**BSU**

At the end of the 20th century the system of higher and further education in Belarus underwent the process of great reforms. They were initiated to provide closer links between education and technological needs of industry.

A distinguishingfeature of our universities nowadays is that they are becoming internationally oriented. Our country has joined the European Cultural Convention which enables us to participate in all projects concerning higher and further education, academic mobility and recognition of qualification.

The training of highly qualified specialists, capable of solving the most complex problems of modern society is the main priority of higher education. The characteristic feature and the main trend in modern higher and further education is not only to check students’ knowledge but develop their abilities and creative thinking.

The Belarusian State University which celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2011 is a top-ranked university in the national system of education. It was founded on October 30, 1921. On November 1st, 1930 students began attending regular classes at its three faculties: workers’, medicine and social sciences. At that time the teaching staff consisted of 14 professors and 25 associate professors.

A considerable contribution to the establishment of the University and its traditions was made by the first Rector of the University academician Vladimir Ivanovich Picheta.

Rapid development of the University played a significant role in creating the educational system of the republic. The University’s educational and research resources gave birth to a number of independent higher educational establishments, such as Minsk Medical Institute, Minsk Pedagogical Institute, the Belarusian Institute of National Economy, Minsk Law Institute, Minsk Chemical and Technological Institute which later became a part of the Polytechnical University. The Belarusian State University contributed much to the foundation and development of the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR, the Republic’s State Library and a number of large research institutions.

1941 was the year of the twentieth anniversary and at the same time it was the most difficult period in the history of the University. On June 21, 1941 a jubilee exhibition was held at the University presenting the achievements of the staff consisting of 17 professors, 41 associate professors, 90 teachers and assistants, 60 post-graduates and 1337 students.

The day following the celebrations June 22, 1941 became a tragic landmark in the history of the Belarusian people. All the post-war generations of teachers, post-graduates and students of the University remembered and will always remember their colleagues who left the classrooms and scientific laboratories to sacrifice their lives for the glory and independence of their Motherland. The evidence to this is the obelisk erected in 1970s at the University campus in honor of those who had perished in the battle against fascism.

The war did great damage to the University. The University campus was destroyed almost completely, the archives, library funds, laboratories and study-rooms were plundered. But despite the ravages of the war regular classes at its six faculties began at the station of Skhodnya near Moscow in October 1943. After the liberation of the capital of Belarus in August 1944 the University renewed its work in Minsk.

The pre-war educational and material base of the University had been restored by the end of 1950. By that time the University had enrolled more than 2000 students. A new period in the history of the Belarusian State University began, the period of its rapid development, creative teaching and scientific research, both fundamental and applied.

At present the international prestige of the BSU has considerably increased; scientists and professors actively participate in international scientific symposia and conferences, in the sessions of the UN General Assembly and UNESCO. The Belarusian State University has become one of the first members of the International University Association.

Today the BSU is the Alma Mater for 30 thousand students studying at its 16 faculties: Faculty of History, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Biology, Military Faculty, Geography Faculty, Faculty of the Humanities, Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics, Faculty of Radio Physics and Computer Technologies, Faculty of Pre-University Education, Faculty of Physics, Faculty of Philology, Faculty of International Relations, Faculty of Applied Mathematics and Computer Science, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Faculty of Chemistry. Within recent years the University has initiated training specialists in the sphere of nuclear energy, logistics, management of innovation technologies, applied computer science, aerospace, radio-electronics, information technologies as well as in a number of humanities. The total number of specialities is equal to 63.

890 students are doing Master’s course and 682 are engaged in postgraduate and doctoral studies. The Research activity at the BSU is conducted at numerous research institutes, laboratories and University departments. About 1670 Candidates of Sciences and 400 Doctors of Sciences, 15 Academicians and 16 Corresponding members of the National Academy of Sciences work at the BSU.

The students are provided with everything necessary for their studies. The University has an excellent library which is one of the oldest in the Republic. The University students do not only study but carry out various research work, take part in educational and scientific expeditions. They make reports on various problems of modern science at symposia and conferences.

Great attention is paid to physical training and sport. The students regularly do sports at the University sport clubs. There are 147 amateur societies at the University where the BSU students can develop their gifts and talents. Much attention is paid to the living conditions and the way students spend their spare time. They live in comfortable halls of residence.

A lot of the University graduates have become state and public figures, prominent scientists, teachers and writers.

The staff is proud of the University traditions and achievements but at the same time it realizes the necessity for serious reforms aimed at preserving the accumulated intellectual potential and promoting progressive development of the Belarusian University in the future. The BSU is an internationally recognized classical university integrating essential features of the educational, scientific and cultural centre.