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Record Number of International Students Welcomed by MU-Pleven

MU-PLEVEN REPRESENTATIVES HELD THE SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NEWLY ADMITTED STUDENTS FROM THE UK IN THE BULGARIAN EMBASSY, LONDON



MU-Pleven's international students admission program has exceeded expectations with more than 250 students from abroad accepted in the most prominent field of study - "Medicine". Once again the United Kingdom is the main contributor of young students of medicine with a total of one-hundred and ten (110) students accepted from the island. There are also forty-eight (48) students from India, nineteen (19) from Germany, twelve (12) from Spain and nine (9) from Nigeria. For the first time in MU-Pleven's history, students were accepted from Australia, Estonia, Bangladesh, Cameroon and Egypt.

On 9th January 2016, the now traditional meeting between MU-Pleven's representatives and the newly

admitted students from the UK and their parents was held. The purpose of these meetings is to answer all questions and alleviate all concerns of both students and parents before the former set out on their new path. The meetings aim to familiarize MU-Pleven's new students with the specifics of the new cultural and academic environment they are expected to spend six years in.

This year's meeting was attended by nearly 100 students and their families. They had the opportunity to hear a presentation and ask the representatives of MU-Pleven further questions. This representative role was fulfilled by the Vice Dean of The Faculty of Medicine, Prof. Angelina Stoyanova and a dedicated team from the Dean's office, among whom were the Experts from the Admission Department - Petya Radeva and Maya Minova.

On 31st January 2016, a "Welcome Party" was held in "Rostov" hotel for the newly-arrived students from the UK. It was co-organized by the governing body of MU-Pleven and the representative company of the university on the island. The first-year

students were welcomed and congratulated by the Rector of MU-Pleven, Prof. Slavcho Tomov. He wished the students of Medicine a strong start and fruitful dialogue with the academic body of the university. Prof. Tomov further noted the admission of students from Australia, Estonia, Bangladesh, Cameroon and Egypt and added: "We look forward to the depth and cultural diversity these students will add to our city and university."

Prof. Slavcho Tomov took the opportunity to introduce a project of

MU-Pleven's governing body - the establishment of Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA): "We have long deliberated making yet another step in the direction of insuring our students are treated with utmost care. My dear parents, your presence here helps to further facilitate that idea. We believe you to be thoroughly invested in the well-being and academic progress of your children. This is especially true now, when they study abroad. Therefore we believe it to be of utmost importance for all of you to be safe and secure in the knowledge that your children have, indeed, chosen the correct university to attend."

A celebratory address was read from Georg Spartanski, Mayor of Pleven: "It is with great pleasure that I note that MU-Pleven's leading position in international medical education has brought even more fine young minds to our city. I believe MU-Pleven will open even more doors before its students and their future professional development. I also hope that by learning more about the history and culture of our fine city, international students will come to appreciate Pleven and keep a small part of its spirit, wherever their future paths may lead them."

The students were also congratulated on their enrollment by the representative company of the university, based in the UK. The official ceremony of renewing the contract between MU-Pleven and their partners in the UK was also held during the "Welcome Party". Prof. Slavcho Tomov had this to say: "Renewing the contract is a sign of how successful and mutually beneficial our business relations have been. This renewing marks the beginning of yet another period of partnership and at the same time is clear indication of how well-sought and qualitative the education we provide really is."

The students themselves are vastly different in their aims and opinions. Alani, 19-years-old, from Zimbabwe shared with us her intention to study

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hard, specialize in a field of her choosing and after that return to her home country and help the people in need there. Emily, 20-years-old, from Wales talked about her fascination with the natural beauty of Bulgaria and was glad to have the opportunity to practice Bulgarian while studying.

The evening continued with a 30-minute variety show, featuring authentic folk songs and dances, performed by the Northern Ensemble "Ivan Vulev".

From the beginning of February, all international students took part in an adaptation program. During that time, meetings were held with real estate agencies, banks, insurance companies and representatives of the Migration Directorate within the Ministry of the Interior. Information tours were arranged for the students to familiarize themselves with the library and the facilities of MU-Pleven as well as the important landmarks in the city of Pleven itself.



THE START OF THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR FOR THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MARKED WITH SOLEMN CEREMONY

15th February 2016 marks the opening of the new academic year for the international students at MU-Pleven. The official ceremony for the 250 students of Medicine was held at "Magnum" hall. It was attended by many lecturers, junior and senior students as well as members of the academic community and the Local Government.

