postulates were submitted for education of future teachers to be provided by two or three-year teacher training institutions operating on the principles of a higher vocational school. These institutions were to admit candidates who completed secondary education. Similar propositions were made during the III Assembly of the Delegates of Polish Primary Education Teachers' Union in 1920 and during the Assembly of Teachers of the Teachers Training Institutions in 1925 and the Assembly of the Primary School Teachers' Education Section in 1928. Demands were made for every teacher to have the opportunity of completing a two-year pedagogical course and the subsequent opportunity for expanding knowledge and pedagogical qualifications through university education (Bródka, 1969, pp. 174–179).

<sup>3</sup> The education for secondary school teachers was provided by universities. In the face of staff shortage in 1918 the Institute of Pedagogy was established in Warszawa with the goal of providing education to secondary schools and teacher training institutions teachers as well as engaging in scientific studies in the field of pedagogy. This institute did not have time to fully develop because it was disbanded in 1925. The task of developing university-level pedagogical study was entrusted to the University of Warsaw.

result in re-Polonisation of Silesians. Initially, the education lasted two years followed by the three-years education period introduced in 1936 and was based on educating teachers in groups/batches (following the conclusion of education of one batch of students, another batch/group of students was admitted for the next period). Before the Second World War broke out, five batches of teachers had been educated (Pieter, 1972, pp. 129–131).

Establishing higher education for the primary education teachers was possible only after the conclusion of the Second World War. In the areas freed from the German occupation, the pre-war forms of teachers' education were immediately restored (Chmielewski, 2007, pp. 33–47). These forms were quickly deemed as inadequate and as early as in 1945 the issue of establishing and universalising higher education among teachers was touched upon during the Education System Assembly in Łódź (Chmielewski, 2007, p. 51)<sup>4</sup> and on the 1st of September the first in history four three-year Higher Schools of Pedagogy were established – in Kraków, Gdańsk, Łódź and Katowice; owing to staff and recruitment/admittance difficulties the HSP in Katowice was immediately moved to Łódź and incorporated into the Łódź HSP. Unfortunately, these schools were completely unable to meet the demand for teaching staff (Chmielewski, 2007, p. 63; Grzybowski, 2000, pp. 39–44; Grzybowski, 2010, 49–50)<sup>5</sup>. In practice, primary school teachers continued to receive education in pedagogy secondary schools (Wojtyński, 1968, p. 128)<sup>6</sup>.

The significant population growth rate in the initial years of the post-war period resulted in the increase in number of children coming to primary schools at the beginning of the fifties of the XX century. Thus, the need emerged for providing adequate and constantly increasing number of teachers. In order to meet these demands, the education authorities decided to launch a new and additional form of teachers' education based on the Soviet model – a two-year College of Education. The first of such institutions were established in the first half of 1954. These institutions were supposed to educate future teachers in the full-time studies' system over the period of two years and over three years in case of part-time studies (Chmielewski, 2007, p. 80). Since that moment teachers who, were educating grades I–IV of primary schools, have were receiving their education in 4-year pedagogy high schools, teachers educating grades V–VII in two and three-year teachers' colleges and teachers who were to educate secondary school pupils have were receiving education at universities or in four and five-year

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<sup>4</sup> This postulate was realised only towards the end of the XX century.

<sup>5</sup> These schools were supposed to educate teachers educating older grades of primary schools. In practice, due to extreme shortage of secondary school teachers, these schools educated and prepared teachers to work in secondary schools...

<sup>6</sup> Following conclusion of the war two-year pedagogy secondary schools were functioning. Since 1952 these schools have been supplemented with 2 years of preparatory classes and thus 4-year pedagogy secondary schools were developed.

higher schools of pedagogy (Chmielewski, 2007, pp. 81–82). Too short duration of the education in pedagogy secondary schools translated into only superficial preparation of future educationalists and therefore, in 1957, a decision was made regarding the extension of the education period to five years (Wojtyński, 1968, p. 131). Another change in the education of teachers took place in 1961 and was related to another reform of the education system. Introduction of 8-year primary schools resulted in the need of adapting proper substantive and methodical preparation of teachers.

Thus, the concept, of establishing approximately twenty additional higher vocational schools, one for each voivodeship, providing three years of education, was born. This project was deemed as correct and works started on specifying conditions for its implementation. The first three-year vocational teaching colleges were to be established in the academic year 1968/1969. It was decided that these schools would be higher vocational education schools, differing from the existing Teacher Training Institutes which were akin to colleges. In order to provide these new schools with proper material base and experienced educationalists, it was decided that pedagogy studies with a slightly modified study programme will coexist along with the new higher vocational schools in the initial stages of the project (Żukowska, 2013, p. 330).

