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EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

PANTEION UNIVERSITY

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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Public Administration (Panteion University) consisted of the following three (3) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

- 1. Prof. Yannis Georgellis**, *Director* of Center for Research in Employment, Skills and Society (CRESS), Kingston Business School, UK
- 2. Prof. Michael Michael**, University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 3. Prof. Yorgos Rizopoulos**, LADYSS CNRS and UFR GHSS, University Paris Diderot, Paris, FR

Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

- **Brief account of documents examined, of the Site, meeting and facilities visited.**

The opinions, comments and recommendations in this report should be considered within the general context of the Hellenic Higher Education system, which is financed and regulated by the Ministry of Education and other state agencies. The regulatory framework affects all aspects of university domains including finances, admissions policies, staff recruitment and progression, curriculum design, and teaching provision. The Department of Public Administration at the Panteion University operates within this regulatory framework. What is more, the Department of Public Administration at the Panteion University bears all the constraints related to the current economic crisis, concerning especially drastic budget restriction and wage cutting.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC, the *Committee*) received the Department's Internal Evaluation Report (IER) dated February 2012 before the visit to the Department. The EEC committee was very favourably impressed with the thoroughness and professionalism with which the Internal Evaluation Committee (Ομάδα Εσωτερικής Αξιολόγησης - OMEA) prepared the IER.

The OMEA was composed by Professors Stavros Perentidis (coordinator), Ismini Kriari and Anastassios Tsamis, Associate Professor Vassilis Kefis, Assistant Professors Charalambos Economidis and Ioannis Filos, Lecturer Lambros Babalioutas, and Dr. Spiros Polymeris (ETEP). Professors Stavros Perentidis and Anastassios Tsamis, Assistants Professors Charalambos Economidis and Ioannis Filos, Lecturer Lambros Babalioutas, and Dr. Spiros Polymeris (ETEP), as well as the Directors of the Sections Professor Sophia Adam, Associate Professors Theodoros Mariolis, Maria Venetsanopoulou and Aglaia Robocou-Karagianni were in charge of the completion and final synthesis of the document.

During the visit, the EEC received additional documents from each sector of the Department, which supplemented the IER with all available information concerning the last two years.

These documents were very helpful in assisting the EEC to evaluate the Department.

After an overview and orientation meeting at the HQA offices, the Committee visited the Department on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 20-22/1/2014. Upon arrival in Panteion University on Monday morning, the Committee members were met by the Rector and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, at the presence of the Coordinator, the Heads of sectors and other members of the Internal Evaluation Committee. This initial contact and discussion enabled the EEC to better understand the general context and the challenges faced by the Panteion University as a whole. Specifically, the members of the EEC were informed about the budgetary restrictions, which adversely affect services provided by the department as well as personnel workloads and resources available for students.

Other issues of interest and concern were brought up, such as:

- The unlimited time allowed for undergraduate students to be enrolled in the program, which tremendously increases the active student population at any one point in time. Newly introduced legislation imposing the maximum (n+2) rule could help to resolve this issue.
- The large number of newly enrolled students imposed on the department by the Ministry of Education.
- The constraints that the existing regulatory framework imposes on staff recruitment.
- Availability of resources to support research activity.

On Monday evening, the EEC members prepared the meetings of the following two days and discussed organizational details.

The lengthy session of Tuesday morning and afternoon was devoted to the presentation of the mission, objectives and achievements of the Department as a whole, followed by a detailed presentation of each sector. Almost all members of the Department assisted in this session and participated actively in the discussion. The EEC have had the opportunity to question every relevant issue concerning the under- and post-graduate curriculum, teaching, research actions and output, external relations, international collaboration, and openness to the society. Part of the discussion dealt with the diversity of administrative duties that each faculty member was obligated to perform. The final point of the session was a presentation by the information technology consultant expert, in charge of the computing information systems service in the Department. In the ensuing discussion the possibilities and limitations that exist for the computer systems infrastructure and software were highlighted.

Subsequently, the EEC met with the Lecturers and Assistant Professor. These faculty members, after expressing their gratitude to be associated with the institution, discussed some of their issues of concern. Heavy work load, lack of research funding, difficulties accessing databases, insufficient recognition of teaching quality for career development and advancement. It is also worth noting that there was some unease about the fact that the results of student teaching evaluations and feedback were not communicated to staff and the head of department.

On Wednesday morning, the EEC visited the offices of the administration staff of the department and met with head of the unit and her two administrative assistants. Relations with the teaching staff and with students, work load, career progress, problems relative to the planning of teaching activities and exams, and the specific task of extremely detailed minutes of faculty assemblies were the main issues discussed.

Next, visiting the library, the EEC had the feeling of a well working open-access facility, composed by highly qualified and motivated staff. Despite the budget cutbacks, subscriptions to national and international electronic Data Bases through university consortium agreements are maintained. The physical space and computer terminal work stations for students are adequate and appreciated.

