



## STRATEGIC PLAN

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**Changes vis-à-vis previous version:**

	<b>Made by:</b>	<b>Controlled by:</b>	<b>Approved by:</b>
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2.			
3.			
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## **RECTORS' BOARD**

### **STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021**

This document is the full version of the Strategic Plan approved by the Board in November 2017. Thereafter a short illustrated version will be prepared for public dissemination on the University website and in print.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

University of Tourism and Management in Skopje has succeeded in its mission of contributing high quality teaching and research to the higher education system of R Macedonia, and in improving access of students to high-quality and marketable study programs. In European terms it has the status of a small-sized university specialising in socio-economic and organizational sciences, with a well-equipped, modern infrastructure. It has made significant contributions to the economic development of the region, and through its high rate of employability, demonstrated its fitness for purpose and attractiveness to students. In the period 2017-21 UTMS plans to consolidate its strengths, expand its offerings at first, second and third cycle, both in the Macedonian and the English language, and further develop its staffing profile to meet its quality-driven objectives.

As private university, it depends on own incomes from students and can not expect support from public sources. It raises the need for UTMS to diversify its income from private sources and to put emphasize on research and training programs, and continue to develop closer collaboration with other institutions in the country, in Europe and worldwide. Using modern techniques of performance and risk management, it will monitor and adapt its profile to demographic and other changes in the region, and maintain long-term financial sustainability. In all respects it will justify the owner's investment and keep policy of sustainability.

#### **THE UNIVERSITY'S MISSION AND VISION**

When defining the mission, vision and the action plan of the University for Tourism and Management, several standards and referencing benchmarks issued from the survey with the employers and the analysis of the needs of the business community and the graduates, were taken into consideration. Besides this, the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism were implemented within the mission and the action plan of the University of Tourism and Management (here and after UTMS). The core connection and interrelatedness between the mission, the program objectives and the activities incorporated and put into practice by this Higher Education Institution and the coherence of the study program and pedagogical system with the global mission is provided.

UTMS mission is to create, implement and maintain the highest quality of education. Preparation of highly professional staff, which will be able to face with the challenges in the future in their professional careers. The main goal of the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje is to give students all necessary knowledge and simultaneously focus on the real priorities in order to create a better future and real professionals necessary for the new scientific and professional demands of the society and the business community.

University of Tourism and Management, through its methodology of work, which is almost identical to the work of all the world's universities, primarily through teaching, and the implementation of practical engagements, constantly arouses the creative activity of students, research spirit in them; and of course they need to conquer the new knowledge and skills.

The aim and the strategic orientation of the UTMS above all is discovering new ways of incorporating the society and the individuals into the current flows of social growth, as well as creating a permanent and secure communication channels with the most important accomplishments of that growth.

The UTMS, as the integral part of the entire educational system of the Republic of Macedonia, strives to meet European and world standards. The UTMS Faculties contribute to the process of development and energetic promotion of the areas in which they are specialized.

Our intention is not to create competition with other Universities, but to prevent the student from feeling lost in the multitude of students. Therefore, the philosophy behind our University is a personalized teaching approach. UTMS mission is to prepare students to be efficient and successfully accomplish their goals in life.

The thing mentioned above proves that our objective is unique – to provide high-quality education to the students who will be able to incorporate it in all structures of the social life in RM and the EU.

## **UTMS Mission Statement and Broad-Based Goals**

### **Mission**

The mission of the UTMS is to foster academic excellence and student achievement at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in the field of tourism, economy and management. UTMS students are provided with a strong academic foundation with access to various specialized knowledge bases and they are prepared to become productive, competent professionals, and responsible citizens in the diverse, dynamic global arena. University promotes regional economics development, leadership development, and development of life-long learning skills.

### **Broad-Based Goals**

In order to carry out this mission, the UTMS has developed broad-based goals as follows:

- To have constituent satisfaction as the top priority of the university;
- To ensure continuous improvement and academic excellence;

- To have continuous improvement of the faculty products, educational products, and operations;
- To provide the faculty and the staff with an opportunity for personal growth and development;
- To provide students with quality learning experience and excellent customer service;
- To establish cooperative links with internal and external educational institutions and subjects in order to foster educational development
- Producing skilled human resources in the field of tourism, economy and management;
- Acquisition of skills and competencies to create independent researchers of knowledge;
- Developing personal skills for lifelong learning;
- Developing awareness of managing their own professional lives;
- Testing the theory into practice through active attendance at internships with field work;
- Learning through proper implementation of the ECTS system in accordance with the Bologna process and work under the mentorship;
- Extension of international cooperation with the established higher education institutions in the region and beyond.

## **UTMS vision and strategic orientation**

### **Vision**

UTMS vision is a national and international recognition of high-quality education, providing the knowledge, skills and competences required for high-professional expertise. University of Tourism and Management according to its methodology for acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies, is synonymous for the highest standards and requirements to maintain quality, which provides a place among the universities that are leaders in the field of higher education in Europe and in world.

As a affiliate members of the World Tourism Organization, (UNWTO) University of Tourism and Management Skopje, constantly work to develop regional and international cooperation with universities and related organizations in the field of scientific disciplines that are studied in this university. Inherent, in the manner and methodology of work, UTMS is permanently building its image of high-quality HEI.

UTMS diplomas provides easy academic recognition titles or transition to study abroad. Diplomas and supplements issued by the University clearly reveal the student achievement, in terms of gained knowledge, skills and competencies of the area of study, whether it is for academic needs, or to continue studies of the student to another foreign university or again, for professional needs, acquiring the right to employment in a particular profession.

