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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
H.Q.A.
 HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
 AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
 UNIVERSITY OF PELOPONNESE

February 8, 2014



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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Economic Sciences of the University of Peloponnese consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Professor Irini Dimitriyadis
Bahçeşehir University, Turkey

2. Professor Demetrios Giannaros (Coordinator)
Consultant, Giannaros Associates, USA
Professor of Economics (Retired)

3. Associate Professor Konstantinos Serfes
Drexel University, USA

4. Professor Aris Syntetos
Cardiff University, UK

5. Associate Professor Ioannis Violaris
Fmr Dean of the School of Economic Sciences and Administration,
Frederick University, Cyprus
Consultant, M.G.Violaris & Sons Ltd

NOTE: The Evaluation took place from the 3rd to the 8th of February 2014

GLOSSARY

ABS	Association of Business Schools
EEC	External Evaluation Committee
IEC	Internal Evaluation Committee
HQA	Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency
IER	Internal Evaluation Report
PG	Postgraduate
The Committee	External Evaluation Committee
The Department	Department of Economics
UG	Undergraduate
UoP	University of Peloponnese

***N.B.** The structure of the “Template” proposed for the External Evaluation Report mirrors the requirements of Law 3374/2005 and corresponds overall to the structure of the Internal Evaluation Report submitted by the Department.*

The length of text in each box is free. Questions included in each box are not exclusive nor should they always be answered separately; they are meant to provide a general outline of matters that should be addressed by the Committee when formulating its comments.

Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

The External Evaluation Committee (henceforth **EEC** or equivalently, **the Committee**) received the Department's Internal Evaluation Report (**IER**) dated December 2013 before the visit to the Department of Economics (henceforth **The Department**) of the University of Peloponnese (henceforth **UoP**). The Committee was very satisfied with the thoroughness and professionalism with which the Internal Evaluation Committee (henceforth **IEC**) prepared the IER and with the presentations of the information contained therein.

A detailed account of the visit is presented below in chronological order.

Monday, February 3, 2014

After an overview and orientation meeting at the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (henceforth **HQA**) offices, the Committee visited the Department on Monday through Wednesday 03-05/02/2014. Upon arrival at the University, on Monday afternoon, the Committee members were met by the Chair of the Department, Prof. G. Fotopoulos, for preliminary discussions and to finalize the schedule for the meetings during the following two days.

Tuesday, February 4, 2014

On Tuesday morning, we had a meeting with the Rector of the University, Prof. K. Masselos, the Deputy Rector Assoc. Prof. K. Botsiou and Prof. G. Fotopoulos. During this meeting, we had a thorough discussion on the structure of the University system in Greece, recent changes pertaining to the higher education system and its impact on the UoP and implicitly the Department. We also discussed the strict regulatory environment and how it has recently impacted the University and Department. This meeting was very productive and informative.

We were impressed by the high awareness of important issues related to the University and Department and the challenges they face. We noticed an openness and eagerness to improve the Institution and to provide us with complete answers to our questions. This meeting helped us understand the very severe budgetary constraints of the Institution and implicitly the Department, which affects staffing, planning and hinders the effectiveness of the implementation of their mission. Given the limited availability of resources, we believe that their accomplishments, for a new Institution, are significant. We sensed that they have a clear vision and capability to move the Institution forward in the future.

Following the visit at the Rector's office, the EEC visited the Department and was given a tour of the library, classrooms, computer labs, the amphitheater, faculty offices, the cafeteria and study halls. The EEC noticed that, although the building is in great condition, some of the facilities are yet to be completed and fully utilized.