The EEC visited the Erasmus Office and attended a presentation about the operation, the mission and the goals of the office. Apparently, the involvement of the Department and more specifically of the Chief for Erasmus program Professor Sophia Adam is highly appreciated. Next, we visited the Student Support Service (KEF), which provides a wide range of support to students, including help with accommodation, catering, health insurance and various registry services.

On Wednesday afternoon, the EEC met the student representatives of Doctorate, MBA and undergraduate levels. In a series of free format discussions, the EEC members asked the students to provide their candid opinion and comments on both positive and negative aspects on all issues of concern in their academic experience, from class instruction to university services and infrastructure. The undergraduate students who assisted the meeting seemed very satisfied. They appreciated the relevance of the Curriculum, they considered the opportunity to attend this institution as a privilege, and they considered the ease of access to their instructors as positive aspects, while they felt that the administrative services could be organized more rationally, concerning mainly the exams planning. However, the lack of audiovisual and computing equipment in many classrooms was noted. The main positive aspects of their program mentioned by graduate students and by the Doctoral candidates were the good working relationships with faculty, the interesting courses, the quality and availability of faculty supervision. Unlike the undergraduate students, they consider the university facilities and infrastructure adequate for their needs.

The Committee feels that its evaluation visit took place in a highly professional, as well as very cordial and collegial atmosphere. The Committee members are unanimous in wishing to express in writing their gratitude and appreciation to all the Faculty and Staff of the Department for their excellent hospitality, help, cooperation and logistical support in all aspects of the evaluation visit.

A.1 Curriculum – Undergraduate Program.

APPROACH

- **What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?**
- **How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards?**
- **Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the curriculum and the requirements of the society?**
- **How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?**
- **Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?**

The basic goal of the undergraduate program is to equip graduates with a wide knowledge covering multiple areas such as law, economics, accounting, public administration etc. The Department offers a degree in Public Administration with two specializations, one in public economics and one in public institutions. The plan for achieving the objective is by offering a large number of courses, 126 for the academic year 2010-11. In addition, students have to take a foreign language course (English, French, German, Italian or Russian). From the academic year 2004-05 students have to successfully complete at least 51 courses in order to be awarded the BA Degree (Ptychion).

The objectives of the current curriculum are consistent with those set by the founding members of the University who aspired to filling the gap that existed in the system of higher education in Greece. That is, to provide proper training to public employees. At the time when the university was first established, the standards were appropriate and were set having in mind foreign institutions of higher education, especially the French Ecole Nationale d' Administration (ENA). Recently, the objectives were expanded to provide training to students suitable for the private sector.

The intention of the curriculum of the Department was to provide training to students that were suitable for the public administration. That is, graduates from the Department of Public Administration should have deep knowledge of law, accounting, public administration, economics, etc.

In recent years, the Department has revised the curriculum of its undergraduate program frequently, but mainly by adding new courses. There is a thought, however, for a major revision, although to the best of our knowledge there is no specific plan in place yet for undertaking such a revision.

IMPLEMENTATION

- **How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?**
- **How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?**

- **Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?**
- **Is the curriculum coherent and functional?**
- **Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?**
- **Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?**

The Departmental goal has been served adequately by the curriculum, which is comprehensive. The curriculum in its current form is mainly driven by the expertise of existing faculty. However, the curriculum structure and content needs to be reconsidered in the light be the existing constraint in terms of faculty expertise and the new trends and developments in the field of Public administration.

It must be noted that the curriculum covers a much wider range of subjects areas, compared to other institutions in Europe and in US. It was the feeling of the EEC committee that this is an over-loaded curriculum, which needs to be revised despite the fact that the large numbers of courses offered appears to be attractive to students.

The department has the necessary human resources to support the existing curriculum. However, the existing infrastructure, such as computing labs, is inadequate.

RESULTS

- **How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?**
- **If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?**
- **Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?**

The program of studies has a good reputation amongst students and in the society. It appears that existing students are satisfied and during our meeting with undergraduate representatives, no major concerns were raised.

In a nutshell, although the curriculum is reasonably structured, the thematic areas are not entirely consistent with international practice.

IMPROVEMENT

- **Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?**

The departmental members acknowledge the need for revising the Curriculum to take into account new developments in the field, in the society and economy in general, but we do not feel that there is a specific plan or strategy in place.

Recommendation A.1.1

Following wide extra-and intra-departmental consultation (including staff from departments where service teaching will be offered, students etc.), the Department should seriously consider streamlining the curriculum in line with available resources and the current needs of the public administration and private firms. The department should focus on the undergraduate restructuring as a matter of priority so that available resources can be directed towards other related objectives (e.g. , research or graduate teaching).

Recommendation A.1.2

The Department should consider decreasing the number of courses required for the degree (e.g. 48 instead of the 51). It should consider to include in its curriculum, courses from other Departments e.g., psychology. We think that the number of elective courses offered by the Department is quite large. This, while on the one hand is good since students have more courses to choose from, on the other hand, we do not think this use of the available resources of the department is the best.

