



American University in Bulgaria

OPINION

By: Associate Professor **Jeffrey Nilsen**, Ph.D., American University in Bulgaria

Regarding: The application of the following candidates for habilitation as **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR** according to the Bulgarian legislation at the American University in Bulgaria in Area of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences in Professional Field 3.8 Economics. The procedure has been announced in the State Gazette issue dated September 9, 2014, issue 75.

Candidate: **Tamara Todorova**

I present the evaluation below in my capacity as a member of the Habilitation Jury appointed for the above mentioned procedure by a letter of the AUBG President dated November 6, 2014 and according to a Decision of AUBG dated June 6, 2014. My evaluation is based on the *Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act*, the Rules for its implementation, the internal AUBG rules, regulations, and policies, including the *Habilitation Procedure* and the habilitation procedure advertisement on the AUBG website.

Evaluation of the Applicants

*The evaluation is carried out according to the **Primary Indicators** and **Additional Indicators** included in the document **Guidelines for the Habilitation Jury**.*

I. Basis for Evaluation

Please indicate on what information this evaluation is based - documents submitted by the Candidate, professional activities, publications, e.g.:

- monograph(s);
- articles in refereed journals specialized in the area;
- non-refereed publications;
- conference reports;
- other publications: translations, invited lectures
- citations (by publications in Bulgaria/abroad);
- professional memberships;
- other activities: service activities, e.g. advising, academic affairs

II. Eligibility

1. Please find attached the **Eligibility Checklist** (Enclosure 1).
2. I find the candidate satisfies all the criteria required for full professor and strongly support her candidature.

III. Areas of Research of the Candidate. Evaluation of the Contributions of the Candidate.

1. *The principal areas of the Candidate's research includes new institutional economics, economics of reform and transition, mathematical economics, microeconomics and international trade.*
2. *Please find enclosed the **Additional Requirements list** (Enclosure 2). I find that the Candidate's areas of research correspond to the specific requirements of the current procedure.*
3. *Below is a focused evaluation following the Primary and Additional Indicators, of the Candidate's major theoretical and applied results and contributions.*

These comments make reference to the numbers given in the candidate's submitted abstracts document. Please note that I will ignore the piece written in Bulgarian (#15).

The candidate has self-described her research interests as primarily new institutional economics with "non-institutional economics as her other interest. I believe she is being too modest and ignoring the impressive breadth of her research. I agree new institutional economics is a major part of her research output, including 7 of the 15 refereed English articles. Examining the others, one sees 3 in labor economics (#4, #6, #10), international trade (#1, #11), one in pedagogy (#3), and one in mathematical economics (#5). In an era of extremely fine shades of specialization, this breadth is noteworthy and refreshing.

The main thrust of the candidate's new institutional economics is focused on transactions costs and especially in the context of transitional economies. This is to be commended as although one would have hoped that Bulgaria had already "turned the corner" into a more developed economy, alas progress has rather been slower than hoped for. The candidate's work can be applied to help understand some of the reasons for the slow progress.

Many of the candidate's papers stress the large magnitude of transactions costs in transition economies. Her case study of the Bulgarian pharmaceutical industry thankfully gives concrete illustration of this effect. Among the surprising and interesting results I take this opportunity to mention, firms should monitor more closely the good workers as they are more crucial to the firm (#4), that a stable continuous time steady state of equilibrium inflation and unemployment becomes explosive if solved in discrete time (#5) and that the state should step in to allocate economic resources (#7).

In sum, the candidate shows interesting results over a broad range of topics and exceeds the requirements for habilitation.

IV. Evaluation of the Candidate's teaching



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1. *I include a short evaluation according to the Additional Indicators related to teaching, with emphasis on teaching in recognized liberal arts institutions and student-centered approach.*
2. *Please see below attesting that the Candidate's areas of teaching correspond to the **Additional Requirements** (Enclosure 2) set forth by AUBG for this procedure.*

Regarding additional requirements with regard to teaching, the candidate has included evaluations showing that she has taught courses in new institutional economics, mathematical economics, dynamic optimization, microeconomics, managerial economics, economics of reform and transition, international trade and industrial organization.

3. *Please state your opinion with regard to the correspondence between the overall teaching experience of the Candidate and the specific requirements of the current procedure.*

The candidate teaches a wide variety of courses on many levels attesting to the skill and experience of a seasoned professional. As department chair I appreciate very much that she regularly teaches many "bread and butter" courses such as international trade, principles of microeconomics, mathematical economics, and economics of reform and transition in addition to the more advanced dynamic optimization. And as department chair I also appreciate very much her volunteering to teach whichever course the department needs, rather than which course she would rather teach as befits her seniority in the department.

The candidate has developed several courses, including most recently the dynamic optimization course. This is truly needed due to the increasing technical demand of the economics discipline. Further she has developed courses in the economics of advertising, the new institutional economics and industrial organization.

For the quantitative methods class she has developed a problems text book.

