

University American College Skopje

Opening of Academic Year 2011

September 21, 2011

19:30

- Good evening Rector Bojadziev, distinguished guests, faculty, students and family members. I bring you greetings from Ambassador Wohler and the U.S. Embassy.
- It is my pleasure to be here this evening at the official opening of the 2011 academic year. September is my favorite time of the year. Even now that I am no longer a student, September signals new beginnings and a time to renew and recommit to our careers and our families.
- As a Foreign Service officer with USAID, I specialize in education reform. As you can imagine, I'm very passionate about education – not only because it is the field that I work in, but also because my education has transformed my life and afforded me many opportunities in life.
- I am from a very rural community in the United States where most people work as farmers or in car factories. I am proudly the second person in my family to receive a university education. My older sister was the first.
- Whether you are the first in your family to go to university or the one hundredth, you must remember that this opportunity also brings with it a responsibility to work hard and to give back.
- My university courses required a lot of hard work and dedication. But it was time well spent. Not only did I learn a lot, but my university diploma opened so many doors for me.
- Perhaps the biggest door it opened was allowing me to pursue the job of my dreams with the U.S. Foreign Service, a job where I feel I can really make a difference in the World. I have worked on education reform in so many interesting places – Egypt, Senegal, Pakistan, and of course in the beautiful country of Macedonia.
- And what an exciting time to be in Macedonia to watch the European Basketball Championships!

- Education is not just important to me personally, it is also a critical element of U.S. foreign assistance programs here in Macedonia and around the world.
- In fact, the USAID continues to be the single largest donor in education in Macedonia, having contributed more than \$86 million to the sector.
- USAID is working with the government and people of Macedonia to ensure that schools are preparing youth for the 21st century workplace.
- At the same time, we are working to reinforce the appreciation for diversity that underpins a stable democracy in a multi-ethnic society and to ensure that education is fully accessible to all students – including those with disabilities.
- But education is not only about learning just what you need to secure a good job, or how to live in a multi-cultural society.
- Today, with rapid technological advances making profound changes in the world, it's more important than ever to know how to learn on your own and how to adapt to new challenges.
- William A. Feather, an American publisher and author (1889-1981), said an education is “being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't. It's knowing where to go to find out what you need to know; and it's knowing how to use the information you get.”
- I encourage you to make the most of your time here at UACS and to take responsibility for your own education. Expose yourself to as many new ideas as you can and take advantage of each and every opportunity you can.
- Learn from your classmates as well as your instructors. The friendships you form here at UAC will be the foundations of networks that will be invaluable to you throughout life.
- Most importantly, I encourage each of you to pursue your passions and your dreams. Good luck in Academic Year 2011!