Providing graduates of teacher training colleges with the opportunity to complete university-level education at HSPs or universities was also a novelty (Wojtyński, 1968, p. 135; Żukowska, 2013, p. 331). The first Higher Teachers' Schools were established in 1968 under the University of Warsaw, the branch of the University of Warsaw in Białystok and under the Szczecin branch of the Adam Mickiewicz University. In the following years, further schools were established under the universities in Lublin, Wrocław, Łódź and the University of Silesia. "When these schools were established within the framework of universities, the name of *Higher Teachers' School* was not used; instead the name *Higher Teacher Training Institute* was utilised" (Żukowska, 2013, p. 332). The first independent Higher Teachers' Schools were established in 1969 (Rozporządzenie, 1969). Over time, the schools which met the requirements presented by the effective regulations governing the functioning of the higher education system were able to transform into universities. In the face of the lack of clear regulations determining the conditions which a higher education institution wishing to transform into a university had to meet, the General Council for Higher Education developed a set of criteria for establishing new universities on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1992. These criteria were also to be binding for the process of transforming an HSP into a university. Consistently with these regulations and criteria to convert into a university, a higher education institution had to employ at least 60 academic teachers holding an academic title and employed on the basis of appointment, provide Master's degree courses in at least 6 fields of study, bear the rights to confer an academic degree of PhD in at least 6 disciplines of science (including at least 3 humanities disciplines) and to

confer the academic degree of habilitated doctor in at least two disciplines; furthermore, the institution had to secure a positive review issued by the team appointed by the General Council following consultation with senates of three other universities (AUJK 2, p. 1). These regulations remained binding until the Higher Education Act of the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2005 entered into force (Act, 2005, p. 4)<sup>7</sup>. This act is the first document to precisely determine the requirements an institution of higher education has to meet in order to obtain the status of a university. Another change occurred six years later. At that time the Act of the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 on changing the Higher Education Act entered into force and slightly “eased” the previous requirements (Act, 18 of March 2011, p. 5)<sup>8</sup>. Meeting the requirements stipulated in these acts was a gateway for numerous Higher Schools of Pedagogy to transforming into universities and therefore to providing teachers with the university level education. On the basis of the latter act, the Jan Kochanowski University was founded in Kielce.

The traditions of teachers' education in Kielce reach back to the period of I World War and have continued uninterrupted for more than 100 years. The subsequent history of pedagogy schools operating in the area of the city fits in with the directions for development of this type of institutions in Poland. The first institution educating teachers – The Private Teaching College for Men – was established in 1916, in the period when Austrian forces occupied Kielce (Spis, 1926, p. 401; Bryda, 1936, p. 170). Following the conclusion of the First World War and the proclamation of the “Decree on education of primary school teachers in the Polish state”, this institution was nationalised and since then it operated as the State Teacher Training College. In 1923, the new school building was built at Leśna street. The education in the college lasted five years and was concluded with the matura exam. Not only did students receive theoretical preparation, but also practical training in the school adjacent to the college (it was a primary school located near the college, initially a four-year school, later turned into a six-year school in 1932). Each year the halls of the seminar produced approximately 25 graduates who took up jobs in the entire Świętokrzyski region. Primarily, men

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7 According to provisions of this act “the word *university* can be used as a part of the name of a higher education institution if its organisational units hold the right to confer the academic degree of PhD in at least twelve disciplines, including at least two separate rights in the field of humanities, social or theological sciences, mathematics, physics or technical sciences, natural sciences, legal sciences or economic sciences (...) the word *university* supplemented with an adjective or adjectives for the purpose of defining the profile of a higher education institution can be used in the name of a higher education institution if its organisational units hold at least six rights to confer the academic degree of PhD, including at least four disciplines covered under the profile of the institution”.

8 This entry was worded as follows: “the word ‘university’ can be used as a part of the name of a higher education institution if its organisational units hold rights to confer the academic degree of PhD in at least ten disciplines, including at least two rights in each of the following groups of science disciplines: 1) humanities, legal, economic or theological sciences; 2) mathematics, physics or environmental or technical sciences; 3) biological, medical, chemical pharmaceutical, agricultural or veterinary medicine sciences”.

attended the college, women constituted the minority (in years 1923–1932 there were no women in the school at all). In 1925, the school was named after Stefan Żeromski (Cetner, 1994, pp. 28-29). Following the reform developed by Janusz Jędrzejewicz coming into force, the State Teacher Training Institutions were transformed into the State Co-educational Pedagogy Colleges which provided education to graduates of secondary schools and prepared them to take up a teaching profession (Szymański, 1975, p. 8). The College began its operation in 1937 (Zarządzenie, 1937, p. 327).