Following the facilities visit, we met with the following faculty of the Department:

- Prof. G. Fotopoulos
- Prof. P. Liargovas
- Assist. Prof. T. Aggelides
- Assist. Prof. P. Evaggelopoulos
- Assist. Prof. I. Daskalopoulou
- Lect. V. Skintzi
- Spec. Teach. St. M. Micha
- Spec. Techn. St. Z. Dermatis

Prof. G. Fotopoulos gave us a detailed power-point presentation on all aspects pertaining to the Department, its history, its present state and future plans. A handout with analytical information of the Department, its members, infrastructure, research accomplishments and a comparative analysis with two other well-respected Greek economics departments, was distributed. In addition, Prof. Fotopoulos presented the program of studies both at the undergraduate and graduate levels and the practical internships students can opt to undertake. The prepared document was thorough and highly informative. The Department also provided the Committee with all requested documents (e.g., CVs, samples of exam papers and syllabi). Following the presentation, we had an extensive discussion on all the relevant issues with the participating faculty. Each faculty member had the chance to answer the Committee's inquiries and was given the opportunity to discuss and express their concerns and contribution to the department. The main concern seems to relate to budgetary, resource constraints and the limitations imposed by the frequent amendments in the legal framework, as it relates to their objectives and operations.

The EEC also had the opportunity to meet with three groups of students (about 10 undergraduate, 12 Master and 1 doctorate) without the presence of the faculty. In addition, some committee members met informally with multiple students (about 20), randomly encountered, to get a broader perspective of student sentiment. The Committee was impressed by the consistent enthusiasm and positive comments made by the students regarding the Department and faculty. Some of the most positively mentioned attributes were the accessibility of faculty via electronic and personal means and the students' perceived high quality of the faculty.

Subsequent to the above meetings, the EEC met privately to review the information gathered and the day's meetings and discussions. During this meeting further issues to be addressed, were identified. For this reason, a set of questions was prepared by the Committee.

Wednesday, February 6, 2014

The Committee met again with the Departmental faculty for the purpose of further clarifying the issues raised by the EEC and to receive answers to additional questions. During the same session, we had the opportunity to listen to a presentation on teaching technologies used to support the Department's educational process (e.g., the use of e-class and other software). Subsequently, the Committee met, first with the non-tenured and then with the tenured faculty members, separately. In the former case, issues related to promotion, personal and professional development were discussed; in the latter case, issues related to the development and long term evolution and objectives of the Department and faculty were explored.

Following that, the EEC also met with the Department's substitute secretary as the two permanent secretaries of the Department were on medical leave. The meeting was very informative as it touched on all aspects of administrative services. She recommended the strengthening of the electronic registration and information system to render the relevant processes more effective, less costly and less time consuming. This recommendation would additionally make it easier for students to access relevant information and to register for courses.

The day closed with a meeting between the EEC coordinator and the Department Chair during which the Committee's primary conclusions were presented. The Dept. Chair was given the opportunity to further elaborate on the issues raised by the Committee and others.

During the presentations and discussions, the Committee was highly satisfied with the professionalism, quality of the presentation materials and amount of effort that was devoted in preparing all documents, that were provided to and examined by the committee, such as:

- The Department's Internal Evaluation Report (including tables with statistics on research productivity, average grades of graduating students, list of courses offered at various degree programs, etc.)
- A copy of the Department's Power Point presentation.
- Syllabi, CVs, sample exam questions and an one page summary of the Department's identity for 2012-13.

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

The production of the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) by the Department followed the required procedure. The IER was reasonably informative and contained most of the material necessary for the external evaluation.

The discussions we had with the Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC) and other faculty members, supplemented and elaborated on all aspects of the IER that merited additional discussion. In particular, the Committee appreciated the presentation of supplementary material which was provided and the further clarification on some sections of the IER. All documents presented key information in useful graphical and tabular form.

The Committee concluded that the Department has met the primary objectives of the internal evaluation process with professionalism.

A. Curriculum

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN ECONOMICS

APPROACH

The goal of the program is to provide high quality knowledge in Economics so that students can acquire skills and competencies that will enable them either to be employed in related domains or pursue further studies. The Committee was told that the curriculum itself was developed using as benchmark the Economics and Finance programs at the Athens University of Business and Economics and the University of Piraeus, respectively.

