



“The End of the World As We Know It” or “Leadership Turnaround in Difficult Times”

This case was written by Prof. Marjan Bojadjev – Mayo, and it is intended to be used as the basis for class discussion. The case is inspired by a true story and all characters are real.

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In entrepreneurship, we often use the term ‘near-death experience’, and today, 23rd March 2020, I promised myself never to use that word again. The reason for that decision was the fact that on that day we were in the midst of a real near-death experience. The world was witnessing a great number of deaths daily and, during the weekend, the death toll was: ⁱ 651 in Italy, 117 in the U.S., and the only one (the first case) in my country, Republic of North Macedonia.

Here’s my story and the epic battle I was fighting over the course of the last month.ⁱⁱ

INTRODUCTION

Marjan I. Bojadjiev – Mayo is the provost, former rector, and a minority partner at University American College Skopje (UACS), a small university based in the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM), and also a visiting professor at University Tor Vergata Rome – Economia, one of the largest public universities in Rome, Italy.ⁱⁱⁱ

RNM is basically a very bureaucratic country. For some unexplained reason, distance learning was not mentioned in any form in the country’s laws and regulations; thus, it subsequently meant that distance learning is not allowed.

In the period between 2010 and 2012, UACS experienced a sharp decline in the enrollment of domestic students. An attempt was made to initiate distance learning but the Ministry of Education (MoE) simply did not authorize it. That is why the attempt was moved internationally and materialized by setting up a distance learning college in Florida. It was called Tallahassee International College (TIC) and was granted license by the Florida Department of Higher Education (FDOE). Eventually, it was closed due to high costs and very low income, and costs from this failed investment were huge. The frustration was even bigger.

“We’ve set up the whole MOODLE system” – Prof. Bojadjiev recalled “everything you need for asynchronous education”. They did not delve into synchronous communication, as it was:

- a) expensive;
- b) we are not native speakers;
- c) the internet connection was still expensive;
- d) we were all in different time zones, so synchronous education seemed impossible.

On the other hand, the core activities of UACS were achieving remarkable results. After the initial drop in the size of the student’s body in 2010/2011, UACS had recovered and had a stable enrollment of 350 students annually at a tuition of 2, 600 € per year. That is a remarkable success for a middle-income country where public schools’ tuition amounts to ZERO. UACS had managed to differentiate itself. It was the leading private university and the only one with international accreditation – UACS was accredited by ACBSP. Moreover, it was growing as a research university; voted the leading School of Business and Economics in RNM, according to IDEAS REPEC.^{iv}

PROLOGUE

It was 22nd February. Marjan was teaching a course on Strategic Entrepreneurial Behavior at the University Tor Vergata in Rome, Italy.^v That same evening a crew gathered: Prof. Mayo and his wife Irena, who had just flown in from Skopje, his daughter Ilijana, studying in Rome, Prof. Luca Gnan, Head of International Programs at Tor Vergata and his wife Lucrezia, just flown in from Milan, Prof. Vittorio from Rome, his wife Samuela and son Giuliano, Giulia, an assistant at Tor Vergata and, last but not least, Ilijana Petrovska, professor at UACS and at Tor Vergata, now living and teaching in Qatar. So, it was a wonderful crowd coming together from different parts of the world and celebrating life. Prof. Mayo was talking to Vittorio.

“Did you see what the Chinese are doing?” – Vitto asked. “They’ve shut down the whole area of Wuhan. Small city, 60 million people are in lockdown.”^{vi}

“Well, maybe that’s the only way to prevent any further spreading” – Marjan replied.

“If they need to shut down Rome, we’ll survive. But if there’s a need to shut down Milan, that’s it, Italy will be doomed” – Vittorio pointed.

The group of “shiny happy people” finished an excellent supper in beautiful company. Laughter and joy for just spending time together and celebrating life.

Two days later, the number of cases began to rise in Milan. Prof. Ilijana was the first to become worried. She sent an e-mail to Luca Gnan and prof. Mayo.^{vii}

From: petrovska@uacs.edu.mk
To: luca.gnan@torvergata.edu.it Cc: provost@uacs.edu.mk
Subject: A suggestion

Hi, Luca.

This seems to be turning into something serious. Do you have any suggestions on how we should proceed? Maybe some sort of online classes?

Kind regards,
Ilijana

Luca, of course, didn’t have any particular suggestion. Mayo felt unconformable. Posing this question seemed somewhat inappropriate, he thought. Luca’s wife, son and mother were all in Milan.

In any case, Mayo didn’t see the upcoming danger. He just replied to Luca and Ilijana.

02/21

- ✓ The first patient dies in Padua
- ✓ 16 new cases in Lombardy

02/22

- ✓ City of Milan was quarantined

From: provost@uacs.edu.mk

To: luca.gnan@torvergata.edu.it Cc: petrovska@uacs.edu.mk

Hi there,

It doesn't seem so dangerous. Ilijana, what are the chances that out of 65 million Italians, you and I, the only two Macedonians here and now will become infected?

Prof Bojadjev stayed in Italy over the next couple of days. 02/22-27
His group Strategic Entrepreneurial Behavior class was fantastic: students from Italy, Germany, Brazil, and Argentina. Fantastic experience. However, he would receive calls, messages and emails from Macedonia, every afternoon, and with the same content: asking him whether he was OK, that the news was reporting about the seriousness of the situation in Italy, and what was going on...

In Rome, nothing much was happening, but the North of Italy was starting to drown. It seemed that the epicenter was shifting from China to Lombardy.