During the Second World War, the college ceased to operate. In turn, following the conclusion of the war, it reactivated immediately as the State Co-educational College. It was located in a pre-war, partially destroyed building located at Leśna Street. The institution operated only in the 1945/46 school year and was attended by 17 pupils (Grzybowski, 2010, p. 43). The education authorities of the contemporary Poland made a decision that colleges would be disbanded after the conclusion of the 1946/47 school year and that education of teachers would be provided by pedagogical secondary schools. In 1946, the college was replaced by the pedagogical secondary school operating in the same facilities and thus the college ceased to exist (Ruta, 1983, p. 69). In 1954, on the grounds of the Ordinance of the Minister of Education of the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 1954, a College of Education was established in Kielce (Zarządzenie, 1954, p. 85).

Thus, only the intermediate-level forms of teachers' education existed in the contemporary Kieleckie voivodeship during the period of 25 years from the conclusion of the Second World War. The shortage of teachers with full university education was evident. This fact became particularly noticeable following the school reform of 1961 coming into force. Extending the period of education by a year resulted in the need for providing a greater number of teachers, possessing comprehensive preparation to deliver individual classes, who were supposed to work in primary schools. This problem was also noticed not only by authorities but also by principals of institutions educating teachers who began to turn to the party authorities with proposals concerning the establishment of the Higher School of Pedagogy in Kielce. The first postulates calling for the establishment of the HSP in Kielce were submitted in 1962. These postulates were put forward by the then principal of the Pedagogical Secondary School in Busk who, during the IX Statute Voivodeship Conference of PUWP in Kielc, stated:

despite the plenum of the Central Commission, the Sejm act and the plenum of the Voivodeship Commission, related to the reform of the education system, certain doubts and critical comments come to mind. Firstly, we will need an adequate number of teachers provided on time. In the 1966/1967 school year, we will need approximately 12500 teachers, 40% of whom should possess higher or semi-higher education, school principals and management staff as well as pedagogical supervision personnel, all possessing higher education. There will be 1429 eight-grade schools. The existing balance of staff indicates that approximately 2100 teachers will have to be educated. Currently 22% of teachers possess higher education and 17% possess semi-higher education. The

secondary-level education in 1966 will demand 650 teachers and vocational education will require 800. (...) in the current year 1500 graduates from the voivodeship were admitted to higher education institutions, each year teaching education is concluded by 150-200 students, only some of whom return to the voivodeship. In the national scale Kieleckie voivodeship possesses the lowest percentage of employees with higher education. Teacher Training Colleges are overloaded; higher education schools are also overloaded. Problems may emerge in relation to the school reform and thus it is necessary to establish an HSP in Kielce (APK, 1, pp. 193–194).

Jan Hatys – the first secretary of the POP in the Teacher Training Institute in Kielce – expressed similar views and emphasised that without an HSP established in the city providing even the most essential personnel for management positions in the education system will be impossible (APK 2, pp. 90–92). The party authorities did not respond in any way to these statements.

What Mr. Gałó and J. Hatys were talking about came to be a few years later. As Zenon Guldon writes “In the 1969/1970 school year only approximately 2 thousand of the 20 thousand teachers employed in primary and secondary schools of the Kielecki region possessed higher education” (Guldon, 1984, p. 15). The need for providing teachers with full higher education in the region became a direct stimulus for taking actions aimed at establishing a higher education institution in Kielce. Only then these efforts began to fit in with the actions taken by the central authorities who had finally “noticed” that the existing teachers’ education did not produce teachers of adequate level and that one of the solutions which could improve this state of affairs would be to extend the duration of education under teaching studies to three years. However, this idea was impossible to implement due to the lack of accommodation/facilities and personnel. Thus, it was decided that the best solution in this situation would be to launch twenty three-year vocational higher education schools – one for each voivodeship (Żukowska, 2013, p. 330). One of such institution was the Higher Teachers’ School in Kielce established in 1969. It was established as a replacement for the disbanded Teacher Training Institute. The newly established school had three faculties: Humanities, Mathematics and Natural Sciences as well as Pedagogy. Consistently with the premises of the Ordinance, dual vocational studies were launched: Polish Philology and History (later: Polish Philology and Library Science), Russian Philology, Mathematics and Physics, Geography and Civic Education, Primary Education and Musical Education, Primary Education and Physical Education. It was projected that three hundred candidates would be admitted to the first year of studies. The education in the Higher Teacher’s School lasted three years and graduates received qualifications entitling them to teach in primary schools and basic vocational schools (Massalski, 1987, p. 203).