The program is geared towards serving the needs of the region of the Peloponnese and the overall Greek economy by developing appropriate student capabilities. In particular, the Department, as much as possible, actively seeks to attract faculty and students of high potential. The program comprises 37 compulsory courses and 9 electives, two of which are: i) a graduation project; ii) a two-month internship/practicum. The internship facilitates the transition from University studies to employment and is funded by the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF). Adequate emphasis is also given in courses related to the European integration. The courses are taught by well qualified academic faculty who carry out research in the areas they teach. One of the faculty members holds the Jean Monnet Chair on 'EU Integration and Policies 2012-15.

The Department has the intention to set up an official curriculum review process when its faculty composition (the one dictated by the law) enables it to become legally autonomous.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Program's implementation is limited by resource and budgetary constraints. Although the curriculum is well defined and meets the standards for Economic education in Greece, the insufficient number of Faculty restricts their ability to offer enough electives to meet all their current intended learning outcomes and to expand on new ones. The syllabi are intended to be commensurate with the defined curriculum.

As far as course material is concerned the students are given, by the faculty teaching the course, the chance to choose one out of a number of suggested books. In addition, the course instructor provides students with complementary reading material to meet the syllabus requirements.

The Department, to its credit, offers 4 courses in English economic vocabulary and text analysis to acquaint and provide the students with the necessary background in comprehending material in English textbooks and case studies.

RESULTS

As the department is very young, program results cannot be sufficiently measured. Yet the Committee, from what it could gather from current students and from the faculty members' experience, believes that the program is on the right track to achieve and enhance its goals and objectives. This is backed up by what the faculty mentioned regarding the entry admission points that tend to increase -- as well as the numbers of freshmen students choosing to study at this University.

IMPROVEMENT

The Department is aware that it needs to achieve autonomy as well as build up a well defined identity -- which might introduce innovative opportunities to prospective students. This relates to increasing the total faculty members especially at higher ranks.

When these issues are dealt with, the Department has the potential to further improve its curriculum and meet additional academic endeavors.

The EEC has also indicated that a strict implementation of a prerequisite system would not only ensure the correct continuity in the learning process but also, possibly, reduce the graduation length of time.

Two additional main areas for improvement are: a) the need to reallocate the courses so as to meet the ECTS Bologna requirements and b) the introduction of some more diversified areas of Economics, such as, courses in entrepreneurial and managerial aspects -- rather than the present high concentration on time series analysis and finance.

More 'hands on' practical experience should be introduced for students choosing the practicum related elective. Some clarification with the hosting company/institution is necessary as to the purpose of the internship, in order to make it academically worthy of the credits received. Moreover, the evaluation process should be enhanced so that the Department is more involved and monitors what the students gain. The suggestion was very well received by the Department staff.

Furthermore, to broaden the scope of the curriculum, our discussions indicated the possibility of running shared courses with the other department of the Tripoli campus or possibly with other Universities (e.g. the University of Patras) -- as well as developing online courses.

Additionally, it was discussed that further consideration of international programs in Economics would help in building up a new identity that would make the Department more competitive in the Greek high education environment.

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMS (PG)

APPROACH

The Department is offering two Master level programs: one in the Organization and Management of Public Services – the first of its kind in Greece – and another in Economic Analysis. Each of them is accepting about 42 students. It also runs a PhD program in Economics where there are currently about 20 students registered.

A) THE MASTER PROGRAMS

The goals and objectives of the Master Programs are well defined and have been decided after considering other programs offered abroad, as well as the particularities of the Greek public service and economic environment.

The Department is constantly monitoring the content of the postgraduate programs by considering, among other sources, the feedback received from the programs' students. Both programs have very specific and well defined selection criteria that result in recruiting high quality students, most of whom are employed, thus enriching the curriculum with practical experience.

It was identified that the students have reasonable access to some academic journals through the platforms the university uses, such as the Heal – Link.

The Committee was told that the inter-library loan system has not yet been used effectively especially due to the fact that the library has been only recently developed.

Even though students seem happy with the courses offered, they almost unanimously indicated that they would like to be offered a higher component of public management courses in the Master Program in 'Organization and Management of Public Services'.

