TRANSLATION

Speech of Rector Ilshat Gafurov

at FISU Conference-2013

**“University and Olympic sport: two models – one goal? “**

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**Historic Traditions and**

**Development of Contemporary Student Sport**

**at Kazan Federal University**

Dear Colleagues,

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to FISU for the opportunity to speak at this high-level event. Its main idea – the unity of sport and university spirit – is very clear to all of us.

In this regard, the experience of Kazan University, one of the oldest in Russia turning 210 next year, presents certain interest in interpreting social and cultural aspects of sports movement in connection with the university community.

Kazan University, founded by the decree of Alexander I during his reformation period, was drawn closer to European universities not only by scientific achievements but also through physical training of students. Among other subjects they had to study fencing, gymnastics and equestrian sport.

Educational ideas of Nicolay Lobachevsky, a prominent mathematician and rector of Kazan University in the 19th century, stressed the importance of sport in social adaptation of adolescents. On July 5, 185 years ago, Lobachevsky taught his famous lecture “On major disciplines of education”. He considered that for the complete development of personality academic training is not enough, it should necessarily be combined with health culture and physical progress.

As a Rector, he encouraged extra-curriculum sport activities. Under his rectorship the University built bathing houses on the bank of Kaban Lake, where the modern Rowing Center is located today.

Later on, Lobachevsky’s ideas influenced the educational concept of Petr Lesgaft, a notable biologist and doctor, the head of academic department at Kazan University. His concept of physical development states the unity of body and spirit in the evolution of a healthy person.

By opening the training courses for teachers of fencing and gymnastics for the Army and University, Lesgaft also followed Lobachevsky’s ideas in defining the social and educational theory. The beginning of the 20th century stipulated the increase of adolescent interest to sport fueled by economic growth and the peak of the Silver Age in Russian Culture.

This period was characterized by the boom of sport and related organizations on both coasts of the ocean. 35 Russian higher educational institutions (including 12 universities) had acting student organizations. Kazan University was not an exception, where students could do boxing, fencing, rowing and skiing. The most popular among students were football and athletics, two activities that constituted the core of global sport in the 20th century.

Moreover, teachers were not left aside. A famous lawyer, professor of Kazan University Vladislav Zalessky founded the “Society of Sport and Athletics Fans” that was attractive for students as well.

However, the structure of sport clubs could not develop properly due to the change of political power in 1917. After the Revolution, physical training took different shapes including military training and sport groups.

It continued until the 30s of the 20th century when the government of the country decided on introduction of the discipline and departments of “Physical Training”. The department of Physical Training was established at Kazan University in 1935. In the next year the department was the first in organizing skiing, skating relays and boxing championships in Leningrad.

A notable event before the Soviet Union entered into the 2nd World War was Spartakiade, a sports festival, in 1940.

After the war, the student sport developed through the promotion of annual all-Soviet Spartakiade, with the program including gymnastics, swimming, athletics and basketball. University athletes took part in this sports festival in 1951.

Democratic wave of social activities in the middle of the 20th century was reflected in the overall increase of youth independence including the area of sport. According to students’ initiative, the first spring athletic competition was held in April of 1953 and later became one of our brightest traditions.

Among its participants there were sportsmen who achieved significant results. Vera Smelova – the champion of USSR in 4x400 relay in 1981; marathon runner Ravil Kashapov, a two-time European Cup winner, two-time world champion in the 100 km, participant of the Olympic Games in Seoul, 1988; Irina Vostrikova competed in the European Championships in athletics in 1996, member of the World Championship in Athens, the World University Games in Japan, and many others. Now the relay gathers over two and a half thousand students. This year it was dedicated to the 27th Summer Universiade.

Of special concern was the development of university sports facilities, as well as the sports and medical science. Its basics were outlined by the Sport Psychophysiology laboratory at the University, and once the staff of the laboratory was involved in coaching the national diver’s team.

Expansion of facilities, the development of sport science and mass physical education ensure high sports results in the end. This formula is demonstrated in the 60s – 80s, when the University teams achieved notable success in sports, especially in basketball, athletics, rowing and skiing.