The ceremony began with the introduction of MU-Pleven's standard and emblem and continued with the official address of the Rector of MU-Pleven, Prof. Slavcho Tomov, MD, PhD, DSc followed by a congratulatory speech from the Mayor of Pleven, Georg Spartanski. Here follows an extract from his address: "It was only three months ago that I took on the responsibility of my seat. In a sense, we will be setting on a fresh journey together. I am very pleased you decided to study and live in our city. In me and my post you will always have a strong ally, because young people like yourselves represent the future of our country, of Europe and of the world as a whole. I wish you luck and success in both your studies and later on - your development as professionals. The city of Pleven will be forever honored that you chose it as the place to take your first steps into the medical profession."

Under the guidance of Prof. Angelina Stoyanova, Vice Dean of The Faculty of Medicine, who was tasked with overseeing the ceremony, members of the Student Council and the International Students Association extended a warm welcome to their new colleagues.

The ceremony continued with the viewing of a movie, filmed specifically for the benefit of the international students, in which fundamental points of interest about the university, the city and the country were discussed in English.



YEAR 2016 FRESHMAN ADMISSION SOON TO START AT MU-PLEVEN - PREPARATION COURSES IN BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY MARK THRESHOLD OF ADMISSION SEASON

Year 2016 admission season launches at MU-Pleven with the traditional weekend preparation courses in biology and chemistry, specifically targeting prospect students in the "Medicine" field of study. The application process (on-place or on-line) for the courses was concluded on 8th January 2016. The course-proper began on 9th January 2016 and will be



held every Saturday (chemistry) and Sunday (biology). Each respective course encompasses 60 academic hours, realized during a time-span of 10 consecutive weeks. The application fee remains unchanged - 320lv per course.

The course syllabus is based on the common high-school curriculum. It aims to cover all aspects of the admission examinations in both chemistry and biology. The biology course includes discussions on sample tests based on approved high school

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curriculum for 8, 9 and 10 grade. It also aims to familiarize the attending students with the criteria of evaluation for the university freshman admission tests. The chemistry course's focus is on solving and discussing sample problems in the field of chemistry.

MU-Pleven wishes to remind its future students, that from year 2015 the content and format of the admission examinations in "Medicine" field of study have been changed. The gradual shift from open-ended questions to more closed-ended form of examination aims to promote a more diverse way of approaching the syllabus and at the same time to crack on the practice of mechanical (recitative) copying of the study material.

During last year's "A School Visit From The University" initiative, the prospective and realized changes in the format of the admission examination were met by the universal approval of high school students from Pleven and all major cities in Northern Bulgaria.



"A SCHOOL VISIT FROM THE UNIVERSITY" INITIATIVE EXTENDS ITS REACH IN 2016

MU-Pleven's governing body, MU-Pleven's Student Council and the AMSB (Association of Medical Students in Bulgaria) decided to broaden the reach of this year's "A School Visit From The University" initiative. This resulted in a larger number of cities and high schools visited in North Bulgaria as well as many more meetings held with high school seniors (4th year students). The initiative aims to familiarize high school seniors with the education opportunities MU-Pleven provides and possible career paths after graduating. This year the initiative began on an earlier date and was held between 15th and 26th February 2016.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL HIFU CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN MU-PLEVEN IN APRIL

On 22nd April 2016 MU-Pleven and "St. Marina" Multi-profile Hospital will organize and host the First International HIFU Conference. The general theme of the conference will be: "HIFU therapy: clinical practice and future prospects." The conference will be hosted in MU-Pleven's *Center for Telecommunication Endoscopy*. Discussions will be held using English as primary medium of communication with many international guest lecturers expected to attend.

The aim of the conference is for "St. Marina" Multi-profile Hospital's HIFU Center team to present its findings and share its 3-year experience in the field of non-invasive thermal ablation, accumulated from more than 350 cases of benign and malignant solid tumors. A report will be made, containing the results of the project, part of a two-side agreement on scientific development between the Republic of Bulgaria and the People's Republic of China. The official designation of the agreement is: "A study on the capabilities of the HIFU technology (high-intensity focused ultrasound) to eradicate myoma in Chinese and Bulgarian patients as a non-invasive method, alternative to conventional surgery." An opportunity will be given to the member of the team to share their experience in treating myoma, pancreatic cancer, benign and malignant tumors, etc. with this unconventional and innovative method.

