

Patriotic and Moral Education of Students at the Medical Faculty of the Imperial Moscow University in the First Quarter of the 19th Century

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Abstract. This article analyzes the experience of the professors of the medical faculty at the Imperial Moscow University in the spiritual and moral education of students in the first quarter of the 19th century. The reforms of Alexander I, which reflected the liberal mood of the first years of his reign, affected education. In accordance with the Charter of 1804, the University received extensive rights associated not only with the content of the educational process and its organization. Particular attention was devoted to measures promoting the spiritual and moral education of students. Public lectures attended by representatives of different sectors of the population described the University as a center of cultural and scientific life, making it a major phenomenon in the social and cultural life of Moscow in the first quarter of the 19th century. During the Patriotic War of 1812, teachers and students of the Imperial Moscow University's faculty of medicine excelled not only on the battlefield. University professors and staff sent money to the front and graduates of the medical faculty participated in the fight against epidemics that spread after the retreat of the French.

In the first quarter of the 19th century, the Imperial Moscow University was one of the intellectual centers of the country. Students of the faculty of medicine (and the whole university in general) received a broad universal education, and the staff's work was aimed at shaping future doctors, imparting modern knowledge, providing the necessary skills and offering the best moral qualities.

Keywords: Imperial Moscow University, faculty of medicine, education, patriotism, morality, students and the professor

For quotation: *Surovtseva T.I. Patriotic and moral education of students at the medical faculty of the Imperial Moscow University in the first Quarter of the 19th Century. History of Medicine. 2015. Vol. 2. № 2. P. 204–211.*

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Currently, Russia is undergoing a reevaluation of state policy towards higher education, a reform of the national health care services, and the implementation of one of the most important responsibilities of higher education – forging the spiritual, moral, and professional identities of the next generation of professionals. A central pedagogical objective of institutions of higher education in the field of medicine is the education not only of medical specialists, but doctors, who are able to communicate with their patients and incorporate interpersonal communication into their treatment strategies. Thus, a review of the traditions of education is quite timely. With this in mind, it will be illuminating to examine the experiences of the professors of the Faculty of Medicine of the Imperial Moscow University

(IMU) and their means of providing patriotic and moral education to future physicians.

Since it was opened, the mission of the IMU was to produce not only specialists and professionals, but *citizens* – people who were well-rounded, of high morals and who were devoted to the Tsar and the Motherland. The education provided by IMU was not narrowly focused on professional training; rather, alumni received truly “universal” and multifaceted training and education. The affairs of the Faculty of Medicine, as well as those of all other departments, were governed by a charter regulating the various aspects of life in the faculty and closely connected to the life of the country as a whole.

According to various sources, Emperor Alexander I carried out an extensive Russian social reform program. He saw education as a spiritual pillar, and it is likely that this belief led him to give education priority in the reform agenda of

Received: 06.02.15

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the first period of his reign [1–7]. Reforms of unprecedented scale were carried out on the educational system, reflecting the liberal climate of the first years of his rule. On the 8th of September, 1802, the Ministry of National Education was created, governed by P.V. Zavadovsky, who was entrusted with “the education of the youth and the advancement of science”. In January of 1803, a decree entitled “Provisional rules for national education” was published, declaring that the creation of a system of public education was to be one of the primary objectives of the government. On the 5th of November, 1804, an imperial decree was approved by the charter of IMU, which called for a “complete overhaul” of the University. The educational ideals embodied in the Charter of 1804 reflected a new perspective on the purpose of education, which was no longer limited to the preparation of professional scholars, but to the education of well-rounded people [3, p. 171].

Alexander I paid close attention to IMU. In a letter to its director, I.P. Turgenev, written soon after his ascension to the throne, the emperor noted that he had always “respected this place as one of the top institutions for educating the youth of the nobility”¹ [8, p. 314].

