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ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ
ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H.Q.A.

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AND
ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT: Political Science and Public Administration
ΤΜΗΜΑ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑΣ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΗΣ

UNIVERSITY: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
(ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΑΚΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ)
School of Legal, Economic and Political Studies
(ΣΧΟΛΗ ΝΟΜΙΚΩΝ, ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΩΝ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΩΝ)



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MANAGING AUTHORITY

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External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

1. The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Political Science & Public Administration of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens consisted of the following five expert evaluators drawn from the Registry compiled by HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

- 1) Costas Douzinas (Coordinator), Professor, Pro-Vice Master, International Links, Director, Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, Birkbeck College, University of London, UK.
- 2) Costas M. Constantinou, Professor of International Relations, University of Cyprus, Cyprus.
- 3) Symeon A. Giannakos, Professor and Director, MA in International Relations, Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island, U.S.
- 4) Vassiliki (Vally) Koubi, Professor, ETH Zurich and University of Bern, Switzerland.
- 5) Andreas Theophanous, Professor of Political Economy, University of Nicosia, Cyprus.

Introduction

2. The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens from February 3 to 6 and worked on its report until Saturday February 8, 2014 and after that through email contact of its members. The Committee met the University Rector and Vice Rector, the Chair of the Department, the Section Directors of Political Science, Social Theory and Sociology, International and European Studies, and Administrative Science. The EEC also met with faculty members and a selection of graduate and undergraduate students. The EEC also visited the University Library and Department Laboratories and teaching facilities. This report is based both on the information furnished during the onsite meetings as well as the information presented to the EEC by each of the Program Directors, through power point presentations or documents they made available to the EEC (including the Department's internal evaluation report).

3. Overall the Committee believes that the Department justifiably holds a strategic position in the University, the national and international academic community and, Greek society. It was founded in 1982 and soon established itself as the premier Politics and Public Administration Department in Greece. It has a rich tradition of teaching and research and counts amongst its current and past faculty some of the most senior academics in Greece who have made major contribution to academic teaching, scholarship and public life. One of the most positive aspects of the Department is the continued use of its distinguished Emeriti Professors, who offer their experience and expertise to the new generation.

4. The Department's research base and activity is characterised by inter- and multi-disciplinarity and a particular emphasis on the impact of teaching and research on the political, administrative, economic and legal standing of the country. The Committee recognises the achievements of the Department and offers this report, including its criticisms and advice, in recognition of the senior status of the Department and its faculty.

A. Curriculum

Undergraduate Studies

5. The undergraduate curriculum in Political Science and Public Administration is comprised of core courses and electives. The core courses are designed to introduce students to: the basic methodological tools of knowledge, the reference context of political science and sociology, and the basic knowledge of their subfields. Specifically, the core/required courses of the undergraduate curriculum introduce students to Political Science and Sociology, World and European history, International Relations, Foundations of Law, Political Philosophy, Modern Greek History, Sociological Theory, Constitutional Frameworks, Sociological Research Methods, European Institutions and Organizations, Foundations of Public Administration, political communications, and the Greek political system. Students are required to complete a total of 16 specified core courses and select four of a small pool of nine courses, for a total of twenty core courses. Upon completion of the core courses, students are required to follow the curriculum of one of three specializations: Political Analysis, International and European Studies, and Public Administration. They complete another 20 courses in each of their specialization to receive their undergraduate degree.

6. In the Political Analysis stream, students are required to complete courses in a variety of political science subfields, from comparative politics, political sociology, political behavior, political theory and history of ideas. In the International and European Studies stream, students are required to complete courses in International and European studies. In the Public Administration stream, students are required to complete courses in the study of political institutions, public policy, and public law. In each stream, students are required to complete a set of core courses and select from a pool of elective courses.

7. The undergraduate curriculum makes available to students a breadth of subject courses and exposes them to a wide area of inquiry and knowledge in the fields of Political Science and Sociology. The array of courses offered is impressive and provide a thorough and comprehensive coverage of the field and its four main subfields: political thought, politics and government, comparative politics and international/European relations. The curriculum expose students to a deep and wide understanding of Greek political institutions, their policies and functions in the broader context of the international and European framework. To a great extent, the curriculum meets the contemporary

educational needs of its undergraduate population. It prepares students sufficiently for further study in both Greece and abroad.