MU-Pleven's Rector, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov is the chairman of the organization committee. Member of the committee are the Chinese partners of the university and the HIFU team at "St. Marina" hospital - Pleven.

The registration deadline for active participation in the conference was on 20th March 2016. Passive attendance registration is still open until 10th April 2016. Attendance is free before the aforementioned dates and a fee of 50 Euro will be required for applications past the deadline.

Information provided by V. Dukova

THE SAFEST WAY TO TREAT MYOMA IS THE NON-INVASIVE - THROUGH THE USE OF HIGH-INTENSITY FOCUSED ULTRASOUND (HIFU) ACCORDING TO OXFORD SCIENTISTS

A major study on myoma treatments featuring 2411 patients from 20 clinics worldwide has been conducted by physicians from Oxford, England. Its aims were to compare the 3 most popular treatment methods. Two of those are surgical and invasive - *myomectomy* (fibroidectomy) which refers to the surgical removal of uterine leiomyomas. In contrast to a *hysterectomy* - the second of the aforementioned methods - during *myomectomy* the uterus remains preserved. The third method is relatively new and is known as *non-invasive thermal ablation*. It involves the use of high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU), controlled and intensified through a special transducer.

Amongst the criteria for comparison of these 3 methods were: achieving the goal of the treatment, complications, hospitalization duration, improving quality of life. All featuring patients are similar in the specifications of their condition. The study shows conclusively that HIFU is the safest of the three, as well as most beneficial to the quality of life of the patients.

The results are as follows: *hysterectomy* is invasive and complications occur in 14% of all cases. The return of the patient to a high quality of life and function state takes roughly 30 days post-op.



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Myomectomy lowers the chance of complications occurring to 11% of all cases. The return of the patients to their normal routine (quality of life and function) takes about 3 weeks. High-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) therapy is non-invasive (no cuts, no blood-loss, no post-op scarring, etc.) and manages to lower the occurrence of complications to a minimum of 1.5% of the cases. The patient is stable and in good condition only hours after the operation and can return to their usual lifestyle within 48 hours post-op.

Treatment of myoma is only one of the many uses this innovative technology has. In "St. Marina" Multi-profile Hospital's Clinical HIFU Center - one of a kind in the country - the HIFU technology is used to treat *fibroadenoma of the breast, adenomyosis* as well as a number of *malignant tumors - pancreatic cancer, primary and secondary liver cancer, kidney cancer*.

Assoc. Prof. Dobromir Dimitrov, MD, Medical Director of HIFU Center at "St. Marina" hospital - Pleven, Board member of the World Association for minimally-invasive and non-invasive medicine had this to add: "It should be noted, however, that patients must meet strict criteria for the procedure to be successful. The oncologic cases must

complete accompanying therapies, such as chemotherapy, hormonotherapy or radiotherapy depending on type of their condition." He further adds: "We work in close coordination with some of the leading oncologists in the country which has produced excellent results for our patients. For the past three years we had patients from Bulgaria, UK, Germany, Italy, Greece, Spain, Romania and Turkey. In some of those countries HIFU therapies are available but are much more expensive. We manage to keep the costs down, despite having the same equipment and specialists in the field that have completed the same courses and have exactly the same qualifications." and concludes "Lately we have had some patients from the US and Canada, who have learned about us from the specialized site of the American Focused Ultrasound Foundation."

More information on:

www.hifubg.com

www.svmarina.com

e-mail: hifu@svmarina.com

contact number: 064 90 20 33; 064 90 20 44

PROF. DR. SLAVCHO TOMOV, MD: "2015 WAS A GOOD YEAR" FOR MU-PLEVEN'S ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Here follows an interview of MU-Pleven's Rector on CredoWeb - the social media for health-related issues

- How would you define year 2015 for MU-Pleven in terms of events and achievements?

- 2015 was very successful for MU-Pleven's academic community. A truly eventful year with many scientific forums and conferences, 2015 also brought great peer reviews from home and from abroad.

First, I'd like to mention the outstanding results of our admission program. Even in this state of ever-worsening demographic crisis, MU-Pleven welcomed a record number of new students. Most of them aiming solely for our university, drawn here by our innovative educational approach, material base, opportunities for clinical practice and achievements in cutting-edge medical technology. It is our modern approach and technology that drew in a record-high number of international students - with more than 450 applications, 210 of whom are already accepted. We expect many students to join us from England, Germany, India and Spain. A welcoming party will be held before the

official opening ceremony of the new academic year for the international students. We expect all of this to happen in early February. This wave of young and eager minds, from Bulgaria and abroad, is an immeasurable asset for both our university and the city of Pleven. A city that is slowly transforming into an attractive medical and academic center.