The draft of the new charter was prepared by M.N. Muravyov, a member of the Ministry of National Education and the first trustee of IMU, appointed after the adoption of the new charter. Muravyov was a gifted man of letters, a poet, one of the founders of Russian sentimentalism, a follower of Rousseau. He was even invited by Catherine II to be a tutor of Russian philology and history to the great Princes Alexander and Constantine. He was admired by contemporaries for his great character and humanistic expertise. Recognizing the urgent necessity in Russia for a European-style education system, he sought to reconstruct the national education system on the model of France and Germany. The scholarly authority of German universities, their freedoms and privileges, and their teaching system, which was the best in Europe at that time, influenced Muravyov’s draft for the new university charter. Thus, with the Charter of 1804, the university was granted broad rights, above all, to determine the organization and methods of the educational

process. However, the Charter of 1804 also included articles pertaining to the moral character of students and measures to promote their broader education. According to the charter, the rector was charged with ensuring general order and the “decency of everyone connected to the university” [9, p. 25]. When selecting professors, the university council had to not only consider the professional qualifications of the applicant, but also to gather “testimony of his moral rectitude” [9, p. 61]. The charter also stipulated the hiring of adjuncts: “Native Russians who possess the necessary knowledge and qualities should be preferred to foreigners” [9, p. 30].

Moral qualities were also taken into account in accepting future students – applicants had to obtain testimony from the director of their gymnasium not only about their achievements in the sciences, but also their “conduct and diligence” [9, p. 32]. The charter also required that students comply with specific “rules of decorum” laid out by the university council and approved by the university governance (§ 124). To oversee a moral character and conduct of students, the charter created the position of Official Inspector of Students, which would be filled by one of the professors to be chosen at a general meeting. This position was described as “the keeper of order and decorum of this institution” (§ 16) and enumerated the following responsibility: “He, visiting student quarters, by means of admonitions, will encourage the slothful to their duties and foster a general desire to study” [9, p. 33]. It was also proposed (as it had been from the beginning) that students of all faculties had not only a specialized, professional training, but also a broad and general linguistic education. In § 112 of the Charter, it was decreed that “among the sciences taught at the university would be those subjects which are indispensable to anyone wishing to be of service to the Motherland, whatever way of life or whatever profession he may choose...” [10, p. 316-317]. The charter also called for communication between students and “especially literature, philosophy, and law” humanities professors in order to correct their judgement and their “means of expression”, and accustom them to “communicate their thoughts thoroughly and freely” (§ 122).

A number of articles enumerated measures for expanding the intellectual horizons of students.

¹ Hereinafter the original features are taken into account when citing.

They included, among other things, a university library and press. It was also stipulated that the university and its professors could write any article freely, regardless of a subject matter. All such articles would be stored in the university library. However, articles considered by the university censors to be “provocative and harmful” would not be given to students.

The expansion of a student’s intellectual horizon was also facilitated by the ability to create academic societies and to hold academic competitions with prizes awarded to the best works. In 1804 a medical society was founded at the university, at first known as the “Society for Competition in the Medical and Physical Sciences” and later (from 1845) – as the “Physico-medical Society”, whose primary objective was the “dissemination throughout the Motherland of useful knowledge in the physical and medical sciences”. We can assume that students of the Faculty of Medicine were at the forefront of this new research. In 1805 the “Moscow Society of Naturalists” was founded at the university to deal with scientific issues in close coordination with the “Society for Competition in the Medical and Physical Sciences”.

Thus, the Charter of 1804 in many respects aimed to reform the university (by creating new departments, offering new courses, etc.) and strengthen traditions of university education, which had emerged in the second half of the 18th century, by shaping not only professionals, but well-rounded men with a comprehensive and general education who were devoted to tsar and motherland.

Compliance with the requirements laid out by the 1804 Charter largely depended on the actions of specific individuals – the university administration and the professors, and teaching staff – and their approach to solving problems. The professors, including those in the Faculty of Medicine, continued the traditions that were established during the first period of the university’s existence. As before, the emperor’s coronation days and name days were celebrated, as the emperor paid close attention to the university (in 1802 he donated a “nature” room to the university and visited the university on several occasions). The University professors spoke in public at all important state events, as their strength and ability was crucial in preparing their students “for great and noble deed of serving

the faithful and true, most merciful Great Tsar of the Great Russian Empire”. This is how IMU celebrated its 50 year anniversary: “A Divine Liturgy was held in the university church and then a litany of thanks was made for the health and well-being of the Protector of Science Emperor Alexander and his Most August House, and for the continued protection of the saints of our good Motherland, its ancient capital and the university within it ... In the afternoon, at 5 o’clock, after the choir sang, the anniversary ceremony began and Rector K.A. Chebotarev gave a magnificent speech with representatives from all the faculties. From the Faculty of Medicine, I.F. Vensovich gave a speech entitled “On Medical Anthropology”, in the Russian language” [8, p. 358, 359].

