

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA AND THE ACADEMIC REFORM CHALLENGES

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Prime Minister Berisha's vision to transform the Faculty of Medicine in the first albanian Medical University, mobilized services and departments of the Faculty, and Dean and Deputy Deans have set up immediately extensive working groups for this purpose. Faculty of Medicine, in the democratic governance has always felt the support and special care of Prime Minister Berisha, making this precious promise on the 60th anniversary of the establishment; a promise that has now become a reality.

Democratic government, investing in education, has conducted a long-term investment to our students, beneficial to life and society, and we need to make them understand better (just remind them to remember), that they constitute the privileged part of the society, and they should be ready to assume the obligations, in return for the material and intellectual favors they had have during the democratic governance.

An irreplaceable chance

Medical community, with tens of thousands of students, professors, medical staff and scientific researchers, representing a large force, able to exert its influence on the course of present and future evolutions that occur in an ever-changing world.

Universities in today world have become major protagonists of modern life. In Albania too, is happening the same phenomenon. But to fulfill its mission in the most efficient way, our universities should be guided by clear ideas of what they represent, as well for the fundamental objectives they should reach.

The responsibility of each university is not different from that of any other social entity: it must demonstrate the skills it owns to meet the needs of a society that never stop changing. This means that everybody should

have the courage to change, even if changes are difficult and laborious.

The support of a cooperative society and a government with the Prime Minister, one of the most respected professors of medicine, which promotes and supports the establishment of the first University of Medicine in our country, is undoubtedly an irreplaceable opportunity, demanding contributions from every student and professor, according to their abilities and the ability to better use the possibilities that offers the University.

Guarantees offered by the Professors

Medicine is one of the major sciences. We don't even doubt that the capacity of professors of the Faculty of Medicine, trained and qualified within and outside the country, offers a range of guarantees necessary for the university to be in a privileged stage without differences from its European counterparts. Faculty of Medicine has major advantages in the clinical field, the scientific research and services.

Today were performed medical treatments and surgical procedures similar to those in developed countries. Over 200 teachers have done specializations in western countries, USA, Canada etc.. Our attention is focused towards international projects, such as the project "ERAWEB" etc., which have engaged the faculty in continuous medical education in order to follow step by step the contemporary news and evolution in medicine. For the moment there are 17 students of three cycles of studies in different countries of Europe that are being specialized and are preparing the master theses and doctorates. For the reaching of the syllabus of the modern innovations, we are seriously

engaged through the establishment of a Telemedicine center, so the medical staff and students could interact directly with specialized medical centers in the Western countries, for any problem that may arise during the diagnosis and treatment of various diseases. The application of Telemedicine implied that we are an active part of international conferences in various medical fields. Also, in the Faculty of Medicine were done enormous changes in the direction of interactive teaching and centralized on-line secretaries, in order for the students to receive information in real time.

Certainly the establishment of the University requires a curricular reform, deeper and more comprehensive. Detachment from traditional study schemes based on disciplines towards an integrated curriculum is our short-term goal of teaching reform. Therefore, the necessity presented to project diverse studies in pedagogical terms, detailed and comprehensive, but are also required more flexible structures.

Triptique of our principles

The Medical University, like all its European partners, must be adapted constantly to the changing needs of today's world and projecting future, by applying three basic principles: professional training, holistic education and scientific research. Currently, when a number of functions of the university are already performed by the private educational sector, it seems that the excellence and quality of teaching constitute the supreme order of the day for universities. This remains one of the main factors that determine the quality of a university.

Professors of the Faculty of Medicine, clearly feeling the variety of new responsibilities in a world that is moving at a fast pace and where the problems are complicating increasingly, had these basic principles: creation, innovation and prospects. These principles should inspire the activity of Medical University to fulfill its threefold mission: educational, social and moral. Preparation of doctors to face the civil and professional responsibilities, should be one of the primary tasks. To justify his status, this autonomous institution, thanks to the significant efforts that have been undertaken at the national and international levels, should play a significant social role, regarding

the evaluation of university staff with their teaching formation and mobility opportunities of each professor for occasional specializations.

From the Autonomy depends the Knowledge

Faculty of Medicine has been prepared to this new situation, working out an integrated curriculum, extending scientific research in key areas of many traditional disciplines. Autonomy is a condition for qualitative achievements, which depends on the progress of knowledge. And this is crucial to the important institutions of knowledge and professional scientific formation. Medical University has to carry out an important mission regarding the progress of the albanian society. To do better teaching, more capable and of better quality, we are sure that the structures and the relevant departments will be flexible. A lot of effort is done for a closer cooperation of disciplines and departments, to serve the best to the authentic interests of knowledge and scientific research.

Modern communication systems

It belongs to our academic staff and students community to assist in filling the gap between what we know and what we can do. We should aim the necessity of planning the medical science under a new perspective, if we want the relationship between science and profession to be obtained in such a way as to respond to the complex challenges that raises the contemporary society. Development of teaching and the creation of scientific skills is of paramount importance. University must be equipped with modern communication systems, suitable to facilitate educational and scientific exchanges between institutions of higher education, to be provided with new multidisciplinary programs, aiming at the creation of an increasing number of scholarships for better qualifications.

The perspective of Medical University cannot be separated from the perspectives of the new millennium, therefore, we need to reconsider many strategies, to determine new concepts, to adapt the variety of methods, procedures and new norms, which would leads us, in a word, to review and adapt ourselves in a world that moves.