

Professor Veselin Vukotic, rector of UDG

The University Day

Rector's speech at solemn Graduation ceremony, 11.11.2018. at 11 o'clock

Dear students,

Dear parents and families,

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to UDG!

Welcome to solemn graduation ceremony, held every 11.11. at 11 o'clock, during which we award diplomas to all students who got their Bachelor, Master or PhD degrees in previous academic year.

Traditionally, 11.11. is a very important day in lives of our students, of every one of you, but also your families and friends. It is very important for us as University, too.

Therefore, I ask you kindly to salute all of our students who graduated with a big round of applause and to wish them luck in new life beginnings. May this diploma be lucky for your future!

UDG is a University dedicated to student as an individual... Dedicated to his life success! This dedication comes from our principle that the quality of studies, as well as the success of each professor at UDG is measured by professional and private success of our student. Our success indicator is long-term perspective of our student's success: where he/she will be in 10 years from now, which kind of jobs will they do and on which level. Respectively, we are measuring it by his/her professional success and social status in his year of 35.

We are one young University! Still, it's been 10 years since the first generation of students who enrolled Faculty for international economics, finance and business and Faculty of Law of UDG



graduated. We are very happy to share with you that 70% of them have achieved success which is above the average success of their peers. Let me immodestly and proudly say that we are educating the future elite of Montenegro (both, professional and social)! And not just Montenegrin elite...

UDG is becoming a prestige brand in University education, not just in Montenegro! Our model of studies is not a classical, “knowledge-oriented” model... Model for making book-warms... In contrary, model $S=z \cdot i^{2^1}$ is a completely different study model developed to meet the needs of young generations, which are completely different from generations who are ten years older... Not to mention how different they are from 20-30 years older generations! This model of studies is preparing students for life, it is making them capable to meet the challenges and fight the life problems. We are striving to prepare students not to pass the examination of professors at UDG, but moreover to prepare them for the hardest exam – exam of Professor LIFE, the strictest one!

Young generation recognizes the UDG brand. That is the reason why 20% of overall generation of Montenegrin high-school graduates who decided for tertiary education enrolled UDG. Our competitors are: state University, where there are no admission fees and it is open to thousands of students, as well as 2 other private Universities in Montenegro. Besides the national one, our international competition is fierce – there is a big number of students who decide to continue their studies in the region (especially Novi Sad and Belgrade), but also at European and American Universities, too. Decision to enroll UDG and pay for the scholarship and not to enroll free studies at state University is the indicator of high quality of UDG studies... We are happy that we have students coming from abroad who decide to enroll UDG.

UDG is continuously working on improving conditions of studying – conditions for increasing the quality of studies, modernization of university education. I would like all of you to take a tour of the building. Everything is open, and you will get the sense of the conditions in which your children were educated... All that you can and will see has been done in 10 years. Besides that, we have modern 3D laboratory, IT laboratory, the most modern laboratory for testing the food quality and security, creative centre for graphic and fashion design, laboratory for electro technical engineering, the most modern equipment for students of Geodesy, laboratory for testing materials and a lot more. We will open soon the “Entrepreneurial Nest”, one new project which should encourage creativity and entrepreneurship of our students and which will improve our study model in a long-term.

¹ “Professor’s Equation”, where S stands for “capability”; z stands for “knowledge” and i stands for “intensity of life”.

The lectures are increasingly organized in small groups and we are striving to continuously increase the level of attention to research and communication capabilities of our students. We are putting more efforts in encouraging students to study foreign languages. English language is the official language at UDG. From this year, every graduated student will possess knowledge of at least two foreign languages, which I find as a big success of theirs. To be honest, two languages are not enough. The world is global, communications are diverse, and 2 languages are insufficient to communicate in the global world of nowadays. That is why I am telling them that young generations should speak 4-6 languages. They have all conditions to achieve that. We are striving to this goal!

Still, the quality of studies is dominantly determined by work, dedication and quality of academic staff.

