



**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION (EUA)
INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAMME**

**Pavol Jozef Šafàrik University in Košice
(Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafàrika V Košiciach)**

Evaluation Report

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1. Foreword

1.1 Background Information on the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP), launched in 1993 by the European University Association (EUA) with the aim of preparing universities to meet the emerging needs for external accountability, is a cornerstone of EUA's strategy to develop strong universities for Europe. Since 1993, over 200 universities in 38 countries (mostly in Europe but also in Latin America and South Africa) have been evaluated by EUA.

This programme is undertaken from an institutional perspective to ensure understanding of the institutional context and make recommendations to increase the effectiveness of internal quality arrangements. In this way, the evaluation is responsive to the university's needs, mission, culture and situation, and is future-oriented since it emphasises the development of the university. The main purpose of this activity is to contribute to increasing the capacity of universities for both strategic thinking and internal quality culture in order to adapt to their evolving environment.

The institutional evaluation aims to assess the quality monitoring mechanisms and their use in the strategic development of the university. It does not judge the quality of teaching and learning or that of research as such, nor does it rank or compare one university against another. Moreover, it has a formative orientation (i.e. to help, develop and improve the university's strategic and quality management) rather than a summative one (i.e. passing judgements for accountability reasons). EUA approaches each evaluation supportively and offers recommendations for improvement without passing critical judgements on quality levels. EUA teams believe that improvement-oriented evaluation is more effective in encouraging the academic community to change.

In EUA-IEP, the national, regional or sector-wide evaluations are one of the developments that have taken place in recent years. In Slovakia, each institution was first evaluated individually by an evaluation team followed by one of the system of higher education and research in Slovakia as a whole. This overall general evaluation took its point of departure in all the institutional evaluations. Such system evaluations could lead not only to improving the institutions' capacity to change but also to strengthen their national system further as a whole in Europe.

The methodology of the Institutional Evaluation Programme consists of:

- A self-evaluation report (hereinafter SER) prepared by the university, requiring a descriptive and analytical assessment based on a SWOT analysis. The self-evaluation report, which is considered as key to the success of the evaluation, mainly focuses on four strategic questions:
 - ✓ What is the institution trying to do? (Referring to the mission of the university)
 - ✓ How is the institution trying to do this? (Referring to the fulfilment of its mission in terms of organisation, management and structure)
 - ✓ How does the institution know it works? (Referring to the quality tools available)

- ✓ How does the institution change in order to improve? (Referring to the capacity for change and improvement)
- Two site visits by the EUA evaluation team: During the preliminary visit, following receipt of the SER, the evaluation team becomes acquainted with the university and its environment. In the main visit, the focus is on finding out whether and how effectively the university's strategic policies and quality procedures are being implemented.
- An evaluation report written by the team: The evaluation report details the evaluation team's findings and conclusions regarding the capacity of the university to improve its performance and internal quality processes and mechanisms that monitor the current performance of the institution. The evaluation team note good practices, point to difficult issues and recommend practical improvements.

At the request of universities, a follow-up visit can also take place two years after the initial evaluation.

The EUA evaluation teams are comprised of three current or former rectors or vice-rectors and an academic secretary. The team members, holding key qualifications such as experience in successful university leadership and a thorough knowledge of European higher education systems, come from across Europe to provide an international and European perspective.

By its nature and aims, the EUA institutional evaluation programme adds a European and international dimension to quality assurance. It offers a not-for-profit approach, fully geared towards the needs of the university. The Programme is not linked to the allocation of funds nor does it exercise a control function on behalf of public authorities.

1.2 Institutional Review of the Pavol Jozef Šafàrik University in Košice

The evaluation phase of Pavol Jozef Šafàrik University in Košice (PJŠU) began with the formal application of the University to the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP). The official request was made by Professor Vladimír Babčák, who was then the Rector, with a special request to focus on the Faculty of Science.

