

Presentació del Executive MBA en Finances Islàmiques

World Islamic Economic Forum, Dubai

Octubre 2014

Excellencies, distinguished authorities, dear rector and friend, Dr. Mansoor, colleagues and representatives of the media.

Today is a very auspicious day for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya - the UOC , as it is also known - and for me personally.

My presence here today, accompanied by the Dean of our Business Program, Angels Fitó, and our director of International Relations, John Zvereff, hand in hand with the Hamdan bin Mohammed Smart University, attests to the importance that we attribute to the collaborative project that is the purpose of this presentation.

Since I can't assume that most of you are familiar with my institution, let me just say that the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, founded in 1995, is the first entirely online higher education institution in the World.

It is an institution that has survived and thrived these 20 years (we now have more than 50.000 students) because it has been able to respond to the evolution of the ICTs and of the digital culture, and, above all, because it has been responsive to the requirements and expectations of the socio-cultural and economic environment from where it reaches out to the entire World.



«Our mission to share the knowledge that our university generates for the improvement of society – intended universally - has implicit a commitment to internationalization, commitment which the UOC has consciously carried out by evolving from a local institution with a global reach to a globally sensitive university.»

We furthermore firmly believe that education not only plays a pivotal role in the development of nations and individuals, and the general improvement of society, but that it must also contribute to the preservation and consolidation of peace, peace through knowledge, understanding and tolerance.

The Executive MBA in Islamic Banking and Finances that we are presenting with our strategic partner, the Hamdan bin Mohammed Smart University, can be seen as a natural outcome of the implementation of our mission.

«The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya has been the first online institution to offer a Master's degree in Islamic and Arabic Studies, and this new jointly-offered degree will

contribute to a better transversal understanding of Islamic culture, while addressing an unprecedented and rapidly growing world-wide interest in Islamic practice in finances and banking.»

We are privileged to have found such a reliable and highly professional partner as the Hamdan bin Mohammed Smart University, whose rector, Dr. Mansoor, I wish to publicly thank for being a major and enthusiastic force behind this project.

I understand from my staff – particularly Angels Fitó and John Zvereff - that the entire process, begun almost a year and a half ago, of jointly designing this postgraduate degree was per se a uniquely enriching educational experience, one which would not have been possible without the commitment and dedication of the Hamdan bin Mohammed Smart University staff, which I will not thank individually for fear of leaving someone out.

Both our universities feel that this Executive MBA will be a very successful program, and we, at the UOC, look forward to expanding the collaboration with the HbMSU to other disciplines in the near future.

Finally, as I mentioned before, 2015 we mark our 20th anniversary, and the launch of this first collaborative effort will doubtlessly be one of our celebration activities.

In closing, allow me to also thank the organizers of the 10th World Islamic Economic Forum for graciously allowing us to use it as the platform to present this joint program, which, in turn, we are sure will assist WIFE to further its own objectives.

Thank you.

Josep A. Planell