

Pursuant to the Singidunum University Statute, article 52, University Senate enacted the following decision at the meeting held on September 22nd 2014:

**UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY**  
**(Five-year period 2014 – 2019)**

*Rector's Address*

As the first accredited private university in Serbia, Singidunum University is strongly committed to establishing and fully developing its international cooperation with numerous partners in Europe and worldwide. We are equipped to meet all intercultural communication and coordination challenges that are closely related to such commitment. We are aware of the differences in national contexts, legal and regulatory environments, teaching programmes and research priorities and we consider them an opportunity to further enrich our own experiences. Therefore, we are willing to offer our entire intellectual capital to contribute to the overall advancements in internationalization of the teaching process and research theory and practices.

We consider programmes standardization, student and staff mobility, joint study programmes and joint participation in educational and research projects to be the vocal points of successful international cooperation providing mutual benefits to the parties involved. In an increasingly borderless world, borderless knowledge is a necessary precondition for successful integration of education and scientific research in the society. It will provide opportunities for joint development and dissemination of positive ideas and practices, development of intercultural competencies and increased competitiveness of the human capital.

This Internationalization Strategy provides a blueprint of our vision of the world and the route map that defines the transition from our current position to the one where we would like to reach in five years' time. As the world is continuously changing, our strategy will also be periodically evaluated, and might be subject to changes and modifications. However, our strong and clear commitment to fostering international cooperation and internationalization of our operations will remain unchanged.

Rector,  
Prof. Milovan Stanisic, PhD

## *Introduction*

Internationalization is a two-way process; for the University to realize the full benefits of our global reach, it must give as much as it takes. We believe that by working multilaterally rather than unilaterally, we do achieve much more in terms of teaching, research and knowledge transfer. We are committed towards cultivating long lasting cross-border relationships that are mutually beneficial, focusing on the added value to students as well as to the academic and commercial partners.

We seek to maintain the highest standards in all of our professional activities. Although we are fundamentally Serbian institution, we will always remain sensitive to international segment and attempt to keep pace with the current cross-cultural circumstances.

In general, we consider knowledge as a public good; we recognize that we have the responsibility to generate and share knowledge for the well-being of the society. As an educational institution operating on an international level, we are committed to international cooperation with the developed countries as well as to educational capacity development in emerging economies.

Internationalization is an investment for the future and requires a long term commitment to our students, our staff, and international partners. To this end, we perceive this process as a five year strategic plan rather than as a short term activity.

## *Singidunum University History*

Singidunum University was founded in 2005, as the first private university in Serbia, by decision of the Serbian Council for University Education Development. The study programmes are accredited in three scientific fields: social sciences and humanities, natural sciences and mathematics, technical and technological sciences. The courses within undergraduate, graduate and master levels are conducted in both Serbian and English.

In accordance with the Bologna Declaration Principles, we have adopted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and contemporary trends in higher education based on a new concept of integrated functions and study processes. Curricula and degree formats are in line with the best practices of the well-known European Universities. Besides its regular studies, Singidunum University provides an opportunity for studying through customized Distance Learning system designed to provide studying opportunities for those hindered by limited time, distance or physical disability.

There are currently around 12.000 students attending different study programmes at Singidunum University. Lectures are carried out in new and modern facilities fully equipped with the latest IT infrastructure, audio-video and other state-of-the-art tools necessary for successful realization of educational activities. In addition, our students and teaching staff are provided with various primary and secondary information sources.

## *International Credentials*

Since the very beginning of its relatively short but dynamic existence, Singidunum University has been developing activities related to establishing and expanding of international relations and cooperation with educational and scientific institutions worldwide. As a result of such policies, several international cooperation programmes have been initiated and are continuously upgraded. Three best examples of such cooperation are as follows:

- Austrian- Serbian Bachelor programme in Tourism and Leisure Management - Singidunum University and IMC University of Applied Sciences, Krems, Austria,
- Master programme in Business Systems in Tourism and Hospitality, UNWTO (TedQual) Themis Foundation, international programme
- Joint undergraduate and postgraduate studies: BBA & MBA, American degree programmes in Serbia – Singidunum University & Lincoln University USA

In addition, Singidunum University has initiated two teaching programmes for international students which are attended by students from several countries (Libya, Greece, FRY Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and the others).

Singidunum University has been participating in international projects for several years either as coordinator or partner. We have a proven track record of cooperation in numerous European projects (Tempus) by joining forces with the partners from several European countries.