Second, I am proud to announce that the building that is expected to host MU-Pleven's new faculty - the *Faculty of Pharmacy* has been completed. This is a great opportunity for young minds from not only Pleven but the whole Northwest Bulgaria to be engaged in yet another field of study. The new faculty of MU-Pleven is the visible result of the work of great many people. I would like to take this opportunity and thank the government and state institutions, the academic and governing bodies of the university as well as our partners and contractors for their zeal and dedication to the cause. Because of their hard work, the new building is now complete, accreditation



of the field was achieved and targeted financing was acquired. All this has made it so, that it is now possible to accept our first students in Pharmacy - our new Masters-degree field of study. We expect enrollment to start September, 2016. I believe this is an achievement worthy of note not only for our city and university but for the region as a whole.

- Which fields of study are most sought-after in year 2015?

- During this academic season, 2015/2016, MU-Pleven offers admission in 11 fields in our 3 faculties: the *Faculty of Medicine*, the *Faculty of Public Health* and the *Faculty of Health Care*, as well as in the *Medical College* which is also part of MU-Pleven's structure. This season, the GPA (grade

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per average) was highest for *Medicine* field of study, followed by *Assistant Pharmacist, Medical Rehabilitation and Ergotherapy, Midwifery* and *Nursing*. Young people nowadays are much more aware of their opportunities to study and later build a career. The rating system of Bulgarian universities is also readily available with information on the quality of education and possible career developments. It has become obvious that young medics and medical specialists - nurses, midwives, medical rehabilitation specialists - have a 100% career realization on the job market and are part of the top-tier income bracket. This serves as further motivation for young people to chose these fields of study.

- A few months ago, MU-Pleven held its traditional promotion ceremony. How many young medics graduated in 2015?

- Yes, on 4th December 2015 we marked the promotion of our 36th class of medical students from the *Faculty of Medicine*. This year, during the promotion, 74 Bulgarian students and 22 international students received their diplomas and took the Hippocratic Oath. GPA results are also pleasing, with medical students grading at "Very Good" with twenty-two excellent marks in total.

- Have you followed the professional development of your alumni? How many of them decide to

work in Bulgaria?

- As I have already mentioned, if our graduates decide to stay in Bulgaria they have a 100% chance of finding work in the field of medicine. Bulgarian health care is starved for young specialists. Remaining here, however, or working abroad is not only a matter of personal preference. Young Bulgarian medics work abroad not only for the higher income per average but because of the higher quality of the material base and the ample opportunities for career and academic development. On the local front, the city of Pleven has proven to offer exemplary conditions and opportunities to young physicians - that is why many of our alumni decide to remain here, in some of the many modern medical facilities the city has to offer. Evidence of the abilities of our graduates and the high standard of education MU-Pleven provides is the "Young Medic of the Year" campaign. Two of the three winners of the "Young Medic of the Year" award for 2015 are MU-Pleven's alumni.

- What were the important events that MU-Pleven hosted in 2015?

- From the celebratory promotions to the 13th annual International Conference with Prof. Robert Holloway as guest lecturer, we've had a very eventful year. However, personally the event I am most passionate about was the

"International Day" initiative. We used "Nedko Kjachukov" sports hall to host the presentations of young students who showcased a variety of exotic cuisine, songs and dances as well as segments dedicated to the culture, history and everyday life in their respective countries. There was also the contest part of distinguishing a "winner-country"- last year that was Nepal, this year the winners were the students from India. The runner-up country was Pakistan, while Bulgarian students did their best and got third place. The "International Day" initiative was held as a charity event. The funds collected from entrance fees and donations were redirected to help rebuild and improve the rehabilitation room in the Medico-social care hospice ("Mother and Child" care home). Our international students once again showed us that despite our differences, we can leave together in harmony.

- What are the aims and challenges before MU-Pleven in 2016?

- MU-Pleven is, in my opinion, shaping up to be a leader in innovation, modern approach to education and high-end technology. We are experiencing an influx of bright, young people from both Bulgaria and abroad which makes us optimistic about the growth and development of MU-Pleven and its facilities.

MU-PLEVEN TO HOST THE EUROPEAN FORUM ON ROBOTIC SURGERY IN 2019

After a six-month-long application procedure, MU-Pleven has received official approval from the Council of SERGS (Society of European Robotic Gynecological Surgery) to host the Annual Meeting on Robotic Surgery in 2019.