## **Strategic orientation**

The aim and the strategic orientation of the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje is discovering new ways of incorporating the society and the individuals into the current flows of social growth, as well as creating a permanent and secure communication channels with the most important accomplishments of that growth.

The University of Tourism and Management in Skopje, as the integral part of the entire educational system of the Republic of Macedonia, strives to meet European and world standards. The Faculties of the University, as a continuity of the Faculty of Tourism, contribute to the process of development and energetic promotion of the areas in which they are specialized.

The aim of the education offered by the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje is to prepare students to be efficient and successfully accomplish their goals in life. The thing mentioned above proves that our objective is unique – to provide high-quality education to the students who will be able to incorporate it in all structures of the social life in the Republic of Macedonia and the European Union.

The University of Tourism and Management in Skopje ensures academic success and achievements for the students at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the field of tourism, economy and management. The UTMS is streaming towards high quality education by continuously creating the most competitive conditions for acquiring knowledge, skills and competences in the aforementioned fields. The students are enabled to gain high quality academic knowledge with access to diverse expertise and skills in order to become productive and skilled professionals and responsible citizens in a diverse and dynamic global market environment. The UTMS permanently promotes regional economic development, leadership development, applying the principles of the ethics, and the development of long-term life skills. UTMS has clearly defined mission to provide first-class education for the students. In an increasingly globalized world, a prominent university must be able to prepare undergraduates, graduates and doctoral students for a career in the international arena. UTMS educates students to become well-prepared for both domestic and international career. UTMS study programs are highly ranked and created in accordance with the need of business sector, which means that students from all over the world choose to study at UTMS in order to achieve personal development. The international cooperation results in study programs that are conducted jointly by different universities. The strategy objectives reflect the fact that internationalization is a key component that should help the university its sets goals. In order internationalization to have the desired impact it needs to encompasses all levels of the university. That is why a number of internationalization goals in the areas of research, education, culture and environment have been identified. For education is important that the overall goals should facilitate that we have an international perspective in all our study programs, that our students can spend part of their study period abroad, that our strong and innovation areas provide study programs to be attractive to foreign students and that we develop joint courses and programs with our international partners and we create opportunities for international carriers. UTMS chose partner universities on a number of criteria that not only meet our own strategy but also facilitates a long-term relationship with possibilities for in-depth cooperation. This includes

joint courses, projects, multiple degrees via programs such as Erasmus, as well as exchange of teachers, researchers and administrative staff. UTMS strategy aims that all continents should be represented among the partner universities, but geographic scope should be of lower importance than meeting UTMS international policy as well as having good international reputation. UTMS will continue to foster intense, structured and long-term cooperation with identified partners. In accordance with the requirements of the Law for Higher Education, UTMS is obliged to have 2 double-degree programs with HEI ranked on the top 500 World Universities Shanghai List and based on already signed agreements with aforementioned institutions, UTMS plan to start double degree and joint degree programs in next academic years. UTMS believes that such programs will not only enhance employability of our students which is defined as crucial task in our university mission, but also can be considered as strong evidence of UTMS overall quality. This is UTMS most important objective, to enhance education quality, to support innovation and to meet demands for skilled graduates on an international market. The most important target groups are: - Students on undergraduate and master level. The goal for year 2020 is that majority of UTMS graduates have studied at least one semester in English abroad. Most of the programs on Master level will be taught in English. - PhD students: In 2020, most of the PhD students have to spend a part of their studies and practical research abroad. During this stay they have to publish their research papers in scientific international journals from the Web of Science. - Current staff: Participation on international conferences and publication of papers in scientific international journals is obligatory for professors who work at UTMS. Moreover, UTMS determined standard for professors to publish papers in scientific journals with impact factor in the Web of Science. - For new staff members, all academic vacancies will be for professors and researchers with an international background. UTMS will keep the policy to support and encourage academic staff to apply for exchange. International experience will be threatened as additional value and will help in academic promotion.

How these objectives have been achieved, and how we intend to build upon those achievements, are set out in this version of the Strategic Plan.

In recognition of its achievements, the University was awarded the many awards for quality in education and for social responsibility.

## **THE CHANGING BACKGROUND**

### **The Republic of Macedonia**

Despite four successive positive opinions by the EU Commission, there is as yet no progress in the ongoing issue of opening EU accession negotiations as the settlement of the 'name dispute' with the Greece remains a major obstacle. Visa liberalisation with the Schengen countries has taken place, but visas are still required for travel to non-Schengen countries like the United Kingdom; in R Macedonia there has been a more strict interpretation of the procedures for acquiring work permits by foreign citizens. During the extended transition period, R Macedonia withdrew from the EU TEMPUS, programme, and so has lost its ability

to partner with EU institutions in this programme, although participation in other EU programmes Erasmus as a non-member state is still possible. Incorporation into the mainstream of European higher education would improve prospects for academic exchanges and employment of international staff.

From the 2017 Macedonia education system was connected again with the EU through EU programmes Erasmus, so UTMS as a Erasmus Chart holder plans to improve prospects for academic exchanges and employment of international staff.

The long process of incorporation into the EU means that donor funding for UTMS purposes from both EU countries has, with the exception of some limited scholarship funds, ceased. Likewise, while the opportunities to work with Greece as yet are limited, co-operation with Turkey continues to increase. In many ways UTMS's strategy must reflect political reality. The Government of R Macedonia has emphasised the development of education and skills training as an essential factor in the economic progress of the country and is allocating state funding in this area, but so far not to UTMS.

### The structure of higher education in R Macedonia

Higher education in R Macedonia is structured into three categories as defined by law: public universities; private (for profit) universities, colleges and faculties; private-public not-for-profit universities. Public universities are those in Skopje, Bitola, Tetovo, Štip and Ohrid (IT) with branches of these universities/faculties in other cities as a result of a continued government policy of extensive dispersion; there are several private, for profit institutions mainly in Skopje; UTMS is institution falling into the second category.