Act I, Scene 1: Return to Skopje

Marjan returned to Skopje. Everyone around him was scared. To reduce the anxiety, he sent an email to his closest team of two: Venera and HR, Tijana:

02/27

From: provost@uacs.edu.mk

To: vice-president@uacs.edu.mk Cc: hr@uacs.edu.mk

Hi there,

I'm back in Skopje, but it seems like everyone is worried about me potentially spreading the virus. So, I'll stay at home and isolate myself. I have classes scheduled for 5th and 6th March, but I'll ask Ivona¹ to teach the first sessions. I'll continue with the students after 13th March, i.e. as soon as the 14 days expire.

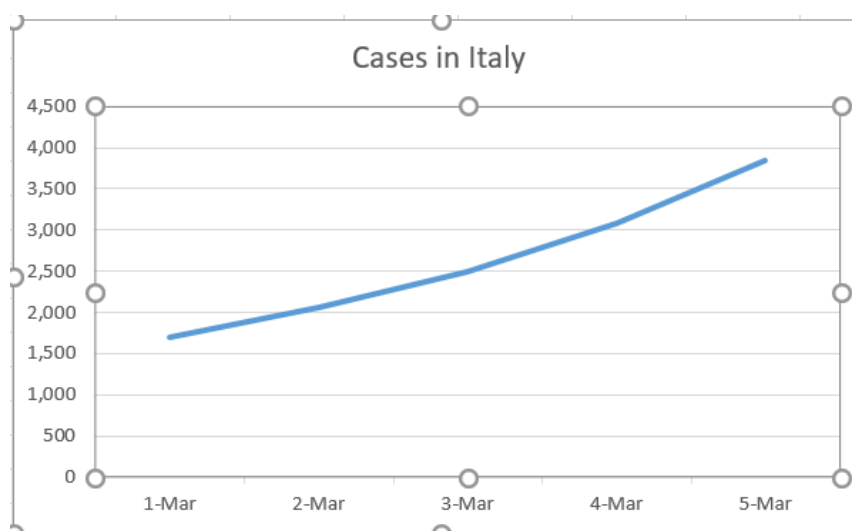
See you soon,

May

He was not really 100% isolated – he went to his Rotary club meeting on 5th, though he did not shake hands or hug friends. The same day they had the first doctoral thesis defense. As he was the mentor, he of course attended. There were more than fifty people present. Once again, he did not shake hands.

The Situation in Italy: 27th February – 5th March

The situation in Italy was going from bad to worse.^{viii} Due to the growing number of cases, universities in Italy began closing down. Ilijana, his daughter, caught the first plane and returned home on 5th March.



¹ Ivona Mileva MBA, Teaching Assistant

Act I, Scene 2: The Escalation in Skopje (The beginning of the story)

It was around 10 a.m. He called the rector prof. Nenovski, 03/09 morning who was in his office.

“I’ll stop by” – Prof. Bojadziev said.

“Sure” – Prof. Nenovski replied.

Marjan went to his office immediately.

“Tome, the situation is worsening” - he said.

“We should consider pausing classes and maybe convert to some sort of distance learning.” – Mayo added. “My daughter has just returned from Italy. They have paused everything, but they will continue with classes online. For the exams, they will continue as scheduled with a one-meter distance among students.” - he concluded.

“We should talk to Mishko” - Nenovski said. Mishko Ralev is the Dean of the School of Architecture, the only School that hasn’t offered part-time studies. Their philosophy was the students should work in class, draw blueprints. Of course, everyone would agree with this in normal circumstances. To be honest, even for Prof Bojadziev online education was the “necessary evil”: having had experience at Harvard Business School, he was the main proponent of the in-class discussion. He was proud to have enabled more than 16 UACS faculty members to attend European Entrepreneurship Colloquium on teaching Participant-Centered-Learning Classes.^{ix}

They called Mishko; he was at the office and joined them soon

“Mishko, we are thinking about some sort of online education. Not now, of course, maybe in a couple of weeks. But if this escalates, we should halt the classes and proclaim “Reading week” from 16th to 23th March. Then, we’ll have the midterms and, if necessary, we should start online after 23rd March.” – Mayo informed Mishko.

“Of course, “- Mishko replied – “these are tough times, we must adapt.”

Rector Nenovski and the Provost scheduled the Rector’s Board Meeting for the next day, Tuesday 10th March. Actually, that was called a ‘Consultative meeting’ with only one item to be discussed, and that was whether we should put the lessons on hold as of 13th March (Wednesday) or continue until the weekend, and declare the following week “Reading week” (16th to 21st March). In any case, the 16th March marked the beginning of the examination week. 03/09 noon

Rules of Marjan Bojadjiev – Mayo

He has been working according to the “5 Rules of Conduct of Marjan Bojadjiev”, and they are as follows:

1. Attention to detail and precision is crucial
2. Do not take NO for an answer!
3. When he knows, he knows and asks everyone to follow through.
4. When he is not 100% certain, he takes time to think.
5. When he doesn't know, he asks.^x

But this time he wasn't sure. Being the first school to put the lessons on hold might be understood as an attempt to disseminate panic, or they might be labeled the most responsible school. Venera, unfortunately, was not in Skopje and they were constantly communicating via email and messenger. Neither she had or expressed an adamant attitude towards the entire situation.

Act I, Scene 3: Escalation of the Crisis

The Rector's Board meeting started. The Dean of SBEM², 03/10 Snezhana Hristova said:

“We are halved in classroom attendance. Everyone is afraid. If someone coughs, the whole class leaves the classroom.”

“OK,”- Prof Marjan continued, “the question is if we should stop between 13th and 16th? That's the real question.” – He enquired.

“We should stop immediately!”- declared Mishko, the Dean of Architecture.

Everyone talked loudly. In the meantime, Mayo received a call from his wife, Irena, working at the Institute for Public Health, informing him that schools would be most likely closed down very soon. From other sources, Venera also found out about the decision brought by the Ministry of Education to put the educational system on hold. The decision was made.