The review team, which was appointed by the Steering Committee of the Institutional Evaluation Programme, consisted of the following four members:

- Professor Henrik Toft Jensen, Former Rector, Roskilde University, Denmark (Chairperson).
- Professor Maxwell Irvine, Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Birmingham, England.
- Professor Jiri Holenda, Former Rector, University of West Bohemia, Czech Republic.
- Professor Fatma Göktepe, Director of Natural & Applied Sciences, Graduate School, Suleyman Demirel University, Turkey.

The preliminary visit took place in April 2007, while the main visit had to be postponed until October 2007 due to the election and change in university rectorship which took place in July 2007.

2. Introduction

2.1 Outline of the Visits

In December 2006, the review team received a 34-page Self-evaluation Report (SER) with 6 informative appendices and 17 different lists and regulations to explain institutional management, facts and figures in detail. The SER was prepared by a 10-member Self-evaluation Steering Committee (SESC) chaired by Prof. RNDr. Eva Cellarova, Vice-Rector of PJŠU during that period. The other members of the SESC, consisting of a dean, vice-dean, heads of departments, researchers, senate members and PhD students as well as an external member, were:

- Prof. MUDr. Ladislav Mirossay, the head of Institute of Pharmacology (Faculty of Medicine); former dean of the Faculty of Medicine (and the current Rector of PJŠU),
- Prof. MUDr. Neda Markovská, the head of the 1st Stomatology Department (Faculty of Medicine) and the Teaching Hospital of Louis Pasteur; vice-chairperson of the Academic Senate,
- Doc. RNDr. Pavol Sovák, dean of the Faculty of Science,
- Doc. JUDr. Vladimír Vrana, vice-dean for foreign affairs of the Faculty of Law,
- PharmDr. Marek Šarišký, PhD., researcher,
- Mgr. Lucia Grada Kuliková , PhD. student,
- JUDr. Martin Vernarský, senior assistant of the Faculty of Public Administration; vice-chairperson of the Academic Senate,
- PhD. Daniel Klimovský, assistant of the Faculty of Public Administration; part-time PhD student; a member of the Council of Universities,
- Doc. RNDr. Peter Samuely (external member), the Institute of Experimental Physics of Slovak Academy of Sciences, the chairman of Accreditation Committee of Slovak Academy of Sciences.

When the degree of involvement with the SER was explored by the evaluation team during the meetings, it seemed that there had been very little involvement or indeed awareness of the SER both by staff and students. Apparently, the SER was made public but there was not much feedback. The members of the SESC met at an introductory meeting on 13 September 2006 and the SER was handed in by the end of December 2006. Similarly, the team could not see any news on the university web site regarding the main visit taking place, probably due to the recent management change in the University.

Nevertheless, the evaluation team realised that the self-evaluation process had contributed to the quality awareness within the university where it had been made known. And the evaluation team appreciates the work done by the SESC in providing such an informative, comprehensive and self-critical report containing many important data and issues related to the university. One of the main weaknesses of the SER was the lack of a detailed SWOT analysis. The university needs to improve the University's Strategic Plan further by a well-considered SWOT analysis.

After receiving the SER, the team made a preliminary visit to PJŠU between 18-20 April 2007 to get a better understanding of the whole structure and system within the

university to enhance the strategic development of the university and management for change.

The review team also requested and received further information and documentation in several areas including clear duties and responsibilities of deans, directors, head of departments, background of incoming students (both in regard to regional and social aspects), some details of senate meetings etc. They were ready in time for the main visit. The main visit of the review team took place on 15-18 October 2007.

During the meetings and in-depth discussions that took place in both visits, the review team had an opportunity to discuss many important aspects with quite a wide spectrum of actors related to PJŠU and formed a good impression of the different bodies and leaders running the university. In summary, the team met:

- the Rectors (Professor Vladimir Babcak as Rector during the first visit, and Professor Ladislav Mirossay as the new Rector during the main visit) and having intense discussions.
- the members of university management such as deans and elected Academic Senate members.
- the members of Self-evaluation Steering Committee (SESC).
- members of the staff and students from each of five faculties (Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Public Administration and Faculty of Science) and Institute of Education in Rožňava.
- members of staff from: Institute of Physics, Institute of Oncology, two of the departments (Cell Biology and Social Science Departments), as well as the Louis Pasteur Hospital of the University, International Relations Office, University Library and Centre for Information & Communication Technologies.
- central administration staff members.
- external partners including representatives of local authorities, board of trustees, business representatives and other stakeholders.