The Fiscal Strategy of R Macedonia 2017-2019 has 'investments in knowledge and education as the safest way to create professional personnel and a strong state' but the detail does not discuss higher education. The official text describing provisions for higher education in the State Budget of R Macedonia for 2017 is virtually identical to that for 2016, very general in nature, and provides a total of about €40m for the sector.

### Competition for students

According to the R Macedonia State Statistical Office, there were 58747 registered undergraduate students in 2016/17, of whom 50080 were enrolled full-time. The state budget provided for funding 34300 places at public universities, which enrolled 49675 students of whom 42916 were full-time. So full-time fee-paying students at state universities totalled 8616. Private (and private-public not-for-profit) universities enrolled very much the same number, 8785 fee-paying full-time students, some 15% of the total. UTMS accounted for 6-7% of this number. Almost all of this private activity is in Skopje.

Students enrolled within the state-funded quota pay €100-200 tuition fee per annum, whereas students outside the quota pay €400 per annum. Students at private universities apart from UTMS pay much higher fees.

The State Statistical Office records approximately 18000 to 20000 students enrolled in each year of pre-university education. Between them, the universities in Macedonia offer more places than there are students taking the Matura examinations, and the age participation rate is approaching 100%, far higher than in other European countries. This is without taking into account the students who pursue their degree courses abroad. This means that students enter R Macedonia's universities with a wide range of abilities and qualifications. It also means that, unless there is a dramatic improvement in non-higher education opportunities for young people, the overall numbers in higher education are unlikely to change significantly: only the distribution might change.

To maintain and grow student numbers, UTMS targeted additional market for students in Tetovo, Gostivar, Veles, Sv.Nikole, Resen, Krusevo, Strumica etc. is (i) those who attend the public universities or one of the dispersed faculties and who pay the non-quota fees, so have not secured a state-funded place on merit, and (ii) those who may be qualified to obtain a state-funded place but consider UTMS's programmes to be of higher quality and more useful in a free market (which of course does not exist in R Macedonia in the same form as in Western Europe or internationally). In Skopje and other areas, in addition to those attending public universities, the direct competition, apart from (i) those seeking high quality in the same way as elsewhere, is (ii) the students who constitute more than 50% of the private market. The strategic aim is to attract both groups of fee-paying students who have a good academic record, with good offers of quality education in a limited range of subjects. This therefore requires intense attention to detail of programmes and curricula, staff qualifications, teaching ability and approach to working with students, as well as improved links with the community: potential students, parents, schools, private employers, central and local government, etc. It will be the aim of this plan to identify ways of achieving these essential elements for future success.

#### The Law on higher education

Apart from the re-formulation of the higher education sector already described, the Law on Higher Education, which is subject to frequent amendment, continues to pose difficulties as it is, in contrast to many other European laws, highly restrictive and without doubt over-regulatory. Indeed it is a complex law, which ignores the regional and indeed European trend (as confirmed by the 2009 report of the MODERN project funded by the European Commission, and the 2010 and 2011 EUA Autonomy Reports I and II (Scorecard)<sup>1</sup>) towards framework laws with maximum autonomy granted to higher education institutions in accordance with constitutional provisions, accompanied by accountability. If R Macedonia were to be assessed according to the Scorecard, there is no doubt it would be at or near the bottom of the existing list in several areas.

Some provisions of the law are a reaction to perceived problems in quality of service offered by the state universities, and while a number of provisions of the legislation apply only to



public universities – as a consequence of restructuring from quasi-independent faculties to an integrated structure – some appear to apply to all institutions. We consider that some provisions may yet restrict us and other institutions (public and private) in responding quickly to changes in the international and local markets, as they continue what is in our opinion an outdated system of *ex ante* programme accreditation and continue to place heavy emphasis on the acquisition of the doctoral degree, which in several academic fields –notably business and management - is not necessarily the best qualification for modern blended learning practice.

UTMS has already implemented most elements of the Bologna Process as relevant and possible under the laws of R Macedonia, including the accreditation of third cycle (doctoral) studies from winter 2013, but still decision for work permit from Ministry of education is waiting.

In April 2015 the Ministerial meeting under the Bologna Process took place in Yerevan, Armenia. Apart from the general exhortation to governments to support the framework and policies of the developing EHEA, the messages from that meeting relevant to UTMS included the importance of widening access and raising completion rates, fostering student-centred learning and involving students at all levels, and enhanced co-operation with employers.

### The changing labour market and government priorities

Responding to the labour market has been a key feature of UTMS planning from the first thoughts about the curriculum in early 2006. The initial curriculum for faculty of Tourism, looking ahead to how our first full cohort of graduates might be received in the labour market in 2009, was finally drafted in February-April 2006 and accredited in May 2006, and has been under constant review since then, with new accreditations of six faculties in 2009 that started to enroll students in academic 2009/2010.

Global, European and domestic markets have changed significantly, and have been particularly volatile in the last few years. It is essential that we remain flexible in adjusting courses, particularly at second cycle, to changing markets, which increasingly demand language and other personal competences. The Bologna Process has assisted this, because it is now possible to provide basic education and skills training in the first cycle, with specialism in different fields in the second cycle and ultimately the third cycle.

We can also explore opportunities in accredited lifelong learning (LLL), which is another development in the European Higher Education Area. However the need for *ex ante* accreditation slows down our responsiveness and therefore our international competitiveness. In addition, while contact with employers as advocated by the Ministers in Bucharest is important, in practice in R Macedonia there are only a few major employers outside the public sector. Concerning the difficulties of adjusting the 3 year degree to expectations of employers mean that we have to accredit and to offer a 4 year (3 plus 1) option in some cases. UTMS plan to make new accreditations for the 4 year Bachelor degree in 2019.