Recommendation A.1.3

Taking into account current practice in other foreign universities, the Department should consider designing a more balanced undergraduate Curriculum and gradually shifting its emphasis to include more courses in public management. This can be done gradually through the retirement of the existing staff and the recruitment of the new staff.

Recommendation A.1.4

The committee suggests that during the last year of studies, one of more elective courses should be added where a research project is required.

A.2 Curriculum – Postgraduate Programs

APPROACH

- **What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?**
- **How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?**
- **Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?**
- **How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?**
- **Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?**

The Department offers graduate programs in the areas of i) National and Local Administration, ii) Legal culture, iii) Economics, iv) Tax and Auditing, and v) Public Management. The objectives of these programs are to equip graduate students with specific skills and knowledge that are needed for the contemporary firms and public administration.

It aims to meet these objectives through a curriculum structure, practice-oriented learning techniques and lectures from both academics and practitioners. The graduate programs overall cover a meaningful array of courses relevant to the contemporary needs of the public administration and of the Greek economy.

Relevant committees have decided upon the objectives, content and structure of the programs taking into account the existing staff, the needs of the Public administration, Greek firms and the respective graduate programs of other local and foreign universities.

IMPLEMENTATION

- **How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?**
- **How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?**
- **Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?**

- **Is the curriculum coherent and functional?**
- **Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?**
- **Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?**

The graduate programs are well organized and each one of them has the appropriate courses. Some graduate programs are unique in the Greek university system. The other programs are compared very favorably with the relevant programs of other very good universities in Greece or abroad and their curriculum is very carefully and well designed.

All the graduate programs have a rational structure and the timing of the course offering and their content is the appropriate one. The content of each program, however, could be enriched with the provision of elective courses.

For some programs the Department has the necessary and appropriate qualified staff to implement the curriculum, while for other programs needs more qualified staff. Currently, in some cases, there is reliance on the volunteer contribution of quality staff outside the University. The non-staff resources needed for the implementation of the graduate programs are very minimal and the existence of the graduate programs depends mostly on the volunteer contribution of the Departmental staff.

RESULTS

- **How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?**
- **If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?**
- **Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?**

The department through its focus on the graduate programs has achieved its goals and objectives. There is, however, room for improvement (please see recommendations below). The graduate students seem fairly happy and progress well with their studies. On the positive side, they noted the collegial spirit in the department, the quality of communication between students and staff and the diverse opportunities to show their skills e.g. through coursework, presentations etc.

IMPROVEMENT

- **Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?**
- **Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?**

The Department has no resources for its graduate programs besides the teaching space and its own teaching staff, which in some cases is not enough. There are no funds available to buy the services of teaching staff outside the University, the services of students or sometimes has difficulties in buying even basic materials for teaching purposes for the graduate programs.

Recommendation A.2.1

We recommend that the Department should consider the possibility of charging tuition fees for its graduate programs. We recommend that the Department should consider the possibility of increasing the number of the students it accepts in some of its graduate programs to 20-25, charge reasonable tuition fees which can be different across programs and provides tuition waiver to 5-10 students base on economic and academic criteria.

Recommendation A.2.2

The Department should consider offering some elective courses, which are suitable for the students of more than one program and thus students from different programs can take them. This should be possibility should be explored in the context of the new structure of the university. The existing collaboration between the department and the National Technical University (ΕΜΠ) for a joint provision of MSc courses in Economics could offer a useful template.

Recommendation A.2.3

We recommend for the department to introduce MSc programs, which are sufficiently differentiated from those offered by other Greek universities in order to exploit a potential niche market advantage, which will utilise the diverse expertise and synergies in the faculty (e.g. MSc Human Resource Management in the Public Sector; MSc in Health Sector Management)

A.3 Curriculum-Doctorate Program

The doctoral program is the area where structural changes could be implemented soon. Currently, the doctoral process seems to be heavily 'supervisor-oriented' and this has the positive aspect of the frequent communication with the student. However, the international practice leans towards processes of regular intervals which set up pre-determined guidelines for both the supervisor and the student. The emphasis should be towards the process and not rely so much on the individuals. This more structured approach is expected to benefit both parties and is associated with the reliability of the process and mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation A.3.1

Design milestones that doctoral students have to achieve (e.g. every 6 months or year) where clearly defined outcomes are expected (e.g. completion of conceptual framework by the x^{th} month of study). This could be done within the existing system of required annual progress reports.

Recommendation A.3.2

Ensure that all doctoral students attend a research methods module which covers fundamental areas for all students (e.g. philosophy of science, research ethics, research design etc.) as well as offering more narrowly focused sessions on specific methodological tools in respective fields e.g., Economic Professors to offer sessions in Research Methods in Economics.