IMPLEMENTATION

There exists adequate documentation on the three Programs to inform current and prospective students, staff and potential employers. The curricula are well structured, coherent and functional. The postgraduate students the EEC talked with were extremely enthusiastic -- both about their program of study and its content, as well as, with the support they receive from their Professors. The material used for the various courses seems to be appropriate and consistent with the time planned for each of them.

Faculty teaching on the postgraduate programs do so in their related expertise. The Committee formed the view that the PG Program courses, in many instances, reflect to an adequate degree, the relevant research expertise at the Department.

RESULTS

An important indicator of the success of postgraduate programs is demand. These Programs have had fairly stable demand over the last seven years. Even the current Greek economic crisis doesn't seem to have affected the demand - especially of the master program related to the public services. Presumably, this is true because students undertaking it believe, and rightly so, that acquiring this qualification will enhance and strengthen their employment security and prospects.

Additionally, the Masters programs play a decisive role in generating revenues for investing in research and improving the resources available for students and faculty.

IMPROVEMENT

The programs would greatly be enriched if visiting professors could be involved, as well as high level professionals, offering seminar and lecture series which could also be designed to attract people from the industry. This would also strengthen the links of the University with the, business and society.

B) THE PhD PROGRAM

The goal of the PhD in Economics program is to prepare future academic instructors and researchers in the thematic areas of the Department. The program doesn't have a teaching component for Master holders, and it is entirely based on a dissertation that the students develop with the support of their adviser.

For the program, PhD research is conducted under the supervision by members of the faculty with expertise in the domain of the doctoral study and through the faculty's affiliation with external research groups.

The Department lacks the academic environment needed for the development of a proper PhD research as is experienced in international PhD programs. Yet, although there are not enough seminars within the department, the PhD student interviewed pointed out that all advisors keep the PhD students informed of seminars in other Universities that are related with their subject of research.

B. Teaching

APPROACH

The Department is expanding rapidly in the number of students enrolled. The new enrollment of 2012-2013, as cited in the internal report, has reached 163 students.

The Department deploys teaching and learning methods comparable to those of well-established international Universities. The Department uses traditional teaching methods for an Economic Department which combines lectures, exercises and short projects whenever applicable. All course material, including lecture notes, as well as the syllabi and examination procedures is available on the e-class platform so the students are fully informed on the implementation of the course. This facility makes it convenient for students to review the teaching material or access it -- in case they have missed a class, to follow up on any assignments given or for any other educational material suggested.

The University provides students and staff with the use of computer software packages, some of which are Matlab, SPSS and Eviews, which back up the teaching of courses like Quantitative Financial and Economic Methods for Enterprises and Theory and Application of Econometrics, as well as the preparation of projects. However, there is a significant deficit in access to data bases to assist in carrying out proper applied research by faculty and students.

The teaching physical facilities are of excellent quality. All rooms are equipped with the basic equipment one would find in any good University, such as comfortable desks and chairs, as well as power point projectors, etc.

The computer labs are quite adequate for the number of students. When the library will be fully equipped there will also be such functional stations in the library.

The Department however lacks a designated study-hall which makes it possible to work in groups for the preparation of group projects. This would also help with the general teaching approach using more case studies which can enhance the creativity and team effort of the students.

Student assessment of performance is done via examination(s) and assessed assignments. Usually grading depends on a single final exam. Students might choose to have a midterm exam known as "progress exam" but this might only count up to 20 or 30% maximum towards the final grade. The grading of some courses depends only on the project work that the student completes. More student assessment opportunities are needed to incentivize students to attend classes more often. This is desperately needed across the university system in Greece to avoid wasteful use of resources and to increase the learning and the educational value.

The students interviewed expressed their satisfaction about the transparency of the grading system. They also stated that they were given the chance to go over their exams/papers and discuss the answers, with their professors.

It was suggested that the so called “progress exam”, which is not compulsory, should become a general practice since that might also enhance the success in the course and develop a greater affiliation of the student with the academic program. Students interviewed also showed a preference towards multiple exams within the term.