8. It is commendable that the Department's website includes the list of required courses. Many of the courses listed include detailed syllabi, some less detailed ones while some do not offer a syllabus. It is advisable that syllabi posted in the Department's website, <http://en.pspa.uoa.gr/undergraduate-studies/curriculum/core-courses.html>, should be detailed, comprehensive, and up to date.

9. Overall, it can be said that the curriculum in both the undergraduate major and its concentration is relatively rigid in terms of required courses. This allows for easier scheduling of courses, but the existence of the large number of the undergraduate population should allow for the offering of fewer required core courses and more electives. This would also allow for the easier updating of courses and the continuous updating of the curriculum. On this, perhaps the Department may wish to consider reducing the number of compulsory courses to the absolute introductory ones at both the undergraduate major and in each stream and then allow students to select from the available elective pool whose scheduling should remain relatively predictable. Information should be presented as to which semester specific electives are planned to be offered as opposed to simply being listed for specific semesters.

Postgraduate Studies

10. Four graduate programmes are offered in the Department:

Political Science and Sociology
 European and International Relations
 State and Public Policy
 Southeast European Studies (delivered in English)

The programmes offer a combination of compulsory and elective courses and seem to cover a large number of cognitive areas satisfactorily. Masters degree students spoke highly of their courses and expressed satisfaction with the curriculum and the commitment of Professors. It was noted that there is little collaboration both in terms of curriculum development and course coverage between the different programmes. Additionally there is not much intellectual collaboration with students stating that they are not aware of courses in other programmes. Finally, the initial rationale for the different modes of delivery of the graduate programme (one over one year others over eighteen months or two years) seems no longer as strong.

11. Bearing these comments in mind, the Committee suggests that the curriculum and syllabi should be periodically reviewed in order to update the programmes and avoid overlaps and repetitions. Perhaps the Department should consider setting up a Teaching and Learning Committee to oversee curriculum development at both undergraduate and graduate level and ensure

that teaching outcomes are set and monitored and clear progression routes exist between the semesters. The Committee felt that a first review of the existing graduate portfolio in the not too distant future would be desirable. This is necessitated by changes in the topicality of the general themes of each programme, by developing academic trends, by the decline in student numbers and, finally, by the need to attract new types of Greek and foreign students. Most importantly, such a review would allow the graduate programme to establish itself as a leading provider of contemporary, relevant and intellectually challenging education.

12. The Committee discussed certain ideas that emerged out of the discussion of the graduate portfolio with the Department faculty and graduate students. They are summarized below as suggestions for future discussion and adoption by the Department.

The current MA degrees were extremely topical and significant when they were founded. However, some MAs have witnessed some decline in student numbers and could benefit perhaps from a review of their content and potential student constituency. This should allow to move them towards themes and issues that are more topical today and would help both their intellectual standing and student recruitment. More specifically:

- The MA in South-East European Studies is an example of a highly topical and innovative degree at the time of its introduction. However, as the post-communist Balkans are moving on, the Department could perhaps consider enlarging the MA's scope towards the wider Black Sea and the Middle East.
- The MA in Political Analysis and Sociology has a strong set of parallel activities with regular seminars, including those organised by students and lectures by invited academics. The committee felt that its extracurricular activities and student support offer best practice for the Department. It was also felt that the programme could increase the aspect of comparative politics it currently offers, teach courses in English and attracting students from Western Europe and further afield.
- The MA in Public Administration could consider placing greater emphasis on Public Policy issues as well as political economy. Faculty and students stated that the traditional employment route of this programme's graduates in the civil service is currently significantly reduced. The proposed development could perhaps endow graduates with skills that would enhance their employability beyond the public sector.
- Finally, the MA in International and European Studies appears to have a disproportionate larger number of courses on the European Union than in broader international relations. It could consider enhancing the provision of its international relations aspects, an area of increasing importance and student interest.

The above ideas are initial suggestions. They could perhaps be difficult or impossible to implement in the current financial situation. However an overall review of the curriculum and syllabi of the graduate portfolio would allow faculty to update the offering of the degrees and consider meeting contemporary challenges and academic trends and interests.

