Denis Prcić, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of American University in BiH

Our Children's Mentality is Different
June 21st

- Are all professors Americans or some of them are local?

Our professors are Americans, and we do not have visiting professors. The US professors come here for a year's work with our students, so they are with us students all the time. Perhaps in the future local professors will teach at American University, but we do not have them currently. We want to create for our students an atmosphere in which they would feel as if they were in the USA, because they ask us to, and we listen to what our students and their parents have to tell us. They want to send their children abroad because of the professors, so it is not a good idea to mix the professors, if that's the model and we follow these principles. As far as I can see, the University of Sarajevo, the Faculty of Economics is trying to copy and paste our work, which makes me glad, so they list the ten reasons why to enroll in their faculty, they are introducing the dual diploma in cooperation with Ireland. I hope they catch up with us, although not so easily.

- How do foreign professors find their experience with BiH students?

Since our children's mentality is not the same as the mentality of the US children, professors teaching first year students need to make more commitment because of the discipline. Our students are not used to the fact that in the United States a professor is a professor, that discipline is required, while after classes the professor is just an ordinary human being having coffee with the students, having a chat with them, and listening to what they have to say. Our mentality is not used to this. As a matter of fact, students learn a lot from their professors in that way, because they show them that they need to be normal persons, and should know that the job is just that - the job, and school is just school, and that the discipline is there, as well as that everyone knows their place. All of this is a school. The US professors teach the students how to address both an educated and an uneducated person once they leave college.

- Are there any plans to open new colleges, in addition to the three colleges currently working?

We have three colleges at American University in BiH – the College of Digital Economy and Information Technologies, the College of International Law and Diplomacy and the College of International Finance and Banking. We were planning on opening the Nursing College in Tuzla, which requires some serious planning, so we'll see if this will go ahead next year or not. In Sarajevo, we finally received the clearance from the Ministry of Education, so we will start working in Sarajevo as of this year, and next year, if all goes as planned, in Banja Luka. The classes in Sarajevo will be held in our modern offices in UNITIC. Why is there only one group of students attending the College of Digital Economy and Information Technologies? Were there not enough interested parties? Well, it's not that there were not sufficient interested parties, but this is the type of workforce requiring laboratories, and it is important for our students to be able to find jobs once they graduate. Our country needs such experts, however, the awareness of that in small and medium companies is not there yet. These professionals are excellent programmers working on information systems and networking, and so currently we only accept 33 students at this College, but we will see how things will develop in the future.

- Is there a foundation for talented students at American University?

We have not yet completed the registration of the foundation, but there are people and companies that are willing to fund someone. We have some banks assisting the employees' children, they have contracts and a secured job upon graduation. We have not yet completed the foundation, but there are eight or seven students who are financially supported by certain people in their studies.

- Have you assisted the students not coming from Tuzla with accommodation?

We provided them all with accommodation, food and transport. The students were accommodated in apartments and houses in Tuzla. They had meals in the restaurant where I eat, while a bus took them to UNITIC on a weekly basis. We had 37 students from Sarajevo, who travelled to Tuzla every week, where they stayed for four days a week. We also had a number of students from other towns – Cazin, Mostar, Jablanica, Gradačac, but also from Germany, United States and Canada.