

OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Krasimir Todorov Todorov

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of the materials submitted for participation in the competition
to fill the academic position of 'principal assistant'
of the **Higher School of Insurance and Finance**
by field of higher education **3. Social, economic and legal sciences,**
professional direction **3.8. Economics (Financial Optimizations and Business
Process Management)**

In the competition for "chief assistant", announced in the State Gazette, no. 34 of 16.04.2024 and on the website of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Dr. Nikola Dimitrov from VUZF participated as a candidate.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

By order No. 182 of 17.06.2024 of the rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of "chief assistant" at VUZF in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8. Economics (Financial optimizations and business process management).

Only one candidate - Dr. Nikola Dimitrov - was admitted to participate in the announced competition.

The materials submitted by the candidate in electronic format are in accordance with the Regulations for the terms and conditions for holding academic positions at VUZF and include the following documents:

- Request to the rector for participation in a competition;
- Autobiography;
- Copy of the diploma for the educational and scientific degree "doctor";
- List of publications and attached copies thereof;
- Reference on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "principal assistant";
- Official note certifying educational activity under Art. 14, para. 1 of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for holding academic positions at VUZF;
- Certificate of internship in the specialty;
- Medical certificate;
- Criminal record certificate;
- Consent form for the processing of personal data in connection with participation in the contest.

The candidate has submitted a dissertation work for the award of the ONS "Doctor" and three articles in non-refereed scientific publications that have been accepted by me for peer review.

From the reference of the minimum national requirements, it is clear that the total number of points of Dr. Nikola Dimitrov is 80 points, with a required minimum of 50 points under Indicator A (dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor").

2. Brief biographical data (of the applicant)

From the presented autobiographical reference, and from my acquaintance with him as a colleague from VUZF, I should emphasize that Nikola Dimitrov has extremely intensive professional and consulting experience in the field of lean management and optimization of business processes. He is also a long-time

university lecturer. This is quite enough to expect academic performance at a high scientific level.

3. General characteristics of the applicant's activity

3.1. Evaluation of educational and pedagogical activity and preparation of the candidate

From the presented study load report for the period 2019-2024, it becomes clear that Dr. Nikola Dimitrov is a teacher in a wide range of scientific disciplines (24 in number) both in the bachelor's and master's programs of VUZF, as well as in Bulgarian as well as in English. During the period, he completed 2,440 lecture hours in the relevant disciplines, directly related to the content of the announced competition.

3.2. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and scientific-applied activity

The dissertation on the topic: "Financial optimization of organizations through Lean thinking", has a volume of 152 pages, consisting of an introduction, four chapters, as well as 24 pages of bibliography and appendices. In it, Nikola Dimitrov presents the characteristic elements for this type of academic research in a very clear and reasoned way - thesis, goals and objectives, object and subject of the research, as well as the 6 applied methods. In conclusion, I should emphasize that the purpose and tasks of the study fully correspond to the stated thesis, according to which lean systems and tools can serve not only to mitigate operational shocks, but also to create an environment conducive sustainable organizational growth and financial stability of the organizations under consideration.

The presented three articles on the topic of the dissertation have been published in English in non-refereed scientific publications, and these publications are independent.

4. Contributions (scientific, scientific-applied, applied) and citations

I accept the 3 contribution moments formulated by doctoral student Nikola Dimitrov as completely valid, namely:

- In-depth research on the theoretical level of the constructs "organizational chaos" and "lean management".
- Revealing the strategic role of lean management in streamlining processes, promoting organizational stability and improving productivity.
- Revealing the importance of lean management for optimizing the financial results of organizations.

5. Evaluation of the candidate's personal contribution

I believe that the obtained results and contributions in the materials presented for the competition (dissertation work and three publications) are a personal merit of Dr. Nikola Dimitrov.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations

Regarding the presented dissertation work, I do not find a reason to single out critical remarks, since there is none. I would only allow myself to express some recommendations that aim to raise the level of the dissertation work.

1. The formulation of the introduction is the work of the author alone, and there is no place to refer to other authors.
2. The content of the dissertation work should correspond in number of chapters to that on page 13, as well as to find a better balance of the volume of the relevant chapters.

3. The reference to individual authors should also be more balanced - it is striking that Womack is used more than 30 times in the text, of the otherwise sufficiently diverse bibliography presented.

I have no comments on the rest of the materials provided for the "chief assistant" competition.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Dr. Nikola Dimitrov meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of the University of Higher Education.

The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific papers. The candidate's works contain original scientific and scientific-applied contributions. Dr. Nikola Dimitrov's scientific and teaching qualifications are unquestionable.

The results achieved by Dr. Dimitrov in the educational and research activities correspond to the Regulations of VUZF for the application of ZRASRB.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific and scientific-applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and I recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Academic Council for the election of Dr. Nikola Dimitrov to the academic position of "principal assistant" at VUZF in professional direction 3.8. Economics (Financial optimizations and business process management).

04.07. 2024.

Prepared the opinion:

Prof. Dr. Krasimir Todorov Todorov