The subsequent history of the school was influenced by the Resolution on providing all teachers with education in academic schools. On the grounds of the Ordinance

of the Council of Ministers of the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1973, the Higher Teachers' School in Kielce was transformed into the Higher School of Pedagogy in Kielce (Resolution, 1973, § 1.1). Since then the period of education was extended to four years and graduates were awarded the academic degree of Master of Arts. Education was provided in the fields of Polish Philology, Russian Philology, History, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, Biology, Pedagogy and Musical Education. Since then, the school was providing education to future pedagogists of primary, secondary and vocational schools (Massalski, 1987, p. 204; Massalski, 1991, pp. 6–7).

Over the years, along with the development of the school, new fields of study emerged, new organisational units were appointed and frequently transformed into higher-echelon units over time, the number of students increased, the educational offer was expanded and so was the material base. In the subsequent years, the efforts of the scientific community of the HSP, aimed at developing the scientific staff, improving infrastructure and developing new university-wide units, were particularly noticeable. In 1984, the school provided studies in fourteen fields of study and employed 406 scientific and teaching staff members (8 professors, 34 assistant professors and more than 140 doctors) (Cieśliński, Guldon, 1984, p. 37). The HSP was one of the first Polish universities to introduce compulsory physical education classes as well as compulsory skiing camps for students of the second year (Kmieciak, 2009, pp. 291–298). In 1979, the HSP of Kielce was named after Jan Kochanowski (Resolution, 1979) and the non-local faculty in Pitorków Trybunalski was established in 1981 (Kukulski, 2009, pp. 257–258).

A certain stage of development of the school was concluded in 1989. Comprehensive political and social reforms exposed the need for educating the “new” staff to work in primary and secondary schools and the following demographic decline contributed to decreasing the demand for teachers. It was also the period of establishing an increasing number of private higher schools. All these factors resulted in the emergence of new challenges, posed to the management of the school, related to developing such study courses which would be competitive in comparison to courses offered by other higher education institutions, attractive for potential candidates, and which would ensure proper employment for graduates. Thus the need, to move from providing education solely in the field of teaching and pedagogy, emerged. This presented the opportunity of going beyond the rigid formula of preparing solely teachers and the opportunity of expanding the education offer (Markowski, 2009, pp. 12–13).

At that time, the first clearly defined plans for transforming the HSP into a university emerged. In 1990, prof. Adam Kołłątaj stood for the office of rector. His agenda for development of the school included the following entry: “The goal of the entire academic community should be, among other actions, to develop a vision for the university in the region, based on transforming the HSP into a university” (Program). The Association of Friends of the University in Kielce was most probably founded at



the same time. This idea was slowly being popularised not only among the employees of the university, but also among the residents of Kielce (*Zaproszenie*)<sup>9</sup>. It was proven impossible to determine the years in which the Association had operated and the action it had undertaken. It certainly sparked the ambitions of the Kielce community and initiated the process of working towards transforming the HSP into a university. This idea was preserved and continued by the

Foundation for development of the HSP for the purpose of transforming the school into a university through a merger with the Świętokrzyski University of Technology founded in November of 1996 by the self-government assembly of the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship (...); the plans of jointly establishing a university ultimately failed in 1998 (Renz, 2009, p. 29).

The issue of establishing a university in Kielce was referenced frequently during visits of representatives of various Ministries or the General Council for Higher Education. Attempts were made to convince someone, having some influence on the process, to this idea (Kielce zasługują, 1997, p. 1; Kmieciak, 2009, p. 301; Burda, 2011)<sup>10</sup>.

The scientific community of the HSP in Kielce was aware of the fact that in order to apply for establishment of a university, a set of formal requirements must have been met. The greatest problem was

the development of the scientific staff progressing too slowly". In 1996, only a single doctoral dissertation was defended and two 2<sup>nd</sup> artistic degree proceedings were carried out. (...) The very low level of financing of research in the form of the so-called SRC (Scientific Research Committee) grants draws attention, merely approximately 6% of the sum for the statutory research, when at other universities this indicator reaches the level of 50%. Too many research problems are tackled with a too low level of financing – as much as 80% of employees in our school is engaged in their own research, whereas in other institutions this number reaches approximately 30% (...) The employees of the HSP publish too much of their scientific papers in journals with regional reach, poorly perceived and assessed by scientific circles (Styrcz, 1997, p. 2).

