



Prof.dr Veselin Vukotić, Rector of UDG
11th November, 2019

**UDG University Day
- Rector`s Welcome Address -**

Dear students,
Dear parents,
Dear excellencies and
colleagues,

Welcome to UDG, the graduation ceremony for our students. 11th November at 11 o'clock is our University Day, a day designated with six units, which symbolically reveals our desire to be the first and then the best! ... And indeed, we keep striving for that!

Every day we strive to be far better than yesterday, and tomorrow to be better than we are today ... Which means that we work, create, innovate every day ...

But, it is a life philosophy that we strive to instill in the mindset of each of our students ... You should believe us, we are becoming more and more successful in that ... The success and reputation of our graduates gives me the right to say so. UDG is not a classical university. We are aware that the traditional idea of a university, which originated in an industrial society, is in crisis today. That is why we are developing our model of study, which is not only recognizable in Montenegro, but increasingly internationally as well.

Our model of study is based on the fact that a student learns from his life during his studies, not that we have to explain to him what life is ... In short, UDG studies are

life studies! ... A student while studying at UDG lives with his/her own life! S/He learns and empowers from both his/her experience and his/her knowledge!

The goal of our model of study is a bit unusual. The goal is to:

- A. To teach a student to think; to think "out of the box"; to think beyond the template;
- B. Our goal is to make a student become a good man!

Dear friends,

Let's not forget that we live in a world that is a global computer-linked village!

We live in a world of incredible, often incomprehensible technological advances to the human mind!

We live in a world of rapid change, of both things and relationships!

We live in a computer world, not in a world of factory chimneys!

We live in an open world ...

We live in a world where millions of current jobs and professions will disappear in 20 years` time!

How to prepare, during his/her studies, a student who will live in this and such a world in this millennium? More importantly: how to prepare a today's student to be a good educator of his/her children who will live in the 21st century? How to prepare students, today, in this time, for the most difficult life role: the role of parents?

If you approach studies like this - then you can imagine all the difficulties we face with. We had and have the courage, UDG had the courage to enter into the implementation of this meaning of studies, studies adapted to the life of a student in the future, and not adapted to the understandings of life in the past!

Therefore, the mission of our University is to empower the student to be a responsible citizen of the global world! We are empowering him/her to truly understand that all humans on this planet are brothers, to understand that there are no borders in the world today (except in our heads, and that we should be freed from those borders as soon as possible).

From what you have already been told, it is clear to you that UDG has a vision to develop as an international rather than a local university. Today, only if you are part of an international network, if you are internationally networked, you can survive

and develop. This is true for all institutions, for companies, for the state itself... However, to be part of that network - you must not just expect that network to give and offer you something, above all you have to be able to give to that network! ... Networking means giving - so if everyone gives to that network, it will be given back to you as well... That means, you first have to sort things out in your house, to plant the seeds in your house which will grow and spread further, beyond Montenegro.

It would take a long time to present what we are doing, improving, innovating, founding at UDG ... Indeed, UDG is changing every day, growing rapidly ... Energy has been awakened among about 3,500 students, as many as we have, as well as in the network of teachers and associates of about 350-400 people from all continents. It's getting harder to manage that growth rate! We strive to develop UDG as a research-innovation university, a university that develops students' ability to think actively ... To apply and to do what they know! This implies a departure from the classical approach to study, which comes down to learning facts and their rote memorization!... We are investing in the ability to think, in the way of thinking, in understanding the world ... And that means we are running away from narrow specializations, because those, in the technological era, are disappearing, that is, they are changing rapidly. That is why we invest in theoretical knowledge, in fundamental theoretical knowledge of the field being studied. But we also invest in general knowledge in the fields of philosophy, religion, art, literature, poetry, and more and more practical skills such as: communication, painting, meditation, 3D skills, sports, and about twenty different practical skills! We want to help students discover their talents! ... And each student has it! Therefore, we are aware of the message of the German poet Goethe who said long ago that technology is not going to save us ... Therefore, in addition to investing in modern technical knowledge, we also invest in the humanities in the broadest sense!

The university is becoming better and better-equipped. Thus, we have a dozen laboratories, including the Food Safety Laboratory, the most up-to-date honey and wine research laboratory, not only in Montenegro! Prime Minister Marković has recently opened our "Entrepreneurial Nest", a nest from which our students' first start-up ideas are already visible, UDG Creative Center is increasingly popular with students and brings many artistic and creative ideas. Recently, in an international

evaluation, we were given the Center of Excellence to determine food safety risks. The Center of Excellence means that we have already been recognized as a mature scientific-research institution ... All our studies are based on respect for international standards, especially the standards of the European Union!... Also, every student who receives a diploma today can speak two foreign languages - this is in accordance with our Statute... Today we are handing over diplomas to the students of the International Hospitality and Tourism Management study programme, who in addition to a UDG diploma will also receive a diploma from the French university VATEL, for which we were helped and assisted by the company Porto Novi, especially by Mr. Ahmet Erentok!...

UDG is one of the 20 European universities licensed by the European Commission and Eurostat to organize international postgraduate studies in the area of official statistics, i.e. in the field of BigData, the most in-demand field today!... Our University has been a participant in the Free Market Road Show for 10 years which is held in thirty cities and universities in Europe and the USA and which is successfully run by Dr. Barbara Colm... We also participate in the Camino de Santiago, a race in Spain organized by the United Nations... For many years we have organized international summer schools as well as the International Camp for talents in Cetinje. We are developing cooperation not only with high schools, but more and more with primary schools, and also with kindergardens!... I should mention that we also publish three journals at the University, and keep publishing more books and study reports. We are working on a number of national and European projects, including Horizon 2020 projects!