It was fairly easy at the beginning to project minimum demands for accredited courses particularly oriented to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which make up a large part of



Graduation by Faculty								
	2013		2014		2015		2016	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
Tourism								
Economy								
IMM								
Ent								
HRM								
PR								
ST								
Subtotal								
TOTAL								

The number of students enrolled has varied over time. The availability of more first cycle places than potential applicants across the whole higher education system, plus the worsened economic situation, has inevitably resulted in a slow decline in enrolments in most subjects at first cycle, reflected in a reduction in places offered, which are almost all filled. Interest is broadly stable at second cycle, with about 80% of offered places filled. Our total intake is therefore about \_\_\_\_ students per year, resulting in an overall student population of about 5000, including those who are taking longer than the minimum period to complete their degree.

Employment Statistics by Faculty								
	2013		2014		2015		2016	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
Tourism								
Economy								
IMM								
Ent								
HRM								
PR								
ST								
Subtotal								
TOTAL								

The latest employment statistics, based on a very good 70% response rate, are given above: we can draw general conclusions from these and earlier, more limited, studies, to the effect that while the labour market continues to be limited, we are successful in providing our graduates with the needed tools for employment or further study. Unfortunately no other higher education institution in R Macedonia publishes the equivalent data, so it is not possible to make comparisons.

## Developing the curriculum

Over the period 2014-2016, degree programmes were innovated in all fields at both undergraduate and graduate levels, some being more successful than others in terms of student recruitment in 2016. Not just the market, and the lack of state support, but our long term vision determines which academic subjects we continue, which ones we start and which ones we stop. Naturally any decisions have human resources as well as financial implications.

The Senate and Faculties working with the Rector and his team developed proposals for new teaching programmes to be adopted by 2019/20; seeking out and developing ‘niche’ markets as well as adjusting existing curricula based on external evaluations by international experts. The reviews provided a mechanism for a holistic review of all aspects of a Faculty’s operations, exploring the culture of the Faculty in the fullest sense, assessing current performance and future strategy: organisation, research, resources and learning, teaching, and quality assurance and enhancement. Given the primary responsibility of Faculties for the quality of provision and the maintenance of academic standards, the rolling programme of reviews is a permanent feature of the University’s quality strategy.

UTMS’s developmental priorities continue to be in the fields of tourism, economy, marketing, management and HR management, and creation of faculty of law and faculty of informatics to prepare graduates for the changing markets of the 21st century. Particular importance will be placed in following the pan-European trend towards developing second cycle degrees taught in English, thereby enhancing mobility in the new political environment. Further steps will be taken to introduce the concept of service sciences and professional courses providing graduates with additional practical skills. After discussion with the Rector and the University Board, all Faculties have produced a strategic vision for 2018-2022 which are summarised in a consolidated Annex to this Plan.

## The UTMS presence in the country

The Sv.Nikole and Resen Centre opened in September 2011 and Gostivar Centre in 2012, with student recruitment up to our expectations and has continued to develop, so that total student numbers from UTMS dispersed centers are currently about \_\_\_\_, or \_\_% of the total student population. UTMS opened new offices in Tetovo, Strumica and Veles in 2014, necessitated an increase of demand for UTMS programs in other cities in the country beside main campus in Skopje. Due to the small number of students existing office in Krusevo was closed in 2014. As a result of opening new centers, overall student numbers have largely been maintained with a positive impact on the budget.

## Staff development

Since its foundation UTMS has been building up a cadre of full-time qualified staff, at both Master and Doctor level, to replace the part-timers who constituted the main element of academic staff at the level of docent and above. This policy has been implemented successfully using funds from UTMS’s own staff development funds, and the gradual promotion of staff to higher academic titles according to the law. At the end of session 2015-2016 UTMS employed

\_\_\_\_ staff with academic titles, of whom \_\_\_\_ were part-time, and \_\_\_\_ other staff, many qualified to first or second cycle.

The development of the ranking and remuneration policy and associated job descriptions and assimilation to the revised pay spine has had an overall positive effect, but also resulted in a small number of posts being declared redundant, a small number of positions being downgraded, and a number of academic staff newly acquiring the PhD degree held at lower salary points than those promoted earlier. These anomalies will be addressed during the planning period through application of a new performance management system and a complete revision of the staffing complement by 2020.

The traditional barriers between academic and administrative work are breaking down everywhere in Europe. The emphasis needs to be on a team approach to ensuring the most efficient, effective and economical use of available human and physical resources. UTMS's HR staff development policy will take full account of this trend.

### Governance and management

UTMS has since 2009 adopted a governance structure in line with modern European practice, including a governing body and an academic senate with clearly defined functions, separating governance from management. UTMS has clearly defined staffing policies and procedures including ranking and remuneration.

Professor Dr Ace Milenkovski is UTMS Rector. The Rector's Board has been structured to reflect the objectives and strategic plan: Pro-Rector for academic issues, Secretary-General, Pro-Rector for research and development, Pro-Rector for internationalisation, Operating Director (with responsibility for University commercial operations, increasing visibility with the business community, spin-off companies, etc), Deans of UTMS faculties and Executive Advisors for quality and performance management, HR manager and Manager for public relations and communication.

Academic coordination is provided through Rector's Board (where Rector, Pro-Rectors and Deans participate). All educational decisions (Study Program, course distribution, staff election etc.) have to be approved by the Faculty Scientific Council and the main decisions by the University Senate.

