VISION AND MISSION OF E-LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBROVNIK

INTRODUCTION

Under the Lisbon Strategy the goal of the European Union is to become the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment by 2010. One of the key concepts of this strategy are the lifetime education programmes and application of e-learning. Expectations are focused not only on promotion of economic growth competitiveness and employment rate, but also on fostering wider social involvement and more active role of citizens as well as their personal development and individual needs.

The Croatian National Education Development Strategy (Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010 in the Republic of Croatia) as the priority issues defines also "development of lifelong learning habits", "application of information-communication technology" and "innovative approaches in educational processes and their harmonization with the European Union requirements at all levels of education".

Within its mission and goals the University of Dubrovnik adapts to changes in the scientific progress, changes in teaching methods and meets the needs of the students and expectations of its employees and the community, striving to promote the University as an institution offering global excellence in education in order to attract best possible students, national or international, promoting the international, and especially European, co-operation in higher education and science and arts.

THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBROVNIK AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

Tradition creates the present

The University of Dubrovnik is based on historical tradition of the city of Dubrovnik that has been nourishing education, culture and scientific research for centuries as a means of expressing its own identity, recognized worldwide long time ago. The University of Dubrovnik is rather new and still small in number and scope, but significant when taking into consideration that its present and future are based on historical cultural heritage of the European cultural, artistic and educational centres.

Organization

The University organization model provides for full integrity. Teaching activities are organized in separate departments within which university and professional studies are being conducted and teaching, scientific and highly professional activities organized and performed. Curricula are provided and performed in accordance with the Bologna Declaration recommendations, according to which the educational process is an active partnership between the teacher and the students, adapted to individual needs of students and with clearly stated educational goals and responsibilities for achievement of these goals.

The University of Dubrovnik is organized to provide for internal and external mobility of students, teachers and researchers, rational application of human and material resources, development of multidisciplinary studies, as well as supervision and continuous improvement of quality and competitiveness of the teaching, scientific, artistic and professional activities.

Curricula

In elaboration of new curricula based on Dubrovnik tradition and culture, the University focuses onto monitoring the needs of future employers and social community, introducing at the same time modern methods and technologies to comply with cultural changes required by the advanced needs of societies of knowledge and economy based on knowledge, which are inevitable in modern globalization processes. The lifelong education programmes are flexible, interdisciplinary and topic-oriented.

The curricula provide students with latest scientific cognitions and skills based on scientific research, and consequently abilities to solve theoretical and practical tasks from scientific fields, i.e. scientific branches, and for scientific research.

ABOUT E-LEARNING

E-learning is seen as the educational process of highest quality in which the teachers and the students actively participate in order to reach given educational goals. During the process information and communication technologies are used to create a flexible virtual surrounding in which multimedia interactive educational materials are used, intercommunication and co-operation are achieved, the students carry-out individual or group assignments and projects, as well as continuous self-evaluation and testings.

Definition
E-learning is the educational process (learning and teaching process) in which information and communication technology is used, contributing thus to quality improvement of the process and quality of its result.

Forms
Depending on the intensity and manner in which information and communication technology (hereinafter called: ICT) is used in the educational process, several forms of e-learning can be distinguished: from application of elementary ICT tools in the classic teaching form (face-to-face or F2F), through blended, mixed mode or hybrid teaching, representing a combination of the classic classroom teaching and advanced ICT possibilities, to fully online learning and teaching method. To ensure a successful and efficient application of e-learning, i.e. successful application of ICT in education, it is important to select the method and approach adjusted to meet requirements of an individual course, as well as actual possibilities and requirements of the teachers and the students according to which the teacher, as mentor, co-ordinates and stimulates the educational process giving to the student an active role in the responsibility for its results.

Opportunities from implementation of e-learnig
E-learning supports better quality and efficiency of the learning process, flexibility of the study programmes, individual approach to each student, efficient application of available

physical and virtual resources, continuity of the e-learning process, introduction of new target groups in the educational processes, intensive communication among participants in the educational process, unlimited flow of information and realization of co-operation, and it contributes to better communication at the University.