Now, it was a matter of rushing to the PR crew, Dimitar and Alexandra, to send the Press Release ASAP, before the first TV and radio news at 2 p.m. So, they did.

The decision of the Rector's Board had more articles, but the two most important were:

- ✚ classes are suspended, with an exception of videoconferencing for graduate classes;
- ✚ exams are currently suspended, at least until 23rd March, Monday.

The decision itself had one serious issue: for the first time in history, UACS had actually mentioned some sort of distance learning and it was not an easy task to persuade the members of the Rector's Board to vote for it. Only the urgency of the situation was working in favor of the decision.

Had the crisis put the lessons on hold (or stopped them altogether), that would have meant merely a pause for the state universities, but for UACS, that would have signified the absolute

² School of Business Economics and Management

end of revenues. What is more, the University may have been considered legally liable for not finishing the semester.

But this was abrupt change of massive impact. Something completely new and unseen before. Global Medical Shock, unprecedented. The world has had SARS and Ebola but they were kind of far away and with a limited span. This is not like anything they know about change: politics, economics, technology and social trends and others.^{xi}

NOTE: North Macedonia is an extremely bureaucratic country and distance learning was simply not allowed. The deans and the Rector are legally responsible for the operations at the University. The Rector has the power and right to block any initiative they deem “illegal”. Marjan, as a provost and a Board President, and Venera, as VP, were in charge of the business sector, and they fulfilled the role of vice-rectors at the same time. However, the diplomas were signed by the Rector and the deans. Without their full cooperation, it was impossible to implement the change.

Act 2: The Battle on Two Fronts!

“I was feeling like Montgomery in the Sahara Desert. The sea entrapped him from the north, the dessert from the south, and additionally the German and Italian forces are closing in on him from the east and the west.” – recalls Mayo.

He had to fight on two distinct fronts: to find an effective online learning platform and secure support for its implementation. It was not an easy task. As far as the first front was considered, he knew absolutely nothing. And as for the second, he knew that everyone would be against it, out of two different reasons: the first one was fear of breaking the law and the second one - fear of the unknown.

He realized that there was no way to continue in the classroom, but also that they did not have a real online solution and that the faculty members would be hard to persuade to follow suit. This was mostly due to the fact that they would consider this an illegal operation, and what is equally important, that would be due to a fear of the unknown, and of the poor technical skills.

So, Mayo had to win on two fronts: The Technical Front and the People Front.

Act 2, Scene 1: The Technical Front - 36 hours that changed it all

The IT sector at UACS is comprised of two technicians: Zharko and Nenad, and no engineer. However, UACS is outsourcing the services of Vasil Hadzi Jordanov, their Moodle³ guru.^{xii} “Vasil, please can you check for the best option?” – Mayo asked him at some point in the afternoon, that Monday, 10th March. “No problem,” – he assured him and asked for a day or two.

03/09

No of cases
worldwide
104, 328^{xiii}

By the next day, Mayo had still not received any news from Vasil. In normal circumstances, that would be OK. But, these were turbulent times. He was driving to the office for the Rector’s Board meeting. While driving, he dialed Zharko, the senior IT manager. Nenad, their other IT technician, was newly admitted to UACS, and also the Provost’s next-door neighbor. Even though Marjan thought

03/10

9 a.m.

No of cases
worldwide
118, 948^{xiv}

³ Moodle is an open source Learning Management System (LMS).

that Nenad would probably complete this task more successfully, he still called Zharko and delegated the task to him.

“Please find a solution for online video conferencing; we may have to migrate online.” – he said worried. “Tor Vergata, my other University, migrated to Microsoft Teams. It should be free with Office 365, which should also be free with Microsoft 365.”

He wanted to cherish seniority, which sometimes is a problem. By being too polite to others, one becomes less polite to oneself.

After the Rector’s Board meeting, he called Zharko and Nenad to see if they had any news. They stepped forward with a proposition that they should try Microsoft: “Look, we have 50 Office 365 licenses; that should do the trick. And that’s the cheapest solution” – they concluded.

03/10
11 a.m.

“Guys, you don’t understand the seriousness of the situation. It’s not your job to worry about money - that’s my job. Your job is to find me solutions; you state the terms: technical and financial, and I’ll make a decision. And, please, don’t worry about the cost! We’re a private school – our tuition is the highest in town. We must provide the best service,”- Mayo was nervous. He felt the need to emphasize that because, like any company, sometimes UACS has problems with liquidity, so some orders from the IT sector are delayed, some payments are overdue. But, in general, the firm is doing well, they have had a sound student base and the income that they were generating was sustainable. In order to keep going, they needed it to provide the best possible service. Moreover, they **had to offer service that no other university could, at least not any time soon!** **Prof. Bojadjev wanted to make UACS the market leader which the followers could not catch up so easily.** So, he focused on paid software. He knew that that would be a problem for the state universities.

He was alone in the office. So, he started searching. Videoconferencing Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts, Webex, Big Blue Button, pros and cons, pricing, terms of service, difficulty of use.

With the above-mentioned terms in mind, he narrowed his search down to Zoom and Webex in terms of paid software or best software. However, he couldn’t find the Edu version pricing^{xv4} for Webex, and they were running out of time. It was just one day before his first classes were about to start.

Marjan called Nenad. “Nenad, what do you think - should we buy Zoom?” – he asked.

03/10
3 p.m.

“Well, it doesn’t seem like we have any other option. We can go with a monthly subscription, two accounts, maybe...” – Nenad thought. We also called Marjan Petreski to ask for an opinion. He was supposed to start one day after Mayo’s first lesson.

“I don’t mind,” – Marjan Petreski said – “I’ve already used it previously for video conferences.”