The peer reviewers together construct a picture of an excellent teacher. For example her lectures are well-structured, well-prepared and accessible. She uses repetition and review using student names to ask questions and guide them in their formulation of clarifying questions. She uses real life examples, she moves around a lot and modulates her voice. The reviewers noted that she mainly uses the white board, and this I think is important since students must be introduced gradually to graphs since on a presentation slide it is too easy to quickly accept a relation when the actual variables may be confused. In all the reviewers conclude the classes are active and engaged, which is our goal as teaching

professionals. And finally the course evaluations provide reinforcement of these ideals from the viewpoint of the students.

In the candidate's self-evaluation, it is clear that she does not slavishly follow one method, but rather tailors the method to the subject matter. Indeed she mentions that she uses powerpoint slides for several classes when they are appropriate, for example in economics of reform and transition. Another major point to mention is her heavy use of tutorials in times prior to examinations. She uses these sessions to ensure the students are able to solve problems. Other pedagogical devices the candidate uses are term reports, which she offers to give comments on drafts so students can improve their performance

In addition, the candidate is active in curriculum development. She has also taught at the executive MBA program, illustrating her ability to handle mature business leaders as well as the typical young students.

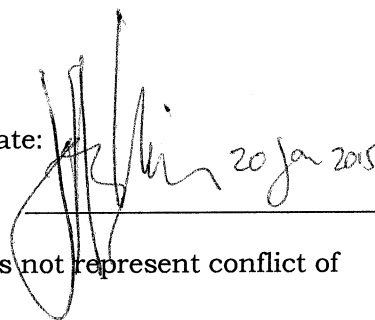
The candidate has published a paper with a student on labor market issues. And she is working on the development of a joint environmental studies minor with other department members.

I find in general the student evaluations are excellent. This is particularly noteworthy because it is always more difficult to motivate larger classes. And the candidate has admitted many students over capacity – this means more work and usually less-than-stellar evaluations. Yet the candidate has very large classes and excellent evaluations.

VI. Conclusion:

- 1. The candidate's record is certainly appropriate to the specific requirements of the American University in Bulgaria*
- 2. I do not hesitate to recommend strongly the candidate for habilitation*

Signature and date:



20 Jan 2015

By signing here I also declare that writing this opinion does not represent conflict of interest.

American University in Bulgaria

Eligibility Checklist

Name of the Candidate: **Tamara Todorova**

Applying for habilitation as: **Associate Professor at the American University in Bulgaria according to announcement in State Gazette, issue № 75, dated 9 September 2014**

In Professional Field: **3.8 Economics**

Check below what applies. Sign and submit together with your review or opinion.

YES The Candidate has Ph.D;

YES The Candidate has served five years as (Senior) Assistant Professor (for applicants for Associate Professor) or six years as Associate Professor (for applicants to Full Professor) at a recognized academic institution;

YES The Candidate has published a monograph or publications of equal standing in specialized journals. These should not repeat publications based on which Ph. D., or Doctor of Science degree, or Associate Professor Rank was granted;

N.A. For applicants for Full Professor: The Candidate has other original research works, publications, and other theoretical or applied-theoretical works;

YES The Candidate has experience from recognized academic liberal arts institution(s);

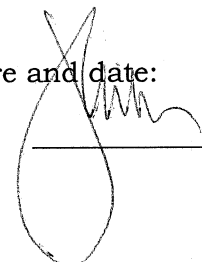
YES The Candidate has experience in student-centered teaching approach;

YES The Candidate has undergone at least one successful evaluation in teaching, research and service at a recognized academic liberal arts institution, including positive student evaluations of teaching.

YES The Candidate has experience in teaching in English at a higher education institution with instruction in English language.

YES AUBG can ensure teaching and research load according to its internal rules and regulations.

Signature and date:

 20 Jan 2015

American University in Bulgaria

Additional Requirements

For Associate Professor Academic Position in Professional Field 3.8 Economics

Additional specifications: new institutional economics, economics in transition, mathematical economics, microeconomics, and international trade

Name of the Candidate: **Tamara Todorova**

Check below what applies. Sign and submit together with your review or opinion.

Research

The Candidate has conducted research in the following areas:

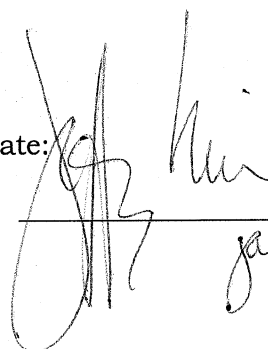
- YES** New institutional economics;
- YES** Economics of reform and transition;
- YES** Mathematical economics;
- YES** Microeconomics;
- YES** International trade.

Teaching

The Candidate has teaching experience in the following areas:

- YES** New institutional economics;
- YES** mathematical economics;
- YES** microeconomics;
- YES** managerial economics;
- YES** economics of reform and transition;
- YES** international trade;
- YES** industrial organization.

Signature and date:


Jan 20 2015