All I said represents the basis for becoming an international university, a university in the international network. We have about 90 cooperation agreements with universities from all over the world... The number is impressive, but more importantly, we have never encountered a university that did not want to cooperate with us. We are often surprised, now less and less, when well-known universities take the initiative to cooperate with us... Through all these collaborations, the most important thing is that our students, the majority of them, have been abroad at least once to study. Our goal is to have as many of our students as possible to study abroad or on the exchange programme as long as it is possible. Cooperation with the United States is particularly important to us, with hundreds of our students staying there

over the summer... We are especially pleased that Germany is opening its channels for students' professional practice – given that a lot of our students learn and can speak German...

Under the Erasmus programme, of which we have implemented 15 so far, we are currently participating in 10, about 80 of our students and professors are at universities across Europe. We have just started cooperating with Russia!... We have been developing a particularly important cooperation with Chinese universities, and with universities from Thailand and Singapore since a few days ago... We cooperate with 17 Chinese universities and about 10 Chinese companies, where our students go to on a one-month or two-month internship. About 70 of our students have been to China, about ten of our professors have lectured in China, as well as 50 Chinese students and about a dozen have visited us in Montenegro. As you know, we established European Studies several years ago, and this year we have set up Chinese Studies, too... We are trying to run UDG based on information from the future! Vision is not a view into the future. Vision is a view from the future on us today! A view from 2030, 2040 on UDG today! That is why we are freed of any ideology that still exists unfortunately, not only in Montenegro! Our cooperation is growing in the field of information technology, blockchain technology, computer science, science parks, energy and economy, as well as student cooperation in the field of start-up ideas... Do not forget that China is one of the most digital countries in the world today!

Three days ago, an eight-member UDG delegation of professors, as part of a research visit to China, entered into a significant agreement for us to establish a Confucius classroom at UDG. As you know, there is also the Confucius Institute at the University of Montenegro. I can exclusively say that the Board of Directors of ANSO - Alliance of International Science Organizations, an organization that promotes the development of science and innovations in the world, has once accepted the candidacy of UDG¹ to be a member of ANSO and submitted this proposal to the ANSO Assembly for ratification! The Board of Directors of this Agency, founded last year, has about 40 members, half of which are national

¹ Explained on about 450 pages of material + a direct presentation by UDG at the end of October in ANSO and direct talks by the Rector of UDG with the President and Secretary of the ANSO

academies from around the world. For example, the members of this organization are the Academy of Slovenia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Belgium, Russia, with national academies from around the world. During the presentation of UDG at the headquarters of that organization in Beijing, we were simply wondering if it was possible that in 10 years` time we had come from the plain of Donja Gorica to find us in the company of such famous world scientific institutions!... It seems that nothing is possible like what, in an instant, looks impossible to you!

Dear Colleagues,

UDG has opened itself to many challenges! There are so many that we often get frightened if we are able to face each of them... I'm sure we can! Neither for the sake of UDG, nor for the sake of myself and my reputation in international institutions, would I allow us to accept something we cannot do! We have young teaching staff who have either completed a PhD or Master's degree at European and American universities, or have completed one year or several months of study abroad. Indeed, there are no those who did not experience abroad! Our students are also more and more awakened, more and more aware of the opportunities they are offered... To be honest, UDG still has more to offer than the students, as a whole, manage to take advantage of! Fortunately, though, that is changing... We want UDG to developed towards continuous innovation! Not just towards technological, but innovations in teaching, innovations in organizing leisure time, innovations in every field of life. Innovation gives fresh blood to the development of both the individual and the institution as well... Innovation is borne by the individual! And there are almost 4,000 individuals at UDG - not to mention the network of University graduates and associates in companies... If 4,000 capable people, with a network like this, can't face most of these challenges, god shall not save us! To be or not to be - what Shakespeare would say!... We must not forget that UDG itself is a great innovation, that it is one of the more successful start-up ideas developed not only in Montenegro! UDG was not founded to be a provincial, closed university! It is based on the vision of a global information society!

Dear guests,

Everything that is done is funded! This is the civilization of money! UDG exclusively makes money in the market! It makes money in domestic and international competition. It is not easy - but we are struggling... The average tuition

fee at UDG is 1,600 euros... As you know, the state does not fund private universities and colleges. And that's good! That, at least UDG, is forcing us to fight, looking for a place under the global sun... Even so, UDG has about 350 students who, on various bases, do not pay their tuition fees: Luča A diploma, Luča B diploma, successful athletes, the second and third child of one family, etc. This is about 500,000 euros in money paid by UDG, not someone else. Let's find this as UDG social responsibility! Starting next year, we also have a special programme for talented students - we're investing in talent. We take this investment in talent and innovators as an investment in the vision of UDG development!

Dear Parents,

Congratulations on your children`s graduation. We, at UDG, have done our best to live up to your expectations. I am sure that you have noticed great changes in your children, that you have noticed a different and more mature way of thinking, that you have noticed their desire to be independent and responsible for themselves... I hope you will also be satisfied with what your children will achieve in their life, as we are satisfied with what we have done to our students. Both your success, as of a parent, and ours - as of the university your children have graduated from, success is measured by their success in life!

Dear students,

Every end is a new beginning! I wish you good luck in that new beginning!

I wish you both luck and success! And I want you to always remember UDG! And, whenever and wherever you are, help people, UDG students in particular. That would be our biggest thanks for what we have invested in you.

Good luck and may you live long!