

**Dr. Kollai Márk:**

Honorable Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans, Professors of the University, dear Students, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to extend my greetings on behalf of the Senate of the Semmelweis University and welcome you to the new academic year. As for the English Language Course we start our 18th academic year. Since the initiation of this program we have accepted students from all over the world, from as many as 45 countries and issued well over 1000 diplomas in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy.

We are about to start a new academic year. In my old high school, that I graduated from, the opening ceremony of the academic year was called “Veni Sancte” and we sang the song “Veni Sancte Spiritus”, which in Latin means “Come Holy Spirit”.

I believe that at the beginning of the new academic year we all need the “Spirit” to come. You, students of the Semmelweis University, will need a strong and dedicated spirit for the coming years. You will need a strong spirit, because you are entering a completely new way of life. For many of you becoming university citizens will represent a considerable challenge. The level of requirement in academic performance will be much higher than what you probably have been used to in your high school years. You will have to study in a more independent way and also bear more responsibility for the results. And only the exams will tell you if you were successful in mobilizing your mental resources and using your time efficiently. Although you will get all the help and support from your tutors and professors, this period will be a test of growing up. My advice is to never get behind because simply there will be no time to catch up.

You will also need a dedicated spirit, because you are preparing to become a dedicated professional: a medical doctor, a dental doctor or a pharmacist. These professions are unique, since they care for other people’s body and mind. To become a medical professional, you will have to acquire a great deal of knowledge and also to develop empathy. This can be obtained only through attending the basic science courses, clinical studies and practices provided a medical university. In the medical field there are no short-cut electronic-courses, which are becoming popular in many other fields of higher education. No simulation or modeling or any kind of electronic wizardry, can substitute for the revealing experience of the anatomical dissections; for the excitement of observing function in the physiology laboratory; for the challenge of diagnosing various forms of diseases at the bedside in internal medicine and for the drama, sometimes playing in the operating room. For these reasons “medicine men” were always kept in high esteem in every kind of civilization. The expectations towards medical profession are high and you can live up to those expectations only with a dedicated spirit.

And, of course, you should also have a happy spirit. University life is full of happy and relaxed moments and exciting experiences, especially in an international environment. To find them you will not need my advice.

So I wish you successful years at Semmelweis University, and, also, a good time in Hungary. Thank you.