

Every 5th student at the American University in Bulgaria has a salary of \$100,000 after graduation

Q: Mr. Kulinski, the American University in Bulgaria holds first place in Administration and Management in the country according to the sixth edition of the universities ranking. How do the graduates earn an annual monthly income of more than 3,000 BGN? How did you achieve that?

A: It is not by accident that AUBG holds leading positions in the ranking. Critical thinking, a practical approach, interactive methods and a tight connection with business are only parts of success. We are constantly making improvements to prepare our students for the competition at the job market. We offer them opportunities for acquiring knowledge from a broad range of disciplines combined with a specialization in one field. We prepare them for jobs that we do not even suppose would exist in five to ten years. That's why the creative approach, the ability to analyze and solve complex problems, and entrepreneurship are of great importance in our program.

Q: In which majors do you have the ambition to reach first place in the next ranking? Now you are second in Economics, Informatics and Computer Science, Public Communications and Information Science and Political Science.

A: Ever since the beginning of the ranking system AUBG has held top positions and some of our programs are second, surpassed only by one point by the leader. We are glad that we are leading in graduate prospects, which is one of the most significant indicators. In 4 of the majors (out of 5 in the ranking), our graduates earn the highest income and the unemployment level is the lowest. It has to be noted that 40% of our students are international students (who either go back to their home countries or find realization on a global scale after graduation). The ranking system evaluates only those who work in Bulgaria.

Q: How is the job market developing in our country?

A: In Bulgaria and in the rest of the world, there is a trend to seek people with so-called soft skills in addition to solid knowledge in the specific field. Employers know that in order to be successful in today's global world, they need employees who understand cultural differences, are adaptive and can solve complex problems. There is an even broader interest in people who have knowledge in different spheres in contrast to being concentrated in only one field. Even in computer firms, a professional is more successful if having business and teamwork skills. It is important for the country to have leaders who are educated according to international standards and have a bigger contribution to community

thanks to their education. That is why AUBG offers Executive MBA and various other trainings in Sofia.

Q: What distinguishes you from other universities, what is unique at the American University in Bulgaria?

A: It may sound too idealistic but our priority really is our students. Three factors contribute to our success:

1. Quality education at a global level: two diplomas - American and Bulgarian, interdisciplinary education and a variety of academic programs.
2. A successful career: 99,8% of graduates start working or continue their education after getting their diploma. 65% receive more than two job offers or letters of acceptance to universities. 20% earn more than \$100,000 a year, and more than 20% of the earlier classes (between 1995 and 2000) who work in the USA earn more than \$250,000 a year.
3. A superb price-quality ratio: our graduates rank the university with 6.24 (out of 7.00) and determine the price-quality ratio. This excellent score is due to the fact that compared to various competitive Western European and American universities, AUBG offers a more affordable price (tuition fee and living expenses) which comes with a variety of opportunities for scholarships and financial aid.

Q: Which business branches are your partners?

A: Cooperation and a tight connection with business are some of the essential factors for successful education. Our network of partners is diverse and we work with organizations from all spheres - from computer firms, banks, telecommunications and media to NGOs. Our students have the opportunity to work on real-life projects for real companies and thus gain invaluable experience which helps them be successful in the future. Each year we host a Career Day on which 50 companies come to campus to find talents.

Q: What new programs do you want to start?

A: Entrepreneurial thinking and an innovative approach to education are what motivates starting new programs and initiatives at AUBG. For us it is important that when students graduate, they will have the necessary qualities and skills to be successful at that moment. We also develop in them flexibility, adaptability and curiosity - qualities that will help them be successful in the future. That is why we created Aspire, the purpose of which is to gather together students, professionals and mentors in order to create new business models. We are examining some new majors for bachelor's and master's degrees. We are currently focusing on the reform of our general education program which serves as the basis of the Liberal Arts model and on which specializing in majors is based.

Q: How do students from 43 countries live together?

A: We are proud to be chosen by students from different parts of the world. One of the requirements for students is to live on campus. Because they are coming from 40 countries,

life in the residence halls is a small round-the-world trip. Friendships for life are born in this safe and comfortable environment. Students expand their worldview, learn to respect and tolerate. This experience prepares them for life in a global environment. The university also helps young people adapt and transition by organizing various initiatives.

Q: You graduated from the first class of the American University. Tell us some more successful people who started out there.

A: I have many classmates with which I remain in touch and see how they have succeeded in the whole world. It is hard to mention all the names but here are some: Elvin Guri, entrepreneur, River Styxx Capital; Romyana Trencheva, Managing Director of SAP for Southeastern Europe; Svetlozar Georgiev and Vasil Terziev, founders of Telerik; Evgeni Morozov, writer; Sphend Ahmeti, Mayor of Prisitina; Viki Politova, Chief Operating Director and Deputy Chairman of the Managing Board of Nova Broadcasting Group; Daniel Tomov, one of the founders of Eleven; Olga Marcenac, co-founder and Vice President of TELUS International; Alexander Oliver, Vice President at RBC Capital Markets; Vezhen Stoilov, Director Operational Risk at Barclays; Milena Grayde, Managing Director of JP Morgan in London.