The achievements of the University fencing school are illustrated by Olga Voshchakina – a foil fencer, world champion, repeated winner of championship of Europe, silver medalist of 1985 Summer Universiade, the participant of the Olympic Games in Seoul and Barcelona.

A new stage of the University sports life started in the late eighties, when a six-storied cultural and sports complex "UNICS" was built (the name "UNICS" is derived from the words "university", "culture" and "sport"). For its time, the complex with ten sports halls and with a total area of ​​three thousand square meters was the best among universities in the country. A revival of basketball traditions of 60s – 70s took place in UNICS. In those days the student team repeatedly won the championship of "Burevestnik" society, became the silver medalist of Russia and took part in international tournaments.

The men's basketball student team "UNICS” was established in the early 90s. It played in the minor Russian championship league, and then won the right to play in the major league. Today "UNICS" has outgrown the borders of the university team. It successfully plays in championships of the Super League and of Russia, it won the European Cup in 2011, and it became a member of a quarterfinal of the Euro league in 2012.

The current stage of university sports movement is closely linked with establishment of Kazan Federal University which has got at its disposal such objects of the Universiade legacy as a sport-complex "Bustan", the center with a swimming pool and a multi-sector venue "Moscow". This has allowed bringing the athletic performance to a higher level.

Over fifteen thousand students train at the halls of "UNICS" and the new complexes. At the same time, throughout the year gyms are actively visited by over five thousand students, about thirty-five thousands of Kazan residents and about four and a half thousand students of youth sports schools. There are more than three dozen sections in twenty five kinds of sport. Moreover, during the year there are about fifty recreational and sports activities, which involve more than ten-thousand people. Not accidentally, the University in recent years has consistently been a winner of the Sports Festival among universities of our Republic.

But all of these would not be possible without the appropriate infrastructure. Today, the sports infrastructure of KFU, including its branches, represents 27 gyms, two swimming pools, a dry-swimming pool, eight game-halls and eight gyms, five aerobic halls, two wrestling room and gym room, physical therapy room, four sports camps and so on.

Being lucky to have such a foundation, we face our main challenge - the development of mass sport. Calendar of sports events is very rich: University Sports Festivals in 13 kinds of sport, sports days among students and faculty residences, summer sports days in the recreational and sporting camps, as well as student-games among universities of Kazan, "Ski Track of Russia", "Cross of Nations", and other competitions.

Since 2011 we began to carry out sports contests among freshmen in four kinds of sport, which is an additional factor in the formation of a unified corporate culture of the staff at Federal University.

The scale of the tasks during the taking up of young people to the sport can be judged by the fact that our university has become a major scientific and educational holding, the structure of which is closely linked with domestic and foreign partners - both in the academic field and in the real sector of economy through joint departments, laboratories, industries, small innovative enterprises.

We confidently took the direction for achieving the top rankings among world universities in the short-term future. KFU is one of 15 leading universities of Russia which were awarded a government grant on a competitive basis.

Our innovative activities, the atmosphere of scientific work directed at practical applications, significantly improve the social well-being of young people being the key to their involvement in sports activities. This leads to a sense of pride for the home university and the desire to glorify it by achievements in sport.

This was clearly demonstrated at the First Competition of Student Sports among federal universities held in autumn 2011 at KFU. More than three hundred students from all nine federal universities took part in the Competition and our team’s victory once again proved that we are on the right way.

All-Russia scientific conference “On the increasing role of physical training in establishing student’s personality” held in the framework of the sports festival had a significant value for solving the problems of sports community development. It was attended by more than three hundred leading scientists from more than sixty cities of our country.

I would like to emphasize an important role of Russian Student Sports Union and its president Oleg Matytsin - in organization of student sports and its research. Since November 2011 the agreement on cooperation in the fields of student sport, high performance sport and sports education between our university and Sports Union has been successfully implemented. It is of special importance for us that the Union solves the problems of development of mass sport and high performance sport in close connection to each other.

