BISLA
Liberal Arts College

Erasmus Policy Statement

BISLA is an accredited three-year degree-granting undergraduate college. Its core curriculum is based on political science with offerings also in other social science disciplines and the humanities: history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, international relations and theatre and fine arts and literature. The educational program is based on a mix of small seminars, tutorials and lecture classes, and practical, supervised fieldwork. Emphasis is placed upon continuing intellectual interactions among and between students and faculty inside and outside the classroom.

As an intellectual community, BISLA is energized also by scholarly research and publication activities. We have developed an internal system of counseling for both outgoing and incoming students to ensure that they will receive any information needed for their stay sufficiently in advance. As a normal part of our educational system, we have our own tutorial system for our students, so that incoming student is integrated in our institution easily. Since BISLA welcomes applications from international students, and half the courses are taught in Slovak, half in English, our international and Erasmus activities, such a s education development projects or mobility of students and teachers, constitute a cornerstone of our strategy.

Our strategical intention is to prepare BISLA students for postgraduate education in Slovakia and abroad and for the world of work in whatever country. Our main focus is to maintain and still expand large network of co-operation with other educational institutions within the framework of the Erasmus program all around the Europe and globally.

BISLA seeks to strengthen itself in conjunction with other such institutions in a network, European Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences (ECOLAS). Our partners are HEIs and their programmes who strive for high quality in education within the framework of liberal arts and sciences. Cooperation includes numerous fields ranging from HEIs´ administration (debated on liberal arts model, administration, financing and its place in the European educational system as a blueprint for bachelor cycle), teachers (professional development program, expert visits, research, mobilities) and students (mobilities, summer schools, conferences). Our long-term priority is to continue providing opportunity for at least 50 percent of our students to participate on Erasmus mobility program. Another long-term goal of international cooperation is to boost therefore and significance of liberal arts and sciences concept to benefit European educational system as its natural and important component.

All our Erasmus activities have large publicity not only within our institution, but also in a larger framework of Slovak intellectual society. Together with BISLA there was established the Bratislava Institute of Humanism (BIH) that mounts public lectures and debates on intellectual, social and political issues concerning Slovakia and Europe. Our Erasmus activities have been introduced into broader scope and these debates, enhancing

thereby any ongoing debate about the emerging European identity and its political, social and educational implications.

Institutional Strategy

BISLA actively seeks international cooperation opportunities with European, American and other liberal arts and sciences programs, colleges and initiatives. It is active member of Global Liberal Arts Alliance (GLAA) and European Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences (ECOLAS). Regular meetings of these associations´ members define their strategy for cooperation of its members. They include numerous topics involving three levels of university and educational participants: HEIs´ administration (debates on liberal arts model, administration, financing and its place in the European educational system as a blueprint for bachelor cycle), teachers (professional development program, expert visits, research, mobilities) and students (mobilities, summer schools, conferences). All these initiatives are in line with the vision and mission envisaged by the Lifelong Learning Programme and, hence, BISLA seeks the support by the Programme, whether in terms of financing, taking part and use of the programme´s initiatives.

BISLA, its educational profile and Endeavour, is committed to the liberal arts and sciences (LAS) model of first cycle (bachelor) degree higher education. LAS define bachelor degree as a fully-fledged terminal level of higher education that delivers its students skills generally appreciated by labour market (creative and critical thinking, effective communication, etc.) and at the same time cultivates a broad and interdisciplinary education with gradual student specialization. Its graduates are thus both ready to either enter the labour market fully-equipped with skills necessary for the professional needs in 21st century or continue in further specialized studies in second (master) or third (doctoral) cycle. That´s why LAS students´ drop out rate is very low, time required to reach adequate education is shorter, their scope and qualification are broader and thus more relevant for the labour market.

Since European model of LAS stresses importance of usage and learning in English and, at the same time, promotes respect towards national cultures and specificities, its international level is enormously strong and cross-border cooperation is seen as a must. Well-rounded LAS graduate is also an ideal candidate to become researcher who is able to recognize and solve various aspects of a single problem. LAS are easy to be implemented into the educational system dominated by large universities since it can effectively use their rich academic resources for student benefit. As the average student of LAS needs to use educational system for shorter time, higher quality can be achieved without a need for additional funding.

BISLA believes that thanks to its participation in the Lifelong Learning Programme not only it maintains and further develops it s international profile but it also unfolds its internal development potential. Through participation is several education development

projects, BISLA strives to make the Programme more contributive to proliferation of LAS and its beneficial effects on European higher education.