Recommendation A.3.3

Complement existing workshop/seminar series dedicated to doctoral students where all students and staff annually present their ongoing research work. This will allow all parties involved to get feedback from each other in a collegial atmosphere, exploit synergies within a closely tied network and identify areas for joint work.

Recommendation A.3.4

Identify conferences of international standing where students are expected to present their work at least once before completion. We assume this is already happening at some level but it can be more formalised as a practice.

Recommendation A.3.5

The Department should provide financial assistance, at least to some of its best doctoral

students, either from its own funds, e.g., graduate students tuition fees or from external funds, e.g., private companies or non-profit organizations.

B.1 Teaching – Undergraduate Program

APPROACH

Does the Department have a defined pedagogic policy with regard to teaching approach and methodology?

- **Teaching staff/ student ratio**
- **Teacher/student collaboration**
- **Adequacy of means and resources**
- **Use of information technologies**
- **Examination system**
- **Teaching methods used**

The quality, level of expertise, and level of commitment of teaching staff is very high. They are enthusiastic about their subject areas and they aspire to maintaining high standards in pedagogy and course delivery, whilst fostering an excellent working relationship with the students. Following our extensive discussions with undergraduate students, it became apparent that students were also satisfied with the faculty, highlighting their professionalism, approachability and supportive predisposition. By and large, our discussions with students confirmed the general feeling that they enjoy an overall rewarding learning experience in the Department of Public Administration at Panteion University.

However, there are several issues to be addressed and there are certain areas where further improvements could be made.

- The student to staff ratio is high, which makes it difficult to implement a broader array of pedagogic methods when delivering certain courses, especially in the first and second year where the number of students could easily exceed 200. In these large classes, there is little flexibility or room for manoeuvre to deviate from the traditional lecture and final examination. Fortunately, in the third and fourth years, when optional modules are introduced, teaching is delivered in smaller groups and a greater variety of assessment methods is introduced, including project work and presentations. Nevertheless, the issue remains of whether all the students are exposed to the whole array of assessment methods and have acquired all the skills necessary for a successful entry into the labour market. The existing legal framework is rather rigid as it does not allow sufficient flexibility for the department to introduce mechanisms for a more systematic evaluation of skills needs.
- The issue of the large number of students has also a number of different dimensions. First, the fact that a large number of registered students are not actually active creates logistical problems in terms of timetabling, classroom allocation, examinations planning and a general difficulty for all support services, including library provision, computing and administrative support. In essence, there seem to be a number of courses with 100s of students registered of whom only a small proportion are actively attending lectures or participate in examinations.
- The adequacy of teaching means and resources varies greatly across the various sites.

Certain classrooms are well-equipped with computing/audiovisual equipment, including projectors and microphones, while such equipment is totally absent in other classrooms. The lack of adequate equipment creates a particular difficulty in delivering lectures in large lecture theatres with a large number of students.

- In recent years, significant progress has been made in integrating information technology in the teaching delivery and provision. The online learning environment is used by most teaching staff to provide course information (syllabi, lecture notes, and other material) to students with success. Students mentioned however that the web provision is somewhat unreliable with the system crashing at peak demand times, suggesting the need for an upgrade.
- Examinations are generally fair and well organised but there is a major issue with students not having information about exam timetables in sufficient good time prior to the start of the examination period. Students felt that this was a major source of dissatisfaction and unnecessary stress and something that needs to be addressed. The main source of the problem is that students are allowed to register for exams up to almost a couple of days before the start of the examination period, which does not allow sufficient time for the administrative staff to prepare and communicate the exam timetable to students in good time.

Recommendation B.1.1

It is necessary for the department to adopt a strategy and specific measures to mitigate the negative impact of large student numbers on the students learning experience during the first and second year of their study. Splitting the large courses into two groups and introducing smaller seminar groups could be one way forward.

Recommendation B.1.2

It is important for the department to introduce procedures for continuous assessment and updating the skill needs and requirements for graduates of Public Administration and ensuring that all students are equipped with these skills. Establishing an employer-faculty- alumni liaison group to assess the evolving skills needs in the industry and the public sector could be a way forward. The recommendations of the 'skills liaison group' could be incorporated in the teaching and assessment strategy of the department.

Recommendation B.1.3

The online learning environment should be used more extensively across the board with clear department guidelines regarding the minimum required content to ensure more consistency across various courses.

Recommendation B.1.4

Improve the computing/audiovisual infrastructure in teaching classrooms with adopting a clear policy on minimum standards for effective teaching delivery.

Recommendation B.1.5

Ensure that examinations timetables and other related arrangements are communicated to the students at least two weeks prior to the start of the examination period. This might require that the deadline for students to register for examinations needs to be set to four weeks prior to the start of the examination period.

