

TESTIMONIAL

in a competition for the award of the academic position

"Professor"

in professional direction 3.4. Social activities (Art therapy and socialization),

for the needs of the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski",

Faculty of Pedagogy (PF),

announced in SG, issue 98 / 17.11.2020

The opinion was prepared by: Bozhena Levon Takvoryan-Solakyan, PhD, Assoc. Prof., University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski", in my capacity as a member of the scientific jury in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.4 . Social activities (Art therapy and socialization), according to order № RD-16-004 / 12.01.2021 of the Rector of the University of Shumen.

The only candidate - Zhivko Velichkov Zhechev, PhD, Assoc. Prof., is authorised to participate in the competition.

I. General description of the submitted materials

1. Details of the application

The documents submitted in the competition by the candidate comply with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for application of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the terms and conditions for obtaining scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski".

The following quantitative scientific publications have been presented for review:

monograph - 1 piece, published monograph, which is not presented as a main habilitation thesis - 1 piece, *textbook* - 1 piece, *workbook* - 1 piece, *scientific publications* - 12 pieces, *citations* - 14 pieces;

The described scientific work has been entered in publications which are part the National-reference list of contemporary Bulgarian scientific publications with scientific review. The attached reference in the documentation for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under art. 2b, paragraph 2 and 3 of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria proves

that the candidate has fulfilled all the requirements for the academic position "professor" with a total number of 600 points (with 550 points being the requirement).

The research activity of Zhivko Velichkov Zhechev, PhD, Assoc. Prof., has taken place in seven national and fourteen university research projects. He is known to the academic community for his participation in fifteen scientific forums, four of them with international participation and one traveling seminar abroad.

He is the scientific editor of one monograph, reviewer of three monographs and an editor of one collection of poems.

The topical orientation of the author includes the following areas: institutionalization and deinstitutionalization of disadvantaged children and risk, alternative forms of social care, social innovations, art therapy, deviant behaviour in children, the father figure in the development and socialization of children in social services, sociological and legal regulations of the problems of disadvantaged children.

2. Biographical data

The following aspects of the biographical data of Zhivko Zhechev, PhD, Assoc. Prof., are important for the competition:

- 1980 - he received his master's degree at the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Shumen with specialty Bulgarian Philology
- 2001 - he obtained a further master's degree in Social Activities at the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski";
- 2013 - he defended his dissertation on the topic: "Motivation for social activity through art" was awarded a PhD degree in Theory of Education and Didactics (Social Pedagogy), professional field 1.2. Pedagogy, field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski";
- he is fluent in Russian and English;
- he has experience in amateur theater, cinema, photography, fine and applied arts;
- he has participated in research projects aimed at researching the successful and sustainable social inclusion of children and adolescents, the socialization through art therapy, the innovative practices in social work with people with disabilities, the applied social work, the practical aspects of social work with a group, etc .;

The fundamental specialty and the educational degrees of the candidate, nurtured by many years of pedagogical experience, fully correspond to the profile of the competition.

3. General characteristics of the scientific works and achievements of the candidate

Through the eyes of various sociological theories, the different social institutions and for children and their characteristics have been compared. The true social constructing, the macrosociological paradigm and the concept of social distance are the subject of the author's functional analysis and research. The role of the social worker for a successful outcome is scientifically defined, stressing on his/her importance and the different ways of involvement with the help of diagnostics, psychodiagnostics and competent interaction.

An analysis of Art Therapy is presented as an applicable innovation in cases of disadvantaged people. It is considered as a tool for social inclusion in emotional, educational, mental or rehabilitation problems. The main aspects of the deinstitutionalization, the reintegration into the biological family, the placement of the child in a family of relatives or friends, of adoption and foster parenting, of the residential social services and of sheltered housing are revealed. The role of the civil sector has been announced. An analysis of the legal regulation of the subject has been made. The main relevant legal and normative documents are presented.