⁴ Accessed on 04/19/2020

Thus, we purchased two Zoom accounts for one month. Sitting at home, of course in front of a computer screen, Prof Bojadjiev received a LinkedIn message. 03/10
5 p.m.

“Hi Marjan, this is Alexandra, from the MBA 2017 group, remember me? We can offer free Webex software due to the outbreak”. Then he recalled. He’d completely forgotten that Alexandra was Head of the Cisco office in Skopje. He called her immediately.

“Alexandra, thanks for calling, of course we are interested!” – he proclaimed. “I’m sending one of my colleagues tomorrow” – she said.

“Perfect, he can call me whenever.” – Mayo replied.

The following morning, he was supposed to be at the Fund for Innovation to sign a contract. After months of negotiations, they managed to get funding for a project that they had been working on, the Vox Project^{xvi}. Then, someone called him: 03/11

No of cases
worldwide
126, 214

“Hi Marjan, this is Goce from Cisco. I got your number from Alexandra. She asked me to call you about Webex”.

“Thank you very much for calling, Goce. Please call Nenad at 078 455 111. I’m currently out of office but I’ll be in in an hour.”

Later that day they finally met. They had already installed a pro bono version of Webex, courtesy of Cisco in times of crisis, but also discussed purchase options. They told Goce that UACS had already bought Zoom for one month, because they couldn’t find the Edu pricing on the Webex site.

“That is because Cisco doesn’t sell directly. We sell through authorized distributors,” – Goce replied. “But no worries, Alexandra and I are both UACS alumni and we will provide you with the best possible options. We can also offer some training options. Nevertheless, the important thing is that now you can have our services for free, for 90 days. This way, Cisco helps the world in times of crisis!”

Goce was kind enough to walk Marjan through. That was his first contact with video conferencing. Nenad was a couple of steps ahead of him; he had been learning over the past two hours. Marjan had to rush home to relax and prepare for the class scheduled for 6 p.m. The lesson begins. He invited the students to a Webex meeting just 2 minutes before 6 p.m. New students; that was their very first session meeting. An excellent crew. Some technical issues ensued, so he called Nenad, who immediately solved them. Sometime after the lesson, Prof Mayo created a Facebook post with the following content: History in the making: The first ever Webex class at UACS. ^{xvii} 03/11
2 p.m.

The very next day, Marjan Petreski, their Vice-Rector, had his first online class, this time on Zoom. ^{xviii}

Act 2, Scene 2: People Management, Change Management & Adjusting the Formal Part of the Organization

The people who know Mayo well, probably know that he is a big proponent of participative management. He believes UACS to be an Entrepreneurial Democracy and would characterize himself as “Jack Welch Type” leader. Now, it was time for the show

to go on. They were about to make the biggest shift in teaching, the biggest shift in examination, and both in the worst possible environment with no face-to-face communication, and not enough time for gradual accommodation.

Mayo was now facing three challenges:

- 1) to convince and educate everyone aboard that online teaching is doable and that is not too complicated;
- 2) to convince the deans and the Rector that this is legitimate! (He still couldn't use the word 'legal' due to the fact that Macedonia is a bureaucratic country and distance learning is not prescribed, or rather not allowed);
- 3) to convince everyone aboard that the next two weeks are of key importance. Even though we started teaching on 12th March.

On 12th March, they started teaching, but those were two open-minded professors. He still needed to convince another 70+ professors, some more and some less open-minded, and an even more complex endeavor - to train them.

Time available: ONE WEEK! (Marjan began online teaching on 12th March. Academic calendar scheduled midterm week beginning on 23rd of March.) Formal part of the organization = ZERO! Legal part of the organization = ZERO! ⁵

Act 2, Scene 3: Battle of liquidity

There was one other crucial battle Prof Bojadjiev had to fight during this period. Liquidity! As the things were worsening, the normal influx of cash was simply draining. Being 90% funded by tuition, the current situation was making UACS deeply vulnerable. He knew that the whole organization would have problems in the ensuing months. So, he sent an email to the deans titled: "The end of the world as we know it." Basically, he asked the deans to: a) regroup, b) ask full-time professors to overstretch and cover classes of the part-time professors. This operation would bring cash relief of about 30% of the payroll and 300% increase in the uncertainty level. In some cases, that was even impossible, for instance, the Computer science program was based on professionals from the industry.

He remembered words from one World Bank consultant, back in 1998. He had his business, which had collapsed earlier, so he became a consultant. He was saying: "Working for someone else is easier".

"The moment you become responsible for the payroll your life is completely changed".

⁵ There weren't any UACS bylaws nor state regulations that regulated online education and examining.

Act 2, Scene 4: The Formal Part of the Organization

On Friday 13th, Mayo sent an email to the Rector, Venera, Marina (Secretary General), and Olivija (Head of the High School).^{xix} This email contained 4 draft procedures:

- 1) Decision on launching hybrid education;
- 2) Bylaw on conducting online classes via Webex;
- 3) Bylaw on organizing the mid-term exam; and
- 4) Bylaw on hybrid education AHSS⁶.

These bylaws were, more or less, the core of UACS's 'legal system for online education'. Of course, these crude drafts were processed by Marina, the Secretary General.

03/13

No of cases
worldwide
145, 49

Act 2: Scene 5 – Monday 16th March (Total Cases 182, 439)

UACS scheduled a Rector's Board + Senate joint meeting. The reason for this meeting was that Marina (Sec. General) suggested that these bylaws be formally adopted by the Senate. Though in practice all the executive power was with the Rector's Board, UACS had to obey the formal Senate vote. So, the idea was to invite the six deans, six Senate members, the Rector and three vice-rectors, the Head of Records and the Head of Finance. This turned into a meeting of almost thirty people, actually one third of the employees, and the most important third, at that. As mentioned previously, the Provost believes in participative management and wanted a wide acceptance for his idea to move online.