In addition to fashioning ideological supporters of the monarchy and of Alexander I personally, the university also actively sought to instill a love for the Motherland in the students. At the 50th anniversary celebrations, Rector K.A. Chebotarev stressed the university’s pride in their graduates, some of whom had gone on to become high-level ministers, church leaders, leading politicians, and skilled doctors, remarking that the defining features of the character and conduct of its students was “honesty, integrity, fidelity, and love of their country – the fruits of true enlightenment” [8, p. 360].

The influence of the professors of the university did not stop at their students. Spreading education and respect for science throughout the broadest circles of Russian society became a time-honored tradition at IMU. I.A. Goncharov recalled, “Our university in Moscow was a holy place not only for us, who studied there, but for our families and society in general... Moscow was very proud of its university” [11, p. 144].

Public lectures attracted the attention of citizens and became a major phenomenon in the social and cultural life of Moscow, characterizing the university as a center of cultural and academic life in the second capital. They were attended by representatives of the most varied segments of the population. These lectures were highly valued at that time, not excepting medical professors. N.M. Karamzin enthusiastically wrote: “Mr. Politkovsky... is trying to arouse in his listeners of love for the great science of nature...” [8, p. 334].

In the prewar years, due to an increase of patriotic feelings, interest in the Russian language

was on the rise. Minister of National Education, Count A.K. Razumovsky, “driven by feelings of patriotism”, established the Department of Slavic and Russian Philology at the university, because, “due to neglect... strange absurdities from foreign languages are creeping into the native Slavic language, subjecting our language to constant change and leading to its possible downfall” [8, p. 406]. At the end of 1811, in *Vestnik Evropy* it was noted that “under the direction of the trustees, Moscow University is daily moving towards the goals set for it by the government and is clearly taking on the form of a Russian University” [8, p. 411].

Significant effort was made to educate students about “the fear of God and His law”. The claim of Alexander I that “true enlightenment is founded on the Gospels” was constantly repeated within the walls of the university. The Charter of 1804 introduced a requirement that all faculty teach “dogmatic and moral” theology. Although a specific department for “theology and Christian doctrine” did not exist before 1819, this did not mean that the university neglected the religious education of its students. In fact, for a whole academic year (45–46 weeks), first year students of each faculty attended theology lectures. All of the most important events at the university (the opening and closing of the school year, anniversaries, the opening of a new auditorium, museum, or laboratory, etc.) began with a church service and sermon. The following is a description of the ceremonial opening of some clinical institutes at the end of the summer of 1805: “For the consecration of the hospital, Archpriest F.A. Malinovsky said a word about how helpful to our neighbors and how pleasing to God such philanthropic institutions are; Dean Politovsky gave a speech about the utility and necessity of such facilities for the utmost success of our students of medical science” [8, p. 375]. At the beginning of 1806, the Midwife Institute was opened, and at the ceremony, “with a prayer and sprinkling of holy water, Professor Richter gave a speech on the benefits and advantages of the art of midwifery” [8, p. 375].

Peace in Russia was broken by Napoleon’s invasion in the Patriotic War of 1812. The Patriotic War of 1812 saw an upsurge in patriotic fervor among students and teachers of the university. “When the rallying call to battle for tsar and Motherland was heard”, writes S.P. Shevyrev,

“the university became nearly empty” [8, p. 413]. In the words of M.Y. Mydrov, the professors and students of the Faculty of Medicine, “covered themselves in glory and valiance”. “Our... faculty is completely closed due to lack of professors and students... some have gone to the battlefield, others to care for wounded on the Borodino battlefield...” [12, p. 169-170]. In the ranks of the Faculty of Medicine who heeded the call of duty were included professors I.Y. Gruzinov and P.G. Renner. “Prosecutor of anatomy, Doctor Rybchikov, Doctors Rizenko Jr., Butter, Gennika; Physicians Panteev, Zamyatin, Naumov, Grechishev, Dobrov, Vorontsov, Vinogradsky, Tseidler, Krylov, Petrishev... left their university, were dispersed into various regiments and hospitals, and brought honor upon their *alma mater*” [12, p. 170]. Talented students like A.A. Alfonsky, future dean and rector of IMU, and I.V. Georgievsky, who later became prosecutor of anatomy, began to work in military field hospitals in Kasimov and Vladimir-on-Klyazma [13, p. 62]. Professor of surgery F.A. Gildebrandt, on the day that French troops entered Moscow, left for Vladimir with a wagon train full of wounded soldiers who were in his care” [14, p. 201].