The real effects and consequences of the deprivation of the father figure on the vulnerable target group are researched including children from institutions and subjected to social services, children in the child protection system due to family problems and others. The possible benefits of involving the father as an active participant in the multidisciplinary team caring for the child which is the object of the social work, are outlined.

a) the scientific papers meet the minimum national requirements (under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria) and respectively the additional requirements of the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski" for obtaining the academic position "professor" in the scientific field and in the professional field of the competition;

b) the scientific papers submitted by the candidate do not repeat those from previous procedures for acquiring a scientific titles and academic positions;

c) I do not find plagiarism in the scientific papers entered in the competition.

4. Characteristics and evaluation of the teaching activity of the candidate

Zhivko Zhechev, PhD, Assoc. Prof., has worked as a methodologist at the District Council for Culture in the Center for Amateur Arts in the fields of amateur theatre, cinema, photography, fine and applied art between 1982 and 1988. He entered the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski" and was an assistant in the period 1988-1992. From 1992 to 1996 he was senior assistant, from 1996 to

2015 he was chief assistant and since 2015 he has been an associate professor. In connection with the Additional Indicators under Art. 57a of the Regulations for application of the Law for the Development of the Academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (Art. 27 of Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria):

- **Related to the learning activity:** His teaching experience includes lectures and seminars in the disciplines: "Art Therapy", "Language Culture", "Communication and Speech Development", "Speech Culture", "Fundamentals of Theater Culture", "Social Communication", "Social work with children who dropped out of school", "Social-normative training", "Speech techniques", "Communication skill training". In the master's program he teaches some further disciplines: "Art techniques for self-expression and art-pedagogical means for transmitting knowledge", "Innovations in social work", "Regional policy for integration of marginalized groups", "Social communication", "Strategies for employment of excluded groups";
- The candidate has also given scientific guidens to a successful doctoral student within the doctoral program: Theory of education and didactics (Social pedagogy), professional field: 1.2 Pedagogy, scientific field: 1. Pedagogical sciences;
- He participated in the Erasmus + program as a trainer in kindergarten "Brothers Grimm" Shumen and kindergarten "Cosmonaut" Shumen in the period 2017-2019; He has trained qualification improvement courses of teachers in primary schools in the period 2016-2020;

Overall a long and professional scientific path is evident.

4. Content analysis of the scientific and scientific-applied achievements of the candidate contained in the materials submitted for the competition

In general, the scientific work of Zhivko Zhechev, PhD, Assoc. Prof., outlines a wide range of theoretical analyses and models that enrich existing knowledge and practical realities, dedicated to the current state and challenges in the theory and practice of social work, social pedagogy and directions of socialization. Their topicality, social significance and applicability are given recognition not only for their indisputable scientific value, but also for the sustainable interest they provoke through their application in curricula. Focal point of the author's research is the childhood and the institutional environment. In all his publications he projects a modern educational paradigm which transforms from object-subjective to subject-subjective, assuming highly effective dialog-potency and emotional meaningfulness for personality change. Reflections of this can be found in the authors who quoted him. Practical-applied ideas for art therapy, aimed at motivation and social activity, application of brainstorming and the Ringi Method for research of social problems, practical cooperation between the University of Shumen and the Municipality of Shumen in the field of social policy, methodology for empirical social research on the problems of the need of the father figure to solve antisocial problems in children in the child protection system, institutions and social services.

5. Conclusion on the application

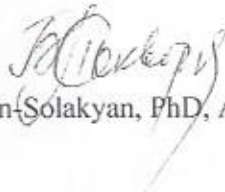
After getting acquainted with the materials and the scientific papers presented in the competition and on the basis of the analysis of their significance and the scientific and scientific-applied contributions contained in them, I confirm that the scientific achievements meet the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its application and the respective Regulations of the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski" for the candidate for the academic position "Professor" in the scientific field and the professional field of the competition. In particular, the candidate meets the minimum national requirements in the professional field.

I give my positive assessment of the candidacy.

II. OVERALL CONCLUSION

Based on the above, I recommend the scientific jury to propose to the competent body for the selection of the Faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski" to choose Zhivko Velichkov Zhechev, PhD, Assoc. Prof., to take the academic position of "professor" in the professional field 3.4.Social activities (Art therapy and socialization).

Testimonial:


Bozhena Levon Takvoryan-Solakyan, PhD, Assoc. Prof.

20.02.2021