B. Teaching

13. The 107 courses offered at the undergraduate level cover a large spectrum of themes and subjects. However, the Committee feels that 107 undergraduate courses for a four-year BSc degree are too many. The delivery and administration of such a large number of courses puts immense pressure on staff (academic and administrative) as well as on infrastructure.

Lectures are taught only by academic staff. Established teaching methods are being used with core courses being taught by means of lecture in large theaters. As a result, students at least in the first two years of their studies are exposed to a large lecture mode of teaching and do not experience smaller, interactive, and participative modes of learning.

14. While student numbers in the postgraduate program are reasonably healthy and manageable, at the undergraduate level the staff - to-student ratio is high by international standards (1:49,4 staff-to-registered students and 1:37 staff-to-active students). This is exacerbated in the Public Administration section which attracts about half of the student population. The Committee believes that this severely inhibits the learning process and places a heavy pressure on teachers. Students, although generally understanding, also feel that this high ratio has a direct adverse effect on their learning.

15. At the undergraduate level, contact between students and teachers depends heavily on student initiative. The evidence offered to the EEC indicates that only a small proportion of undergraduates take an active interest in approaching their teachers. The situation improves in the last two years of the studies. The department recently introduced the position of an academic advisor, but again, only a small number of students take advantage. It may be advisable to introduce a compulsory meeting between advisors and students early in the first year.

16. Lecturing is the main mode of teaching delivery. Traditional methods (chalk and blackboard) are primarily used; some modern techniques (power point presentations) are rarely used and mostly for small, elective courses. In addition, it seems that no additional tutorials exist to help students engage in better learning. In general, the Committee feels that the large number of students limits the extent to which group discussion, project work, presentations, and other modes of delivery and assessment could be used. As a result, there is a risk that graduates, especially those who did not select electives offering such opportunities, could have only limited exposure to such methods and consequently insufficient training in acquiring essential transferable skills (e.g. presentation, team work, conducting independent research).

17. The teaching resources could be improved. In the places visited by the EEC, audiovisual equipment (such as projectors) is not readily available, especially in classrooms where the large core classes are taught. The computer facilities could be improved in terms of both software and hardware. As it will be

detailed later, the library services, including its holdings and opening hours, are inadequate for the purposes of teaching and research. Information technologies are not used widely. Not all courses provide complete course information regarding syllabi and class material do not systematically appear on e-class web pages. The syllabi presented in the list of core courses in the website are incomplete and stand to benefit from improvement.

18. All instructors recommend two to four textbooks for their courses, but students usually receive only one. The class material is not always updated. The textbooks are often translations of popular English texts and are often, but not always, recent. They are rarely supplemented by class notes or lists of readings from international literature.

19. The examination system relies predominantly on the traditional final exam concept, in the form of either written or oral examinations. Considerable use of alternative methods (such as papers and presentations) is also made, in particular at the last two years of the undergraduate studies and at the graduate programs. The grading method depends on instructor with the agreement of the department. In some instances, the grade can be improved by undertaking extra work eg writing a paper. The reliance on oral examinations could pose credibility and accountability concerns.

20. Student evaluation of courses is mandatory. Until now, a department-specific questionnaire has been employed. The information collected is available only to the teacher evaluated and the chairman of the department. No descriptive, cross-sectional statistics are constructed so it is not possible to judge the historic evolution as well as the comparative standing of either the department or the faculty member or the course being evaluated.

21. Significant differences exist in graduation rates across courses, sections and programmes (graduate vs BA). While the overall graduation rate of graduate students seems to be very satisfactory (according to the information provided by the Department, 90% of the graduate students graduate within the time allocated by the sections for the completion of the degree i.e., 1 to 2 years depending on the section), the graduation rate of undergraduates is extremely low (only a quarter graduates on time). Some of these differences seem to have well understood causes. For instance, since students are assigned directly to the department through the system of the national qualifying exams, they might not all be interested in the subjects studied.

22. Many of the academic staff have an outward orientation and are well connected with the international research scene. Despite this, however, mobility in some cases is somewhat limited because of the lack of travel funds which hampers the ability of academic staff and PhD to participate in international conferences for example. The student exchange programme (Erasmus) is not very successful. So far it has been limited to BA students. It involves around 10 to 15 students per year. But it is quite unbalanced in terms of inflows and outflows, a situation that seems primarily due to the shortage of the department

courses taught in English. Hence, the Committee suggests that the Department ought to address the issue of the internationalization of its programme. The Committee believes that if the Department does not upgrade its performance in the existing Erasmus programme, it will soon lose its current exchange possibilities with other universities. The large deficit that exists between receiving students from abroad and sending students abroad will become a problem for future students.