The current system, as dictated by the State, allows for multiple opportunities to retake an exam until a course is passed which is out of line with international practice and standards.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Department has 7 regular faculty members (3 Professors, 3 Assistant Professors and 1 Lecturer). It is additionally assisted by 1 Special teaching staff member who teaches English, 1 Special technical lab assistant, 2 administrative staff members, 1 guard and 1 secretarial support staff member.

In the Past, the department has employed adjunct Professors so as to be able to serve a wider range of courses. The EEC was informed that there was a problem this year due to legislative amendments which made it impossible to continue this practice. This, in turn, has increased the load on the existing faculty as well as reduced the number of electives students can choose from.

The department currently accommodates about 540 registered students (as cited in the internal report) implying a student/staff ratio of 75:1 -- which is for the moment, by Greek standards, marginally acceptable. Given however the expansion rate of the department in the last few years this ratio will increase rapidly unless new faculty is appointed.

Despite this rather high ratio, it is to the credit of the faculty that they provide to their students a sense of personal support/attention for their academic and personal needs.

The student/faculty exchange agreements are not yet as functional as they should have been. There was only a small number of mobility through ERASMUS. The outgoing students over the years were about 10 while the incoming students about 7. There was no outgoing staff through Erasmus although there was limited incoming staff mobility.

RESULTS

Since the University is very young, the enrollment data stipulating the average time for graduation has no statistical significance.

The average grade of graduation is around 7.10 (out of 10) as cited in the internal report.

The faculty members pointed out that participation of students in lectures is high in the first year and drops significantly in later years. They have also mentioned that the economic conditions in the last few years have affected the participation rate even further -- since a number of students are not able to afford renting an apartment, or commuting from their home towns to Tripolis.

IMPROVEMENTS

The future challenges the Department faces are largely exogenous because of the legal framework in which it operates and, largely, due the prolonged financial crisis gripping Greece, at the time of this report. A special challenge is retaining good staff or recruiting new staffs -- especially since the salaries in Greece have become highly noncompetitive in an increasingly international academic market for good academicians.

Considering the traditional teaching methodology cited above, the faculty should consider using more case studies, role playing and guest speakers -- which enrich the experience of students and make them aware of the different paths that they may choose, in the future.

The Faculty has also pointed out that they plan to enhance the existing software system by a more advanced electronic system that would involve the creation of multiple choice questions, as well as introducing Plagiarism (detecting) Software.

It was pointed out that the MOODLE system would be an effective solution. However, it seemed quite impossible to adopt it due to financial limitations.

C. Research

APPROACH

The Department works towards the creation and promotion of a high quality research environment underpinned by internal and external collaboration and joint publications. Despite the absence of a specific research objective, they are planning to establish two research centers, one in Economic and Regional Analysis and the other in Strategic Economic and Policy, which will help them to become more specialized in certain areas of economic research.

The Department does not have any formal internal standards for assessing research. Nevertheless, the faculty is encouraged to publish in high quality journals contained in the well-recognized ABS (Association of Business Schools, UK) list.

IMPLEMENTATION

In general, the research and publication output, considering Greek standards, is very good. Moreover, some of the publications are in top/very good journals by international standards. However, there is a considerable variation in the quality of publications. Given the limited number of faculty and available resources for research, the department has produced a high volume of publications. Nevertheless, the majority of the publications fall outside of the four categories in the ABS list. The number of faculty publications in the top two ABS categories is a strong indicator that the majority of the faculty has the credentials and capability to achieve higher standards of research and publications.

The faculty members are engaged in research projects funded by external sources, in participating at domestic and international conferences and paper presentations -- all of which enhance their research and recognition of the Department and University. Moreover, through their participation in the Jean Monnet Papers on Political Economy, they are able to organize and participate in conferences (some international) allowing further collaboration in research and publications. The Department has a few active Doctoral students who participate in some research projects and have a substantial level of collaboration with faculty from other Greek institutions and from abroad.

RESULTS

For research publications, please see above section.

Based on the CVs of the faculty and the number of citations of their publications referenced therein, the department seems to be achieving a reasonable level of recognition.