Based on the positive experiences from such endeavors, we are looking forward to sharing our 'know-how' with the current and future partners, both in the domain of education and scientific research.

## *Our Vision*

Since the end of the last century, the process of globalization has developed to the extent which was hard to imagine 50 years ago. The advent of the Internet as the key communication tool and information source, along with its borderless nature, has entirely changed our working and living environment. Today, we can easily communicate free of charge with almost anyone and anywhere; abundance of information is freely available at our fingertips, irrespectively of the place of work or residence.

In addition to global aspects of communication and information sharing, many other aspects of our daily lives are transcending national and cultural borders. Climate change, world's economy, infectious diseases, transportation, crime and many other relevant issues are increasingly losing their national characteristics and are becoming truly global. In the absence of the authoritative global governance bodies, it is essential to establish cross-border cooperation channels on a professional level that will comply with the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Education plays a crucial role in the development of civil society. It accumulates and further upgrades knowledge in the broadest sense and ensures that the best knowledge is transferred to the new generations in the most efficient way. It aims to prepare young men and women for creative and productive work and to enable them to give their own contribution to the overall social development. With the new technologies to support the process and facilitate international cooperation, education is increasingly focusing towards global labor market trends, exchange of information and personnel mobility.

### ***Mission and Social Responsibility***

The mission of Singidunum University is to contribute to the society through accumulation and further development of knowledge as well as through knowledge transfer and dissemination to students, academic world, private and public sector and society at large.

The University advocates social awareness among its students and academic staff and conducts all its activities in compliance with ISO 26000 standard.

We pledge to give full attention to all of the seven principles of social responsibility: Accountability, Transparency, Ethical behavior, Respect for local stakeholders, Respect for the rule of law, Respect for the international norms of behavior, and Respect for human rights.

As an integral part of the society, Singidunum University will conduct all of its activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, thus accumulating, creating and distributing intellectual capital to all segments of the society.

### ***Core Objectives and Particular Goals***

Based on the framework of the Strategy, our vision and our mission to contribute to the society in a responsible manner, we have established three core internationalization objectives for the period 2015 – 2019:

- to establish ourselves as the leading Serbian University in terms of international cooperation
- to become one of the leaders of Higher Education (HE) Internationalization on Balkans
- to be respectable contributor to the Internationalization efforts in HE in Europe and wider

In order to meet the aforementioned internationalization objectives, we have developed five strategic long-term programmes:

1. Programme standardization based on the international norms and requirements
2. Development and deployment of student mobility programmes
3. Development and deployment of staff mobility programmes
4. Development and deployment of joint degree / double degree programmes
5. Participation in joint educational / research projects

We have based our strategy on our positive experiences within the domain of international cooperation as well as on the best international practices related to internationalization. Our focus shall be higher education institutions located in West Balkan countries as well as the leading educational institutions in European Community and wider.

### ***Programme standardization based on the international norms and requirements***

Internationalization and standardization of the curriculum will be embedded in all facets of the programme development at Singidunum University, from policy statements to daily teaching practices. Primary goal will be harmonizing all our programmes with the best international practices and applying the highest international standards to all our curricula. In addition to standardization of the contents of our programmes, we will pay particular attention to fostering language capabilities and intercultural competencies of our students and teaching staff. Furthermore, we will facilitate access to institutional, national and international funding opportunities such as Erasmus and scholarships in order to provide sufficient budgeting.

We believe that with the introduction of internationally based standardized programmes, we will equip our graduates with the knowledge that would increase their competitiveness in the domestic and international working environment. We strongly believe that international involvement is of crucial importance for further education, talent development, knowledge transfer and advancement in the domain of scientific research.

As a part of this strategy, we will continue with standardization of our programmes following the best practices in international education. Besides preparing our students and staff for international integrations, there are ongoing plans for the introduction of advanced English courses as well as some other languages (German, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, other) to all of our faculties. We also intend to introduce courses of intercultural competencies.

### ***Development and deployment of student mobility programmes***

We will develop and implement programmes for short and mid-term student exchanges with our international partners. Through harmonization of our programmes with the partner universities, we will contribute to the effective exchange and recognition of achievements based on ECTS system. In addition, relying on the existing experiences, we will offer full time studies to students from other countries. Furthermore, our distant learning programmes will be modified in such a way as to make them available to the international students from partner universities.

