



# University of Mostar

## Student Services and Career Office

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TEMPUS MOREM, KREMS, March 23-26, 2010

# Introduction

University of Mostar is organized as an association of faculties with absolute academic and partial financial autonomy.

The University is a legal entity, but faculties are also individual legal entities.

# University structure – present state



- Faculties are still legal entities
- Employment at the faculty level
- Students' enrollment at the faculty level
- Small number of services (offices) at the university level (International Relations Office, QA office)
- Commissions at the university level:
  - For Bologna process
  - For normative acts
  - For interuniversity cooperation
  - For finance, investment and development

As far as student services and career centers are concerned the situation is the following:

1. At the University of Mostar there is no special office for giving overall support to students. Taking into consideration that that is a very important segment, the University has conducted adequate activities in that area and faculties have approached this problem in an organized way. The result of that was forming of Student counseling services. The following steps were made:

Survey about student needs was conducted and its results are given in the table below

## Student needs

Survey conducted at 9 faculties, sample (N=905, M=257, W=627)  
average age 20,5 years

Most frequent difficulties/problems	M (%)	W (%)
Inefficient control of time for learning	68	53
Fear of failure in studying	63	78
Strong fear before exams	52	61
Uncertainty in future career and employment	50	58
Lack of motivation for learning	48	41
Difficulties with learning	45	45
Financial difficulties	42	48

Besides that *SWOT* analysis was made for the needs of the University internal analysis



# SWOT analysis – STRENGTHS

- Already established support services at some faculties e.g. Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Computing, Faculty of Medicine
- Positive experience with forms of support at the level of faculties
- Experience and activities of student organization in offering support to students
- Competent staff in the framework of academic community
- Experience in planning intervention measures and programmes
- The existing quality assurance system
- Motivation of the academic community members for involving into giving support
- Motivation of students to offer volunteer support



# SWOT analysis - WEAKNESSES

- Lack of strategic approach to development of infrastructure in that area
- Lack of institutional researches and University data bases
- Limited human, space and financial resources for intensive development of student support system
- Weak technical equipment for giving support to invalid students
- Lack of educational programmes for development of counseling skills of academic and administrative staff





# SWOT analysis - OPPORTUNITIES

- Generally positive attitude and consciousness about the need for establishing support services in the bodies and management of the University and members
- Learning from examples of good practice
- Emphasis on excellence in learning and teaching in the University internal and external environment
- Opportunity for national and international cooperation
- Opportunity of receiving funds from different sources (EU funds, local community, donors)
- Expansion of campus with great space potential



# SWOT analysis – THREATS

- Non-existence of national strategy for higher education development
- Tendency that the “possession” and responsibility for development of student support system is transferred to narrow expert groups and individuals
- Lack of academic staff motivation to involve into system of student support because of overload
- Weak communication among individual interested parties outside the University
- Low priority of financing support services in governmental and institutional financial plans
- Lack of external experts and referent institutions

If we look at general hierarchy model of student support service, which is presented in the next slide, the underlined supports are active at the University of Mostar:



# Hierarchy model of the student support system

LEVEL	KIND OF SUPPORT/SERVICE
<b>University</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Psychological counseling center</li><li>▪ <u>Student clinic (medical and dental)</u></li><li>▪ Office for career planning</li><li>▪ Office for students with special needs</li><li>▪ <u>International Relations Office – mobility counseling</u></li></ul>
<b>Faculties / Academy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Counselors for legal and financial issues</li><li>▪ Counselors for orientation in study and career</li><li>▪ Coordinators for the students with special needs</li><li>▪ <u>Coordinators for student international mobility</u></li><li>▪ <u>Web portals and printed information materials</u></li><li>▪ <u>Activities of orientation and student support organizations</u></li></ul>
<b>Departments / institutes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <u>For the first year students: orientation days/courses, mentors, student tutors, information materials</u></li><li>▪ For all students: programme counselors, groups for learning, <u>web sites and printed information materials</u></li></ul>

Besides the above mentioned, one of the faculties (Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Computing) has established student counseling service, whose basic characteristics are given in the next slides:



## Student counseling service at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Computing

With a goal of improving cooperation between teachers and students, monitoring quality of teaching, organizing studies with increased electiveness, the Faculty has organized student counseling service. Counseling service can help students in adjusting and orientation at the Faculty.

Counseling service has three levels:

General counseling service

Counseling service for final years

Mentorship

Vice-Dean for teaching process organizes and monitors counseling service. General counseling service works with the first and second year students every day in accordance to published duty.