Quality of work and the way they perceive the studies, communication culture and manners of each and every student is determined by the work and dedication of professor, TA, both, academic and administrative staff at University in 80%. Because of that, the key criteria of promotion of all of our academic staff are their results in the work with students. Indeed, we have a lot of strong professor names who give lectures at different levels of UDG studies – not just from the region, but also from EU, USA, and increasingly from China and Asia. With these famous professors, a perspective group of young generation of teaching assistants – future professors is being raised. Their obligation is to bring this University to a bigger level. UDG is unmatched to any other University (not just from the region) when it comes to dedication of professors and teaching assistants to every student individually.

UDG is the only University, regionally and wider, which organizes the gathering of all academic staff from its 17 study programs at which we discuss mission and model of studies of UDG. These gatherings last for two days and they are organized in Cetinje – so called “Cetinje discussions” which gather around 250-300 professors and teaching assistants. That is how we are fostering and increasing the spiritual and practical unity of our University... In this “friction of ideas” coming from different people, we are working on finding new development tracks of our development! That is one of the additional proofs that UDG is not classic University, but, as we like to say “OUR University” – meaning that it belongs to all our professors and teaching assistants, all our students who relate the vision of their personal and professional development to the mission of our University.

We are very much aware that without internationalization, UDG cannot achieve the level we are striving for – the level which is determined by nowadays fast changes and globalization! Today, if you do not have a strong international network – you don’t exist, neither personally, neither as a company, but especially neither as University.

UDG has cooperation with a big number of both, Universities and companies outside Montenegro. What makes us extremely proud, but also responsible is that everyone wants to cooperate with us! Cooperation with European and American Universities is well-established, and we have significant number of students who enrolled or continued their studies there.

In the last 2 years, we have established a good cooperation with Universities from China. Around 40 of our students went there for a study stay for a period of few months or a whole year. Some of our professors and teaching assistants also visited China. Respectively, around 40 Chinese students came for exchange at UDG, as well as professors from China. 150 UDG students are studying Chinese language at different levels! Besides Chinese Universities, 10 UDG students had internships in Chinese companies and banks and all of them came with great and very positive experiences from one different culture. Our University is very active in realization of the idea “The Belt & Road Initiative“. Just yesterday, we had high delegation visit-representatives of Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee, National People’s Congress of PR China. They wanted to hear our experience in studies and to encourage us to cooperate more intensively... We are from any ideology and we are trying to deliberate from all prejudices. UDG is more oriented to future than to the past... And China and Pacific in general are for sure the present and the future of the global development.

I don’t want to discuss more about our activities. Let me just highlight three important matters.

First, that UDG is investing a lot in research capabilities of its students and staff, resulting in a big number of projects. We became a leader of one research consortium comprised of 12 European Universities. Also, we are part of a consortium which got a “Horizon 20-20” project... It is a success equal to the success of a soccer team which qualifies for the Champions league!

Second, we had an international accreditation commission from Brussels, which stayed at UDG for 5-6 days. It was the second time they came to visit us... If I told you how they evaluated us – it would look like we were bragging! That is why I will not talk about it. The most important thing is that we are perceived as a new, original and creative University.

Third, we are organizing a big number of international conferences at UDG, especially with Universities from Turkey and Universities from Baltic countries. We have intensive cooperation with Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts (MASA) and we organized several joint round tables and scientific conferences. For now, we have two scientific journals: “Entrepreneurial Economy” and Humanistic studies’ journal. We are planning to organize several international conferences in the year that follows. One of them which will be highly important and promoted throughout the world will be dedicated to education of children up to the age of 6, which we are going to organize with UNICEF.

Dear colleagues,

Considering the mission that UDG has, project of UDG is one of the most important, not to say the most important project which is being developed in Montenegro today!... Of course, railway is more expensive one! It is important for the economic development... But, human capital – people play the key role in development of one country!... That is where our mission comes from. We founded the University with that goal! This is the mission on which my colleague – Professor Dragan Vukcevic and myself, together with a team of 300 professors and teaching assistants are working on passionately! Creating people with different way of thinking, different value system, different perceptions... That is UDG... We are living in a world of big challenges. In a world of dramatic changes! We are living in a world of big and fast technological changes, but also in a world of political instability... We are living in a global world, in interconnected world!... There are no boundaries anymore! National state has become anachronous institution in the development of Homo-sapiens... The world is in civilization crisis! One civilization is dying quietly – the other has not emerged clearly yet. And the question which rises is how to prepare students for this “civilization interregnum”? How to prepare them for that civilization inter-time? How to awake them from a dream of inertia of past and prepare them to live in a different world which is rapidly growing... How to make them aware that this world has already come and that it will gulp everyone who is not aware of that.