Suggested Improvements

23. It is essential that students are encouraged/required to attend classes. Moreover, students should know in advance the material that would be presented each week. In addition to textbooks, reading from professional journals should be utilized to greater extent.

24. Greater care should be taken to publicize complete syllabi with course objectives, grading methodology, general policies and procedures, student expectations, program of study with specific dates for reading assignments and exams. It is easy to access syllabi through the web that are published by universities abroad and rely on them for templates.

25. The Committee strongly encourages using both faculty members and PhD candidates to teach undergraduate classes. PhD candidates could, for instance, offer tutorials. In addition, more courses in statistics and econometrics are highly recommended.

26. The Committee suggests that the department should consider making grade evaluation more flexible by allowing greater use of midterm exams and tests as well as homework assignments and papers (the latter when class size permits it). A BA thesis should not be optional but required for all 4th year students in spite of the fact that it will stretch the resources of the department. Such an endeavor will enhance students' academic and practical skills.

27. The Committee believes that the process of course evaluation by students needs to become more systematic and transparent. Statistics need to be computed and made publicly available. Also the students in each class should be informed about the descriptive statistics constructed from their evaluations and the actions taken by the department in case these statistics indicate poor teacher/course performance.

28. A major impediment to the efficient functioning of the department -and to the university as a whole- regarding especially its teaching capacity is the unlimited opportunities students have to retake exams for courses they have failed. This leads to waste of resources in preparing and administering examinations. Of course, this is one of the issues that need to be tackled at the ministerial level.

29. The Committee feels that given the large number of students, further investment and improvements are needed in order for IT to be fully integrated and to be used more widely for the delivery, assessment, and the management of courses. For example, all lecture material (e.g. syllabi, lecture notes, and required/recommended readings) should be available online, via e-class, to all registered students (with password protected download capabilities in order to avoid infringement of copyright law). A well functioning IT infrastructure will be particularly beneficial to post graduate students because it will give them the opportunity to benefit from a wider array of bibliographic references and learning material beyond the recommended reading in most course syllabi.

30. The Erasmus programme must be strengthened. The Committee believes that the best way to rectify the current shortcomings would be to offer a larger menu of upper-level optional courses taught in English and also allow (and strongly encourage) Greek students to attend such courses. By making the inflows-outflows in the Erasmus programme more balanced, it would also help maintain links to a larger number of external partners.

C. Research

31. The Department organizes its research within the four sections mentioned earlier in the report. Within each section there is a number of institutes/labs/units (εργαστήρια), which further focus research around the expertise of faculty members. Some institutes are highly active, including the Institute of European Integration and Policy, the Administrative Sciences Unit, the Institute of Greek Politics, the Lab of Political Communication and Information Media, the last of which the Committee visited. There are institutes/units that are less active and/or inactive and/or too specialized as was admitted by staff members during the section presentations. In some cases, retired and emeritus staff remains active within institutes, thus continuing to offer expertise, research guidance, and external visibility.

32. Research is financially supported by the university/department through small research and traveling grants, for which members can apply internally. Most faculty members are research active and very visible in the Greek national context. This applies invariably across all sections. They have authored and edited a considerable number of books and published a large number of articles in peer-reviewed journals in Greek. They have also published a number of high profile public reports and legal opinions. Some members have impressive records of public outreach and of research with impact on wide public debates.

33. In addition, a number of faculty members have international visibility, pursue collaborative research and have notable publications record, across all sections. For example, members of the Department co-edit and/or serve in editorial boards of international peer-reviewed journals, in addition to editing highly visible national journals. Furthermore, faculty members have a solid number of international collaborations and externally funded projects, most of

which employ doctoral students – an excellent practice. Although a complete list of these projects was unfortunately not presented to us in the internal departmental report, an indicative sample was presented in the section presentations that we were given. They include a number of EU Framework VII funded projects, Thales, Daphne, Niarchos Foundation, etc. All the above provide clear evidence of recognition and successful national and international networking.