IMPLEMENTATION

- **Quality of teaching procedures**
- **Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.**
- **Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?**
- **Linking of research with teaching**
- **Mobility of academic staff and students**
- **Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching and (b) the course content and study material/resources**

By and large, teaching delivery and provision is effective and of a high standard. This is often achieved by the dedication of staff who often have to go the extra mile to overcome some of the problems caused by inadequate infrastructure and the lack of resources. The quality of course material is very high, but there have been few exceptions where students felt that the required textbooks were outdated and needed to be replaced by more modern, up-to-date ones. The majority of academic staff are engaged with scholarly activity and research and there is clear evidence that they strive to incorporate their research into their teaching.

Academic staff and students have benefited from exchanges and visits to other universities in Europe, mainly through the ERASMUS program. There is clear evidence that the department has embraced the ERASMUS program with great enthusiasm and there is strong support and commitment from dedicated staff and the Panteion University to expand the program.

There is a process of students' evaluation of the teaching and course content, mainly through the standard ADIP questionnaire. However, the results of the questionnaires were not seen by the academic staff concerned, so the questionnaire was not used as a way of constructive feedback that staff could use to improve their course and their teaching.

Recommendation B.1.6

The department is encouraged to continue to enhance the link between research and teaching, with further efforts to incorporate the latest research (by staff and the literature) into the course content and syllabi.

Recommendation B.1.7

Encourage further participation of incoming students into the ERASMUS program by offering a set number of courses in English, which could also be optional for Greek Students.

Recommendation B.1.8

Improve procedures for student feedback. Such feedback should be seen and be used by members of staff and the head of the department for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching. The introduction of a student questionnaire tailored to the required needs of the subject and the department could be adopted.

RESULTS

- **Efficacy of teaching.**
- **Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are justified.**
- **Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.**
- **Whether the Department understands the reasons of such positive or negative results?**

There is a variation in student failure rates across courses but there is nothing alarming about it. The issue of the discrepancy between the number of registered and active students remains. It is important for the department to have accurate information about the number of active students so that progress and failure rate statistics are also more accurate.

Recommendation B.1.9

Introduce a formal bi-annual review committee of teaching and examination results to discuss the performance of staff and students in the previous semester and to identify potential areas of improvement.

Recommendation B.1.10

Establish the permanent post of a 'Student Advocate' (Sinigoros tou Fititi) in order to improve communication channels between students and the department/university.

IMPROVEMENT

- **Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?**
- **What initiatives does it take in this direction?**

There is a broad consensus within the department that a review of the undergraduate program and the teaching provision is due. We envisage that such a review will consider recommendations B.1.1 – B.1.9 above.

B.2 Teaching – Postgraduate Program

APPROACH

Does the Department have a defined pedagogic policy with regard to teaching approach and methodology?

- **Teaching methods used**
- **Teaching staff/ student ratio**
- **Teacher/student collaboration**
- **Adequacy of means and resources**
- **Use of information technologies**
- **Examination system**

Postgraduate teaching provision is of a very high standard, attracting highly qualified students who are selected through a very rigorous and competitive process. The capped number of 15 students in each MSc program makes the program manageable and allows for more interaction among students and staff. Issues related to the lack of adequate computing /audiovisual equipment in classrooms is less pressing than in the undergraduate program. Classroom facilities for the MSc students are of a high standard.

IMPLEMENTATION

Quality of teaching procedures

- **Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.**
- **Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?**
- **Linking of research with teaching**
- **Mobility of academic staff and students**
- **Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching and (b) the course content and study material/resources**

One area that takes on particular prominence in the case of postgraduate teaching is the link between research and teaching. Postgraduate students enjoy the resources and services of a high quality library service, which allows them to access the latest specialized research sources in the area of study, including a comprehensive list of online journals and other resources.

RESULTS

- **Efficacy of teaching**
- **Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are justified.**
- **Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.**
- **Whether the Department understands the reasons of such positive or negative results?**

Postgraduate teaching is very effective, helped in part by the small number of highly qualified students, committed faculty, and good library resources. The popularity of the MSc programs begs the question of the introduction of tuition fees, which will provide additional funds to finance MSc scholarships and to support research activity for staff and postgraduate students.

C. Research

APPROACH

- **Research policy and main objectives**

Research conducted by the members of the department is, in most areas, of a high level from both a quantity and quality point of view, although there is still room for improvement in terms of the quality of publications.

Although there is some evidence of collaborative research among faculty members and researchers in other institutions, research activity remains predominantly a rather personal matter. Indeed, faculty members conduct research mostly in their own area of scientific training and specialization, as evidenced by their publications and other research accomplishments such as journal reviewers, etc. However, there is no multi-disciplinary research work performed within

the Department, which is in contradiction with its very character and its aim to enhance and disseminate scientific and practical knowledge at the interface of law, economics and administrative science in order to inform policy and practice in effectively managing the public sector. Recent initiatives to produce collective volumes of research output and to organise research workshops are steps in the right direction and they need to be supported within the context of a departmental research strategy.