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<sup>9</sup> E.g. on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 1992 the "Evening of the Kielce residents" took place under the theme of "Kielce towards a university" This evening was presided over by prof. Adam Massalski and the introduction to the discussion was provided by the then Rector of the HSP, prof. Adam Kollątaj.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. when the chairman of the Polish Academy of Sciences, prof. Leszek Kuźnicki was staying in Kielce on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1997 he met with the voivode, visited the HSP and the Świętokrzyskie University of Technology. During the visit he familiarized himself with the plans for establishing a university in Kielce and assured of the support of the Polish Academy of Sciences in this regard. He stated that "Kielce deserve a university. The growth in the number of people possessing higher education can be effected through development of new academic centres – and this is how we should act." A similar situation took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 1998 when the HSP hosted the Vice-minister of National Education Jerzy Zdrada who also expressed his support in regards to the plans for establishing a university.

Therefore, people were aware what they should draw attention to in the first place and work towards which goals in order to facilitate the process of applying for the status of a university. Under these circumstances, a decision was made to continue working towards meeting the requirements and to simultaneously capitalise on the opportunity of increasing the rank of the school by transforming it into an academy (this transformation was treated as a transition stage on the path towards the rank of a university). The official decision on taking the actions aimed at transforming the HSP into the Świętokrzyska Academy was made during the meeting of the Senate of the HSP on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 1999. The actions focused on preparing appropriate documents and submitting the application to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland (Kmieciak, 2009, p. 303). In the beginning of 2000, the school met all formal requirements and thus reaching this goal became possible (Grabowska, 2000)<sup>11</sup>.

The issue of renaming the HSP in Kielce as the Jan Kochanowski Academy was debated during the 80<sup>th</sup> meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> term Sejm of the Republic of Poland on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2000. Previously, the draft of this act was positively reviewed by the Central Council of Higher Education (Jaskiernia, 2000)<sup>12</sup>. During the deliberations, all parliamentarians, from the Świętokrzyski region from all parties, supported the application for establishing the Academy. In their statements, they emphasised that this transformation would not only become a stimuli for further intensified scientific development, but it would also increase the prestige of the city and the entire region of Świętokrzyskie (Posiedzenie, 2000)<sup>13</sup>. The voting on this issue took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2000 and resulted in adopting the act granting a new name to the school in Kielce – the Jan Kochanowski Academy of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship in Kielce (Act, 2000).

This success resulted in the attempt at transforming the Academy into a university made in the very next year. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2001, the Commission for Education, Science and the Youth was reviewing the deputy's draft of the Act on establishing the University of the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship, pursuant to the first reading mode.

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11 In 2000, there were 887 members of the scientific staff employed at the HSP, including 202 professors and habilitated doctors, the school held the right to confer the academic degree of PhD in two fields (history and linguistics), it provided education in 15 fields of science in Kielce and 6 in Pitorków Trybunalski; the school was attended by more than 12 thousand students and its international cooperation was expanding.

12 Deputy Jerzy Jaskiernia during his speech in the Sejm of Republic of Poland delivered on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2000 described the issue as such: "It is the substantive and objective criteria that count. The General Council for Higher Education formulated these criteria in order to ensure that the issue of transforming schools into academies will not be an issue of political voluntarism or desires of specific communities but instead it will be the issue originating from objective, verifiable rationales. These criteria were unambiguously met by the Higher School of Pedagogy in Kielce".

13 Statements regarding the issue were at that time made by: deputy-rapporteur Danuta Grabowska, deputies Mariusz Olszewski, Jan Chmielewski, Jerzy Jaskiernia, Maria Stolzman, Mirosław Pawlak, Andrzej Słomski.

Deputy Grzegorz Walendzik argued for such a rapid promotion primarily through claiming that establishing a university in Kielce would make the better development of the entire Świętokrzyski region possible (Walendzik, 2001)<sup>14</sup>. In response to this statement, the Undersecretary of the State in the Ministry of National Education, prof. Jerzy Zdrada, stated that the Academy had to meet all formal requirements and the application was premature (Zdrada, 2001). Another attempt at transforming the Academy into a university was made in 2003. A coalition of two cities not possessing a university – Kielce and Bydgoszcz – was formed. Unfortunately, these efforts did not bring any measurable results as well (Burda, 2011).