As Member of the Council of SERGS, MU-Pleven's Rector, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov submitted the application form. In it, Prof. Tomov pointed out that MU-Pleven boasts seven years of experience and four independent teams dedicated to robotic surgery, working with two robotic systems and a real-time virtual endoscopy simulator (Endotrainer) for

educational purposes. He also stressed that the only Center for Telecommunication Endoscopy on the Balkans works within MU-Pleven's structure and offers ample opportunities for "Live Surgery" sessions with the robotic system located in the University Hospital. When addressing his colleagues Council members, Prof. Tomov also demonstrated a short "Live Surgery" video in 3D format. Lastly, MU-Pleven's Rector emphasized the fact that the university has a rich history of hosting major events, conferences and international meetings. It was also pointed out during the discussions that

international students at MU-Pleven show increasing interest in robotic surgery, a fact backed by the huge influx of applicants for the School of Laparoscopic and Robotic Surgery, hosted annually in MU-Pleven.

In 2016 SERGS Annual Meeting will be held in Barcelona, Spain. After that, in 2017, the Congress will remain in France, the city of Lille. In 2018, SERGS will celebrate its 10th anniversary in Milan, Italy and immediately after - in 2019 - MU-Pleven will have the honor of hosting the event in Sofia, Bulgaria. of hosting the event in Sofia, Bulgaria.

"DOCTORS WE TRUST" CAMPAIGN

The "Doctors We Trust" Campaign, Organized by 24 Chasa Daily Concludes With a Solemn Ceremony



December last year 24 Chasa daily newspaper published its latest issue of the "Doctors We Trust" handbook. In it, 309 established and well-respected physicians of various fields of expertise were mentioned. The initiative itself was conceived in 2011 by 24 Chasa daily as an attempt to re-establish trust between physicians and patients and has received the patronage of the Chairperson of the Bulgarian National Assembly.

The official presentation of the handbook for 2015 took place on 25th January 2016 in the Chamber of the National Assembly. The award ceremony was conducted by Tsetska Tsacheva, Chairperson of the Bulgarian National Assembly. In her address towards the attending physicians, Tsetska Tsacheva had this to say: "You hold in your hands the prescription for the ills in our health care system. To find the best solution to the problems we are faced with, we will depend on you - Bulgaria's finest and most-trusted physicians. For it is impossible to reform a system without sufficient help from within."

The publisher of 24 Chasa added: "Back in 2011 when we launched this campaign we believed that political



argumentation was insufficient as means of altering our existing health care system. Both we and Chairwoman Tsacheva knew that the words of our physicians had to be heard. We launched this project with the strong conviction that without the active participation of Bulgaria's finest medics, a reform would be impossible."

The ceremony was attended by the Minister of Health, Petar Moskov and other MPs. The Minister of Health presented the parameters for the new Health Care Reform Program and answered questions from the attending physicians. A discussion on the problems and issues of Health Care in Bulgaria was held, with our top physicians addressing the topic of "The Three Most Urgent Problems of Bulgaria's Health Care System." According to the polls, these are: Financing (70% votes), severe shortage of young, highly-qualified medical specialists (42%), problems with our Emergency Health Care System (40%).

It is a point of pride for the entire academic and medical community of Pleven, that many of the nominees and

some of the awarded physicians are well-known and highly-esteemed medical specialist from MU-Pleven, "St. Marina" and "Dr. G. Stranski" multi-profile hospitals. Awarded were: Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev, MD, PhD, DSc, Member of correspondence at BAS, Honorary Rector of MU-Pleven and Medical Director of "St. Marina" Multi-profile Hospital; Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, MD, PhD, DSc, Rector of MU-Pleven; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petko Lisaev, PhD, Chairman of the General Assembly of MU-Pleven, National Advisor in the field of Forensic Medicine; Prof. Dr. Tsetsa Doychinova, PhD, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Public Health, Head of the Department of Infectious Diseases, Epidemiology, Parasitology and Tropical Medicine.



FREE MEDICAL CHECK-UPS FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS AT "DR. GEORGI STRANSKI" HOSPITAL FOR MULTI-PROFILE TREATMENT ON BABINDEN

On 21st January, *Babinden* (Day of the Midwife), the Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinic at "Dr. Georgi Stranski" Hospital for Multi-profile Treatment offered free physical examinations to all pregnant women. The examinations were performed by a Gynecologist on a pre-set schedule from the 18th until the 20th January, from 14:00 till 16:00 o'clock.