The outcome is a lack of collective strategic vision for research and a lack of articulation with the objectives and mission of the department (as it can be supposed by the very few publications specifically in the field of public administration or management, for instance). There is thus a wedge between the institutional objectives and the respectable results obtained by the individual research.

This has two main consequences:

- a) It weakens the positive impact of research conducted by individual members of the Department because it does not fit into a collective dynamic in order to promote potential synergies, and
- b) It undermines the interdisciplinary character of the educational and learning objectives of the Department.

There are no set internal criteria and systematic standards or processes for assessing research, but these are built into the process of tenure and promotion of the Department members.

We acknowledge that this lack of a coherent research strategy is a general characteristic of the Greek higher educational system and not solely of the department. Members underline such an unsatisfactory context for promoting research in the Internal Evaluation Report (IER).

IMPLEMENTATION

- **Research promotion and assessment, quality of support and infrastructure**

The current economic and institutional context in Greece is unfavorable for providing funds or incentives for academic research. Nothing suggests a rapid improvement, which could undermine any effort in this area in the medium and long term and makes it very difficult to promote research activities in the immediate future.

There are formally five research centers, which the EEC thought is too large of a number in a Department of 40 members. More importantly there is no evidence of any synergies across these five centers. This situation reflects the variety of disciplines and sensibilities but mainly translates the deficiency of the lack of a shared research strategy. These centers do not have any financial resources at their disposal and only two of them (in law and governance) are apparently active.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that there is a strong support for PhD students and for the organization of doctoral seminars. It should be noted that a number of PhD students have published already high quality outputs. Based on the information provided in the IER and the meeting held with PhD candidates, the EEC feels that doctoral candidates are active on the doctoral program. Faculty members of the department who share similar research interests supervise these individuals and PhD students have stressed that there is very good interaction with their supervisor having very frequent meetings. The EEC strongly recommends that the ethos of strong support for PhD students is maintained and further promoted.

Collaborative research between junior and senior faculty works well, as indicated by some joint

publications produced and confirmed by the discussion with the younger faculty. The EEC considers collaborative research between junior and senior faculty to be a good practice and encourages the senior faculty to take a more active leadership role in setting research targets and forming teams of young researchers.

Based on the discussions of the EEC with faculty members, it is noted that the more junior academics spend a significant amount of time for the delivery of courses due to high teaching loads as well as a significant amount of time serving in several administrative committees, which in many cases do not have an academic purpose. This is related to the current legislation for the organization of tasks inside the academic community, which allows relatively limited time for them to carry out research. On the other hand, it is known that the same educational legislation imposes that research output is essential for academic promotions. Hence, junior faculty will have to put more emphasis on research for promotion purposes and this may have a negative impact on the quality of teaching. These tensions between teaching, research, and administration are particularly heightened within the department. It should be noted, however, that under the current legislation all faculty members are required to teach the same number of hours and they are responsible for a similar load of administrative tasks, irrespective of seniority or rank.

It is the EEC's opinion that the academic and professional qualifications as well as the practical experience of the existing faculty are adequate to respond to the multi-disciplinary research needs of the Department, under the condition of clarification of the strategic objectives and exploitation of potential synergies.

To increase the quality and quantity of research output, the Department must have the critical mass required in specific areas of research. Acquiring additional faculty personnel of high caliber from international well-known institutions could further enhance the departmental research activities, but this opportunity seems quite limited for the next 2-3 years at least.

RESULTS

- **Scientific publications.**
- **Research projects and collaborations.**

Given the current context, the involvement of members of the department in research remains high, even if the individual instead of collective character for most initiatives and projects weakens the coherence of the whole, as it has already been indicated.

The research assessment presented for the period 2008-2013 includes several publications in well-known journals, especially in economics and business administration, as well as quality monographs and books in law. The research work covers both fundamental and applied topics in a wide range of subject areas.

The research output over the last five years shows a continuous activity, both in terms of quality and quantity. This is indicated mainly by the publications in books and journals, as well as the number of conference papers presented by the academic faculty at various national and international conferences.

Based on evidence provided by the IER and also obtained at the meetings with Faculty, various forms of research collaboration are already in place between the faculty from the Department with other academic institutions outside Greece (Program LEGAPOLIS, European Science Foundation...) . The EEC encourages this good practice as a platform of promoting research and developing links with reputable institutions in Europe and worldwide.

It is worth noting the density of interactions with social demand (conferences and multiple interventions in public and private organizations) and relations with several other Greek

universities in the form of participation in post-graduate programs.

A number of faculty personnel have been given honorary awards for their research achievements. The EEC considers the above reported results very promising and encourages the staff of the Department to continue engaging in research with high impact for Greek public administration and enterprises.

IMPROVEMENTS

The EEC acknowledges that there is some considerable strength and a commendable effort is made in the department but there is room for considerable improvement.