All these meetings and the various programmes were very efficiently organised under the personal supervision of Professor Eva Cellarova during the preliminary visit, then acting as both Vice-Rector for International Relations and as liaison person coordinating the self-evaluation process. During the main visit, her task was transferred to Professor Alexander Brörtl, who took over her position as Vice-Rector, following the changes in University management in July 2007.

On the last day of the main visit, the chair person of the evaluation team, Professor Henrik Toft Jensen, presented the oral report to an audience consisting of the University's top management, deans, both academic and administrative staff members and student representatives and this is the basis for this final review report.

2.2 Outline of the Review Report

During the evaluation process, the team was concerned with the current mechanisms and processes for strategic management and quality assurance and focused on the capacity for change of PJŠU in order to increase quality and the development of the university.

The evaluation report explicitly focuses on following points:

- The role of the institution in a regional, national and social context.

- Effectiveness of higher education governance at local and regional levels.
- The effective research capacity of the University.
- Size of disciplines and interdisciplinary studies.
- Evidence of existing inter-institutional arrangements in teaching, research, administration, services and internationalisation.
- Particular strengths and weaknesses with regard to policies, management, funding, prevailing cultures and attitudes.
- Progress in relation to the Bologna reforms.
- Student support services and student employability after graduation.
- Effectiveness of internal quality processes and their relevance in decision-making and strategic planning.
- Ability to attract foreign students as there are 1500 international students in Slovakia compared to a total of about 180,000 students at all Slovak Higher Education Institutions¹.

3. The Regional, National, Institutional and Social Context

3.1 Higher Education and Research in Slovakia

Slovakia has 24 universities and several institutes of higher education.

In 2002, a new Higher Education Act (AHE) was adopted which implements all components of Bologna Declaration in the Slovak Higher Education System.

Higher education in Slovakia is provided through study programmes in compliance with the Higher Education Act. Universities may admit students to those accredited study programmes only.

The public higher education institutions like PJŠU were transformed from state higher education institutions in 2002 into public universities and have not-for-profit type economic managements. Their costs are covered in average up to 90% from the state budget while the rest is made up from their own resources and other income. The higher education institutions which remained state owned are the Military and the Police Academies - these higher education institutions have 100% financial support from the state. The Health Higher Education Institution –The Medical University - is also a state higher education institution and receives most of its subsidies from the state budget.

Research in Slovakia is organised in the universities, the Academy of Science (with its 57 institutes) and in around 40 research institutes each belonging to a specific ministry. There are 4 universities, 8 institutes of the Academy of Science and other research institutes in Košice. Besides this, in Prešov, there is one university, some branches of the Academy of Science and other research institutions. In other words research institutions are concentrated in this particular area.

¹ EUA Framework for the Slovak Institutional Evaluations, p.2

3.2 Brief Profile of the University

As the second oldest classical Slovak university with a long history stretching back to the 17th century, modern-day PJŠU was established in 1959 as the 2nd university in Slovakia by merging a branch of the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University in Bratislava located in Košice with the Philosophical Faculty originally situated in the Pedagogical College in Prešov.

However, in 1997, Pavol Jozef Šafàrik University was split into two independent universities: Prešov University in Prešov and Pavol Jozef Šafàrik University in Košice. PJŠU then had only three faculties: the Faculties of Medicine, Science and Law. Currently, it has 5 faculties, namely:

- Medicine (1948),
- Science (1963),
- Law (1973),
- Public Administration (1998) and, more recently,
- Arts (2006).