# General counseling service

Tasks of the counselor in this service are:

Helping especially first year students in orientation at the Faculty

Explaining to first year students meaning of some teaching forms and warning them about the significance of continuous work during a semester

Explanation of rules and regulations related to learning which are printed in the faculty publications

Giving information and advice about the way of work and ways of testing their knowledge

Collecting of student objections about teaching and exams and submitting reports about that to Vice-Dean for teaching process

Noticing other problems of students and giving proposals to the Vice-Dean for teaching process about possible taking of actions necessary for solving problems



# Counseling service for final years students

Student counselors in this service have the following tasks:

Giving information to the second year students before enrolling in the third year

Counseling students about possible ways of finishing their studies and on the basis of wishes expressed by students helping them in making contacts with potential mentors

Giving information and advice about the way of work and ways of testing their knowledge

Collecting of student objections about teaching and exams and submitting reports about that to Vice-Dean for teaching process

Noticing other problems of students and giving proposals to the Vice-Dean for teaching process about possible taking of actions necessary for solving problems





# Mentorship

When enrolling in the fourth year of study student can get a mentor if he expresses wish for that. That mentor helps the student in making his/her diploma thesis. Tasks of the mentor are:

Counseling and guiding of the student from the enrolment in the fourth year till the end of study

Giving approval for selection of elective courses

Assigning and grading of seminar papers, project tasks and diploma theses.



## Working schedule of the service

- Every day from 10:00 till 12:00
- For students of the first two years counselor on duty is in the office 106
- For older students office 107
- Counselors are: teachers, associates and senior year students



# CONCLUSION

Support to realization of student potentials should not be understood as additional workload and expense but as one of both short-term and long-term excellent investments

## 2. There is no Career office at the University of Mostar

However, that is not a reason for not taking care about this activity. Namely, the University has a Student Union, which is the highest student organization and it is significantly involved into career activities. Besides that, offices of the international student associations (AIESEC, IAESTE) also exist at the University and they work intensively in the framework of their programme (student exchange, workshops, etc.). Through the Student union presidency, Rector, Rector's assistant for teaching and students, Deans and Vice-Deans of Faculties, the University participates, helps and encourages work of these associations.

Thanks to the initiative of the AIESEC representatives for holding a manifestation called “CAREER DAYS”, four such manifestations have been held at the University so far (2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009).

“Career Days 2010” are under preparation. Because of its great importance, the University and all its members pay attention to holding of this manifestation.

## „CAREER DAYS“

„Career days“ is one of the most significant AIESEC projects the goal of which is to connect students, final year students and post-graduate students with successful companies in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The companies have an opportunity to make direct contacts with potential staff, presenting their work and way of recruiting students, education of students through workshops. From the other side students get the opportunity to get acquainted with business environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## WORKSHOPS

Represent combination of work, presentation and discussions or debates in the form of interactive teaching. They give students insight into business world and companies an opportunity to present their work and corporation culture to wide student population. Goal of such workshops is improvement of student capabilities and skills in certain areas, e.g. how to present yourself in the best possible way during an interview, how to communicate successfully. Workshops are also a good opportunity for directing student attention to the activities of the company.

# „CAREER DAYS 2009“

Date: May 20-22, 2009

Place: Mostar, Amphitheater and Hall of the Faculty of Economics

First day

Opening ceremony in which Rectorate representatives, Vice-Rectors, Deans, professors, associates, ministries representatives and companies representatives participated. That was a direct opportunity for students to meet the companies representatives. Press conference. AIESEC workshop “HOW TO SEARCH FOR A JOB SUCCESSFULLY”



Second day

Workshops of companies

The special workshop was the one held by TRENKWALDER. In that workshop students could see a complete process of job announcement and how to represent themselves in the best possible way.

Third day

Holding of job fair which lasted for five hours. The participants got their own stand where they represented working places for which the student could apply and offered a form which the student could fill and in that way they were registered in the company data base.

Students could also make contacts with their potential employers and collect information from practice for which they were interested.

## Experiences and results

The practice has shown that companies who participated in the job fair decide to employ students. Data from 2008 show that 7 students were employed through this manifestation. Hypo Alpe Adria Group employed the most of applicants. One of the special features of Career days is that companies give an opportunity to AIESEC members to find a job with their help.

Companies make their own data base about final year students which is updated every year.

## Plans

Holding of manifestation „CAREER DAYS 2010“ in May 2010. Possibility of participating in „Most Desirable Company“ project which is a part of Career days 2010. That is a project for implementing survey about most desirable companies in our areas and enabling companies to see how students perceive their company and in that way they will try to improve that perception in the future.

The University is in the process of making its Strategy and new Institutional development plan in which the problems of career offices and students services will find their place on the basis of experiences and results of this project.

*Thank you for your attention!*