The endeavours, aimed at establishing a university in Kielce, resumed in 2006. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2006, the Honorary Committee for Establishing the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce launched its operation. This Committee was established under the initiative of deputy Przemysław Gosiewski and its main goal was to bolster joint efforts of various communities connected to the city and the Świętokrzyski region aimed at transforming the Academy into a university. The composition of the Committee consisted of parliamentarians – all of the then senators and deputies from the Świętokrzyski region, “clergymen authorities”<sup>15</sup>, doctors *honoris causa* of the Świętokrzyska Academy<sup>16</sup>, local self-government authorities of the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship<sup>17</sup>,

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<sup>14</sup> Grzegorz Walendzik stated the following: “Establishing a university on the foundation of the Świętokrzyska Academy will become – according to the applicants – an opportunity for further development of this education institution and for developing education opportunities for the youth inhabiting the entire region of Świętokrzyskie to a degree much greater than currently. I shall add that this region is one of the poorest in the entire country and requires well educated staff in order to alter its structure and state of economy. It should be the staff consisting of the educated residents who owing to lack of money are unable to study beyond the borders of the voivodeship. (...) within the regional policy we adopted the assumption that each region, in order to develop properly, should host at least one university for the purposes of educating personnel and proper functioning of a given region. It is indisputably required by the Świętokrzyski region to possess adequate number of residents with higher education. Currently the number of such persons in the region is significantly lower than in other parts of the country which results in the region of Świętokrzyskie being called, not without its own fault, *the B Poland*”.

<sup>15</sup> fr. dr Stanisław Dziwisz, Archbishop of the Krakowska Province, fr. prof. dr hab. Kazimierz Ryczan, ordinary bishop of the diocesan of Kielce, fr. prof. dr hab. Andrzej Dzięga, ordinary bishop of the diocesan of Sandomierz.

<sup>16</sup> prof. dr hab. Franciszek Ziejka, prof. zw. dr. Hab. Henryk Samsonowicz.

<sup>17</sup> Grzegorz Banaś – voivode of the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship, Franciszek Wołodźko – Marshall of the Voivodeship, Stefan Pastuszka – Chairman of the Assembly of the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship, Zbigniew Banaśkiewicz – Starost of the Kielecki district, Tomasz Lato – Chairman of the Kielecki District Council

city authorities<sup>18</sup> as well as social activists<sup>19</sup> (AUJK 1, pp. 8–10)<sup>20</sup>. The first meeting of the Committee took place in September 2006. During that meeting, it was decided that the efforts aimed at transforming the Academy into a university must have been consolidated. Later, P. Gosiewski recalled this as follows:

(...) we adopted a different method. Through arduous work as well as long-term and patient efforts we will work towards meeting all the requirements stipulated in the Act. When all these requirements will be met, we will appeal to the Sejm to adopt an appropriate act regarding transforming the Academy into a university (Protokół, 2008, p. 10).

The greatest burden regarding meeting these statutory requirements fell onto the academic community. Applying for further rights to conduct doctoral proceedings and confer an academic degree of PhD became a challenge which could be successfully tackled only through combining efforts and capabilities of all employees. All actions aimed at meeting the requirements of the Higher Education Act of 2005 (Act, 2005, p. 4) were indeed consolidated to a significant degree; the number of independent scientific staff increased, the scientific achievements expanded and an increasing number of the agreements concerning international and domestic cooperation with other scientific centres was being signed. This was also the period of procuring extensive financing and major assets destined for establishing and developing new university infrastructure (Burda, 2011)<sup>21</sup>. Providing appropriate scientific staff, bringing in specialist, necessary for functioning of the newly developed fields of study and courses, was also significant and was related to, for instance, the requirement of providing ample accommodation. In this regard, the scientific community was supported particularly by the city and voivodeship authorities but also by local self-government authorities, politicians, local entrepreneurs and social activists; various assets, for example, apartments were donated to the academy (Protokół, 2008, p. 10).

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18 Wojciech Lubawski – president of Kielce, Tomasz Bofucki – Chairman of the City Council.

19 Michał Markiewicz – Chairman of the Council of Towns and Municipalities of the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship, Leszek Mądzik – professor of Catholic University of Lublin, Ryszard Zbróg – President of the Staropolska Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

20 AUJK, Acts of the Rector's Office, R-016, reference no. 3316/23, The protocol of the meeting initiating operations of the Honorary Committee for Establishing Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce 13.02.2006, k. 10.

21 Between 2006 and 2013 the Academy received PLN 286M destined for expansion of the university campus (this financing was to be used to erect new facilities for the Main Library and the Foreign Language Centre; the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the academy was also to be expanded with new laboratories).

