
Looking back at the celebrations of 20 years of Gender Studies

In the fall of 2025, the Master's Program in Gender Studies celebrated its 20th anniversary. It is currently the only Master's program of its kind in Central Europe. The first students enrolled in the full-time and part-time programs in the fall of 2005, and 12 years later, an English-language version of the program was added. Over the past 20 years, nearly 400 students have earned Master's degrees in the program and now pursue a diverse range of careers, including academic ones.

The GS20 celebrations began with a discussion among current faculty who were either involved in the creation and accreditation of the program, or were associated with it as former students. The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University, Doc. Věra Sokolová, recalled, among other things, the decisive role of one of the program's founders, the late Dr. Hana Havelková, in its institutionalization. Dean Sokolová, Dr. Petr Pavlík, Doc. Blanka Knotková Čapková, Dr. Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer, Dr. Ivy Helman, and Dr. Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová reflected on the milestones in the existence of the Master's Program. Among the determining milestones are the expansion of the program to include an English-language version, the period of online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic, the repeated relocation of the program from a former kindergarten building in Prague's Hůrka, through the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport building in Prague's Veleslavín, to its final home in the current Troja Charles University campus, where the entire Faculty of Humanities also gathered in one place for the first time.

The discussion among faculty members was followed by a lecture entitled "Care as Taking Part" by Prof. Estelle Ferrarese from the Institut Universitaire de France. Its organisation was a cooperation between CETE-P, the French Research Center for Social Sciences and Humanities – Prague (CEFRES) and Charles University. This lecture was funded by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, through the PARCECO scheme. In her contribution to the celebration, Prof. Ferrarese reflected not only on the importance of care as an affective practice, but also as a practice of participation and active involvement. In the current climate of brutality, which is evident in public and political debates and, above all, in current international conflicts, such participation is essential for the continuous building of civil society and interest communities.

The event ended with a discussion by some of the program's graduates. The discussion emphasized mutual solidarity, support, and the student and teaching community. This graduate roundtable was moderated by Ananké Nebeská. Lenka Tampierová, Jana Černoušková, Pavla Jenková, and Ondřej Medaň were all asked about their formative experiences during their GS studies, as well as their career developments. They also spoke about how their gender expertise is perceived by their families, friends, and how it registers in their immediate surroundings.

The informal entertainment and conversations between graduates, teachers, and other colleagues also took place in a spirit of community and solidarity. Many former students met again after more than 15 years. Such encounters were powerful, as was the ethos of the program, which advocated for social justice for all marginalized individuals and groups in a democratic society.

Photo: Ondřej Trojan