Some of the faculty have been active in contributing in an applied context to public policy and government affairs. For example, one of the faculty members is currently the Head of the Budget Office of the Hellenic Parliament.

IMPROVEMENT

- Although some of the faculty have a significant publication record in high quality journals, we recommend that, overtime, more emphasis should be placed on quality rather than quantity.
- In our discussions, the Department has indicated that they are planning to develop a system of incentives to enhance the quality of publications. The Committee fully agrees with this initiative.
- We recognize the lack of standards for promotion and tenure decisions set at the national level. However, we believe that such guidelines will be very fruitful for the enhancement of research and publications.
- Even though the Department has a sufficient number of statistical and econometric software packages, limitations to accessing databases inhibits significantly the production of high quality empirical research and regional economic development.
- The very limited computer technology personnel is another important constraining factor.
- A formal mentoring policy for the junior faculty is highly recommended.
- We also highly recommend a structured series of seminars and workshops, including presentations by the Department's faculty and Ph.D. students.
- We also recognize that the geographic dispersion of the University across the Peloponnese is a major inhibiting factor for much needed interdisciplinary studies.

D. All Other Services

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate levels, if necessary.

SECRETARIAL SUPPORT AND COMPUTER LAB

We had the opportunity to meet with the substitute secretary of the Department whose office provides supportive administrative services. Normally, there are two employees in this office who are currently on medical leave. Given the limited resources the office does a commendable job. This unit supports the faculty and the students for services such as traditional secretarial support, maintenance of student records, registration and maintaining financial records for the students and department.

For the volume of work that is expected out of this office, there are insufficient human capital resources to provide adequate service to both faculty and students, on a timely basis. To reduce demand on personnel and allow the secretariat to become more focused and provide better support to the faculty, we recommend an improved information technology system that would be accessible by both faculty and students. A more sophisticated online system will allow the secretariat to encourage students to acquire relevant information on their own such as grades and registration.

We were impressed by the computer laboratories and the facilities. The students were satisfied with the availability of computers and software. Currently, there is only one individual who manages the computer labs and technical matters that relates to them. It seems to the EEC that one individual cannot sufficiently support two laboratories (40 seats each). This individual is expected to provide hardware and software services in addition to teaching in the computer science area. The individual who is currently providing these services impressed the Committee with his dedication and efficiency. Based on the EEC discussion with students and staff, we recommend that the laboratories be more easily accessible to the students.

LIBRARY

The facility is beautiful, modern, well-organized, with computer equipment and furniture. However we believe there is insufficiency of volumes in the areas of economics, management and English literature. Due to lack of personnel, the library seems to be underutilized most of the time. The EEC recommends that the library becomes accessible to both faculty and students at all times. Additionally, we recommend that the students should be able to have long-distance access to library services.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICESTransportation

The issue was raised by the students during our meeting with them that there is no sufficient transportation services from the City Center to the campus, which is at the outskirts of the city. This may partly explain the high level of student absenteeism and class participation. We strongly believe that this issue should be resolved between the University and the local authorities.

Food Services

There seem to be complaints about the insufficiency of subsidized meals for those who are entitled to free food service. Often, by the time they arrive the food has already been consumed. Some stated that they remain hungry.

The Office of Career and Counselling Services (γραφείο διασύνδεσης–σταδιοδρομίας)

During the discussion with the students, the issue was brought up relating to this particular unit. Through inquiry we discovered that there is no such unit on this campus. We believe that there may be a unit in Korinthos, but the students imply that there is not much service that they can acquire from there, including psychological support services. For better student placement and their well-being the University should act on very serious issues.

DEPARTMENT SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AND REGION

The Department collaborates with the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Association of Tripolis. Additionally, in the context of the Jean Monnet Chair, they organize special invited presentations by local and regional community members. They also hold special events for the local community.