Administrative coordination is provided through Operating director office as well as Secretary General (Legal office). Administration, academic records, safety and maintenance are centralized for whole University.

Rector's Board always keeps focus to provide a good work-environment.

### Strategic planning, auditing and risk management

UTMS has adopted a formal risk management policy which is now a key element of decision-making in both academic and administrative areas. The audit and risk management function started in 2011 and further refined in 2012 is now well embedded; during the next period we

will need to concentrate on providing a strategic planning and monitoring capability. Over the period 2010-2012 UTMS has introduced, in stages, performance management based on key performance indicators (KPIs) and SMART objectives and will embed the risk management policy into central and faculty administrations, incorporating concepts such as business continuity planning (BCP) and emergency and crisis planning.

## Research and scholarship

UTMS will continue its dedication to research as a core part of its mission. Research activity at UTMS will continue to be an essential element of all academic staff duties in the belief that an active and vital research culture is of benefit to all areas studies in the University. UTMS formally adopted an institutional research policy in 2010, and by 2011 had developed research activities in all Faculties, devoting about 1.5% of its budget to funding research projects. From 2012 it adopted a policy of supporting projects which attract external funding. UTMS has been involved in several projects funded from European Commission.

UTMS wishes to identify itself, as a 'research-intensive' university in which individual and group research impacts directly on the teaching and learning process. Significant funding for research is very difficult to obtain in R Macedonia; the available resources cover quite small projects. Building on the existing activities, the University must take every opportunity to obtain research funding from the EU and other agencies, in collaboration with other institutions or on its own. Research also has to be seen as an automatic and key responsibility of all full-time academic staff, other than those recruited for specific teaching-only roles.

In 2018 UTMS plan to register two research institutes: The Institute for Social Sciences and The Institute for National Geography. Institutes will function as integrated unit of the University: their missions are to develop and organize research activities in the field of humanitarian sciences, political sciences, international relations, law and public administration, business, economics and management as well as geography. The Institutes' key activities are education, research, and development and project implementation.

During the coming period UTMS will create a Centre of Excellence and Research which will contribute to society and the country's economy through knowledge and technology transfer and the application of research in the wider community.

The Faculty research papers are published in the Scientific Journal of the University of Tourism and Management. UTMS Journal of Economics started in 2010 and is an international journal of multidisciplinary scientific journal for south and southeastern Europe. The Journal is published regularly twice per year (June–December) by the University of Tourism and Management – Skopje, Macedonia. UTMS Journal of Economics is focused for the area of south and southeastern Europe, but contributions from other parts are also welcome. This Journal aims to publish highly selective original articles of current relevance that will have a long-term impact on economics research and it is a key source for professional economists in

higher education, business, government service and the financial sector. At least two anonymous referees review each article and make the evaluation. Information for authors are listed at the end of the Journal.

UTMS Journal of Economics provides open access to its content on the principle that makes research freely available to the public. UTMS Journal of Economics has free and unlimited access to the full-text of articles. Manuscripts are freely available online without subscription or price barriers. UTMS Journal of Economics is indexed and abstracted in following databases: ABI/INFORM (ProQuest), AP PLATFORMS, C.I.R.E.T., DOAJ, EBSCO, EconBiz, Econis, EconPapers, EconStor, EDRIC, EZB, GOOGLE SCHOLAR, IDEAS, Open J-Gate, RePEc, Socionet, ZBW. We are planning to improve the quality of the journal and list it in ISI Thomson Reuters.

During the period 2018-2022 UTMS will further support presentations at international conferences through research development funds, and promote submission of journal articles by encouraging younger staff in particular through adjustments in teaching responsibilities and incentives to those whose articles are accepted for publication in international journals listed in Thomson Reuters Web of Science as one of the as one of the most important indicators for the ranking of universities.

Since the foundation of the University, about \_\_\_\_\_ books have been published (\_\_\_\_ under the UTMS imprint). There have been about \_\_\_\_\_ presentations at international conferences, numerous presentations at national conferences, and about \_\_\_\_\_ papers published in refereed journals. The pace of such activities is increasing, as funding permits.

#### Developing pedagogy, use of IT and blended learning, e-learning

With assistance from the Faculty for hotel and tourist management in Opatia, Croatia, UTMS has established in 2007 Methodology for continuing assessment provided by the UTMS educational software (Assistant Monitor). The methodology is completely realized and performed thorough an electronic platform and Assistant Monitor software adapted to the needs of the University and ECTS Methodology. The teaching staff regularly updates the data for each student in each parameter determined by the adopted methodology for work. Using their username and password each student may enter in the program through an internal e-learning portal where the student can monitor their progress on Ranking-lists.

The role of Assistant Monitor is to provide general methodology training linked with observations to achieve good teaching practice for academic staff, and different types of training for administrative staff aiming at improving the quality of services provided for students. The work of this system is part of a policy of continuous improvement in teaching and learning, including the progressive introduction of blended learning. E-student is a complex data system primarily determined for the support of the pure set of e-learning activities. The electronic platform enables professor and teaching assistants permanently to follow up and monitor assimilation of the program contents and the student's results and

outcomes. On monthly basis, the scientific committee analyses separately the student's results on each partial exams. This enables the Faculty to provide corrective measures if certain deviations are identified.

As e-learning becomes a mainstream activity for our institution and fundamental to our strategy, the importance and profile of the E-student is increased. E-student and Assistant Monitor has been in use for almost 4 years and currently is the main communication channel for teaching staff and students. Studies show that it is the Learning Management System (LMS) experience itself that makes many users able to identify the possibilities in the technology and to ask more of an LMS, so they have become the key drivers towards LMS change and enhancement. Hence one of the main concerns in the further development of LMS at UTMS is to identify user requirements and to implement them by using the latest technological trends.