PJŠU has also some additional units such as the Institute of Education situated in Rožňava, around 80km from Košice (where Pavol Jozef Šafàrik was born), the Botanical Garden and the Christian Academy. In addition to these, the University has numerous other facilities such as the University Library, the Information and Communication Technologies Centre, the University Publishing House etc. The University cooperates with the institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, with the University Hospital of Louis Pasteur and with other institutions of the state and public administration. The University is also a seat of several international institutions, such as the European Documentation Centre, the Austrian Library, the Examination Centre of British Council, and the Institute of European Law at the Faculty of Law. PJŠU is not a campus university but a city university with buildings in several different locations scattered throughout the city. However, the Rectorate and the faculties are all within reasonable reach in the town.

The study programmes are accredited by the Slovak Republic Accreditation Commission to whom accreditation is granted in turn by the Ministry of Education. The university has implemented the Bologna reforms including the 3 main cycle system (with an exception of study programmes in General Medicine) and ECTS thus enabling the easier exchange of students with other European universities.

In the 2006/2007 academic year, there were all together over 7,500 students in all three cycles with a projected increase to 10,000 by 2010 because of the newly accredited study programmes, mainly in humanities and social studies. There are 22 single-subject bachelor programmes, with 34 graduate (master) programmes, and 39 PhD programmes. The student-to-staff ratio is 22.7 to 1 in the Faculty of Public Administration while it is 7.3 to 1 in the Faculty of Medicine. The average number of students per teacher is 15. However there is very high drop-out rate in some faculties during the first 2 years. According to the SER, the average age of the professors is 56 and, as such, it is one of the youngest age average figures in the country.

In 2005, there were a total of 1,147 employees at the university with 501 teachers (professors, associate and assistant professors) and 85 researchers without teaching

obligations. It has 81 professors, 90 associate professors and 330 assistant professors. The ratio of academic staff to other staff is 1 to 1.

3.3 The Role of the University within Regional Context

The University is located in the city of Košice, the main regional centre of the eastern part of the Slovak Republic, Carpathian region, and the second largest city of the country with more than 200,000 inhabitants.

In Košice, which is considered as a gateway to the region, there are 4 universities (namely Pavol Jozef Šafárik University, Technical University of Košice, University of Veterinary Medicine, University of Economics), 8 Slovak Academy of Sciences, research institutes and new technology and innovation initiatives. Košice, which has a rich history, is also the seat of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic which is a valuable asset for the Law Faculty of the University.

Eastern Slovakia has only one third the GDP per capita of western Slovakia. PJŠU is a national university and its mission aims at *'having a strategic goal to finalise the structure of faculties and study programmes in order to achieve the structure of a classical university whose role is to spread through education and science, the culture and national heritage of Slovakia, specifically the heritage of the Eastern region and city of Košice. It is the intention of the university to become a prestigious research university with solid recognition as such within the European Union's educational and research norms'* as indicated in the SER. *'Due to its location, PJŠU could acquire the role of a European Union outpost, asserting the Union's educational and research priorities in the east'* is also stated in the SER.

PJŠU makes a great contribution to the regional development in terms of educational, social and cultural dimensions. As the figures given to the evaluation team indicate, 90% of recruit students are from this region, i.e. from Košice and Prešov.

The official statistics show that unemployment rate in Slovakia is over 15% (it was 17.56 and 15.5% in the Košice and Prešov regions, respectively, as of May 2006). However, the employment ratio after graduation from PJŠU is 97% according to the statistical data available in the SER. Such a favourable figure indicates that graduates of this university can find jobs quite easily both abroad and in the country, with percentage employment shares of around 20-30% and 70-80%, respectively.

Another dimension related to the regional contribution is the Medical Faculty of the University, which consists of theoretical and experimental institutes and clinical departments, and is the only medical faculty in this part of the region. Through its hospitals, the university has a major role as regards services to the community in this region.