This is only possible if we make them develop the view from the future on us today, to think of the tasks future is giving us (the year of 2030, 2050) – meaning: what should we do to be active on the scene in 2030, 2050? We need to prepare our students for swimming in restless oceans of megatrends of global development. It is not enough to be University institutionally to have this vision! **No! We must understand the time as a process...** The time which we are living in... We must work a lot, understand a lot of phenomena in nowadays world, we must invest in knowledge, and create and invest a lot to develop an important habit for development, **the habit of talking with the future**. Talking with the future makes you awake; it fosters you to keep looking and finding the ways which are leading you to inscrutable future! If we don't colour “NOW” with future, we will disappear immediately in a world of big changes... That is why we are striving to prepare our student to become a responsible global citizen and to be responsible parent to their descendants... Since the very first year of studies, we are developing responsibility to our students. We are telling them that they are not only responsible to their parents, not just to themselves, but primarily to their future children! We ask them what will be with their descendants, not what will happen to them, if they “fallout from the time train”?...

Trust me, this question concerns the most of them, not to tell it concerns every student. The old, patriarch model (father left the fortune to his son) as well as logic “I will somehow manage it” is one of the riskiest life strategies. Do not forget ever that managing the personal and

professional career is more difficult than running a corporation or any other institution. This is because globalization, which is inevitable, is integrating the world horizontally, it is cutting the limits, fastening the exchange of human and all other capitals, goods and ideas. On the other side, vertically, it creates huge social difference among the population. Sometimes even the biological difference among people, too. These differences are that deep, that some scientists even estimate that by 2100 new species of Homo-sapiens could arise- the species which would exploit others who did not adapt to changes and those who did not develop properly in time. Yes, I know – there are some of you who do not take this seriously... It looks impossible, far away from us, irrelative! But don't you forget that us people, we are (especially in Montenegro) overwhelmed with short-term decisions, and that unfortunately our mind is robbed within the time limits of political elections. Let us not forget that during the history, 34 civilizations had gone with the dust, and some of them were more advanced than ours! Many researchers in the field of future, physicist and other scientist, are telling that nowadays young generations of our students have the biggest, historical responsibility for the future of Homo-sapiens, for the destiny of human race! I completely agree with them! That is why we have to awaken young people so that they can find their development path on civilization crossroads and that they can contribute to development of civilization!

Dear colleagues, our dear students,

Today, you will be awarded a diploma. On behalf of UDG and myself personally, I want to congratulate you and I wish you lot of success and happiness in your future life. Besides congratulations, I want to give you two advices:

First, you must understand that diploma you are awarded today is just a proof that you are capable to continue to self-educate and that you have the desire to work on improvement of your knowledge and capabilities on daily basis and for the rest of your lives. I sincerely hope that we awakened you and that you understand that you have to work all your life and that you should invest in yourself, your knowledge and capabilities. Never forget that we are living in a world full of wonders, or as Alice from Wonderland would say: "This is a Land full of wonders... You have to run faster and faster in order to stay at the same place!".

Second, don't invest in your knowledge and capabilities, but in your humanity and kindness of your heart, too! In your goodness and graciousness! In you becoming a Man, as R. Kipling would say! One of the characteristics of good and successful people is gratefulness and showing gratitude to those who helped you and encouraged you to become what you are now. Never forget the ones who helped you – neither individuals, neither institutions. I hope that, or to be



more precise – I am sure that UDG helped you a lot in achieving life success and happiness. UDG's success is measured by the success of its students, do not ever forget that!

On the other side, our success is your success too, whatever you did or will do in your life. UDG is an important part of your personal brand. So, never forget UDG and its students!

That is a human obligation you have, and I do not doubt that you will fulfil it!

Once again, I wish you good luck!

Cheers!