One of the first to answer the High Command’s call to enlist was the young professor of anatomy, physiology, and forensic medicine I.Y. Gruzinov. He joined IMU in 1797 and passed his exam to become a Doctor of Medicine in Sait- Petersburg in 1804. The talented youth was sent abroad at public expense in order “to improve”. Upon returning, he began working at the Anatomy Department of the university. In a short period he had filled the anatomy theater with a number of specimens and gave an interesting talk at a meeting of the Physico-Medical Society called “On Inflammation of the Brain, Treated with Ice” (1811). His reading of “Discourse on the Newly-Discovered Place of Origin of the Human Voice” on the 2nd of July, 1812, at the university became quite an event in the academic world. The war, however, interrupted his scientific research. Gruzinov volunteered to go to the front with the Moscow militia and received his baptism by fire on the fields of Borodino. At the Battle of Borodino he was able to demonstrate his skills several times (by operating on the wounded and treating the sick). He worked in the infirmary and on the battlefield, often operating directly

in the battlefield [14, p. 273-275]. Gruzinov took part in all of the battles with the militia, but died of typhus, at age 33, after Napoleon had been expelled from Russia. M.Y. Mudrov said that “the memory of his virtue would remain forever in the annals of the Faculty” [12, p. 170]. Alumni of IMU and the military doctors who took part in the Patriotic War of 1812 deservedly won the recognition of their compatriots. The actions of the doctors on the battlefield were highly praised both by the commanders of the Russian army and foreigners. After the war, the sacrifices of the medical personnel were emphasized in a declaration published by Alexander I.

The examples of patriotism of teachers, physicians, and students of the medical faculty of IMU were not just on the battlefield. Professors of the university transferred significant sums of money to the front. In fact, they raised more than eight thousand rubles for the Nizhny Novgorod militia [10, p. 111]. In Nizhny Novgorod, the city where IMU was evacuated to, M.Y. Mudrov, along with his student A.Y. Evenius, worked at the local hospital. In the evenings, the professors and some students met at his house. Mudrov also took care of the education of two orphans, the daughters of his deceased professor F.I. Barsuk-Moiseev, and supported a son and daughter of his former classmate, Professor I.F. Vensovich.

Significant effort was exerted by the alumni of the IMU Faculty of Medicine in the fight against epidemics, which spread quickly after the expulsion of the French. For example, I.V. Georgievsky was sent to Smolensky Governorate, having worked as an anatomist. For his service in treating the ill during the epidemics, he was awarded a yearly pension [13, p. 117]. At the initiative of the administrators of the Moscow region, professors of the Faculty of Medicine developed and circulated information on practical ways to prevent the outbreak of epidemics.

During the War of 1812, the university experienced a great loss. The main building of the university completely burned down. Only the clinical institutes building survived, but it was severely damaged and looted. S.P. Shevirev wrote, “The main university building was a burnt ruin in the great Moscow conflagration. Under the heaps of ash were buried all of the scientific possessions of the university” [8, p. 420]. The extensive museum of natural history,

the great library, and the university archive were destroyed. Describing the colossal loss suffered by the Faculty of Medicine, M.Y. Mudrov wrote in October 1813, “The anatomy building, and all of the anatomy and pathology specimens along with it, was burned down”. The surviving “hospital equipment, clinical books, and surgery and midwife equipment in the clinical institutes which was miraculously saved from the flames ... was for the most part ransacked and shattered” [12, p. 40]. The enormous losses that IMU experienced left a lasting impression on contemporaries. “When I think about the university”, wrote one of them, “my head spins and I cannot imagine when it will be restored... what will our professors do without books? In a word, the fate of the university is very much to be pitied and God only knows what will come of it” [16, p. 112]. Due to the condition of the university, Commander-in-Chief of Moscow, Count F.V. Rostopchin advised the tsar to close it (“so that there would be no university in Moscow”). There were other reasons for such a recommendation: “the existence of a university in the capital could be harmful... the university and its administration are full of the Jacobin spirit and Illuminati Freemasons” [16, p. 114]. However, the university was firmly entrenched in Moscow society, occupying a prominent place in the scientific, cultural, and social life of the city, and these facts could not be ignored. Russian society, above all the students and professors, emphatically demanded that the university be restored. Likely under pressure from public opinion, P.I. Golenishev-Kutuzov, a trustee of the Moscow academic district wrote on the 9th of December of 1812 to the Minister of National Education A.K. Razumovsky, “There is no doubt that the most beneficial outcome for the university and for society would be the existence of its institutions in Moscow...” [16, p. 114].