Athletic feats do not go for good – they leave us bright names. Popularization of resounding victories of students and alumnus of Alma Mater work for the university’s image and makes it more attractive for the young people from Russia and other countries. Besides that, sports heroes serve as example to follow and help to make sports more attractive for the youngsters.

Our outstanding athletes have made significant contribution to the positive public image and brand of Kazan Federal University.

Let me list some of them:

Andrey Demanov, a post-graduate student of Kazan Federal University, the winner of the Summer Universiade in Shenzhen, European champion in weightlifting (2011), the fourth place at the Olympic games in London,

Elena Migunova, a post-graduate student of law faculty of Kazan Federal University, Olympic silver medalist of Beijing in relay 4x400, European champion in track-and-field (Paris, 2011),

Yulia Zaripova, a student of our Institute of Physical Education, Sports and Restorative Medicine, Olympic champion of Beijing in women’s steeplechase,

Alexey Obmochaev, a student of the same Institute, the gold medal in volleyball at the Olympic Games in London.

The students of our university observe the competitive career of our graduates such as Alexey Morozov, a hockey player, a captain of Russian team and “Ak Bars” club. This year he transferred to CSKA team. He has an impressive sports experience – the Olympic silver medalist in 1998, Nagano; the world champion of 2008 and 2009, the participant of the Olympic Games in 2010, Vancouver.

Vladimir Dyadyun, the forward of “Rubin” football team, a player of Russian team and the student team at this Universiade enjoys popularity, too. I might add that he made the first goal of the team at a group stage of the Universiade in Kazan.

The list of notable sportsmen is not full. However, it is equally important to mention that we have set up the Institute of Physical Education, Sports and Restorative Medicine in order to train top-qualification athletes and support them methodologically. About four hundred fifty students are enrolled in it, including eight Masters of Sport of International Class, more than forty Masters of Sports and eighty Candidate Masters of Sports.

Our prospects for the science development in sport are connected with the generation of academic sport cluster. Meanwhile, the specialists of Institute of Fundamental Medicine and Biology, Institute of Management and Territorial Development, Faculty of Law consider the science-based issues of sport support.

The targeted activities in sport development have the results. Fifteen students of Kazan Federal University who perform in eight kinds of sports are among forty eight athletes from Tatarstan at this Universiade. Statistically, it accounts for about thirty per cent of Tatarstan participants and about forty per cent of the sports

There is no doubt that the Universiade legacy is a strong impetus for the further development of the student sport. Due to the agreed decision of Tatarstan and Russian authorities on transfer of twenty buildings of the Universiade Village with a total area of more than two hundred thousand square meters to Kazan Federal University the issue of hostel accommodation for almost seven thousand people - non-resident and international students - was solved completely.

Moreover, we confirm new living standards and stimulate interest in sport at this largest in Russia student campus serving as home for students from thirty countries. It is sufficient to say that more than one hundred forty sporting and cultural events were held there for the past two years.

The Universiade has allowed us going forward in development of the volunteer movement that plays an invaluable role in youth inclusion to the ideas of solidarity and mutual aid. Four thousand sport volunteers at the Universiade – each fifth - represent Kazan University. Last but not least, the most volunteers go in for sports on a regular basis.

Dear colleagues! Awareness of sport development as a tradition during more than two centuries of the university history is a necessary condition for sports movement continuity.

It is especially important today when Russian students have to raise universities sport clubs to a higher level. The Association of Russian Student Sport Clubs initiated by Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin will help to fulfill this objective. At his speech on the occasion of the Association founding congress on the eve of the Universiade President of the Russian Federation called the Association the symbol of the continuing student sport traditions and gave his consent to head its Board of Trustees. This is a vivid example of how Russian authorities treat student sport…

Kazan University has gained its bright image of student sport movement from the past to the future: many generations of our students will be proud of the fact that Kazan Federal University was the last leg of the Universiade-2013 Torch Relay unique in its scope. We have received the torch of the Relay for ever and ever.

It is the preservation of social and cultural values and their positive perception by the University’s staff that influence mainly on the further development of university and Olympic sport and increase of popular sport movement. I am sure that Kazan Federal University will accomplish this goal.

Thank you for attention.