### Quality Assurance

At national level, in 2011, the Accreditation and Evaluation Board became a single agency with continued responsibility for licensing and ex- ante programme accreditation and review, in line with current higher education law. The Accreditation and Evaluation Board combined accreditation with a responsibility for quality assurance. To this end, it has required the publication of institutional Self-Evaluation Reports which the University has provided with appropriate detail and self-reflection. UTMS awaits further developments concerning quality assurance and continues to support the establishment and active functioning of a national or regional quality assurance agency with international input.

UTMS has provide TED Qual certification and standardization in 2014/2015. UTMS main task and orientation for this external accreditation is to use it to develop effective evaluative tools.

In fact UNWTO TEDQual Certification in 2014 was clear evidence for quality assurance. UTMS will continue to put the emphasize on the quality assurance process and beside strategic plan will develop Outcomes Assessment Plan (OAP) by the end of 2017.

In 2017, the Quality Management System was thoroughly reviewed resulting in updated policies and procedures which will now be implemented. UTMS is also preparing for the external evaluation from the Board for the Accreditation and Evaluation of the Republic of Macedonia.

The key method by which the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje provides quality education is the continuous observation of teaching and learning process through an annual program of activities effectuated by the Quality Control Department and from the 2018 the basic tool will be Outcomes Assessment Plan (OAP).

The Quality Control Department is under the Vice-Rector for education -prepares Teaching Observation Schedule, delegates Observes, collects and analyzes reports. The UTMS and the Faculty has Teaching Observation Schedule for each semester. The Quality Control Department observes and monitors the implementation of the methodology of the University in order to assure a continuous improvement and development of the teaching process. Through the realization of the objectives of this department and through analysis of the results of the



announced and no announced observations, a set of recommendations and priorities for further improving of the quality of programs are being identified. The main aim of the monitoring activities of this Quality Control Department is to provide total quality management of the University. UTMS has defined indicators for monitoring the quality of teaching. This is the result of need to have objective evaluation of the results after the implementation of the quality plan. UTMS used best practices of mature and well-established Universities considering quality control. Development of quality indicators is result of several trainings and exchanges with some of these universities. The Quality Control Department also makes official decision for team members responsible for monitoring.

The University intends to continue with the review process which is seen as insightful as well as supportive of solid quality enhancement. As mentioned above, major initiatives were taken during the period 2016-2017 in pursuit of our principal aim of achieving excellence in both teaching and research. In summary, these were the improvements in the quality assurance system, adopting improved internal audit procedures, consolidating our risk management policy, reviewing and adding value to teaching observations, maintenance of the Student Evaluation Survey, introduction of a Client Audit Survey, development of Assistant Monitor and E-student, a performance-related assessment of research activity by staff, a more active Staff Evaluation procedure, objective recruitment and academic promotion processes and further development of what is already the best IT infrastructure in the region.

The priorities for the planning period include: maintaining the cycle of programme and institutional review with active use of evaluative outcomes from the reports; contributing, if requested to do so, to developing and strengthening national quality initiatives; complying with the quality assurance elements of the national legal framework, developing these so that they have a real added value and positive impact on the student experience; maintaining and actively developing integrated, transparent, internal quality assurance mechanisms concerning resource management, teaching and learning, student involvement in quality evaluation, and efficient performance management and administration with measurable impact and value.

#### Internationalisation

UTMS strongly recognizes the need of cooperation, both with domestic and foreign higher-education institutions (HEI). UTMS is fully aware that excellence in higher education requires cooperative relations both within the institution and with other institutions. University of Tourism and Management based its international cooperation and networking on following principles: Excellence in business education requires cooperative relations both within the institution and with other institutions and Articulation relationships should promote the interests of transfer students and academic staff.

These are the starting principles in UTMS's policy towards cooperation. UTMS has an intention and wishes to promote international and inter-cultural understanding through academic contacts and exchanges. UTMS has a policy and always shares the notion of internationalization as a valuable component of modern higher education. These are also UTMS's principles in establishing bilateral relations with other institutions.

UTMS believes that the relationship between the HEI should be cooperative and synergistic. UTMS collaborates with other HEI in general in the area of:

- Exchange of students, teachers, and lecturers;
- Academic cooperation and exchange of academic staff;
- Curriculum development;
- Exchange of information and experience;
- Exchange of visiting professors with lectures on topical issues of entrepreneurship, small & medium size enterprises and major trends and outcomes of globalization;
- Arrangement of useful and non-expensive international workshops, seminars or conferences on selected research projects with participants from the parties concerned and from third similar educational institutions, if such events are agreed upon by the contracting parties;
- Exchange of publications and books
- Involving local/ regional companies in the training and the education promotion process;
- Organizing Joint Degrees studies.

UTMS encourages cooperative relationships through Erasmus Programs with foreign educational institutions in a way that furthers the mission of the institution. UTMS establishes academic links and co-operation in teaching, research and other activities with HEI that have similar interests. These activities are carried out through work programs and projects that are developed each academic year. In accordance with approved mutual programs, both institutions organize exchange of teaching staff and students under conditions preliminary agreed and accepted. The academic staff of cooperative institutions also co-operate in developing common research projects, business curriculum etc. Academic staff from both institutions should participate in seminars and training sessions. Academic staff from both institutions should promote the student exchange program.

From its earliest days, UTMS built up a network of co-operation with other universities in the region of SEE, EU, Asia and individual faculties in public universities in R Macedonia. The University now plans to consolidate its links with other institutions in Europe, including Turkey, through joint programmes and EU funds. However we need to be selective, building up a few strong links rather than many 'paper agreements.' Opportunities exist under ERASMUS MUNDUS, FP7, the US National Science Foundation, etc, and a number of ERASMUS agreements have already been signed, with more to follow in the coming period.

