



*THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC*

# **Business & Academia: Bridging the Gap**

AmCham Slovakia 's  
**Committee on Business- Academic Cooperation**



**The Key to Success**

# Committee on Business-Academic Cooperation

Established in **2007** to contribute to the reform of the Slovak educational system and to foster cooperation between schools and businesses, this committee currently includes more than **20** AmCham member companies. The Committee on Business-Academic Cooperation is one of the **most active** and productive committees of AmCham Slovakia.

## Goals

- Contribute to **effective implementation of Education Reform** in Slovakia
- Foster **regular dialogue with key decision-makers** (the Ministry of Education and the Slovak Government Office, Universities and Research Institutions)
- Contribute to better conditions for **R&D, innovation and technology transfer**
- Provide platform for **sharing best practices** among AmCham members
- Long-term **support of entrepreneurship** for enhancing Slovakia's competitiveness

## Committee Leadership



Board Executive Sponsor:

- Marcel Rebroš,  
Cisco Systems



Committee Chair:

- František Jakab,  
Cisco Systems

Committee Vice-Chairs:

- Milan Polča, U.S. Steel Košice
- Nicolas Martel, NM Management

**The majority of Committee members operate in:**

- IT (7 companies)
- Consulting and Accounting (7 companies)
- IT (6 companies)
- Banking and Insurance (3 companies)
- Universities & International Schools (2)
- Manufacturing and Production (2 company)
- Telecom (1 company)
- Media (1 company)
- Cooperation with the U.S. Embassy in Slovakia

## AmCham's priorities

- AmCham considers the modernization of education sector key element of prosperous society
- Many member companies have long-term programs supporting education and research institutions
- Contribute to better vocational education and thus contribute to preparation of a qualified labor force
- Support local communities
- Contribute to the long-term competitiveness of Slovakia

## Key Areas of Related AmCham Activities:

### 1. ADVOCACY & LEGISLATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS



#### Public Relations – Press Events

The Ministry of Education invited corporate members of AmCham Slovakia to join its Advisory Committee on Education Law and Law on Vocational Education. The Committee members were the key subjects participating on commenting on the Education Law and drafting the Law on Vocational Education.

From left: **Jake Slegers**, Executive Director of AmCham Slovakia; **Robert Šimončík**, President of AmCham Slovakia and General Manager of Microsoft Dynamics; **Marcel Rebroš**, General Manager of Cisco Systems Slovakia and Member of the AmCham Slovakia's Board of Directors

## Contribution with expertise of AmCham member companies

Seven out of nine AmCham comments incorporated into Educational Law

Key issues:

- System of coordination of vocational education
- Diversification of Education Financing – Motivation Criteria and Tax Deductibility (specifically defined items provided as business support for education activities to be considered as tax deductible)



## 2. HIGHLIGHTING BUSINESS-ACADEMIC COOPERATION

### Sharing Best Practices between Slovakia and the United States

AmCham co-organized an official visit of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Ján Mikolaj, to the United States. It took place on March 31 – April 6, 2009.

Focus on:

- Cooperation between private and public institutions in the area of transfer of technologies
- Establishing contacts between Slovak and U.S. Education institutions

The official visit aimed to foster cooperation between Slovak and American educational, research and technology institutions and support transfer of technologies between Slovakia and the United States. During the official visit, cooperation agreements were signed between Stanford University and the Technical University of Košice on joint research of mobile learning technologies, and the PlugandPlay Technology Center and Comenius University on exchange of researchers and joint technology projects. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Education and the Robert Morris University providing scholarships to both Slovak and U.S. students.

### Cisco Systems Headquarters – April 2, 2009

Key focus:

- Awarding Minister Mikolaj with CNAP Contribution Award
- Connected Learning – New Thinking in K-12 Technology



### Meeting with Governor of Minnesota, Tim Pawlenty

The highest level official visit of Slovak government representatives in the history of Minnesota



From left: **Jake Slegers**, Executive Director of AmCham Slovakia; **Ján Mikolaj**, Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Education of the Slovak Republic; **Tim Pawlenty**, Governor of Minnesota; **Peter Burian**, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the United States

### Stanford University, School of Education – Memorandum of Understanding

Key focus:

- Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between Stanford University's School of Education and the Technical University in Košice – joint research of mobile learning technologies, Peer-to-Peer Networks



From left: **Anton Čizmár**, President of the Technical University of Košice; **Ján Mikolaj**, Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Education of the Slovak Republic; **Paul Kim**, Chief Technology Officer, Stanford University School of Education



## Strategic Events - Conferences

*ICETA Conference – International Conference on Emerging eLearning Technologies and Applications – Partners of the conference*

This annual high-level international conference is focused on promotion, development and implementation of information and communication technologies in education organized under patronage of Ján Mikolaj, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education



From left: **Harvey Newman**, Professor of Physics, California Technology Institute; **Jake Slegers**, Executive Director of AmCham Slovakia; **Milan Polča**, General Manager, Human Resources Development and Staffing of U. S. Steel Košice; **Martina Slabejová**, Public Lead of Microsoft Slovakia

## Mentor Network Program

The program aims to provide students an opportunity for mentoring and career advisory by business sector representatives.

Impact: 34 mentors, 100 students, five universities in three semesters



## Teleconference Lectures with U.S. Professors

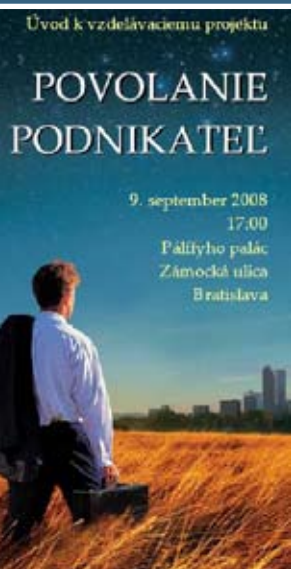
The course “Certified Interdisciplinary Introduction to North American Studies” is offered by the Center for North-American Studies the center was established by the University of Economics in order to facilitate the cooperation between Slovak and North American universities and to foster mutual academic and scholar mobility.

Lecturers:

- Michael Kazin (professor, Georgetown University)
- Irina G. Axelrod-Angres (Supreme Court Fellow, Federal Judicial Center, Washington)
- Kevin R. Deegan-Krause (associate professor, Wayne State University)
- George Seldat (associate professor, Southwest Minnesota State University)
- Dana Gioia (independent poet)

## Full-time Course on U.S. Business Environment

AmCham, in cooperation with the University of Economics' Center for North-American Studies, prepared a course on the U.S. Business Environment & Ethics led by our member companies Accenture, Dell, IBM, U.S. Steel Košice, and the U.S. Embassy in Slovakia



## Support of Entrepreneurship: Regional Discussions with Students

This educational project presents positive role models of local entrepreneurs and supports entrepreneurship in various regions in Slovakia.

Impact: 31,000 students of secondary schools and universities in Slovakia.



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