4. Constraints and Institutional Norms

4.1 Autonomy, Governance and Management

Most of Slovak Universities are based on the Higher Education Act of 2002 (AHE) and Change and Supplement to Some Acts. PJŠU follows the general model of other

universities in the country; it has autonomy in areas like selecting and appointing academics, organising its internal structure, enrolling students, organising international exchange programmes, generating income from research and other activities.

By law, the Rector, Academic Senate, Scientific Board (26 members) and Board of Trustees (13 members) are the governing bodies. The senior financial officer is the Bursar. The Academic Senate currently has 42 members. All faculties are represented equally by 8 members each plus 2 members of the academic community representing other university units. Each faculty has 3 student representatives and 5 academic representatives elected for 4 years.

The Academic Senate has an elected chairman and three deputy chairmen, and appoints:

- the Rector and vice-Rectors,
- Scientific Board members of the University consists of vice-rectors, deans and non-academic community members of university,

It also approves:

- the budget prepared by rectorate and supervises its use
- the long term strategy,
- the annual academic calendar,
- both the statute and members of the Board of Trustees,
- the disciplinary commission,
- the annual report on activities and annual statement on economic management presented by the Rector.

Therefore Senate has a strong power in terms of academic, financial and strategic aims.

There is also Professor's Club, institutionalised in 2003 as an official committee with influence on the scientific strategy of the institution. Apart from participation in the scientific activity of the university, the club was founded to deal with organisation of professorial lectures within the professorial seminars at the university.

From the SER and both visits, the team was informed that the university has quite a de-centralised structure. The faculties have autonomy on many important academic issues and other administrative tasks as well as being able to offer different academic calendars. There are, however, strong informal networks linking the rector and deans and the vice-rectors and vice-deans. These networks are important in facilitating the collaboration between the administrative staff at both faculty and central levels.

In addition, the Rector and his team constitute a visible power centre at institutional level, and the deans have important duties at faculty level since they have power in terms of the recruitment of new staff, the dismissal of academic staff, salary adjustments, student enrolment processes and so on. Because of the important changes in University Law in 2002, there have been changes in distribution of administrative tasks between faculties and the central university administration, and this process is not finalised yet. However, in the SER, there is an emphasis on the high number of decision-making bodies, indicating that their roles sometimes may overlap each other and makes things more complex within the university.

The team believes that university management has the tools to change this situation, and during the main visit, observed some indication that such changes were taking place already. The university has to create an optimal distribution of tasks, but it is important to avoid duplication of responsibilities. To give an example, the university could benefit from a centralisation of indoor and outdoor building maintenance as well as other operational activities. Concerning some activities related to teaching and research, however, it is important that the academic staff is close to the service organisations of the university, that is to say that part of the administration has to be kept at faculty level, naturally in good dialogue with central support.

Given the history of faculty autonomy, it is not surprising that faculty identity among staff and students is stronger compared to a sense of belonging to the university. It would be important that the University takes some action to make the PJŠU identity stronger for both its staff and students, and thus reduce the potential for rivalry or tension between some faculties, which could damage the University as a whole. The information policy of the university could be important here. In addition, the evaluation team advises the University to develop new incentives to encourage its staff towards inter-disciplinary and inter-faculty studies. Another suggestion could be further encouragement of students to choose selective courses from different faculties.

The evaluation team recognised that there is a substantial representation of students in the Academic Senate and academic senates of faculties and in the disciplinary commission. The team strongly believes and supports having students in the governing bodies since they are important partners in the university. There are mechanisms for student involvement in decision-making bodies but the team observed a weak participation or little awareness about quality issues. To improve student participation, the team encourages the university to provide appropriate support for student groups, developing their leadership skills and their capacity to understand strategic institutional issues and involving them in the appropriate bodies where their contribution would be of added value.