34. Whilst we recognize that there is evidence in a number of cases of international visibility, collaborative research and a record of international peer-reviewed publications, this aspiration is not universally shared within the department. We believe that this should be strongly encouraged. The argument that we have heard that members of staff should use the Greek language in disseminating their research is correct and well taken. Indeed, we appreciate that in some contexts, this might be more appropriate than writing in English or in another foreign language. But it will be wrong to see the two as mutually exclusive. We strongly believe that the internationalization of research is the way to go with younger academics, who are now building up their research profiles and should be fully supported in that direction.

35. The research culture within sections and institutes appears good. A number of research seminars and activities are organized by all sections. The research culture across sections, however, needs to be strengthened (with the exception of the Political Science and Social Theory and Sociology Sections, that seem to be collaborate more “naturally”). As it stands, the division into sections is positive but it can also fragment internal research collaboration. It is advisable that following a long and thorough discussion, the department should prioritise themes and areas of research, which aim at creating research clusters – perhaps two to three in each section or across sections – promoting research collaboration in prioritised areas. The aim of these clusters should be to consolidate areas of research excellence. The tradition of the European University tends towards individual research and scholarship. However, the cultivation of a culture of collaboration would allow the Department to maximize its interdisciplinary potential and to achieve a leading position in South East Europe.

36. The public presentation of the Department’s research has room for improvement. The profiles of faculty are often short and schematic and do not give sufficient notice of their research specialisation and scholarship. More generally it is desirable that a part of the Department’s website be dedicated to the substantial research and scholarship of staff. The research programmes, areas of research priority and potential research clusters should be posted there and offer a succinct image of the work of faculty (including major publications, collaborations and externally funded projects). Furthermore, a depository of major publications should be created, which whether password protected or openly accessible collects and promotes research outputs. The absence of such a depository made the detailed evaluation of research almost impossible.

37. Finally it was noted that excessive emphasis was placed in the presentation of research on research programmes and externally funded research. As a result, not externally funded research and scholarship was not mentioned and the impression was given that it may not be fully appreciated. This may be linked in part with the emphasis placed on research grants in the ADIP form. In any case, the Committee emphasized that research and scholarship that takes the form of monographs, journal articles and edited collection chapters is as important as externally funded research and should be similarly appreciated.

Doctoral studies

38. The Department has awarded 124 PhD degrees in its history. Many of its doctoral graduates are now successful academics in Greek universities, and a few have become academics in European universities. It currently has 186 registered doctoral students across the sections. All the doctoral students we have spoken to are satisfied with the degree of supervision and praised their supervisors for their active and supportive work. It was felt however that the doctoral support strategy needs improvement.

39. According to information provided, the PhD completion rate is between seven and eight years, although no accurate and up to date statistics were available. This period of completion may not be unreasonable in a situation where many doctoral candidates have to work during their research. Recently the Department has started de-registering doctoral students who have been inactive for long periods. The Committee believes, however, that the introduction of certain reforms in the doctoral process could facilitate the successful carrying out of research and help towards a reduction of the completion period.

40. The committee believes that doctoral research is one of the most important missions of the University. Doctoral students should be given the opportunity to develop as much as possible all skills necessary for an academic career. Beyond research these include experience of teaching, conference attendance and help with the publication of work. Some of these activities exist already, but it was felt that participation in conferences and publications before submission was not universally encouraged. We strongly believe that these activities should become an integral part of research culture.

41. Measures that may help in this direction could include:

- the use of doctoral students as much as possible to convene small group tutorials in undergraduate core courses.
- The creation of a permanent and regular doctoral seminar in each section. There is evidence that such a seminar exists in some sections while in others tends to be irregular and *ad hoc*.

- The establishment of a Department-wide research seminar to allow doctoral students to meet their fellow researchers from other sections and exchange ideas and advice.
- The establishment of a Departmental annual Ph.D. conference in which students present their work in conditions of an international conference.
- The creation of working papers series in which doctoral students can publish important parts of their research.
- The financial and academic facilitation of national and international conference attendance, presentation of conference papers and the encouragement of the publication of essays in international journals and edited volumes.
- Finally, some doctoral researchers indicated that they would prefer to meet all three members of their supervisory committee at least once a year.

