

Remarks upon the Opening of the Academic Year 2010 by Mr. Ilijanco Gagovski

University American College Skopje Academic Year Inauguration, Aleksandar Palace, Skopje, 22 September 2010

Honorable Rector Bojadziev, members of the rectorate, professors, parents and students – on behalf of the Business Council of the University American College and from me personally, allow me to congratulate the start of their first academic school year, to all the new students and to wish them a lot of successes and newly accumulated knowledge in the years to come.

I would like to share with you a couple of thoughts around the concept of knowledge – the key concept associated with the educational process. Everyone is intuitively aware that the knowledge is one of the crucial pre-conditions necessary for achieving success in any walk of life. We all also know about the old paradigm about the “information based economy”, whose transformation is happening before our very eyes. Namely, when the information became easily accessible through the use of ICT, thus stopping to be a competitive advantage in itself, it became apparent that the information needs to be contextualized in order to become knowledge and bring us added value – and so we came to the today’s paradigm of the “knowledge based economy”. With today’s pace of development of the technologies, the knowledge itself become very easily accessible, and we all become aware that the knowledge should be treated only as a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for success (to use a mathematical analogy here). It seems that a new paradigm is emerging, the one about the “wisdom based economy and society”. This is not just a nice saying neat for speeches like this one, but a essential shift in the focus from the knowledge per se, to the questions WHAT we do with the knowledge, and not less importantly, HOW we use it. Our academic, Prof. Pop-Jordanov lucidly defined the wisdom, in this context, as knowledge plus moral. I always add one more element to this equation and that is innovation – to get to the directions that should lead us to success – knowledge plus innovation plus moral. This means that we can no longer attribute innovation only to the “selected few” – it needs to be treated as a day-to-day modus operandi, if we are to survive in the business world. The morale, which in the light of business context and our geographical context in particular seems as a surplus in the equation, is in fact key element of it. Namely, anyone looking for long term success needs to take care of the newly emerging moral norms – how we treat our natural environment today is a question of morale for example. The treatment of the innovative workers today becomes a partnership instead of the employer-employee relationship, because you can force someone to work hard in a mine, but you cannot force someone to be innovative. Finally, in the light of the easy accessibility of the information as such, the expectations on transparency of the businesses are higher all the time.

Having all this in mind, no one today should treat himself as a “finished product” – we should all treat ourselves as work-in-progress. The career climb should also not be treated as going up the ladder from point A to point B – instead it more useful to project ourselves as being on an endless spiral, which itself moves in different directions – it is up to us how much energy we will invest to move up this spiral. I believe that you, the new students will make the right energy investment choices, starting with the one you are making today to study at the University American College. I wish you all the best on your journey to success.

Ilijanco Gagovski, President of the Business Council