The Department does not have a collective strategic plan on research. Research is, however, an important issue regarding the image of the Department, the coherence of its overall development and the advancement of its Faculty at the personal level, in particular the younger members. What is more, international experience clearly shows that efficiency in research is closely linked to interchanges inside dynamic groups, instead of isolated work.

Recommendation C.1: Build-up a strategic plan on research

The EEC recommends that the Department should make serious efforts to formally define its strategic research direction and major research themes in line with the Departmental mission statement so as to provide clarity and direction to its members in terms of priorities and research standards. Plans should be put forward for implementation.

Given the multi-disciplinary structure of the Department, the definition of fields of common interest and the building-up of shared quality standards is a crucial matter during this process, enabling a shared understanding of research quality and impact, as well as identifying and disseminating best practices. Indeed, it seems necessary to overcome a narrow disciplinary approach and to favor synergies among the different subject areas.

Recommendation C2

The EEC recommends the creation of one single research unit gathering and maintaining the specificities and sensibilities represented inside the Department, but working towards the definition of some common axes and priorities could serve this aim. Members convinced for this necessity have to be appointed in order to coordinate the process.

Recommendation C.3

Given the current context, it is unlikely to obtain any supplementary state funding for a while. It is urgent to find additional financial resources in order to facilitate the research work itself, diffuse the results and allow the modernization of the equipment and software systems with the view to improving the research infrastructure and support (databases, etc.).

Some possibilities can be mentioned:

- A more aggressive public relations campaign in attracting sponsored research and collaboration with public and private organizations.*
- A more organized and systematic participation in European research programs, knowing that such opportunities depend also on the will of the Panteion University to establish appropriate support services.*

- A portion of the tuition fees for the post-graduate programs should be used to encourage research (participation in conferences, fees for article submission, etc...). From an administrative point of view, the EEC believes that a major improvement would be possible if the Department were to have and manage its own research budget.

Recommendation C.4

The EEC Committee recommends that the Department maintain the positive research attitude within the Department and would like to see the good practice continued and enhanced. Faculty is strongly encouraged to continuously improve the quality of their publications (articles and/or monographs), increase the number of their publications in internationally respectable journals, and participate in international research networks. Internal incentives have to be instituted. The allocation rules of available resources for research activities could be based on some indexes related to academic production of the members corresponding to the uses of each discipline. This implies the establishment of internal research evaluation benchmarks.

Recommendation C.5

Also, under the condition of resources availability, the members would be benefited from some income bonuses for research only that will be offered on the top of their salaries. These bonuses should be related with clearly defined criteria, such as ranking of journals or other standards according to the different disciplines.

To this end, the Committee would urge the Department to support junior staff in order to facilitate their career development and enable them to realize their research potential.

Recommendation C.6

Building a significant student body of high quality doctoral students can make a substantial contribution to the Departmental research output. Upon graduation, these individuals may further contribute to the Department in different ways through their connections to the Greek or overseas industry and other academic. To make this possible, the Committee suggests that the Department should make a firm commitment to the PhD program and make every effort so that additional financial resources are allocated to attract high quality researchers, for example, offer a number of PhD scholarships, on the top of their waived tuition fees, to the most competent candidates.

D. All Other Services

APPROACH

- **How does the Department view the various services provided to the members of the academic community (teaching staff, students).**
- **Does the Department have a policy to simplify administrative procedures? Are most procedures processed electronically?**
- **Does the Department have a policy to increase student presence on Campus?**

Comments regarding the services provided to the academic community were solicited from all groups that the EEC committee met with, as they related to their needs. The general impression of the EEC is that the department of Public Administration offers a collegiate environment for academic staff, administrative staff and students to engage harmoniously with the learning process. Despite the general context of budget cuts and pressure on resources, faculty and staff maintain a very good relationship with the students. The students have also indicated very clearly that they are proud studying Public Administration at Panteion University.

Overall, staff and students alike are satisfied with the quality of support services. Great progress

has been made in recent years to maintain and even improve such services during a period of budgetary cuts.

There has been no discussion about a policy to increase student presence on Campus. Access for students with disability is limited and greatly inadequate.

IMPLEMENTATION

- **Organization and infrastructure of the Department's administration (e.g. secretariat of the Department).**
- **Form and function of academic services and infrastructure for students (e.g. library, PCs and free internet access, student counseling, athletic- cultural activity etc.).**

The library service is of an exceptionally high standard, it is run by enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff who are highly motivated and dedicated to helping students and faculty. Staff working in the ERASMUS office are equally enthusiastic and keen to foster and promote further links with other European institutions.

A small team of three members of staff in the registry are very dedicated and very effective handling a large volume of work. The registry staff felt that their working relationship with both faculty and students is excellent and that they are happy and proud to provide support to the best of their ability.

The establishment of the Student Support Services office (KEF) in recent years has been a great success. The KEF office serves a large number of students offering a great range of services to students including help with housing, catering, and medical insurance. The office is also managing student requests for transcripts, certificates and other services during extended opening hours. This has improved student access to such services and has helped the registry in dealing with excessive workloads and to concentrate in core academic registry duties.

