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*“Connection” asked Dr. Lichardus to share with us some of his own knowledge of his institution and his experience of working with Slovak students. His answers are salutary.*

the information society during the last twenty years into a new society in which knowledge plays a key role. This new situation generates new requirements for the management of industry, institutions and culture. The question of how to manage what the institutions know, and the use of what they know, becomes an equally important question in many situations; for example how to manage production, distribution, sales, etc. We try to reflect this substantial change by offering the study program of Knowledge Management within our education programs.

***How well are your students prepared for the job market? How did your students succeed in Young Talents 2007 and what are the advantages of this testing initiative?***

The students in their final year of study at VSM / CityU ranked second at the national testing of students of faculties of economics and management - Young Talents 2007. The testing consisted of three tests, the general economic TREND test, the logical test and the language test. In the English language test our students ranked first out of all 11 schools that took part in this years' testing. Young Talents is a testing and a recruitment program for final year students of the highest ranked Slovak Economics faculties. Approximately 7- 800 final year economics students in Slovakia participated at Young Talents testing in the 2007-2008 academic year. The Young Talents program helps talented young people to find the right employer and it also acts as a national ranking of economics faculties in Slovakia. The partners of Young Talents testing include the world's finest graduate employers such as TREND, Accenture, Ernst & Young, Penta, and Citibank. We are very proud of our students.

***In 2007 your college, as the only private college in Slovakia, successfully accomplished the European University Association (EUA) evaluation project. What was the main focus of the EUA in the process of evaluation?***

The EUA evaluation is designed (1) to review the procedures and processes in place in the universities, against the international best practice and (2) to use these evaluations to support the universities in the continuing development of

their quality and to meet best standards and practices. The EUA evaluation examined the following areas: (1) decision-making processes, institutional structures and the effectiveness of strategic planning; (2) the relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic planning; (3) as well as the perceived gaps in internal mechanism processes. The aim of the evaluation is oriented towards offering recommendations for improvement, rather than passing summary judgment or ranking institutions. The EUA Report on Vysoká škola manažmentu presents a successful example of validity and of the sustainable development of private tertiary education in Slovakia.

***On your website, 69% of students questioned think that English is a more important language for their future career than Slovak. Do you agree with the importance of English as a study language?***

The answer is yes. First of all, English is undoubtedly becoming the global language of the 21st century. As such, it is already used as the international language of communication, especially with regards to international business and transportation. With the globalization and emerging of new markets, business opportunities have occurred and will occur in the future like we have not seen before. Therefore, mastering the English language will be a matter of course and a natural predisposition for those who want to make a career in the world of international business and management. Secondly, regarding the current time students spend at university and the nature of their studies (where they write research papers, critical analysis, etc. on a daily basis), we can see that the majority of up-to-date research materials, as well as any international publication available from online databases and libraries are written mostly in English. Thus, accomplishing any assignments successfully requires an excellent knowledge of the English language. The answers to the questions in this interview were given by Prof. Lichardus and chosen from the contributions of teachers at Vysoká škola manažmentu.

*Michaela Benedikovičová*  
Connection Editor

Prepared by AmCham member

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## College of Management Co-operates with Businesses

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*Through the Lisbon strategy, the European Union designed its vision for the evolution of the Information Society to the Knowledge Society. This general concept cannot stand alone without strong input from the business entities.*

The College of Management is in the process of re-designing its curriculum that concentrates upon the following principles:

- Education oriented towards problem-solving skills;
- The faster application of newly obtained knowledge in practice

The first aim can be achieved by fostering student-oriented teaching and the learning of methodologies. The teachers at the College of Management are more creators and facilitators of learning, rather than communicators of knowledge, this is in part thanks to business practitioners who give guest lectures, lead students through their thesis projects, or contribute with current materials from their particular business sector. The College of Management places an emphasis on developing analytical, methodological, conceptual and communication skills, so that students are better prepared for the ever-changing globalized business arena. The content is not only delivered in a one-way fashion (from lecturer to students) only.

**VŠM builds strong relationships between the business and academic community via its life-long learning initiatives.**

A substantial proportion of knowledge is collected by students from various sources - textbooks, journals, web pages etc. - then processed, presented and discussed in open discussions applying critical thinking. The ability to search, process and disseminate information is one of the most important features of knowledge management - one of the leading principles of contemporary modern management. Co-operation with business entities at the College of Management, which contribute to the quality of instruction, is extensively exercised with Gratex International, a.s., which has provided expert and material assistance for the design and

development of an emphasis area within the baccalaureate program in Business Administration which is oriented to Information Systems.

This emphasis area consists of four highly specialized courses which are being taught by experts and software engineers from Gratex International, a.s. Its aim is to educate managers familiar with information systems to the degree that they are able to become the “translators” between designers and future users of business applications. To support this co-operation also on the material side, Gratex sponsored a computer lab consisting of state-of-the-art computers, equipped with the relevant software.

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Vysoká škola manažmentu (The College of Management) has fostered the principles of relevance and applicability in all of its programs since its establishment in 1999. As a natural step reflecting the Lisbon ambitions of the EU, it designed and developed the Knowledge Management study program. The College of Management happened to be the first tertiary institution in Central and Eastern European region to offer such a degree program in its entirety. The program delivers contemporary subjects such as: Knowledge Systems, E-Commerce, Data Mining, Knowledge Management and Knowledge Engineering. Again, the core faculty is composed of a combination of academics and business practitioners.

As has become a tradition at VŠM/CityU, most of the courses in the curriculum are project-oriented. During these courses, our students work on their projects e.g. design an e-commerce-oriented enterprise, specify its products/services, plan its marketing strategy, calculate the costs and potential benefits, analyze the social and ethical impact and so on. In co-operation with lecturers and classmates, students discuss their strategies; evaluate their effectiveness and potential risks. Using case studies, they learn how to place their own concepts in the business environment and - as we believe - become better prepared for real-life managerial challenges.

**The ability to search, process and disseminate information is one of the most important features of knowledge management.**

VŠM builds strong relationships between the business and academic community via its life-long learning initiatives. For example, VŠM and the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV) co-operate on the coaching and tutoring of 100 top and middle managers from SAV, in particular in the fields of strategic management and project management. To further support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, VŠM offers a set of 15 accredited e-learning courses oriented to marketing, advertisement, public relations and related fields. They have been designed to help students to exploit business opportunities, create a demand for their products and services and, consequently prosper. The courses have been designed to enable high flexibility and adaptability of the content requested by busy marketing professionals. Invited lectures delivered by guest speakers - leading economists and politicians - are another method to encourage co-operation with the community. The speeches are very popular as they tackle open, actual, and sometimes controversial issues.

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