

INTERFACE CENTER PILOT FOR ALUMNI AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD

State of the art - the problem:

The University of Novi Sad (UNS) is the second largest state university in Serbia, with some 45000 active students, and with a tradition of 52 years in high education. This could be a solid foundation for powerful and strong alumni. There was an organized attempt to create one in 2003, when the first constitutive alumni meeting was held and it was agreed that all other alumni activities should be left to members themselves to carry out. In the last nine years, there have been eight events organized (more info on <http://www.uns.ac.rs/sr/>) and it became obvious that the alumni needs some incentives to foster their engagement in academic life.

Some of the faculties constituting the functionally integrated university have created their own web pages titled Alumni, but only in a form of lists of students that graduated in a specific generation, and even not for all years (for e.g. the Faculty of Medicine has alumni lists from 1965 until 2000, created on the occasion of their 50th anniversary of establishment, but nothing after that time - accessible at <http://www.medical.uns.ac.rs/alumni.php>). The Faculty of Natural Sciences has an alumni database with links to only 20 alumni members at <http://www.pmf.uns.ac.rs/studije/alumni>. The Faculty of Economics in Subotica has a link to AIESEC alumni, available just for ex-AIESEC members, not for the wider public (<http://www.su.aiesec.org.rs/>).

Purpose:

The purpose of the INTERFACE center (IC) pilot in the area of alumni is the following:

- to create an updated, unique alumni database at UNS, with all relevant data (members' contact information, data on employment and career development, etc.) and make it available at the UNS web site
- to get an insight into alumni members' readiness to participate in alumni activities, into their ideas for alumni activities enrichment, lifelong learning (LLL) or career counseling and development (CCD) improvement - better match between needs for LLL and CCD courses and the actual offer
- to get insight into alumni members' professional achievements and career development - dissemination of experience through success stories and best practices publishing
- to involve alumni members into events and happenings organized at UNS, into LLL and CCD activities

Activities:

The INTERFACE center alumni pilot should be realized through the following activities:

1. Formation of a team that will work on the realization of this pilot project
This team should consist of one university representative, one contact person, one person responsible for PR, and one person responsible for a Web page design and on-line questionnaires.
2. Designing the on-line questionnaires for data acquisition
3. Establishing contacts with alumni members and asking them to participate in database creation and updating
 - 3.1. The UNS representative will send, on behalf of the university, a circular letter to all faculties, explaining the pilot and asking them to provide contact information on their alumni.
 - 3.2. An invitation will be sent to alumni for on-line participation in database update and electronic forms filling.

4. Design and implementation of a unique up-to-date alumni database and web interface for updating, searching and querying purposes (across faculties, generations, study programs, etc.)
5. Collecting data from on-line forms and analyzing the responses (evaluation of expressed ideas, initiatives, support)
6. Publishing on the alumni web site and on alumni page in UNS's newspaper "The Voice of the University" ("Glas univerziteta") acquired success stories and career development best-practices.
7. Making available relevant information about UNS, alumni, LLL and CCD possibilities, etc., to all alumni members on the alumni web site
8. Contacting alumni members willing to participate in LLL or CCD activities as trainers or lecturers and discussing such possibilities with them

Expected results:

1. The unique alumni database at the UNS
2. Alumni web site with update and search options available
3. Insight into possible alumni support to the realization of LLL and CCD activities
4. Insight into possible alumni support to the UNS promotion and development
5. Making publicly available success stories and career development best practices
6. Inclusion of alumni members into LLL, CCD and other events organized at UNS

Risks:

- low response rate of alumni and low interest in any kind of engagement and support

Time frame:

The pilot will be realized from November 2012 till May 2013, as displayed in Table 1.

Action	2012				2013			
	November				January	February	March	April
Formation of a team								
Designing the on-line questionnaires								
Collecting contact information								
Sending an invitation to alumni								
Collecting data on alumni								
Database design								
On-line web interface								
Analyzing the responses								
Articles in UNS newspaper and on-line								
Disseminate information to alumni								
Contacting alumni for active participation								