Computing facilities are rather basic and cannot support an extensive use of information technology in teaching and students' project work. The difficulties related to the IT infrastructure are often circumvented by staff and students' initiative to share their own, personal computing hardware. An information technology consultant offers expert, high quality, technical support for the members of staff and students. Further improvements in computing facilities are needed to support improvements in teaching delivery and to increase the efficiency of administrative services.

RESULTS

- **Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?**
- **How does the Department view the particular results?**

Academic staff are responsible for many administrative tasks that are not directly related to teaching and research.

Recommendations D1.

Such tasks could be transferred to the central administration of the university. The same applies for administrative tasks performed at the local level (e.g. timetabling), which could be done centrally.

IMPROVEMENTS

- **Has the Department identified ways and methods to improve the services provided?**
- **Initiatives undertaken in this direction.**

The organization of the department is well established and there is close cooperation among administrative staff. However, there is room for improvements in efficiency by centralizing certain services.

Recommendation D2

A review of administrative processes could identify services that could be offered centrally and services that could be provided at the departmental level.

There is a clear intent by the Department to offer good infrastructure services to the students. However, a need remains for the University to address the issue of infrastructure facilities (classroom space, classroom audiovisual aids, and computing facilities) rather urgently.

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

- **Potential inhibiting factors at State, Institutional and Departmental level, and proposals on ways to overcome them.**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term goals.**
- **Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit**
- **Long-term actions proposed by the Department.**

The Department does not have any document where its strategic planning is stated explicitly. During the interviews, however, the Department revealed the following goals.

In the short term horizon, the department focuses on goals of:

- Increase the use of computers and electronic communications to further improve teaching and administrative processes.
- Continuous review and evaluation of the undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Improve the internationalising of the Department through the exchanges of students, faculty and administrative staff using the Erasmus program.
- Within the restrictive policies and practices of the Greek educational system regarding admissions, the Department will continue its efforts e.g., visits, forums etc., to secondary education schools to promote the department of public administration to potential students.

In the medium term horizon, the department plans to focus on goals of:

- Improving the student/faculty ratios as and bring them closer to international standards of comparable institutions.

In the long term horizon, the Department plans to focus on goals of:

- Continuing the effort of upgrading its research activity.

Recommendation E.1

It is recommended that the Department adopts a brief, formal departmental Mission Statement in which the Department's emphasis and priorities are stated. This can be used as an implementation plan for the future. It is something that could be posted on the departmental website.

Recommendation E.2

The committee thinks that the Department should institute a formal standing committee to propose and track the progress of future plans and goals of the Department.

Recommendation E.3

The committee thinks that the Department should adopt monetary and non-monetary award schemes in order to promote excellence in teaching and especially research. In the current situation with pressing budget constraints there are disincentives for research. Given its limited financial and other resources, the Department should find the means and design an incentive structure to promote research in the medium and long run.

Recommendation E.4

The Committee recommends increasing the Department's interactions with all the university stakeholders: industry, other academic institutions, and alumni. Given, the extremely low resources provided by the government, the Department could engage in a fund raising activity in order to secure funds that will help accomplish its mission.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:

- **The development of the Department to this date and its present situation, including explicit comments on good practices and weaknesses identified through the External Evaluation process and recommendations for improvement**
- **The Department's readiness and capability to change/improve**
- **The Department's quality assurance.**

The evaluation took place during a time of great economic uncertainty for the higher education sector and the country as a whole. Nevertheless, the EEC committee found that the actual process of evaluation was performed smoothly and efficiently. The faculty, staff, students and the senior management team at Panteion University facilitated the evaluation process with great hospitality, cooperation and a general enthusiasm.

The EEC found that overall the Department is doing a very good job in terms of its core tasks. The faculty is composed of highly qualified academic professionals who, in spite of the ever decreasing resource availability are going beyond the call of duty to provide a high quality learning experience for the students. Students, staff, faculty, and management are all proud of the history and great heritage of Panteion University and they feel privileged working for the institution.

The EEC committee made a number of recommendations in the above section, which the department should consider in good faith to improve certain areas of the provision.

In summary, there are three main general areas of potential improvement, which require a more strategic and a more proactive approach by the department:

- ***Establish a mechanism for revising the curriculum to reflect the needs of all stakeholders, including the needs of the Greek society and economy, which is informed by the latest developments in the field of Public Administration internationally.***
- ***Adopt a more strategic approach for steering the department through a rapidly changing external environment and financial pressures. Such a strategy needs to include the proactive pursuit of external funding from the private and non-profit sectors.***
- ***Establish a mechanism for continuous self-reflection, evaluation of teaching and research activity. Clearly defined incentives for research and scholarly activity of an international standard need to be an integral part of such a mechanism.***