In December 1812, a committee was established to manage the affairs of the Moscow academic district. V.M. Richter was the first representative on this committee from the Faculty of Medicine, followed by M.Y. Mudrov, who made a great effort to ensure the reconstruction of the university.

In October 1813, M.Y. Mudrov, “at his own expense”, opened the Faculty of Medicine. In his speech at the opening ceremony he said, “Today we are reopening the Faculty of Medicine... The

rapacious hands of our enemies destroyed it... But rejoice with us that the treatment institutes, where I watched you day and night serving the ill, the poor, tradespeople and soldiers, where you daily treated the maimed and wounded under the command of the excellent Hildebrandt, and learned to carry out great operations, where you rendered aid to new mothers and their newborn children – these noble institutions have been spared from the ravenous flames” [12, p. 171].

It is no coincidence that the first “words” uttered by the dean upon the renovation of the faculty was in praise of the moral quality of Russian doctors. M.Y. Mudrov stressed, “I am certain that you marvel with me at the shining example of the students who preceded you... And to make you worthy of this important calling... I will speak to you about the moral qualities of the doctor and in particular about his devotion” [12, p. 171-172]. Even in our time, Mudrov’s words have not lost their relevance, especially his remarks that, “the intelligent and noble doctor will never disparage another out of envy” and “the doctor who truly knows his profession can soothe a patient’s emotional illnesses as well” [12, p. 188]. It is both important and insightful that, for Mudrov, these were not simple words – in his own medical practice he always adhered to these principles and was deservedly considered to be the best clinician-therapist of the first quarter of the 19th century. It is not without reason that L.N. Tolstoy, when describing the events of this period, mentions him in his epic novel *War and Peace*.

Mudrov valued books very high. He believed that a doctor should not and could not exist without books, writing, “...A well-educated doctor animates himself by means of continuous reading” [12, p. 190]. That is said that in his practice Mudrov tried to instill in his students a love of reading. In fact, he and Professor K.A. Chebotarev donated their libraries to the university after the fire left it without any books.

The restoration of the university and the medical Faculty of Medicine was accomplished under difficult circumstances. Government funds for the project were insufficient. Documents testify that even in 1817, almost five years after the fire, Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Education A.N. Golitsyn “found that the anatomical theater and its office were in very poor condition and did not suit the space and

importance of the university or the number of students studying medicine” [17, p. 86].

A large swath of the Russian society participated in the restoration of the university and the medical Faculty of Medicine. A number of institutions, organizations, and private individuals responded to the appeals for charity that were sent out, especially to alumni. Books, maps, and specimens were donated by the Academy of Sciences, the Medical-Surgical Academy, and other institutions. The Moscow merchant Grachev and Senator Politkovsky donated 3,947 and 202 medical books to the department. In 1817, by the decree of Alexander I, the university library received a number of “beautiful anatomical illustrations made in Vienna, along with wax specimens” and more than a thousand books from the emperor’s library. A few years later, Alexander I “kindly purchased” the anatomical study of Professor Loder for 100 thousand rubles and “bequeathed it to his university”.

From 1820 to 1821, the university council established two libraries, including one for medical students. A number of council members, including Y.O. Mukhin, “were the first to participate in the founding of these libraries with their own funds. Other professors followed their example and continued to furnish the libraries with books” [8, p. 439].

Mukhin, who was head of the Department of Anatomy, Physiology, and Forensic Medicine since 1813, made an enormous contribution to the restoration of the IMU Faculty of Medicine. Several times elected as dean of the Faculty of Medicine during the difficult post-war years, he paid close attention to improving pedagogy and had a substantial moral influence on graduates of the Faculty. He worked to raise a strong work ethic, interest in science, and patriotism – the very qualities that he possessed in full [15, p. 145]. Mukhin’s motto was “Service, honor, and glory to the Motherland will always be our primary subjects” [18].