326 PREGNANT WOMEN FROM PLEVEN WERE PART OF A BIOCHEMICAL SCREENING AND EVALUATION OF THE RISK OF BIRTHING A CHILD WITH DS

During the last 3 months of 2015, 326 pregnant women from Pleven were part of a biochemical screening and evaluation of the risk of giving birth to a child suffering from Down syndrome. The screening process was part of a nation-wide program, aiming to improve the quality of health care for mothers and children, in which MU-Pleven is participating as a contractor. In line with the same program, MU-Pleven conducted another screening - a neonatal hearing examination of new-born babies - between October and December, 2015. During the latter, the hearing of 144 infants was measured and examined using Otoacoustic Emission (OAE) equipment.

OBSTETRIC WARDS IN 10 CITIES RECEIVED DONATIONS THROUGH PAMPERS AND UNICEF CAMPAIGN

Pampers and UNICEF have concluded their "One Packet = One Lifesaving Vaccine" campaign. During the entirety of December, everyone was welcomed to vote on the Facebook page of *Pampers Bulgaria* for a specific Bulgarian city. The winner cities were going to have their Obstetric wards modernized with the help of Pampers. The donations include neonatal equipment and diapers. Among the winner cities are Pleven, as well as Stara Zagora, Pernik, Targovishte, Ruse, Burgas, Velingrad, Silistra and Varna.

In the 10 years of partnership between Pampers and UNICEF, neonatal tetanus has been purged from 17 countries worldwide and the lives of more than 500 000 babies have been saved.

MU-PLEVEN'S FACULTY OF HEALTH CARE IS HOLDING ITS 4TH NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SESSION

The Faculty of Health Care at MU-Pleven is holding its 4th National Scientific Session for students in the professional field of "Health Care". The meeting is titled: "Health Care in the 21st Century - Tendencies and Prospects." It is to be held on 24th and 25th March 2016 in TELECOM at MU-Pleven and is expected to draw attendants from Bulgaria and abroad. The

topics of discussion vary from Specialized Nursing Care, General Nursing Care and Midwifery to Student Projects and Miscellanea. Honorary Chairman of the forum is Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Rector of MU-Pleven. Chairman of the Organization Committee is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Valkov, Dean of the Faculty of Health Care.

DAY OF BIOETHICS AT MU-PLEVEN

On 6th April 2016 the Faculty of Public Health is organizing Day of Bioethics. The event will be held in the Telecommunication Center at Medical University - Pleven. The suggested thematic fields include: *Ageism in Health Care, Care of Dementia Patients, Ethics of Palliative Care, Competency and Advance Directives Issues, Resource Allocation and Ageing, Access of the Elderly to Health Care and Medical Research,*

Cultural Aspects of Ageing and Inter-generational Responsibilities. Guest Speaker: Prof. Renzo Pegoraro, Professor of Bioethics at Faculty of Theology, University of Padua, Former President of EACME (European Association of Centers of Medical Ethics), Chancellor of Pontifical Academy for Life.

Source: www.mu-pleven.bg

THE MEDICAL COLLEGE AT MU-PLEVEN IS HOLDING ITS 14TH NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

On 6th-7th October 2016, the Medical College at MU-Pleven will hold its 14th National Scientific Conference for students and lecturers. The thematic fields include: "Medical Diagnostic Investigations", "Social Activities", "Prevention and Public Health".



THE FACULTY OF PHARMACY - A PRIORITY FOR MU-PLEVEN IN 2016

At the end of December, 2015, the Board of Trustees at MU-Pleven and the Rector of MU-Pleven, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov decided on the priorities in the development of the university in 2016.

First: local and international student admission program that exceeds the results from last year in both terms of the quantity and quality of realized applications.

By collaborating with its partners abroad and actively pursuing international recognition for its modern educational approach and cutting-edge medical equipment and practices,

MU-Pleven received hundreds of admission applications from students abroad, 250 of whom were later accepted. Through organizing the traditional weekend preparation courses in biology and chemistry, specifically targeting prospect students in the "Medicine" field of study and by full commitment to its "A School Visit from the University" initiative, MU-Pleven's 2015 admission program was a huge success on local and national level as well. MU-Pleven welcomed a record number of new students, most of them not even considering other opportunities, interested in the university's innovative educational approach, material base, opportunities for clinical practice and achievements in cutting-edge medical technology, e.g. Robotic Surgery, 3D education, "Live Surgery" sessions with the robotic system at University Hospital, Real-time Virtual Endoscopy Simulator (Endotrainer) for educational purposes at the Telecommunication Center, etc.