The Committee understands that not all these measures may be attainable in the short term. But they should be attainable in the middle and longer terms, following internal consultation. Overall the Committee believes that greater assistance should be given to doctoral students who become ambassadors for their cognitive field, their supervisors and the Department and help reproduce the academic vocation.

42. To implement the above and especially so as to support cross-section collaboration, the Committee recommends the establishment of a Research Committee at the Departmental level. It should be in charge of research strategy and should include participation from all sections. The aim should be to overview, on a regular basis, the work of sections/clusters as well to enhance a common research culture and, where possible, a common research agenda. The Research Committee could strategize on appropriate ways of maximizing the interdisciplinary potential of faculty and international collaborations.

Administration And Library

43. The Committee was impressed by the calm efficiency of the administrative staff. One of the most impressive aspects of the evaluated Department is the academic qualifications of the administrators with 25 % holding PhDs and 31.25 % Masters degrees. Recent administrative mobility measures have reduced the number of administrators and there is a clear fear of further reductions. It should be noted however that the large number of students imposes huge burdens on both professors and administrators. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the undergraduate population may have grievances about administrative services, particularly as regards the prompt response to student inquiries. The large number of undergraduate population may partially explain this, but the Department may wish to survey the undergraduate population to develop a clear picture of the extent and scope of dissatisfaction among its undergraduate

population. Furthermore, faculty reported that they have no administrative support for their teaching.

44. Insufficient staffing is particularly acute in the Library. The existing staff of three can keep the Library open until 7:00pm in working days and closed on the weekends. This means that the large number of students at all levels who work during the day have limited opportunities to visit the Library. The committee believes that the opening of the Library after 7:00pm and in the weekends is important.

45. An increase of administrators is necessary for the efficient running of the Department. However in the present climate, it is strongly suggested that no further reduction of administrative staff is acceptable.

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

i. Inhibiting Factors

46. The context for this evaluation is an environment of significant political economic and sector turbulence. The difficulties the Department is faced with respond to circumstances that are both systemic and institutional. More specifically, the Department stated that a number of inhibiting factors are affecting adversely their teaching and research mission. The most important hurdle is the lack of replacement of retiring faculty and the inability to appoint new lecturers in areas of strategic activity. This has led to a faculty, the majority of whom, are full Professors while very few are Lecturers or Assistant Professors. The picture of a 'reverse pyramid' of faculty is the opposite of most University Departments and creates major problems in the delivery of teaching and research. Additionally this situation creates problems for the renewal and reproduction of the academic and cognitive fields offered in the Department.

47. In this context, the Committee notes that the faculty gender imbalance is more pronounced than one would expect of an established Department of Political Science and Public Administration (only 8 of the 37 faculty members are women, while, for instance, women constitute 62,8% of the undergraduate student body). The Committee is aware that gender imbalances in academic settings are sometimes caused, at least in part, by external factors. The Committee recommends that the department should undertake an inventory of best practices in this area - within the Department, in similar Departments and Faculties and other leading Universities. Gender imbalance in senior positions should be targeted first. Such initiatives would strengthen the Department's position as a centre of academic excellence in Greece and the region.

48. The Department is asked annually to recommend to the Ministry of Education an appropriate number for undergraduate student admission. Its recommendation of around 150 students is not followed however and the annual student cohort is around double the Departmental recommendation.

The non-replacement of retiring faculty and the lack of new staff appointments has seriously affected the staff student ratio estimated at around 1 academic per 50 undergraduate students. This is extremely high by international standards and inhibits the teaching delivery and achievement of desired student skills outcomes. The staff student ratio for MA programmes is much lower.

49. Financial constraints have affected all aspects of infrastructure including library provision. The library holding of books is small by international standards of a research library. We were informed that funds available for new books are very limited and do not allow a proper updating of the stock. The journal holdings appear strong. However, the journal subscriptions have not been paid since 2010, and as a result, recent issues of most international journals are not available. Additionally, the central University subscription to major databanks has been discontinued and as a result faculty and students have no centrally provided access to periodicals indispensable for teaching and research.

50. The Committee believes that any further reduction in the funding of the Department will seriously affect its ability to perform its pedagogic research and service mission. The Committee recommends that the decline of funding be reversed. This would involve the replacement of retiring staff and the creation of new lectureships. Additionally new income streams should be explored, including the exploration of creating Masters degrees programmes beyond the existing in South Eastern European Studies delivered in English, which could help attract foreign fee-paying students.

