



TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF IASI
ARACIS INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION
Report by Professor L F Boswell
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Introduction.

This report contains the personal reflections and impressions of Professor L F Boswell, which were obtained during his recent visit to Iasi (15th -19th June 2009).

It was agreed with the Commission members whilst in Iasi, that the report could be in a free format approximately three page structure and would contribute in part to the final report to ARACIS by the visiting Commission. However, to give the report a relevant structure, the specific responsibilities and activities of the Foreign Expert-Institutional Evaluator, which have been provided by ARACIS, have been used as guidance. The specific responsibilities and activities are contained within the project "Quality assurance within higher education in Romania in the European context. Development of quality management at the system and institutional level."

This report, therefore, is based upon an assessment of the self evaluation document prior to the visit and the activities visited and meetings attended in Iasi during the period 15th-19th June.

The Self Evaluation Document.

This is a very comprehensive document which, together with the annexes, provides the basis for the management of educational quality at the University.

The University mission, objectives and strategy are introduced before the main sections related to quality management are discussed.

The document provides evidence that the University has formulated its own mission and objectives. The University acts independently, with integrity, responsibility and with complete understanding of its liability to the public in general and the student body in particular.

The University has a coherent and transparent quality management system. It provides staff and facilities, and these can be benchmarked accordingly to demonstrate the fulfilment of academic objectives.

Administrative processes, structure of programmes, assessment and examinations are well established.

A quality management system has been established which can be continuously monitored and evaluated.

Supporting services such as finance, space planning, ethical issues, treatment of endowments and the training of academic and administrative staff are included in the overall management of quality. Of particular interest is the SWOT analysis in which important issues have been realised.

Visit to Facilities.

The Commission members visited faculty laboratory and teaching facilities. I visited Automatic Control and Computer Engineering, Chemical Engineering and Environmental Protection, Civil Engineering and Building Services, Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technology and Mechanical Engineering.

The Commission was informed about the generous funding that the University had received to provide for new teaching and learning facilities.

Everywhere was to be seen well founded laboratories for teaching and PhD research. Lecture rooms and laboratories were provided in all faculties which were endowed with technical equipment for teaching, learning and communication. Local libraries were provided to support the staff and students. There was also technical support in the laboratories for demonstration and practical work for experiments. Computing facilities were excellent and the ARACUS requirement of one computer for every two students was satisfied.

The visit to the facilities demonstrated that the resources and services offered to the students are sufficient, adequate and relevant to facilitate the learning process. They also contribute to a more general teaching and learning environment.

Academic Staff.

Many academic staff were in attendance during the facilities visit. The deans explained that the academic staff were involved in the formation of scientific and technical societies, publication in refereed journals and conferences. They also obtained research funding from National and European sources and had established International collaboration with numerous organisations and universities. Strong links with industry had also been established. These links should be commended and provide a strong and essential background for the teaching, learning and research environment.

Meetings with Students, Staff and Employers.

Generally, technical education is a combination of content driven and output based education. The current and past students as well as the employers are the stake holders who need to comment positively about the education process.

Three very useful and positive meetings were attended during which representatives of current students, former graduates and employers discussed issues of importance to each of the groups.

i) Meeting with students. Several issues arose, which are common to students when asked about their study programmes. The high attendance in lectures and other work during the early years reduced considerably in later years due to the need for students to undertake paid work. The students agreed that the results of their feedback regarding the courses in their programme were considered by the academic staff and that the practical training they received was of great value. Sometimes the relevance of the study programmes was not well understood by students, but they considered that they were able to obtain knowledge and understanding, in general terms, in most



subjects. The students indicated that they would value positive advice regarding the choice of options and how that choice might be related to career development.

ii) Meeting with Graduates. Graduates were asked to consider if their training had been relevant and adequate. It was generally accepted that they had been well trained, but there was some disagreement about an ideal study programme content. Perhaps the formal establishment of an industrial advisory committee, which engages with the academic staff of a faculty, might be helpful.

iii) Meeting with Employers. The general theme of the meeting was about the employers perception and expectations of Iasi graduates. There was a positive response from a number of employers representing several different industries. Iasi graduates were considered to be "as good as any" and "well prepared compared to ten years ago". The education of graduates was considered to be of high quality and they have been able to respond to changing circumstances. There was a mixed response to the question regarding consultation about programme content. However, in the particular case of hardware and software development in automotive engineering, an Msc programme had been developed with industrial involvement and support. Generally this was a very positive meeting

Conclusion.

This brief personal report is to be read with the main and comprehensive Commission report. However, it is my opinion that the quality assurance system that has been established in the Technical University of Iasi is very robust, relevant and includes all aspects of the University's function.



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