Second: the new Faculty of Pharmacy. The incorporation of this new, fourth faculty in MU-Pleven's academic structure is not only highly beneficial for our city and university but for the northeastern region of Bulgaria as a whole. The new faculty of MU-Pleven is the visible result of the work of great many people. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the government and state institutions, the academic and governing bodies of the university as well as MU-Pleven's partners and contractors, the new building is now complete, accreditation of the field was achieved and targeted financing was acquired. The Faculty of



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Pharmacy is now ready to accept its first students in Pharmacy - MU-Pleven's new Masters-degree field of study. Enrollment is expected to start September, 2016.

Further details: Based on National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency's (NEAA) positive reviews, MU-Pleven's governing body expressed intent to issue a project for suggestion to the National Assembly for the establishment of a new faculty as part of the university's structure. The set purpose of this faculty was designated as "providing education for medical

specialists in the regulated field of study *Pharmacy*, in accordance with the laws concerning higher education and allowing students to attain a Master's degree qualification in the field." On 2nd March 2016 the Council of Ministers introduced before the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria a project-suggestion for the establishment of new faculty within the structure of MU-Pleven. Based on NEAA's evaluation, the capacity of the Faculty is 300 students (60 per year). For the first 3 years, up to 90 students will be accepted (up to 30 per year).

Third: acquiring additional funding from EU Framework Funding Programs. Participating in EU's funding programs will boost the reputation of MU-Pleven as center of innovative educational approaches and cutting edge medical technology. The members of the Board of Trustees were unanimous in their belief that the university lacks the necessary resources to facilitate territorial growth by opening new facilities in other Bulgarian cities or abroad.



THE NEW DEPARTMENT OF RHEUMATOLOGY OPENS DOORS AT UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL – PLEVEN

On 27th January 2016 the new *Department of Rheumatology* opened doors at "Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital for Multi-profile Treatment. Leading the ceremony were Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nikolai Nikolov, Head of the *Department of Rheumatology* and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tsvetan Lukanov, Director of "Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital for Multi-profile Treatment. Attending the ceremony were representatives of the Local Government, the governing body of MU-Pleven, the local branch of NHIF (National Health Insurance Fund), the RHI (regional health inspectorate), medical specialists and journalists.

Assoc. Prof. Nikolai Nikolov explained that because of a European directive for the development of rheumatology in EU's Member States, the new department had been functioning as a separate unit since September 2015. Before that, it had been a part of the Cardiology and Rheumatology Clinic. Assoc. Prof. Nikolai Nikolov further added that an accreditation procedure was ongoing, as it is required for the department to be further reformed into a clinic with a base able to host 12 patients.

"Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital has redirected 10 000 lv. from its own budget to renovate the clinic, while the remaining funds necessary were acquired with the help of donations and sponsors.



ST. MARINA" MULTI-PROFILE HOSPITAL SHOWCASES ITS INNOVATIVE IT SYSTEM

On 18th February 2016, the 11th National Conference on the topic of "National Platform for Electronic Health Care - Tendencies, Strategies and Policies" was held in Sofia. This forum is regarded as the most important in the field of Electronic Health Care in Bulgaria. "St. Marina" Multi-profile Hospital showcased its innovative IT system, unique for our country. Renata Karaargirova, Head of *International Relations Department* at "St. Marina" Hospital, Pleven had this to say: "We are very pleased to be able to show and explain our practical experience with the system. We hope this way we can directly help improve the quality of electronic health care in Bulgaria."

The conference was endorsed by the Parliamentary Committee on Health Care; the European Committee; the Ministry of Health Care; the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, the NHIF, BMA and IFRC-Bulgaria.



MEDICAL CENTERS IN PLEVEN NOMINATED AT THE ANNUAL "BUSINESS BALL"

The annual "Business Ball" at the "Moto Pfohe" saloon brought together leading businessmen and entrepreneurs from the city of Pleven. Present at the event was also the Mayor of Pleven, Georg Spartanski.

During the celebration, awards were given in several categories. In the category "Health Care" several health centers in Pleven were nominated. The award for "Business of the year - Pleven, 2015" went to "St. Marina" Multi-profile Hospital, while "St. Panteleimon" Diagnostic-consultative center was recognized as the most successful company in the "Health Care" category.



