

TESTIMONIAL

By: Professor Dr. Maria Georgieva Stoyanova, University of National and World Economy, Lecturer in the Department of Economic Sociology, specialty Sociology.

Subject: competition for a professor in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.4. Social activities (Art therapy and socialization), promulgated in SG, issue 98 / 17.11.2020

1. Information about the competition

The competition was announced on the basis of a decision of the Faculty of Education of the Faculty of Pedagogy (Protocol №...) of the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski". I participate in the composition of the scientific jury of the competition, according to Order № RD-16-004 / 12.01.2021. of the University Rector.

2. Information about the candidates in the competition

Only one candidate participates in the announced competition - Zhivko Velichkov Zhechev, PhD, Assoc. Prof. In 1980 the candidate obtained a bachelor's degree in Bulgarian philology at the Higher Pedagogical Institute, Shumen. Later he continued his studies at the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski" in social activities and in 2001 he was awarded his Master title. In 2013 he defended his scientific dissertation and received a PhD in Theory of Education and Didactics (Social Pedagogy), professional field 1.2 Pedagogy, field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences.

The academic development of the candidate has taken place entirely at the University of Shumen. His command of the Russian and English languages helps him maintain and expand his scientific awareness in the field of social work.

3. Fulfillment of the requirements for holding the academic position

From the attached card naming the fulfillment of the quantitative requirements for obtaining the academic position of "professor" at the University of Shumen it can be seen that the candidate meets the mandatory conditions of the Law for Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, namely - he acquired a PhD title in 2013; he has been occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" for 5 years now (with 2 years being the requirement); he has a published monograph "Sociological and legal regulation of the problem of disadvantaged children", published by the university publishing house in 2019, which is not presented as a habilitation thesis.

The name of Zhivko Zhechev, PhD, Assoc. Prof. is associated with high research activity. He has participated in the implementation of 7 national and 14 university projects.

4. Educational work evaluation

Zhivko Zhechev, PhD, Assoc. Prof. is a sought-after lecturer - within the bachelor's degree courses he teaches 10 subjects and within the master's degree courses he teaches 5 subjects. The academic disciplines he teaches are of topical interest and are for the most part profiling disciplines. They provide the necessary knowledge and practical skills to students, from the perspective of their professional qualification and realization, as future social workers.

5. General characteristics of the presented scientific papers

The candidate participates in the competition with 16 publications published within the period 2016-2019. They include 2 individual monographs, 7 studies and articles in the electronic journal SocioBrains, 3 in university yearbooks, 1 textbook and 1 workbook. The content of these publications clearly outlines the research interests of the candidate in the field of social studies - social services working on current problems with disadvantaged children, the usages of art therapy for the motivation and social inclusion of such children, building social skills in students to ensure the delivery of quality social services through training practices and internships led by Zhivko Zhechev, PhD, Assoc. Prof., the problems of deinstitutionalization, etc.

6. Scientific and scientifically applied contributions

There is new social knowledge based on the theory of human development through art therapy and the effects of its group and individual application, especially in children. These effects include learning abilities, psychodynamics, limitation of interpersonal disorders, deficits in self-reflection and motivation. The ideas proposed by the candidate regarding the prerequisites for conducting art therapy are of particular practical importance for building certain human assets qualities.

Social theory and practice have been enriched as far as the advantages and disadvantages of deinstitutionalization of children and the provision of alternative services in the legal and regulatory framework operating in our country are concerned. Along with this, the role of social change is taken into account - the transformations that occur in all areas of society, in organizations, in the patterns of thinking, culture and social behaviour.

The conceptual apparatus related to deviant behaviour and its distinction from delinquent (anti-social) behaviour has been refined. The argumentation about the strength of social norms and values for the regulation of individual behaviour and for limiting its negative characteristics has also been substantiated. The description of the procedure "social behaviour" reveals how its implementation causes a positive change in children with illegal behaviour and how it helps in the process of building them as valuable citizens.

In the study of foster care as a protection measure for children at risk (placement of children in foster families, not in institutions) answers to very important society-relevant questions have been given, namely what kind of families submit applications to become foster families – are these mainly families that do not have children of their own, or families with crisis

relations between the spouses, single mothers, families who have lost a child for some reason, etc. The other question is what the quality of the foster parenting is.

The need for the father figure of children in social services has been outlined. The dynamics of this need, related mainly to security, protection and role model for sexual self-awareness, has been traced historically. The three consecutive studies on this issue prove the negative impact of the father figure unavailability on children in social services, while at the same time lining out the method to overcome this unavailability by including the father figure in this service.

Looking at the issue of ensuring full and equal development of children in social services from the perspective of vocational education and training specialists in social activities is one of the important applied achievements.

7. Recommendation

It is desirable that doctoral students, researchers and lecturers in the field of social services, motivated to limit deviant and especially anti-social behaviour (theft, fraud, drugs, rape and ex.) of children and disadvantaged children are trained under the scientific guidance of Zhivko Zhechev PhD, Assoc. Prof.

Conclusion

The candidate for the announced competition, Assoc. Prof. Zhivko Zhechev PhD, Assoc. Prof. fulfils the legal and internal regulatory requirements of the University of Shumen for taking up the academic title "Professor". Based on the study of the content of scientific papers and the overall teaching activity of the candidate without hesitation I give a positive assessment of his theoretical and practical achievements. I propose to the esteemed scientific jury that Zhivko Zhechev PhD, Assoc. Prof. is elected to take the academic position of "professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.4. Social activities (Art therapy and socialization) in the Faculty of Science of the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski".

Testimonial prepared by:

(Prof. Dr. Maria Stoyanova)