All the actions, taken at that time at the Academy, rapidly produced measurable effects. As soon as towards the end of 2007, the Academy met all the requirements for transforming into a specialist university (the Academy held the right to confer the academic degree of PhD in the disciplines of History (1989), Linguistics (1998), Physics, (2005), Biology (2007), Geography (2007), Fine Arts (2007), Pedagogy (2007) as well as the right to confer the academic degree of habilitated doctor in the discipline of History (2002)). At that time the university provided studies in twenty four fields and in more than 70 specialisations. The university educated 26 thousand students as well as two thousand students of postgraduate studies and employed approximately thousand academic teachers, including more than two hundred thirty professors and habilitated doctors. Due to the fact that all of the legal requirements for applying for changing the name from the Świętozyska Academy to a specialist university were met, all that remained to be done was preparing appropriate documents and launching the procedure for granting a new name to the institution. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2007 the Senate of the Academy adopted the Act on transforming the Academy. The government of the Republic of Poland sent the draft of the Act to the Sejm on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October; on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, following the changes in the Government, these documents were sent to the Sejm once again with the goal of confirming the permission for continuing the procedure. The Sejm Commission for Education, Science and the Youth unanimously accepted the contents of the project on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2008 and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January the Sejm adopted through voting the draft of the Act on granting a new name – the Jan Kochanowski University of Humanities and Natural Sciences of Kielce (435 of deputies voted for, 1 withheld from voting, there were no votes against) (Act, 2008). Subsequently, the project became the subject of deliberations of the Senate of the Republic of Poland. The Senate Commission for Education, Science and Sport did not submit any critical remarks and the project received full support during the meeting of the Senate on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2008 (Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne, 2008, p. 51).

Securing the right to the status of a specialist university became a great success of the institution but when the number of rights to confer an academic degree of PhD grew, the ambitions and aspirations to become a classical university significantly intensified. During the meeting of the Honorary Committee on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2008, a decision to take up further intensive actions aimed at transforming the specialised university into a classical university in the future, was made over a symbolic glass of champagne (Kmieciak, 2009, p. 313). This indeed happened. The university received further rights to conduct doctoral proceedings in the fields of Political Sciences (2008), Chemistry (2009) and Health Sciences (2009).

In March 2011, the amended Higher Education Act came into effect. Among the newly worded articles there was a single article indicating that the name of a classical university can be borne by a university holding the rights to confer the academic

degree of PhD in at least 10 scientific disciplines Act, 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2011, p. 5). For the University of Humanities and Natural Sciences in Kielce which met these criteria this provision opened the path towards transforming from a specialist university into a classical university. The work aimed at finally securing the status and name of a classical university was accelerating. The appropriate documents were prepared rapidly. The General Council for Higher Education delivered a positive review and endorsed the draft of the Act regarding this issue 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2011. The draft of this act was read in the Sejm on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July. During her speech, deputy Marzenia Okła-Drewnowicz stated:

(...) the Jan Kochanowski University of Humanities and Natural Sciences in Kielce meets the requirements presented by the amended Higher Education Act to the institutions applying for the title and rank of a classical university. The university holds the right to confer the academic degree of PhD in 10 disciplines. (...) The university in Kielce is the largest public higher education institution in the Świętokrzyski region, it employs 1767 employees, including 1002 academic teachers, 244 professors and habilitated doctors as well as 559 assistant professors and assistants. The university provides education in 35 fields of study and 150 specialisations within the framework of seven faculties, including two faculties in the branch of the university in Pitorków Trybunalski. In the academic year 2010/2011 there were 19,840 students in total attending the university as well as 1730 postgraduate students. (...) The change to the name of Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce should be treated as a result of the dynamic development of the university and its scientific-education infrastructure and the expansive education offer connected to the higher levels of scientific research documented through e.g. the rights to confer academic degrees. Establishing Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce shall undeniably positively influence development of the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship as well as its capital – Kielce. It will become an event worthy of commemoration for all those who care for the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship (Okła-Drewnowicz, 2011).