The Department though has limited space for such events. The best and the most prominent facility is the amphitheatre within the School of Economics, Management and Information Systems which has the capacity of 300-400 individuals and is the largest space in the City of Tripoli for such events. However, the amphitheatre, a beautiful, modern ancient Greek style theatre is incomplete. We believe that completion of this amphitheatre will increase the ability of the Department to offer seminars, tutorials, special lectures and foster interactive learning. Moreover, this facility can enhance the Department's ability to provide services with and for the community and region. This will bring more recognition to the Department and University and better relations with local Municipalities. It will also enable the organisation of more constructive events with visiting faculty from other Universities, within and outside Greece.

Overall, we believe that supportive services should be strengthened for the benefit of higher quality education, retention of students and better community relations.

Please, comment on quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives.

Please see comments throughout the report.

E. Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential Inhibiting Factors

The EEC was not provided with an official long term strategic plan by either the University or the Department. There were references of desired goals and objectives in the power point presentation and also scattered references in the IER. Overall, the Department seemed to recognize this issue and is discussing it. However, legally, they cannot convene to officially create such -- due to insufficient faculty in certain ranks to allow for official meetings. This rigidity in law was a shock to some of the EEC team.

The uncertainty expressed in terms of planning may also reflect the unstable economic and legal environment within which they currently operate.

Therefore, the Committee highly recommends that the University as well as the School and Department need to develop a long-term strategic plan which will assist in setting long term specific goals and objectives and the means to achieve them.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

The EEC would like to state upfront that Committee's overall impression is positive regarding the accomplishments of the Department -- given the short term of its existence and limited resources available. We were also impressed by the high level of cooperation of the faculty, staff and students. We hope that the following summarised recommendations will be helpful and constructive enough for the Department to further develop and enhance its national and international standing.

For our detailed recommendations please refer to all the main sections above. Below we highlight some of our key recommendations:

1. First of all, it is of paramount importance that the Department achieves autonomy so as to be able officially convene and make strategic decisions. Such autonomy is conditioned to the composition of the Faculty in terms of rankings and minimum numbers of staff as set out by the Greek law.
2. We recommend that a mission and a strategic plan is developed to address the long terms goals and objectives and assist the creation of a Department identity and that of the graduating student. The Department realizes importance of this and it is mentioned it in the internal evaluation report.

3. In terms of faculty development, we recommend that the Department creates appropriate guidelines for promotion and tenure decisions, as well as incentives for research and publications. One way the incentives can be financed is through a more strategic allocation of departmental funds and possible attraction of additional external funding.
4. In terms of an enhanced national and international recognition, more emphasis should be placed on quality versus quantity of publications. In addition, we recommend that the faculty participate more in high visibility/quality international conferences and seminars.
5. The syllabi need to be improved in the context of what is expected by the Bologna agreement and with the intention of achieving the ECTS label.
6. The Department should attempt to introduce bilateral agreements that should be extremely helpful towards building international links.
7. The Doctoral program needs to be further developed and its framework be more clearly defined and properly recorded in publications and on the website. This will allow the prospective students to understand the structure and expectations of the program. Furthermore, we recommend that the Department considers introducing monthly seminars/presentations with an emphasis on applied research methods and other related topics that strengthen the learning process for the Doctoral students and helps them with their dissertation research and publications.
8. The Department's website needs to be regularly updated to provide more complete and up-to-date information. Amongst other things, this would also enhance the visibility of the Department, increase public awareness and make it more attractive to prospective students.
9. The University should consider creation of student and staff residence halls that will help develop the sense of an academic community and increase student participation on campus. The University needs to improve student support services as discussed in Section D. Completion and utilization of the amphitheater for the organization of concerts/theater/discussion programs would enhance student life and learning – in addition to strengthening the academic and community services and relations.
10. In terms of increased visibility of the Department and the University, we agree with the Rector's plans to have a more aggressive marketing of the programs. For example, this can be achieved through increased visitations to individual schools and increased appearance in local and national media, among other possibilities.

The Members of the Committee

<u>Name and Surname</u>	Signature*
1. Irimi Dimitriyadis	
2. Demetrios Giannaros, Coordinator	
3. Konstantinos Serfes	
4. Aris (Argyrios) Syntetos	
5. Ioannis Violaris	

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