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PRESS RELEASE

“They Speak, We Listen, We Redesign, We Evolve” – The Message of the Rector of Aristotle University Press Conference Results

Thessaloniki, 27 January 2026

A press conference was held today, Tuesday, 27 January 2026, at KEDEA of Aristotle University. During the event, the results of the AU S-Bar were presented. AU S-Bar is a modern system for the continuous recording and analysis of the views of the student community of Aristotle University.

In his address, **the Rector of Aristotle University, Professor Kyriakos Anastasiadis**, stated: *“At our meeting almost a month ago, just before Christmas, I concluded the presentation of our first pilot survey with the phrase ‘They Speak, We Listen, We Redesign, We Evolve.’*

At that time, we were listening to first-year students of Aristotle University. Today, we are listening to the entire University. With a sample of more than 2,500 students, we now have a clear picture and a solid baseline for measuring the impact of our interventions as we transform the largest academic institution in Greece and Southeast Europe.

I would like to remind you that AU S-Bar, the Student Barometer of Aristotle University, will be conducted twice a year, allowing us to continuously capture the pulse of our community—the largest student community in the country.”

I would like to summarize the findings of the survey in a series of key conclusions.

First and foremost, the importance of student survey research as a strategic tool. In the coming days, I will propose this initiative to the Conference of Rectors, with the

hope that it will be adopted by other Public Universities and that the Ministry will recognize the significant value of these data for shaping policy in Higher Education and Research. Please note that today we have presented the overarching findings of the survey. As you observed, we have at our disposal a much broader set of statistical data for further analysis and for drawing useful conclusions, which will be utilized by the Schools and Departments.

First conclusion: Regarding perceptions of Aristotle University's academic value, the survey shows that both Greek and international students recognize the University's academic quality and prestige. However, this trust is no longer passive; it comes with increased demands for organization, clarity, and effectiveness. In short, the University is not being questioned—it is being called upon to evolve.

Second conclusion: The digital experience represents the most critical pressure point. Both Greek and international students identify the digital environment and administrative processes as areas with the greatest potential for improvement. Digitalization is not perceived as innovation, but as a fundamental prerequisite of a modern University. Particular attention should be paid to the data showing a clear preference for electronic textbooks, as well as the strong demand for improved soft skills. These skills now include the ability to operate confidently in an increasingly digital world, where the effective use of artificial intelligence dominates every academic field and professional or scientific activity.

Third conclusion: Employability dominates the horizon of our students. Studies are increasingly defined through skills acquisition, career prospects, and strong links to the labor market. Students do not reject theory; rather, they seek visible bridges to practice. Seven out of ten express interest in mentoring by professionals, while they also highlight entrepreneurship and innovation. At the same time, they express concern about whether their University adequately prepares them for the global labor market.

Fourth conclusion: Overall student sentiment is positive. Pride, a sense of belonging, and willingness to recommend the University to others prevail. However, trust remains conditional and depends on the visibility of change. Infrastructure plays a decisive role. The condition of facilities, cleanliness, accessibility, and safety influence not only functionality but also the symbolic perception of the value of studies.

Students assess whether the University truly values them through their experience in classrooms, across campus spaces, and through the speed and ease of service provided by administrative offices. International students act as a "magnifying lens": they evaluate the academic experience very positively but are particularly sensitive to clarity of information, consistency of procedures, and response time. For them, the administrative experience is directly linked to the institution's reputation.

Fifth conclusion: Internationalization is desirable, but not yet fully experiential. The international dimension of the University is highly valued; however, for many Greek students it remains more of a strategic narrative than a lived daily reality. Demand for

greater opportunities for international exposure and mobility is strong. Currently, the approximately 300 international medical students constitute a small community among the tens of thousands of Greek students. However, this is changing. At this moment, nine new international, English-taught undergraduate programs are being prepared for accreditation and the launch of their international campaigns, aiming to enroll students in September 2026, while an additional seven programs are planned for 2027. At the same time, the Aristotle University Gateway—the University's new international website—will go live in February, marking the start of targeted digital marketing that will place Aristotle University on the global academic map.

Allow me to conclude with a deeply held belief of mine, one that is fortunately becoming increasingly understood and accepted. Our problem is not brain drain, and the solution is not simply brain gain. What we must pursue is brain circulation. We want young Greeks to study here, gain experience abroad, and return to apply their knowledge and transmit their values. We want international students to do the same, carrying with them the reputation of Greek education and culture. We want the circulation of minds, knowledge, and experience. We want openness to the world. And we will achieve it!"

The press conference was attended by the Vice Rectors for Academic Affairs and Development, Professor Nikolaos Maggiopoulos, and for International Relations, Outreach, Lifelong Learning, and Student Welfare, Professor Iakovos Michailidis, as well as the Research Director of Palmos Analysis, Paschalis Temekenidis, and the Creative Director and Head of Strategy of Colibri Branding & Design, Christos Chelmis.

The presentation of the AU S-Bar results is attached.

Photographs from the press conference are also attached.

We kindly request that this event be published, broadcast, and covered by the media.