Student exchange programmes are considered essential for increasing the outgoing and incoming student mobility. We believe that promotion of international experiences and development of student international competencies are essential for enhancing international competitiveness.

Our aim is to substantially increase the number of student exchange by the year 2019, as well as to double the number of foreign students completing their studies at Singidunum University. We plan to put lots of effort into making the distance learning programmes available to all international students who meet the enrollment criteria at the University.

### ***Development and deployment of staff mobility programmes***

Singidunum University plans to facilitate both incoming and outgoing staff exchange. We shall take all necessary measures to identify suitable partners and programmes and engage in a meaningful cooperation. The University management will provide necessary conditions (sabbatical leave, other short term leaves, partners search), designed to facilitate international staff exchange and mobility. The University will also encourage the arrival of inbound international staff by assisting in administrative matters, accommodation and travel issues, etc.

We consider that increased staff exchange in general, and academic and research scientific staff in particular, will strongly contribute to the improvement of professional competencies. Upon return from their exchange programmes, outgoing staff will contribute to enhancing the overall quality of the teaching process as well as programmes themselves. Incoming exchange staff will directly contribute to dissemination of their own best practices in the teaching and research process.

Our aim is to provide all necessary conditions for outgoing and incoming staff with the emphasis being placed on the academic staff. The University will invest all their efforts in providing the relevant contact data at partner universities. In addition, it will provide all available information related to funding opportunities of such exchange programmes (Erasmus +, Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and others.).

### ***Development and deployment of joint degree / double degree programmes***

Based on the positive experiences with Austrian- Serbian Bachelor programme in Tourism and Leisure Management - Singidunum University and IMC University of Applied Sciences, Krems, Austria, the University will endeavor to further deepen such cooperation with other reputable foreign universities. The focus will be on the development of joint degree and double degree programmes in the area of social sciences and humanities, natural sciences and mathematics, technical and technological sciences, at all three levels of study (undergraduate, master's and doctoral studies).

Such joint programmes have so far proven beneficial for both Singidunum University and partner universities. The synergetic effects of these actions have contributed greatly to the improvement of programme quality as well as the teaching methods and standards.

During the period 2014-2019, the University will look for and evaluate all opportunities for establishing additional joint degree / double degree programmes with the universities in European Union and beyond.

### ***Participation in joint educational / research projects***

According to previous experiences and practices, the University will attempt to foster continuous participation in international projects related to educational advancements and scientific research. Special emphasis will be placed on new European community initiated programme- Horizon 2020. Together with our current and future partners, we will look for and apply for all relevant programmes related to our professional activities. In addition, the University will take into consideration all other possibilities for participating in international projects dealing with challenges in education and research.

The results that have been achieved within Tempus programme have met the expectations and have contributed greatly and noticeably to the improvement of our professional practice and cooperation with partner institutions. Thus, we consider future cooperation on projects such as Horizon 2020 clearly beneficial to us and our partners.

Singidunum University will incessantly look for partnerships on relevant projects and other similar initiatives participating with its full intellectual capital.

### ***Evaluation, Reporting, Achievements Measurement, Continuity***

Evaluation of the strategy will be performed on an annual basis. International Office will produce a detailed written report on actions, activities and results related to the core objectives and particular goals. The report will be submitted to the university management for the purpose of evaluation and approval.

Particular achievement measurement techniques will be developed in due course.

In order to meet the challenges of the ever-changing social and professional environment, the Strategy will be modified on an annual basis for the specified mobility period and in accordance with anticipated expectations.

### ***International Office***

In line with the requirements to fulfill the specified strategic mission, reach the core objectives and particular goals, the University has established a dedicated International Office. The office comprises five qualified professionals with substantial experience in international cooperation. Moreover, the University is willing to further broaden this team to meet the current demands and objectives, if required.


### *Conclusion*

By defining the concrete strategy and expressing commitment and willingness to work on its continuous development in future, Singidunum University has publicly confirmed its clear orientation towards internationalization of students and staff exchange programmes, scientific cooperation and development and deployment of joint degree / double degree programmes.

The University will welcome any constructive actions and suggestions from our current and potential international partners that are in line with the Strategy, professional interests of the University and beneficial for the society at large.

The herein mentioned University International Strategy comes into force at the date of its enacting and publishing at the University web site and shall be delivered to all the faculties within the University.

PRESIDENT OF SINGIDUNUM  
UNIVERSITY SENATE  
RECTOR



Prof. Milovan Stanisic, Ph.D