In 2012 UTMS has signed agreement with University of Ljubljana (ranked in first 500 world universities in accordance with Shanghai ranking list) and plan to start joint degree programme for International Relations as Master studies. This means that professors from Slovenia will teach at UTMS and vice-versa, because part of the programme will be held in Slovenia.

The UTMS has signed agreement with the University of Valencia ranked in first 500 world universities in accordance with Shanghai ranking list), Spain, with the School of Tourism and Business School and plans to start exchange of academic staff and students and promote mobility among these two Universities from the academic year 2017-2018.

Agreements with two universities ranked in first 500 world universities in accordance with Shanghai ranking list is legal obligation in accordance with the Law for HE.

### Human resources

UTMS has always been committed to an open, transparent and fair process of staff appointments in accordance with relevant laws and by 2017 had developed a series of policies and protocols designed with that in mind. UTMS is moving towards having its own cadre of staff qualified to MA and PhD level by about 2019 in order to decrease part-time staff of other universities except in specific specialist areas where inter-university co-operation is an essential element in the use of otherwise scarce human resources.

More emphasis will be placed on recruiting staff able to teach in English in most fields, and staff with required number of scientific papers published in international science journals, in order to be also mentors for master thesis. In accordance with the law and UTMS's adopted policies, all academic staff positions will be regularly re-advertised in order to secure the best possible candidates qualified to the standards which UTMS now expects. Staff will be able to build up their professional portfolio in both teaching and research over the period 2017-2021. Further progress is planned in staff development linked to future staffing needs, not restricted to academic staff but related to the team approach to support of academic activities discussed above. The Board identified the need to concentrate available resources in this area by establishing a Director for HR to exercise an independent supervision of management action and to receive regular progress reports.

Related to staff development, UTMS will continue to develop its policy on replacement of staff as they reach retirement age, and training to fill positions such as Pro-Rectors, Deans and other office-holders.

### Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Although the principle of non-discrimination has been accepted by UTMS from the beginning, a new initiative to develop a formal equal opportunities policy and to implement it, not just in gender equality but also to counter disability and other forms of discrimination, was launched by the Rectors' Board in November 2010 and is now fully in operation, with specific training given particularly in the area of access by disabled persons, both staff and students.

### Finance

The University Board has developed a conservative budgetary policy allowing room for innovation and securing adequate reserves, not just to meet the requirements of the law but planning for new developments and improving quality. This has an impact on tuition fees, which constitute over 80% of UTMS income. In the circumstances of 2006, tuition fees were set at a level which would make UTMS self-sufficient in teaching in the original buildings, with the original curriculum and staff, in a period of three to four years, at a target student population of 500, and also set as low as possible to promote access from lower socio-economic

groups. The initial fee for the three-year first degree was set on this basis at about €2000 per year in 2006; the fees in 2017 are from €1000 for the first year and €2000 per second and third year, while for students from other cities are €1500 per second and third year. Tuition fees for the second cycle are €1500 per fourth and fifth year.

University has significantly expanded its physical infrastructure and improved the quality of its provision. Setting tuition fee levels in the light of the changing market and inflationary pressures is a difficult exercise; UTMS fees are somewhat higher than the real cost of non-quota places at public universities, taking into account the additional fees charged by those institutions. UTMS fees are in line with than those charged by private universities. Despite some inflation in non-staff costs, notably in energy, the Board has maintained tuition fees at 2012/13 levels until 2016/17. The level of fees will however be kept under review during the planning period to ensure financial stability as an element of preserving quality.

UTMS has offered a significant number of scholarships for especially talented students, disabled students and the Roma community. We are continually looking at new opportunities for scholarships in particular fields or to achieve gender, ethnic or other equality but funding is difficult to access; we have had limited success in attracting commercial funds. At present, following trends of global financial uncertainty, there is not a bright future for economic development in R Macedonia: this may result in lower family incomes in our main target group of clients. Scholarships remain one of the most important mechanisms to retain the quantity and also the quality of students in the coming period. The University needs to motivate donors, not just from the public sector or international funds, but also the commercial sector.

UTMS has developed a sophisticated budgetary process which allows it to predict income and expenditure in different areas more effectively, and to illustrate cross-subsidisation of different academic activities. This leads to development of a resource allocation model which will have the effect of encouraging innovation in income generation and constraining costs.

### Entrepreneurial activity

Diversifying income streams is a common feature of higher education institutions' financial sustainability across Europe. A successful University should increase the knowledge level of the students, but needs also to serve as an important development driver for the community. The real private and public sector in the local and wider environment should gain from the University's activity too. Sharing knowledge and risk with the private sector is the normal logic of the most recognized universities in the world. Shared knowledge is needed to bring down costs, provide more savings and investments, in both the public and private sectors. The University has to be part of those processes and to share part of the incomes too. Earnings from the University's entrepreneurial activities need to become a significant part of the University's income finance structure. The University's entrepreneurial activity assumes numerous forms. Much of the work that we see comes through the professional trainings for Tourist Guides, which pioneers ways in which the University can make business connections with the local, national, and regional corporate communities. The UTMS has provided training in

professionalism, developing business plans, preparing global leaders, and other corporate and management-driven training sessions, and has presented them for local companies and NGOs. UTMS also has and is well-placed to offer facilities for academic and other conferences and income-generating events, working as appropriate with other universities in R Macedonia and the region.