SPECIALIZED TRAINING FOR PREVENTION OF YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE WAS ORGANIZED IN PLEVEN

On 21st January 2016, at Rostov Hotel's conference room a specialized training session was held for prevention of drug-abuse among young people. It was organized by the Town Council's Commission on Narcotic Substances and the Center for Information and Prevention of Substance Abuse - Pleven. It was endorsed by the Ministry of Health Care in accordance to the "Prevention of Substance Abuse on Local Level" program. The purpose of this training was to: "improve the qualifications and ability of the experts at the State Juvenile Detention Centers and the Health Care Specialists at schools to prevent the use narcotic substances."

Important part of the discussions was the topic of legalization of marijuana, themed: "Marijuana Legalization - Positive and Negative Aspects." According to a survey among young people that the Center for Information and Prevention of Substance Abuse - Pleven carried out, 55.8% of all interviewees were against the possible change in legislation; 74% claim to have never tried any form of drug and an impressively high number - 83.5% believe narcotic substances and the aftermath of their use should be studied at school.

Discussions also included the risk that synthetic drugs carry and the connection between acute psychosis and the

Surface Active Agents (Surfactants). Guest speaker was Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya Stoimenova-Popova, Head of the *Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology* at MU-Pleven.



SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS AT MU-PLEVEN LAUNCH THE ANNUAL "MARTENIZA - PRESERVING THE TRADITION" CAMPAIGN

Students from Social Studies at Medical Collage - Pleven, part of MU-Pleven, completed their annual "Marteniza - Preserving the Tradition" project. The aim of the campaign is to encourage creativity in mentally ill patients and to accumulate funds for work therapies for targeted groups of patients. All Martenitza were handcrafted by the students with the help of patients from the Center for Psychiatric Health at "Dr. Georgi Stranski" Hospital for Multi-profile Treatment; Mental Care Home for the Elderly, Pleven; "P.R. Slaveykov"

school for children with special needs and daily centers for rehabilitation and integration of the mentally ill.

The project allowed the newly-accepted international students to learn more about Bulgarian culture and traditions. With the help and support of the Rector, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, the handcrafted Martenitza were displayed and sold in the lobby of the

Rectorate building between 29th February and 1st March, 2016.



STUDENTS FROM MU-PLEVEN HAD A MEETING WITH SHOW-HOST SLAVI TRIFONOV AND HIS TEAM

On 16th February 2016, 17:30 in the afternoon, students from MU-Pleven met late-night show host Slavi Trifonov and his team at "Katya Popova" hall in Pleven. The Facebook-organized meeting drew in more than 600 students, eager to discuss pressing political matters with the host of "Slavi's Show" and his team. The hall was not large enough to accommodate the number of students and citizens of Pleven that gathered to see the popular TV host, who was also born in Pleven.

Slavi Trifonov and his team - Filip Stanev, Toshko Yordanov, Evgeni Dimitrov discussed with the students a variety of topics, ranging from the initiative for a National Referendum, freedom of speech, fugitives from Syria, the political environment in the country, the problems facing our judiciary system and many more. The host once again pointed out, that despite ample speculation, he was not interested in creating and leading a new political party.

Slavi Trifonov urged the students to fight for the betterment of Bulgaria instead of looking for opportunities abroad: "You guys are great, meeting you here, today is also a great experience. You should always remember that everything is up to you - the young and the intelligent. That's you! You should have the ambition and faith in your power to change things for the better."

The initiative was originally proposed and later organized by MU-Pleven's Student Council.



PREMIERE OF "THE SOWER OF HOPE", THE SECOND COLLECTION OF POEMS BY THE AUTHOR DUO VESELA DIMOVA AND SERGEI ILIEV

The poetic duo, Vesela Dimova and Sergei Iliev presented their second collection of poems before a wider audience on 23rd January 2016. The premiere of "The Sower of Hope" took place in "Rostov" hotel, gathering more than 200 admirers of the fine art of poetry.



DR. VASIL STANEV INTRODUCED "THE FORGOTTEN PLEVEN"

On 7th December 2015, Dr. Vasil Stanev, exhibited 33 paintings of lost or forgotten sceneries in Pleven, enshrined within his fine art. Those who attended the exhibition had the opportunity to see a "forgotten" Pleven with paintings of emblematic buildings and people that are now part of the past.



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