The remaining deputies from Świętokrzyskie voivodeship delivered similarly sounding speeches. The voting on adopting the draft of the act on granting a new name to Jan Kochanowski University of Humanities and Natural Sciences in Kielce took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2011 (with 415 deputies voting for, 8 voting against) (Act, 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2011). Transformation of the specialist university into classical Jan Kochanowski University became a fact. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2011 the act was reviewed by the Senate. The opinion of the Senate regarding the act was equally unambiguous. In his emotional speech Senator Grzegorz Banaś emphasised that the path everyone fully caring for and engaged in transformation of the HSP into a university walked along was a difficult one. Various challenges emerged at numerous stages of the transformation and were related not only to formal shortcomings, which as it turned out could be rectified, but also related to the numerous stereotypes defeating which was frequently more difficult than overcoming other barriers; the senator stated as follows:

At times we heard opinions regarding our region claiming that it is a region of a negative identity, a place from where people wish to migrate beyond their small homeland in search for a better life. However, I believe that the ambition, enormous effort and tenacity of numerous communities as well as the incredible dynamics of the development of the University resulting from the joint efforts of the entire academic community were of great significance and were decisive for the future of the region. All those people, people who were born, who live and work in the Świętokrzyski region, were aiming at effecting the change which would contribute positively to the identity of our region. And what is better for feeding ambitions than the opportunity of proper education? The opportunity of a better start into the adult life, the opportunity of supplementing own education to be able to better respond to the demands of the labour market? The University will become one of extremely important components of the process of freeing the Świętokrzyski region from this at times unjustified place among the B or C Poland regions (Banaś, 2011, p. 204).

Currently the University is the largest higher education institution in the region. It constantly develops and expands its educational offer (students of the University can select from among 50 fields of study and almost 150 specialisations). The number of independent scientific staff members who originate from the Świętokrzyski region and enter into a life-long relationship with the University is growing. The University possesses a modern research and education base, provides the opportunity of conducting specialised scientific research and engaging in comprehensive educational activities, admits students from the Świętokrzyskie voivodship and the surrounding areas but also from other areas of Poland, frequently remote, and from abroad. The University cooperates with various entities on the local, national and international level. The former Rector of the Jan Kochanowski University, prof. Jacek Semaniak, describes the essence of the current state of the University the best.

The Jan Kochanowski University is the largest academic centre in the region. It alludes to the idea of universal education. The University provides the opportunity of obtaining knowledge and engaging in research in a diverse range of scientific disciplines: humanities, social sciences, exact sciences, natural sciences, medical sciences, health and physical culture sciences and arts. Our University is closely affiliated with the Świętokrzyski region and Kielce, some of the most picturesque areas of Poland. The University is a place where higher qualifications can be obtained, ideas for professional development can be discovered and where one can enjoy own life. The University offers a modern scientific and education base, cooperates with other Polish and foreign universities as well as with regional institutions; the University continuously develops services related to careers of our students and graduates in order to maintain a proper relationship between the theory and the practice. I implore all employees and students to keep in mind the mission of the University and to contribute to development of our community, our University, our city and region – together for the better tomorrow (Folder, p. 3).

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## Abstract

The roots of the current Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce date back to 1969. At that time, wishing to meet the education demands of the Świętokrzyski region, a decision was made regarding establishing the Higher Teachers' School (HTS) with a humanistic profile which was supposed to educate the future teachers for primary and secondary schools. Initially the HTS provided education in six fields of study. In 1973 the school was transformed into the Higher School of Pedagogy. The same year education offer of the School was expanded to nine fields of study. In 1981 a division faculty was established in Pitorków Trybunalski which was transformed into School's Branch in Pitorków Trybunalski in 1999. The prerequisites for the future development of the University consisted not only of expanding University's education offer and infrastructure but also of meeting the requirements for receiving the rights to confer an academic degree of PhD (the first such rights were granted to the University in 1989). The dynamic development of the institution stimulated and mobilised the local scientific, self-government and church communities to make efforts aimed at transforming the School into a university. Upon the initiative of the Self-government Assembly of the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship in November 1996, the Foundation for Development of the HSP was established with the direct goal of effecting the merger between the Technical University of the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship and the HSP and thus forming the Świętokrzyskie University. In 1998 these plans ultimately failed. In 2000 the HSP was transformed into the Świętokrzyska Academy. After four years the Foundation for Development of the Świętokrzyska Academy reactivated under the leadership of deputy Przemysław Gosiewski and in February 2006 the Honorary Committee for Transformation of the Świętokrzyska Academy into the Jan Kochanowski University was formed. The first meeting of the Committee which consisted of scientists, politicians, self-government representatives and clergymen took place in September 2006. At that time the efforts of the scientific community were focused on obtaining the required number of authorisations and rights to confer academic degrees of PhD and habilitated doctor. These efforts were crowned in 2008 with transformation of the Świętokrzyska Academy into the Jan Kochanowski University of Humanities and Natural Sciences. Immediately a decision was made regarding continuing the work with the goal of establishing a classical university. This goal was reached in 2011. Since the 1st of October 2011 the Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce has been operating in Kielce.

**Keywords:** higher education, the Jan Kochanowski University, Kielce, history of the university