The attendance at this session was already limited. The Government prescribed a fourteen-day self-isolation for everyone that had traveled abroad before the outbreak. Some members were simply afraid to go. So, Nenovski (Rector) and the Provost asked everyone who did not feel comfortable attending the meeting in person to follow it via Webex.

Act 2: Actions before the Final Scene! Saturday 14th March

Mayo was well aware that it was crucial to provide wider support for migration online. No matter the decision that was enacted, it had to convert to life. So, he started calling groups of professors. The first group he called was comprised of: Snezhana (Dean of SBEM⁷), Dimitar Kovachevski (Head of the Marketing Department), Ana Tomovska (Head of the Management Department) and Miodraga Stefanovska (Head of the General Education Department). Snezhana was unable to attend, but the others managed to come. He considered that to be a done deal, and asked the department heads to disseminate the information with their professors. Mayo then spoke with Mishko Ralev, the Dean of the School of Architecture. His cooperation was crucial. Without him, there was no way to enforce the change.

"No problem," – Mishko said, "mind if I called our teacher and teaching assistants on Monday, please?".

⁶ American High School Skopje – being the subsidiary of UACS

⁷ School of Business Economics and Management

“Mishko, maybe it is better if we did it on Sunday evening” – Mayo insisted.

So, they scheduled a call for Sunday evening, 8 p.m. The puzzle pieces were slowly coming together. Most of them understood the idea, and were quickly able to begin practicing, using the Webex platform, helping each other in order to be ready for the classes scheduled to begin on 23rd March.

It was important to get support from these two schools, since they account for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the student’s body and the number of instructors, of course.

Act 2: Final Scene – Monday 16th March

The meeting started, opened by Rector Nenovski. He then asked Mayo to present his ideas. It was a very strange situation. The meeting was scheduled in the amphitheater to allow more space for physical distancing.

Half of the members came with masks, the others joined inline. Everyone felt the ground beneath them was shaking. Everyone was afraid about their health, their life, the future, about the unknown and how terrifying the whole situation was becoming. Furthermore, by mistake one of the technicians sent an invite to everyone at UACS. Hence, instead of having the Rector’s Board and the Senate meeting only, this turned into “UACS ALL” meeting. Thus, from a simple mishap, this converted into a very good bonus towards the dissemination of the idea.

“That’s it,” – Mayo began - “it’s the end of the world as we know it!”

They had to understand the signs given to them by the circumstances and to adjust to this unprecedented situation. They were teachers. Their job was to teach. Their mission was to enlighten the students. At that moment, they had two major issues in front of them:

1) to retrieve students from the break and announce that the mid-term exam would be held between 16th and 23rd March, and, to that end, also train all faculty members how to set up an exam via Moodle, and

2) to announce that classes will start regularly (online) as of 23rd March.

“I know that this is borderline legal” – Prof Bojadjev continued - “but the good news is that some state schools are already implementing the same practice; schools like FINKI⁸ and the Faculty of Economics⁹ have started online teaching via Google Meet. The University where I teach in Rome, Tor Vergata, have started using Microsoft Teams. We can use Webex for teaching and Moodle for examinations” – he concluded.

“No way!” – we heard - “some professors haven’t even posted presentations on Moodle. How will they create an online exam? That’s simply impossible!”

“I’m not sure about this,” – another member stated – “maybe it’s better just to let it go, and come back when the two-week isolation period ends. Maybe the Government will change its mind and allow schooling to continue.” – they went on.

⁸ School of IT, University Ss Cyril and Methodius University

⁹ School of Economics at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University

Mayo immediately felt the meeting was going in the wrong direction. So, he took over again:

The dilemma is not a pure rhetoric:

- 1) Not starting the classes may mean the semester will never end, which means that the University might be legally viable for ½ of the tuition, in other words a bankruptcy;
- 2) Continuing online education might mean sanctions and closure by the Ministry;
- 3) Stalling and waiting for a miracle to happen will also mean serious risk and not finishing the semester.

He said: - “Dear colleagues, this is it. Once again, forget everything you knew until yesterday. It was globalization yesterday; today, the whole world is slowly entering a stage of isolation. Who knows how this will develop?! There’s no guarantee that things will get back on track. Actually, it is quite the opposite. Italian universities closed on 5th March for two weeks. Now, they are closed for classroom education for an indefinite period of time.

Then he emphasized the importance of their mission: “Once again, we are teachers; we are here to teach, and failing to do so means that we are failing in general.” - he spoke confidently.

After half an hour of discussions, the draft decisions from the meeting held two days before were passed, but with one very important note: UACS would inform the Minister of Education, Director of the Inspectorate of Education and the Director of the Board of Accreditation about their decision to start online.

Further actions entailed teachers’ training on how to prepare a Moodle examination. Marjan kindly asked Vasil Hadzi-Jordanov, the head of “Solaris Intelligence”, the provider for the Moodle service, to schedule sessions with groups of professors and to train them on test development.

Act 2, Scene 3: The Battle for Liquidity - Continued

“Who shall we train of the adjunct faculty?”- Nenovski asked.

“We should be fair to explain our intentions” – Mayo quickly replied. Nenovski, Venera and he scheduled a meeting to discuss which adjunct faculty members should be asked to proceed and which would not be asked that. It was not an easy decision, since most of the adjunct faculty had been a part of the UACS family for years. For most of them, as highly successful individuals, teaching at UACS was a prestige and a safe place for mental relaxation rather than a source of income.

“It is difficult,” – Venera said – “why don’t we explain our situation, and ask them to make a choice?” – she added.

And, so they did. They sent a memo to everyone, explaining the situation, asking for delayed payment and, furthermore, asking them to agree upon a reduced payment by 30%. Everyone agreed.