51. A further inhibiting factor is the rigid legislative framework within which the Department and more generally the University have to operate. Colleagues gave the Committee numerous examples of small initiatives which require ministerial or legislative authorization. Again this is a hurdle shared across the sector. However it is suggested that the success of the Department and its activities crucially depends on the weakening of external controls and the introduction of a degree of real autonomy.

ii. Suggestions for Improvement

52. The Department is currently moving towards a new Faculty structure. Its continued success depends in part on a more consistent strategic planning of its major areas of activity. One of the benefits of the evaluation process was that it gave colleagues involved in internal evaluation the chance to review programmes and structures. This period of internal reflection has already enriched the Department's understanding of its activities, synergies and overlapping or repeated activities and has led to a process of reviewing and identifying strengths and weaknesses. It is advisable that this process of review, reflection and planning becomes somewhat institutionalised with periodic internal reviews.

53. The current move towards the new Faculty structure gives the Department an opportunity to review its strategic mission, aims and objectives and develop

a plan for the next period. It is desirable that such plan should consider and update its teaching portfolio, adopt a research strategy and consider the internationalisation of its activities.

54. The Committee considered certain strategic changes in the degree portfolio, which the Department could examine. Such reforms depend crucially on staffing and infrastructure issues on which the evaluation process has no immediate impact. However the Committee has considered various possible reforms that could be discussed by the Department and adopted wherever appropriate.

55. At the undergraduate level, the decline in public sector appointment would adversely affect the employability of the Public Administration degree graduates. This perhaps indicates that great emphasis should be placed in the training of students in transferable skills of use both in the public and private sector, NGOs and international institutional and companies. Such transferable skills include compulsory training in basic research methods, IT literacy, the ability to construct arguments and present them orally and in writing in succinct ways and perhaps a foreign language. The introduction of such skill training modules would help student employability. Furthermore it is advisable that an element of essay writing, oral presentation and participation in seminar discussion would improve the articulacy of students.

56. Moving to wider questions, each section of the Department has a number of activities shared by its own staff. However there was little evidence of collaboration across sectors. This may result in overlap of the courses offered by different sections and even streams (keteuthynseis) in the same section. More widely the Committee felt that a culture of greater communication, collaboration and synergy between the different sections and streams of Departmental activity is desirable. Perhaps the introduction of a teaching and learning as well as a research committee (as previously suggested) to co-ordinate activities across the Department could help alleviate the current difficulties.

57. The Committee is finally compelled to mention concerns expressed by some students and faculty regarding the need for student activities not to interfere with classroom instruction.

E. Final Conclusions and Recommendations

58. The Committee has offered a number of suggestions and recommendations throughout this report. In conclusion, we would like to summarise and emphasise some of the earlier advice:

- The Department should find ways to address the growing discrepancy between senior and junior staff. The ageing faculty, the non replacement of retiring Professors and the lack of appointment of young academics undermines the teaching and service mission of the Department and seriously jeopardizes the renewal of the academic disciplines involved.

- The Committee believes that greater strategic planning should be introduced at all levels with periodic reviews of Departmental activities and the introduction of new teaching and learning and, research committees.
- The Department deserves its position as a leading Department of Politics in the Balkans and South Eastern Europe. It can pursue this strategic aim and consolidate its position by increasing its efforts to internationalise all levels of activity.

Addendum

The Committee received a number of comments on its draft report from Professor Chryssanthakis, the Head of the Department. We are happy to acknowledge these comments, include them by means of an addendum in our report, adding the following responses.

Comment A states that

- a. the number of undergraduate students admitted each year, and
 - b. the appointment of new academic and administrative staff
- are decided by the Government with the Department or the University having no say in such decisions.

Comment C states that the legislative framework regulating Universities prohibits the assignation of tutorial duties to graduate and research students.

We are in agreement with these comments, which emphasize further inhibiting factors and other critical issues we have raised in our report (paragraphs 46-51).

- Professor Chryssanthakis states in Comment B that the Department a.
- a. includes the field of political economy in its activities,
 - b. uses successfully *πρακτικές ασκήσεις* and
 - c. has an active Lab for the Study of Migration and Diaspora.

The Committee notes these points which perhaps were not fully emphasised during the visit of the Department.