Mukhin advocated for domestic staff and the “education” of domestic scientists. In 1812 he gave up his professor’s salary in support of four physicians – I.Y. Dyadkovsky, A.L. Lovetsky, I.M. Boldyrev, and I.M. Vishnyakov – who had graduated from the Moscow Medical-Surgical Academy with honors, in order to help them to

prepare for their doctoral exams. The famous Russian surgeon N.I. Pirogov joined the medical faculty due to Mukhin's advice and assistance, and his future world-view was directly influenced by that of Mukhin.

The well-known Russian historian M.P. Pogodin called Mukhin "a zealot of Russian origin". Mukhin fought incessantly for simplicity and accessibility in teaching (for example, he believed that lectures should be read in the Russian language). His efforts resulted in several medical books being translated into Russian and printed for students of the Faculty of Medicine.

In 1819 the Medical Institute was opened at IMU. M.Y. Mudrov and Y.O. Mukhin played an active role in the creation of a program for physicians and building a clinic for them [19, p. 166-167]. Mudrov's plan was considered the best and, accordingly, the reorganization of the clinical institute was primarily done according to his specifications. According to a decision by the Ministry of National Education on April 19, 1819, "concerning the Moscow University Medical Institute", a sum of "245,543 rubles and 60 kopecks" was allocated for the reconstruction and "furnishing... of a three-story building to house the clinical institute" and for the addition of a "third part" [7, p. 121]. Construction work on the three renovated and expanded clinical institutes continued until the fall of 1820. On the 25th of September, 1820, Mudrov gave a speech at the opening ceremony, called "On the method of teaching and learning practical medicine, or the active physician's art at the patient's bedside" containing not only professional instruction but moral advice, such as the necessary "virtues and qualities" of every doctor [12, p. 201-255]. Mudrov spoke about the external appearance of a doctor (cleanliness, neatness of dress, respectability in manner, body movements, glances, etc.) as well as the necessary "spiritual qualities" of a doctor, the most important of which he considered to be love for one's fellow man, from which flow the other necessary qualities of doctors: "love of service, readiness to help at any moment, day or night, and beneficence" [12, p. 204]. Mudrov's speech contains sound advice for both doctors and students.

Although lessons on professional skill and practice could be found in all of Mudrov's works, they are not the only important lessons.

His work is a striking example of a relationship of mutual respect that he had with his teachers: "In gratitude for their kind advice and wise instruction, I offer the deceased doctors Frez, Zybelyn, Kerestyria, Skiadan, Politkovsky, and Minderer this incense. They lived for service of the ill and the edification of physicians" [12, p. 252-253]. Here is an example of the love and respect of his alma mater: "Look at the medical institute, your home; look at the magnificent anatomical theater and vast library, the inspiring lectures of an anatomist who is the pride of Europe, look at this teaching hospital, equipped with all the necessary supplies... I assure you as an eyewitness that our medical facilities do not lag behind any of the best institutions of Europe in terms of sophistication" [12, p. 254-255]. He also spoke on the fervent desires of his students to "experience the stature and value of the famous men who grace Moscow University" and "to accomplish feats of virtue, with rigorous training and the constant desire to perfect yourselves for the rest of your lives" [12, p. 254, 255].

Thus, due to the tireless efforts of the IMU professors in the face of great difficulties, the Faculty of Medicine was completely restored and its teachers were able to continue their work of training future doctors in terms of both medical skill and moral character.

IMU was not only the "center of Russian education", but the center of scientific and social thought. It provided truly "universal" education and scholarship. University graduates, who each year were dispersed to every corner of Russia, carried with them the "university's idea" and continued their educational work. Wherever they ended up and whatever views they espoused, it can safely be said that IMU alumni, including those from the medical faculty, were well-educated and thoughtful people. For most graduates, N.I. Pirogov's insight that a university education provides outstanding guidance for the rest of one's life probably rang true.

In our time, the moral education of students still holds significant relevance, and we can learn much from the rich traditions of the IMU Faculty of Medicine about "fashioning virtuous men", fostering a "culture of the heart" and "morality, and giving citizens with a spirit of patriotism, devotion, and love of country who "facilitate the welfare of society".

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