Mayo felt satisfied, but also very exhausted. It was a grueling battle. He managed to preserve the company culture in crisis. His understanding of culture has always been that it represents an unwritten system of values and norms determining interactions, behaviors, the processes of decision-making within the organizations.^{xx} In that ambiguous environment, everything was unstable. After that meeting, the processes were moving onto the right track.

Act 3, Scene 1: The Execution of the Plan

Training the professors

Now the stage was set. The organization was in distress. People were scared - they were scared for themselves, for their loved ones, for their financial security. The important thing was that the vast majority supported the Provost. He understood 'leadership as a process of influence on followers in which the latter voluntarily accept stimulus from the former'^{xxi}. And in that situation, he was glad that his influence was, eventually, fully accepted by the organization's members. They were eager to find a pillar to lean on. Maybe it was typical that in times of crisis people are simply eager for guidance and direction. On Monday 16th, the organization gained direction, so now it was in need of execution.

Mayo asked Nenad and Ivona to schedule trainings alongside Vasil (the Moodle guru). And, so they did. Ivona¹⁰ was excelling: she even prepared a video manual. The groups were trained promptly, every day, every few hours. To make it simple, Ivona and Mayo proposed a simple test structure of 5 multiple choice questions (5 points each) and 5 essay questions (15 points each). Of course, that was just a suggestion - every professor had academic freedom to design a test as they saw fit; that was merely a simple template. Prof Bojadjev wanted to be very careful here for one simple reason, and that was the fact that even though other universities had started some online education, none had started online examination. Thus, this seemed like a slippery track; eventually, if students were dissatisfied with the grade, they could easily oppose it. Legally, that would be within their rights. The good thing about these training sessions was that the training was aimed towards understanding the Moodle platform, but delivered via Webex. Hence, two birds with one stone.

In general, Ivona, Nenad and Vasil performed brilliantly. They had the whole university of 120 faculty members and 800 students ready for online lessons via Webex and distance online examination via Moodle, in just a week.

Training the students

In order to enable that entire process, they needed the last stakeholder – the students. Without their collaboration, the midterm examination would not be possible. Consequently, UACS had set a serious mock testing session, group after group, for every student.^{xxii}

Act 3, Scene 2: The Execution and the Ministry

The chief inspector of the inspectorate called Mayo on Tuesday morning.

03/17
10 a.m.

“Marjan, look, we are conducting a survey, could you please disseminate and fill it out at your University?” – he asked. Of course, Mayo agreed immediately, but when he saw the questions, he became very nervous. The questions read as follows:

No of cases
worldwide
198, 172

¹⁰ Ivona Mileva, MBA, Teaching Assistant and academic

1. Do you have distance learning?
2. How do you teach?
3. How do you conduct exams?

He felt that was a direct result of their informing the Ministry and the Inspectorate as it happened on the very same day. It was either that, or a very strange coincidence. Marjan asked Marina Andeva, their Secretary General, to draft the answers. It seemed as if all of the answers were referring to other institutions - like asking whether they had distance learning, to which the answer was the same as Ss Cyril and Methodius, and whether they had conducted online examination, to which the answer was formally negative, as the examination was scheduled to begin on 23rd March.

Rector Nenovski called and informed the Provost that the Minister of Education had asked him to attend a meeting at 11 a.m. the following day, as a President of the Conference of the Private Universities. The President of the State Universities was also invited.

03/18
5 p.m.

“Wow!” - Mayo exclaimed - “this can either be very good or very bad. Why don’t you raise the issue of legality of distance learning?” – he added.

“Marjan, why don’t you come along? We can go together” – Nenovski pleaded.

“Sure, I will” - Marjan replied.

Being part of the ACBSP¹¹ accreditation process for many years, Prof Bojadjev knew many things about distance learning. So, he decided to put on paper everything he knew. Even more so, he did a comparative analysis of the legislation for distance learning in the neighboring countries: Albania, Serbia, Kosovo and Bulgaria. All of them had formalized distance learning. By doing that, he actually managed to draft a “Decision of the Ministry of Education for Regulating Distance Learning”.

Tome Nenovski and Marjan Bojadjev arrived at the Ministry ten minutes before 11. They were asked to remain in the meeting room. After a few minutes, the Minister arrived. Normally, Mayo apologized for appearing uninvited but presented his case about how distance learning works in the region, what should be done, etc. A few minutes later, the President of the State Universities arrived. They continued the meeting together. The Minister was apparently very worried about the educational process in the primary and secondary schools, but seemed almost not at all bothered about the universities. He informed the present participants that they were planning on legalizing distance learning and thanked Mayo very much for the drafts. With that, I felt very relieved. When the Minister started talking about the problems in the secondary schools, Mayo offered his help. He asked for the number of schools, and found out that there were 150 schools. He offered to take 10, and leave 140 to FINKI and Faculty of Economics to train. He promised to fully train them and equip them with knowledge on

03/19
No of cases
worldwide
245, 021

¹¹ Accrediting Council for Business Schools and Programs www.acbsp.org

how to conduct distance learning and examination. The Minister thanked him, but did not seem quite sure.^{xxiii}

Afterwards, the Minister, rector Nenovski and rector Jankulovski held a joint press conference. Nenovski asked all students to log in into their school's distance learning platform and Moodle and to prepare for examination.^{xxiv}

The very next day, the Government adopted decision on organizing distance learning. A big battle was won. A Battle for legality. Now it was the right time to start implementing.^{xxv}

Act 3, Scene 3 – Permanent improvement: Exams on Moodle and Teaching via Webex.

For UACS it was very important to develop culture of permanent improvement. Even more, culture of delegation and empowerment. Moodle examinations were organized according to the procedure structured by Marjan Bojadjev, Vasil Hadji Jordanov and Ivona Mileva. But the whole implementation was done by Ivona and Vasil. Ivona even filmed instructions videos.^{xxvi}

It was the week marking the beginning of midterm examination.

