

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

Academic Staff and Student Mobility Strategy at Singidunum University

In modern era of globalization, a growing part of education takes place in networks expanding across national borders. International mobility and interactions among teachers and students have increased significantly and have become the basic requirement for exchanging talent, developing new knowledge and maintaining high quality standards.

Several studies have been conducted under the auspices of King Baudouin Foundation with aim to provide information on travel and studying situation among Western Balkan students.ⁱ According to the results, the number of students who have never been abroad decreased in recent years, however, only 26 out of 2,137 students questioned for the purpose of the survey have studied abroad and returned to their home country. Furthermore, it has been observed that only 2.4% of the students are familiar with a key scholarship scheme such as Erasmus Mundus Programme. It is therefore not surprising that even though many students are interested in studying abroad (around 28.7%), only very few of them succeed in doing so.

Our ambition at Singidunum University is to develop, facilitate and encourage outbound and inbound staff and student mobility, and enhance experience of all participants in the process. We find that a strong international involvement is fundamental for education, talent development, research activities, consultancy services and knowledge transfer. Academic staff, working either collaboratively or as individuals with the established institutional reputation in focussed areas, will be encouraged to disseminate and promote their work internationally.

Below are given the objectives for the five-year period (2015-2020).

1. Support the University's aim **to create a learning culture that is challenging, creative and flexible** through the development of opportunities to foster intellectual maturity and enhance co-curricular skills.
2. **Design more courses and full degree programmes in English.** Given that the vast majority of the academic personnel are fluent in English, the departments will be encouraged to offer more courses and full degree programmes in English in order to increase the number of students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds who choose to study outside their home countries.

3. **Facilitate and maximize access to institutional, national and international funding opportunities** such as Erasmus and scholarships so as to enable Serbian students and teaching staff to be mobile irrespective of their financial background. Studying abroad provides Serbian students with the opportunity to acquire important intercultural and linguistic qualifications, and understand different working and teaching methods by participating in courses alongside students from other parts of the world.
4. **Promoting international experience and developing students' international competencies** is important in order to increase the number of Serbian students going abroad. Students at all levels of study, in particular those enrolled in Master's and PhD degree programmes, will be encouraged to study abroad for a certain period of time. Fostering the mobility of doctoral students and early-stage researchers, as well as their integration into international research communities is of vital importance for the University's development, and the overall prosperity of our country. Students play a key role in shaping tomorrow's society in Serbia and furthering EU integration. Those who live and study abroad have the possibility to attain the very knowledge and education needed in Serbia for spurring the reform process, institution building and economic development as well as for furthering the continued democratic development. Student Mobility changes their own perspectives and enhances employment prospects, but also enriches institutions, employers and the broader society by equipping students with increased understanding and experience of studying and working in a global environment.
5. **Provision of remote access to University services.** The University will offer a comprehensive and high-quality service to its students on foreign exchange programs in order to ensure that they continue to feel part of Singidunum University community.
6. **Enhance University's capacity** for international engagement and leadership.
7. **Advocate a more balanced mobility between incoming and outgoing students**, since one-way mobility can have a sustained effect on the host and home countries, can facilitate capacity building and cooperation and may lead to brain gain on the one side and to brain drain on the other. Therefore, Singidunum University welcomes international students from all over the world through exchange programs and helps them to become well-adjusted and productive members of our community since they are the best ambassadors of the University, as well as Serbia, once they return back to their own countries.

8. **Developing collaboration with higher education institutions in the European Union and beyond.** Within the framework of the internationalization strategy, Singidunum University has concluded a number of bilateral and cooperation agreements with prestigious universities and research institutions from Europe, Russia, the USA, and China in order to enhance academic quality, increase world-wide recognition, and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and resources. Further development and maintenance of strategic partnerships with higher education institutions that offer new intellectual challenges and perspectives, is of vital importance for academic mobility. Besides, such cooperation should include activities related to teaching, intensive programs and development of common curricula, as well as participation in international educational organizations, networks and university associations.
9. **Developing online resources** that will bring together all relevant information on studying abroad and details about financial assistance available to both institutions and students. All mobility data and other information required by the ECTS users guide should also be published on the official University's website.
10. **Strengthening of arrival and support system for incoming international students.** Financial, linguistic and non-recognition of qualifications are some of the barriers that deter students in this country from gaining valuable international experience. Therefore, support should extend to issues regarding taxation, insurance policies, visa procedures, social security, health services, education, language courses, accommodation, etc., with the aim to minimize any obstructions posed to mobility.
11. **Developing double-degree bachelor and master programmes** **that** will be offered to Serbian, as well as to international students coming to study at Singidunum University. Up till now, the top management of our University has signed the cooperation agreement with IMC University of Applied Sciences, Austria, regarding the organization of Bachelor's degree programme in Tourism and Leisure Management. Special benefit is related to the fact that our students have the option to spend at least one semester studying at the partner institution in Austria and vice versa, Austrian students have the option to spend time at Singidunum University. The programme gives students a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the language and culture of another country while studying at partner institutions.

12. **Development of the quality assurance system** comprising several actions. First of all, it is necessary to monitor the number and diversity of outbound students, for the purpose of achieving a steady increase and growth in diversity. Also, it is required to monitor programs, agreements and service provision, responding to student feedback, and report through the academic monitoring process to ensure quality.
13. **Providing reliable mobility data collection.** Enhanced mobility dataset will help to monitor progress made in the attainment of the objectives.
14. **Establishing of the International Relations Office with enhanced capabilities** will fast track our plans to extend our formal partnerships with pre-eminent international universities and increase the number and diversity of outbound students.
15. Academic staff mobility is another issue that needs to be addressed in the Strategy of Mobility. Up till now, it has mostly relied on personal contacts or/and cooperation agreements with other higher education institutions. **However, facilitating the utilization of sabbatical/scientific leave and/or encouraging the staff to spend shorter period abroad for the purpose of guest lecturing, deserves special attention** in order to enhance the quality and relevance of teaching and research at Singidunum University. To that end, the development of multicultural and language competencies of academic staff, as well as other actions outlined in the Action plan of Singidunum University will be our main objective in the upcoming period. Mobility experience will not be considered a prerequisite for further promotion, but it will be taken into consideration.
16. Remunerated **scientific/sabbatical leave can last up to 12 months every five to six years.**
17.
 18. **Sabbaticals tend to be focused on research;** in some cases, they can also be used for the purpose of professional development or teaching at another higher education institution.
 19. **Upon the expiry of their scientific leave, academic staff is obliged to remain at Singidunum University for at least three years.**

Mobility strategy comes into force at the date of its enacting and publishing at the University web page and shall be delivered to all the faculties within the University.

PRESIDENT OF SINGIDUNUM
UNIVERSITY SENATE
RECTOR



Prof. Milovan Stanasic, Ph.D

ⁱ Ivan Krastev, 2005. "International Commission on the Balkans. Report", King Baudouin Foundation and Centre for Liberal Strategies.

- Cecilia Lundström and HalehChahrokh, 2007. "Smart Visa for Students from the Western Balkans. Challenges and possible solutions", King Baudouin Foundation and International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

- Cecilia Lundström and HalehChahrokh, 2007. " Smart Visa for students from the Western Balkans. Recommendations for the way ahead" (short version), King Baudouin Foundation and International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

- Irma Salihovic and Martin Hofmann, 2008. "Students from the Western Balkans: the experience of EU countries regarding admission and misuse of procedures. A factual overview", King Baudouin Foundation and International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

- Milos Basic, 2009. "Student mobility in Western Balkan countries. Research report", King Baudouin Foundation.