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HIVATALOS HALLGATÓI FOLYÓIRATA

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K R E | Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem

Interviews with Our Freshly Graduated International Students

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I WAS EXPECTING
TO BE HAPPY HERE,
AND I WAS

It is our pleasure to share the news that 19 international students graduated from Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary in 2022. It gives us great pride and joy each year to host international students, but our pride is even more escalated when they graduate from our university. The graduation ceremony of the Fac-

ulty of Humanities and Social Sciences was held at the Károlyi-Csekonics Palace. 10 international students graduated accompanied by former alumni, academic and administrative staff, family, and friends. The congratulatory speeches were delivered by vice-rector Prof. Dr. Peter Bálint Furkó, dean Dr. habil. Géza Horváth, institute heads

Dr. Miklós Péti (Institute of English Studies), Dr. Paszkál Kiss (Institute of Psychology), EMLex coordinator Dr. Zita Dötschné Hollós and international director Dr. Gábor Szalai. The event was moderated by Dr. Judit Nagy, Vice-Dean for International Affairs at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Faculty of Law held their graduation



ceremony on 2 July, in the Reformed Church on Pozsonyi Street. At the event, international and Hungarian students received their diplomas collectively. Dr. Miklósné Dr. Andrea Zakar, Head of the Institute of Social Sciences and International Studies gave her farewell speech to the students.

International students face many challenges in their different sets of new environments. Our university tries its best to guide international students through their studies at Károli, which can be equally challenging at times. For example, the integration of international students into our university community was made more difficult by the COVID-19 pandemic. During these times, our staff acted promptly and remained helpful.

Even in the face of these hardships, the 19 students have graduated successfully from our university, majoring in LL.M. in European and International Business Law, MA in German Language Literature and Culture, EM-Lex - European Master in Lexicography, MA in English Studies, and BA in Psychology. After the ceremony, we had the chance to interview some of the students. The interview was built around three topics: experiences at Károli, life in Hungary and plans for the future.

Feidias Michail – Greece

Feidias Michail has graduated from our EM-Lex - European Master in Lexicography program. When asked about his experience at Károli Gáspár University he said:

„Basically, I only had positive experiences [at Károli]. The university is well-organized, and the staff was helpful. For example, we were informed about all the deadlines well in advance. The university offers a wide variety of elective lessons, as well.”

More generally about his stay in Hungary:

„I learned a lot about Hungary during my stay. Since we are close geographically, I did not experience a cultural shock. Of course, there are differences, but not that much. I managed to participate in many events and join small communities like a hiking group, recycling, and energy preservation.” [...] Quote summing up his experience: „I was expecting to be happy here, and I was”

El Aouad Imane – Morocco

El Aouad Imane has graduated from our bachelor's program in Psychology. She shared the following about her experience at Károli Gáspár University:

„Academic-wise, my time at Károli was fruitful. We learned a lot of things. Sadly, with the pandemic, it was

really hard for me to keep up with my studies, especially after I moved from the dorm to a flat. Definitely being at the dorm kind of helped, because I have my colleagues with me, so it was easier to manage, but when I was on my own it was much harder. But, generally speaking, it was a really good experience for me, I learned a lot about myself, in ways that probably only majoring in Psychology could not have helped”

More generally about her life in Hungary:

„It was bittersweet. There were ups and downs. I made friendships, which will last for a lifetime. However, sadly I am leaving the country so that's also something bittersweet I am going through right now. It was hard adapting to a new culture. The language has created a barrier for me at first, but now I can manage it more or less easier. Generally, Budapest is a really nice place for youngsters to start their life abroad, because it has a very interesting international scene. So many Hungarians are friendly...”

Quote summing up her experience: *„You can get out of Budapest, but Budapest can never get out of you.”*

Fernandes Soares Daniele – Brazil

Fernandes Soares Daniele has graduated from our EM-Lex - European Master in

Lexicography program. She is our first Brazilian graduate. She described her student life at Károli as follows: „It was a bit particular because of the pandemic. Before, I was not even sure if I could travel, because the situation in Brazil was not good. But in Hungary, the situation was more controlled. I enjoyed [my time at Károli] a lot, we had small groups, we did a lot of things together and we are the first EMLex team. We had a lot of support because everything was new, but everything worked very well.”

About her life outside of university:

„I made a lot of friends, but most of them are Brazil-

ians. The Brazilian community here is huge. They have supported me a lot. For example, I don't speak Hungarian and sometimes I had problems with how I do things, but they helped me out. [...]Brazilian culture is more open, but Hungarian culture is more closed, of course, the language barrier is an issue, but the people in Brazil are very friendly, and more communicative. Hungarians are more reserved.”

Khamissara Tith – Thailand

Khamissara Tith has also graduated from our EMLex - European Master in Lexicography program. He told us about his academic experiences at Károli:

„Due to the lockdown, it is hard to tell, but as far as I have experienced it is all pretty good. The university is quite in the middle of the city and that's what I like about it. It was strange for me because in Thailand we have university campuses and that's what I imagined to be like.”

About his student life experiences:

„I participated in the Buddy program, and I got matched with a Hungarian guy and we got along really well. We still hang out to these days. I would say it is going to be a lifelong friendship.”

Quote summing up his experience: „Klein, aber fein.” [‘Small, but nice.’]