Additionally, marking the beginning of the exponential growth of people infected with Corona virus worldwide. The mid-term exams were conducted smoothly.^{xxvii}

03/23

No of cases
worldwide
337, 707

After the mid-term examination week, the university marked the beginning of online classes for undergraduates. Maybe some more, and some less skillful, but everyone felt the benefit and the positive effects. Students were sometimes late, sometimes shy, so they simply wouldn't turn on the camera, but more or less, everyone got the message that life goes on. With or without the Corona!^{xxviii}

03/26

No of cases
worldwide
471, 729

To make the teaching better, UACS organized "Friday matinees"
– Sessions^{xxix} on Self Improvement Seminars.

FINALE

As usual, life will find its way. Like the river banks swing and create their paths, so does life. The magnificent effort to transform UACS in just a few days from the ‘brick and mortar’ educational facility to a ‘click only’ took copious amounts of energy, dedication and support from the leader and the faculty members - the followers.

UACS started a series of professional development seminars targeting the improvement of teachers. The first seminar was scheduled for 10th April^{xxx}. The second one, ultimately organized and scheduled by Cisco, their service provider.^{xxx}

04/10

No of cases
worldwide
1, 694, 667

In the meantime, the university had a Webex-based commemorative service on the occasion of the death of their former vice-rector and honorary professor Dr. Zlat Milovanovich.^{xxxii}

04/24

No of cases
worldwide
2, 828, 826

Students started organizing their own webinars.^{xxxiii}

06/25

No of cases
worldwide
9, 627, 315

“Life is like the river, sometimes it sweeps you gently along and sometimes the rapids come out of nowhere.” — **Emma Smith**^{xxxiv}

06/26

No. of deaths
487, 438^{xxxv}

Life will always find its path. Much like the river, from the spring to the river mouth. It speeds up downstream; it becomes narrower in the valleys and wider while slowing down in the lowlands. Life will, similarly, find its way.

ⁱ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> (accessed 03/23/2020)

ⁱⁱ Special thanks to Tamara Jolevska, MA and Marjana Vaneva, PhD for editing this text

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://en.uniroma2.it/>

^{iv} <https://ideas.repec.org/top/top.macedonia.html> (accessed 03/23/2020)

v Photo: shiny, happy people in Rome on February 22nd 2020



vi https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020_Hubei_lockdowns

Il 23/02/2020 19:00, Ilijana Petrovska ha scritto:

Dear Luca,
I would like to ask what is the situation with the Corona virus, as I just read that Milan was quarantined this morning, and people can not go out? Is this true? I hope Lucrezia is here with you, is better not to go back
Please update us. Maybe we should finalize the last classes online.
If you are available, we can meet after 11 am, after Marjan's class. What time is the most convenient for you?

Thank you
Ilijana

Prof. Ilijana Petrovska
Mobile : +974 3130 5690 / +389 71 382421
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lijana5rovaska/>
>>>Inspiring Mentor for Your Future

Prof. Luca Gnan
Professor in Organizational Behavior

vii

viii Italy confirmed 566 new cases and five deaths, bringing the total number to 1,694 and 34, respectively

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_2019%E2%80%932020_coronavirus_pandemic_in_March_2020#1_March)

Italy confirmed 342 new cases and 18 deaths, bringing the total number to 2,064 and 52, respectively.^[59]

ix European Entrepreneurship Colloquiums were organized by EFER (European Foundation for Entrepreneurial Research), see more at <http://www.oecd.org/SITE/INNOVATIONSTRATEGY/42961567.PDF> text by Caren Wilsen.



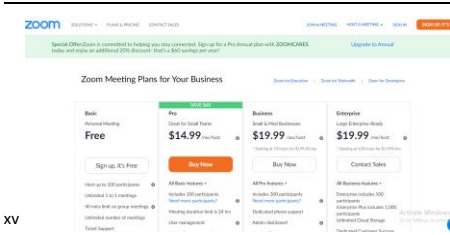
x

xi Robbins, Judge, *Organizational Behavior*, Pearson, 2013, 15th edition, page 579

xii Vasil Hadzi Jordanov, BSc IT, MBA, former Head of IT and professor of MIS at Schiller International University. He has just moved back to Macedonia from U.S. and was an adjunct faculty at UACS. He was also "Head of UACS Moodle". He designed it and organized hosting at UACS.

xiii <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/coronavirus-cases/#total-cases> (accessed 03/24/2020)

xiv <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/coronavirus-cases/#total-cases> (accessed 03/24/2020)



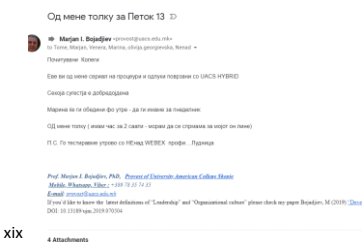
xv

xvi VOX was a project based on a patent issued to the model of organizational alignment. More details can be found at <http://voxorganizationis.com/>, as well as here: <http://www.hrpub.org/download/20191030/UJM4-12113594.pdf>