Through e-learning students are introduced to new learning methods supported by technology, such as collaborative learning that enables creation of "learning communities", not only with members of their study group, but also with external students, both national and international, which further contributes to exchange of data and to scientific and cultural promotion.

E-learning provides a better link between the academic community and economy, giving the economy a chance to participate in development and organization of study programmes, particularly those relating to lifelong education, and thus providing possibilities of studying to those who otherwise due to logistic reasons can not afford it, revitalization of rural and insular areas, as well as better tourist promotion.

E-learning enables the University to take a more active and more intensive role in the continuous longlife education of the Croatian citizens and to face its competition and challenges of the developing national as well as global educational market, which as a consequence of e-learning implementation is made available everywhere and to everyone.

VISION OF E-LEARNING (Desirable situation at the University of Dubrovnik by the end of the period, i.e. in 2010)
Within its educational processes the University of Dubrovnik provides its students and teachers with encouraging, equipped and stable surrounding that ensures success in education system changes and efforts to reach a new quality level.
The University recognizes the need, encourages and plans introduction of qualitative changes in organization of the educational process and teaching, striving to reduce the growing discrepancy between the knowledge acquired through formal and traditional education and requirements and needs of the modern labour market, economy and knowledge-based society. The skills obtained during the study represent a foundation for lifelong education and further independent learning and scientifically based collection and interpretation of data and information.
E-learning is a synonim for modern and quality education, and e-learning technologies and information and communication technologies in general can and should act as the catalyst in changes and efficient tools for achieving changes and implementation of the Bologna Declaration principles at the University of Dubrovnik.
Information and communication technology is harmoniously applied in the educational process so as to enable the teachers and students to communicate and effectively co-operate within the overall virtual environment for learning and teaching.

MISSION (Role of e-learning)
Within the context of its own mission the University of Dubrovnik adapts to changes in scientific progress, changes in teaching methodologies and meets the needs of the students and expectations of its employees and the community, striving to promote the University as an institution offering global excellence in education to attract the best possible students,

national or international, promoting the international, and especially European, co-operation in higher education and science and arts, and contributing thus to local community development.

Systematic implementation of e-learning contributes to quality of higher education by creating an environment in which active co-operation between the teachers and students is encouraged and enabled. Introduction of e-learning helps improve the scientific-research work and opens space for lifelong learning programmes, provides a more important social role and increases competitiveness of the University in both national and international environment.

Introduction of e-learning at the University of Dubrovnik, without imposing particular teaching methods and without restricting autonomy of the academic staff to bring decisions on the optimal teaching form, shall aim at:
- promoting the quality of higher education
- enabling the teachers and students to play new roles in the educational process
- increasing competitiveness of the University and its study programmes
- providing the students with skills necessary to apply lifelong learning technologies

BASIC GUIDELINES
1. The University of Dubrovnik, by providing for development and introduction of innovative and efficient technological and pedagogical solutions into educational processes, supports and actively encourages e-learning, i.e. application of information and communication technology in learning and teaching at all levels of higher education. E-learning is the legal and desirable learning and teaching method at the University of Dubrovnik.
2. E-learning is the constituent and integral part of the higher education process. University departments should recognize and apply the form of e-learning that is most appropriate for the educational area, i.e. for the particular study and/or course. The focus is on finding an adequate means of application of e-learning methods and technologies and their careful but efficient and adopted to real conditions integration into educational processes at the University, at the same time constantly developing the culture of excellence, both in everyday teachers' work as well as in encouraging thorough and dedicated students' work, aiming to obtain the higher education quality standards.
3. The University of Dubrovnik supports adoption of common standards and recommendations for elaboration and use of e-learning teaching material.
4. The University of Dubrovnik is deeply involved in sustainability and development of e-learning, by providing for necessary preconditions, through systematic planning of activities and obtaining resources for application of e-learning, through continuous support to the teachers and evaluation and recognition of their achievements in application of e-learning, through building and maintenance of infrastructure, and through stimulation, co-financing of development and promotion of quality e-learning teaching material.