### Administration and support services

In the period 2012-17, UTMS administration has consolidated its position as a central support to University operations with clear lines of responsibility and accountability. In addition, the administration has continued with actions to increase efficiency and reduce running expenses for the institution. Action planning throughout the University has been introduced and well established. The design and implementation of a whole set of new Rules and policies has enabled the University to quickly adjust to new legal requirements. A programme of creating service standards was developed as part of the overall quality assurance system. In addition several programmes of staff training and development have taken place and will be continued annually. One of the most comprehensive improvements that is being undertaken is the development of the Assistant Monitor system which is intended to integrate all functions within one platform with a clear goal to better manage University resources.

The priorities for the planning period are to conclude the process of implementation of service standards including analysis of administration positions for better resource distribution, and fully develop the Administration Management System by integrating operations of HR, Finance, Student Services, and Facilities. UTMS has been a wholly integrated institution since 2006 and has sought to establish an appropriate balance between decentralisation and autonomy. The University will keep under review the needs of Faculties in a devolved funding model with maximum efficiency in operating costs.

### Physical development and equipment

Whatever the future holds for UTMS, the campus needs further development of classrooms and offices facilities, it has to develop and equip new planned offices out of Skopje. However, in the economic climate prevailing in 2017, the UTMS has postponed all initiatives except those which will return any University costs in a defined period. This policy will be kept under review.

The facility in Skopje was renovated in 2006, but reconstruction continue permanently in order to provide top conditions for students and staff members. The IT infrastructure has been kept fully up to date and is under constant revision.

### Public Relations and Marketing

In a competitive market for students and research funding, and in pursuance of our wish to develop internationally, UTMS will continue to keep under review its PR activities, the website etc for fitness for purpose; part of this review will be the effective promotion of UTMS expertise to the media, government, NGOs, etc. International consultants advised on communication strategy in 2016.

A review of the way in which we communicate with staff and students, and how they can make their views known has been completed and will be further refined over the planning period.

Marketing strategy must be kept under review so that we are at least on a level with our known competitors: it is not just a question of billboards and advertisements but also how we relate to the market, how the University is portrayed in the media, etc. Responsibility for marketing is not confined to the administration; within agreed guidelines it is a function in which all staff can become involved. There are lessons to be learned from the success of some departments in increasing student numbers in 2018.

## **ANNEX 1**

### **Consolidated Faculty Strategic Visions**

Faculties recognise the need to engage in forward thinking and to be pro-active to ensure the success and sustainability of the University in the developing international and national financial climate. As expressed by the Faculty of Economics, strategic forecasting will help the Faculty to deal in a better way with what the future will bring: it usually comes much more quickly than we can imagine, can find the organization unprepared and the response time is very important. This is illustrated by the Faculty's optimistic view of the future economic situation in the region, and the consequent positive effects on student recruitment linked to financial resources of prospective students.

All five Faculties plan to play an active role in increasing student numbers, particularly at second cycle, spread over all UTMS locations, and so will establish or develop existing links with high schools and keep curricula under review in line with changes in the labour market; the need to be flexible has been emphasised. In line with the internationalisation strategy of the University, this includes working in collaboration with other universities, for example proposal for a joint degree programmes with the Faculty of Social Science –University of Ljubljana in the area of International Relations will be designed to offer content that will address the issue of capacities of state administration to absorb EU funds and also to create a cadre to work in EU institutions with the accession process of the Republic of Macedonia. In the Faculty of IMM, greater emphasis will be put on practical work, use of cases, holding mock trials, developing links with professional bodies, etc. The Faculty of Economics will seek to establish closer links with business, working with the Advisory Board – including possibly increasing scholarship support and internship opportunities. The University's stress on student acquisition of key competences in addition to academic knowledge is a major strength which should be reflected in employability. In addition, the introduction of doctoral studies creates major opportunities to develop UTMS's work in research in all Faculties.

Faculties also intend to review their management, in line with the overall strategic objective to improve communication with teaching staff in order to introduce avenues for more constructive feedback and active involvement of the staff in processes related to academic decision making. Teaching staff should be regularly and effectively informed about new university policies, effective organization of faculty council meetings-setting the agenda; creating an environment for constructive discussions; and evaluation of draft minutes.

The effective deployment of expertise of academic staff is central to the overall aim of making best use of human resources and to improve quality of teaching, through the use of existing methodology. The gradual replacement of part-time staff is a reflection of the overall University aim to build up its own cadre of qualified staff after 12 years and to ensure that all staff are assessed and evaluated on the same basis. Staff development, including support for research activity, will be a key element in building the best quality staffing profile in the region.

In a similar vein, Faculties generally advocate greater transparency and improved communication with the student body involving them actively in council meetings and in the quality assurance team and hearing their concerns and needs with the overall aim to improve the teaching process. They also propose an intensification of cooperation with alumni, by including them in the organizational structure especially in curricula planning, because they are most interested in the reputation of the faculty as the value of the diploma is directly related with the reputation of management. This requires however an accurate database of alumni.

The overall University aim is establishing two courses taught in English. The Faculties recognise that this means going outside the region to recruit international staff to deliver this type of programme with a value added greater than UTMS's competitors.

All Faculties see the market for second cycle studies, notably in the Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, as being a key development for the next period, as what UTMS offers brings a competitive advantage (solid reputation, better programmes, better conditions etc). It is recognised that this is related with the price issue, as the cost of study in second cycle is very similar with all other universities in R Macedonia and the region, which is not the case with undergraduate studies. Faculties will aim to build on existing successes in holding national and international conferences, to make these a regular feature of UTMS activity.

Strategic goals for next five years will stay on the same strong economic foundations and principles in order to provide maximizing of financial returns and to improve its position as quality higher education institution in the Republic of Macedonia and in the region of SEE.