Dear AUBG alumni,

Once again, I am running for one of the vacancies for AAA Director-At-Large.

Why vote for me? *Because AUBG problems are predominantly in the academic sphere, and that is where my know-how lies*.

Who am I? I am currently an Associate Professor ("Docent") in Economics at WIUT Business School, Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. I am also a Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) in Social Sciences (Economics) as of September 2025. I am a senior academic, with more than 20 years of experience in academia in US, Hungary, Germany, Uzbekistan, Bulgaria and the UK. While a student at AUBG, I also served as an SG senator (2003-04). Much later, after 2 two-year MSc degrees, and after defending my PhD in Economics at the University of Glasgow in 2013, I came back as a faculty member and served as an Assistant Professor at the Economics Department at AUBG during the period 2013-17; By 2017, I was ranked No.1 among all economists working in Bulgaria.

What makes me a good fit for an AAA Director-At-Large? Aside from my extensive teaching and research experience, fundraising, grant- & project management experience, I have also significant managerial training and real managerial experience in higher education, being the Program Leader for the BA Business Economics, MSc Economics & MSc Economics and Finance programs, all at the University of Lincoln, UK. I also successfully supervised 2 PhD students to their graduation, and also sat on a PhD Defense Committee at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Sofia University. The expertise I developed from administering those undergraduate and graduate programs at the University of Lincoln, as well as my knowledge on the Bulgarian, US, UK, and the continental European systems of higher education, would be quite valuable for AAA, as there are not enough academics sitting on the AAA board. After all, AUBG is in the business of higher education, which is a very specific industry.

Why now? In case you missed the news, recent causes for major concern in the AUBG community are

- the refusal of the Bulgarian re-accreditation of the JMC program, *i.e.,* a score below 7.00.
- the low scores received by the MAT (8.86) and ECO programs (8.78).
- the upcoming/ongoing re-accreditation procedures for BUS, COS&INF, POS&EUR, and HTY. I expect a significant revision of all current scores downward (even below 7.00) – which would decrease the number of students in those majors that AUBG could grant Bulgarian/EU diplomas.
- current MON ranking shows AUBG is no longer top even in Bulgaria – but rather as low as 3-4th in some subjects in Bulgaria (with MAT and HTY not being ranked at all).
- New majors like PSY and Physics are not BG/EU accredited, *i.e.,* no Bulgarian/EU diploma.
- BUS at AUBG is No.1 in Bulgaria, but at par with Sofia University, once the EMBA part is subtracted (i.e. when comparing the undergraduate Business Administration programs).

Why me? I have a deep understanding of the Bulgarian accreditation procedure, and if appointed, I will make sure AUBG goes above and beyond what is required by the Bulgarian academic standards. Only the meeting of those standards allows AUBG to continue granting Bulgarian and European diplomas - in the accredited *in Bulgaria* majors. Let's just hope it is not too late. Without the Bulgarian accreditation of (most) of its majors, the university will not survive…

Thank you for your attention,
Associate Professor Aleksandar Vasilev, PhD, DSc