xvii

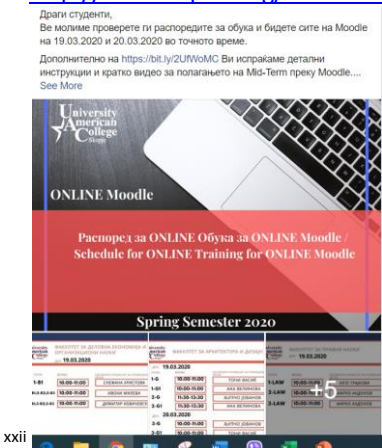
xviii



xix

xx <http://www.hrpub.org/download/20191030/UJM4-12113594.pdf>

xxi <http://www.hrpub.org/download/20191030/UJM4-12113594.pdf>



xxii

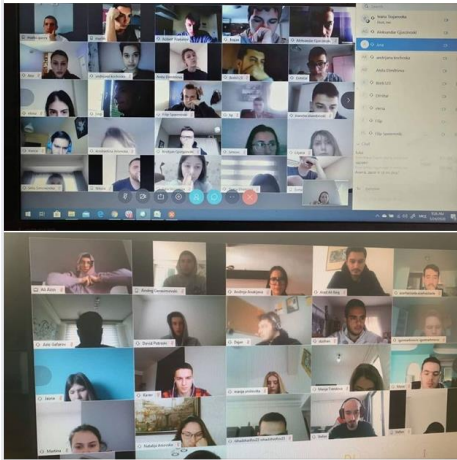
xxiv [Press Conference](#)

xxv

xxvi <https://youtu.be/ZUdDdgyGrwg>

https://youtu.be/1N_v13Gh6U8

Midterm exams in progress via Moodle and a synchronous videoconference call on Webex
 Viva la technologie! ... See More



xxvii

UACS Skopje
 April 7 at 11:59 AM

Even in these hectic times, UACS successfully continues with lectures. 📖
 Our students are our value, and yesterday, at the Marketing communication and media course via WebEx, lectured by prof. Nadica Jovanovska Boshkovska, the students were able to learn more about the practical aspect of effective media planning. 📈📊
 Thanks to our guest lecturer Mr. Nenad Ristovski, Digital Director in Publicis Marketing Agency, we learned about the power of media, media planning and media buying, and learned how to carry out a successful media campaign. We also saw the global media trends and compared them to the macedonian, and we agreed that the world goes digital, and so should we! 🌐
 Thanks Nenad for your valuable presentation, you are always welcome in UACS!

out Me

xxviii

Professional Development Seminars dedicated to Online Teaching

March, 2020	Professional Development Seminar: <u>Webex Training</u> on online education <i>1. How to use <u>Webex</u>?</i> Presenter: <u>Nenad Dukovski</u>
April 10, 2020	Professional Development Seminar: <u>Webex Training</u> on online education <i>1. How to create discussion groups on <u>Webex</u>?</i> <i>2. How to use <u>Pen Tablet</u>?</i> Presenter: <u>Marija Andonova</u> and <u>Nenad Dukovski</u>
April 24, 2020	Professional Development Seminar: <u>Webex Training</u> on online education <i>1. <u>Webex for Education Cisco</u> Seminar</i>
May 8, 2020	Professional Development Seminar: Moodle Training on online education <i>1. Moodle Training - Attendance & Quizzes</i> Presenter: Vasil Hadji-Jordanov

xxix

UACS Provostoffice

to UACS, bcc: me

Почитувани,

UACS - Центар за унапредување на квалитет ќе отпочне со серија семинари

Професионален развој во време на криза!

Првата сесија ќе се одржи во петок, 10.4.2020 со почеток во 13:00 часот и можете да се запишате на следниот линк:

<https://uacs.webex.com/uacs/j.php?MTID=maa84168689cde745e4d56e6538e385>

Meeting number: 842 301 220

Password: 12345

Темите ќе бидат:

1. Како да се креираат групи за дискусија на Webex - Ненад Дуковски
2. Како да се користи уред за рачно пишување - м-р Марија Андонова

Сите професори се добредојдени да достават предлози за следни семинари.

Со почит,

UACS Quality Control Center

проф. д-р Марјан Бојашев

м-р Ивана Милева

xxx



Семинар Webex во образованието

Почитувани,

Водени од желбата да им помогнеме на училиштата и високообразовните институции кои изминативе неколку недели се соочуваат со потреба за квалитетна и безбедна онлајн платформа за учење на далечина, би сакале да Ве поканиме да присуствувате на Cisco Webex Семинарот за образование.

Целта ни е преку демонстрација во живо да Ви покажеме како Cisco Webex може да се користи во образовниот процес за учење на далечина, кои видови на услуги се достапни, како да организирате безбедно предавање, како да го интегрирате со стандардните решенија за учење и со видео уредите на Cisco. Ќе Ви презентираме и примери како постоечките корисници на Cisco Education ја користат платформата и ќе Ви го обезбедиме Cisco Webex бесплатно, да го тестирате на одреден временски период.

Повеќе детали:

Презентер: Александар Вулович, Cisco System Engineer

Јазик на презентацијата: Англиски

Датум: Петок, 24ти Април 2020

xxxi

UACS Skopje

March 28 at 10:28 PM



UACS.EDU.MK

IN MEMORIAM: Prof. ZLAT MILOVANOVIC, PhD

IN MEMORIAM: Prof. ZLAT MILOVANOVIC, PhD Prof. Zlat Milovanovic,...

xxxi

WEBINAR
ОД МЛАДИ ЗА МЛАДИ - СПОДЕЛУВАМЕ ИСКУСТВА

Датум: 22 и 23 Април 2020
 Време: Од 18:00 до 19:00 ч.
 Место: Платформа Zoom

22-ри Април
 Тема: Мотивација + New Vs. Traditional media during COVID-19



Студентка:
Мела Кривиќ



Професор:
Миро Тодоровски,
комуникациски експерт

23-ти Април
 Тема: Претприемништво, започнување на сопствен бизнис,
 поддршка на мали / локални бизниси + Анализа на кризната
 состојба



Студентка:
Марија Дановска



Предавачка:
Александра Азина,
Сопственица на бизнис
и литературознавачка,
Дети Му Дитта



Студентка:
Симеон Добревски

xxxiii

xxxiv <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/river>

xxxv <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> accessed 06/25/2020