The team would like to congratulate the University on the implementation and provision of the Academic Information System (AIS), which is the brain-child of the university and has been set up and used by 12 other Slovak Universities so far. This on-line system enables the design of personal study programmes and prompts communication with administration, teachers and students as well as making information available on publications per faculty member and on ongoing projects. There seem to be weaknesses, however, about getting data from each unit within the university. Establishing a central data or statistics unit could lead to more efficient management and monitoring in a big institution like PJŠU.

4.2 Teaching

All three levels of higher education ,bachelor's, master's and PhD study, are provided at the University. Bachelor's study is 3 years and is finalised with a state exam. The graduate may then continue to study for a master's degree.

The university has 22 bachelor degree programmes (plus 40 interdisciplinary), 34 master programmes (plus 34 interdisciplinary) and 39 PhD programmes. According to the SER, there has been a steady increase in the number of students from a mere 5000 in 2000 to over 7,500 students today. The Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of

Science between them have the lion's share of the students. In the 2005-2006 academic year, these two units apparently had over 2500 and 1800 students, respectively, who represent well over half the student population

Given the number of degree programmes relative to student enrolment numbers, it would be important to pay attention to critical mass. This can be achieved by reducing duplication within the university and between the Universities of Kosice. Biochemistry, for example, exists both in the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Medicine. Such duplication is expensive and may lead to loss of efficiency. The evaluation team strongly advises reducing the number of such duplications to the benefit for teaching and research by creating departments where the critical mass is secured.

In addition, the student-staff ratio in the Faculty of Public Administration is too high (the ratio is over 22). The team would recommend the university make some effort to secure PhD programmes in this faculty since only one application is at present in progress for a PhD programme. The Faculty of Public Administration could also serve the society more by offering courses and programmes as a contribution to life long learning. This would be easier if there were more staff.

Teaching evaluations are widely regarded as an important tool to ensure the feedback of students on the teaching. The team was impressed by the Faculty of Medicine's claim that the student questionnaires on their courses of study were compulsory before registration for the next level of study and believes that generalising this to all faculties would result in a more comprehensive student participation.

Apparently, open questions created an enormous work load, and therefore the team suggests the university develop a common box-ticking template for internal use. Such material can be automatically analysed to give a broad profile of student opinions. While student essay comments can be included, the profile would highlight particular issues. It is also important to design the questionnaires in such a way that they can yield clear and useful results. It is essential that programme committees meet periodically to consider and discuss the consolidated results of these questionnaires and prepare a report on the actions that have been taken to improve weak areas. Such a system would increase the awareness of students, therefore leading to an increased participation which, at the moment, the evaluation team found to be quite weak in some units.

In addition, while the evaluation of teaching is essential it is also important to seek students' opinions on their overall educational experience by using exit questionnaires for graduating students, surveys with students following their participation in international exchange programmes, interviews of incoming international students, evaluation of specific student services (library, career office, IT facilities etc).

The university should give a clear signal to the faculties on how they expect the student evaluations to be handled. These might range from rewards to outstanding teachers to dialogue with and help for failing teachers. The outcome should be widely disseminated so that there is compliance in this approach.

The evaluation team met many students who were happy with the teaching, although some fields need to pay greater attention to teaching quality (didactics) and to improving the planning of teaching, which should be done under the responsibility of faculty and not left up to individual professors. The overall impression of the university is that the drop-out rate is limited, especially in the highly selective fields, but there are areas where the drop-out rate reaches 40-60%. A result of this high drop-out rate in some of the science subjects was the strong desire that the students had to be able to re-sit exams. The high drop-out rate is certainly a waste of resources and should be analysed in order to address the reasons for it. At the Faculty of Law, the drop out rate is quite low (around 15%).

The team learnt that there had been lengthy discussions at the university concerning the education of nurses. The team supports a development at the university of vocational higher education activities such as nursing and other specialised courses. This is a feature in several European universities and could be achieved without harming the research standard of the university by creating units which are not research-assessed and thus do not downgrade the statistics of the research standard of the university.

The team congratulates the University on its the efforts to continue the tracking of graduates. This shows that the University is ahead of some European institutions. According to the SER, PJŠU graduates have no difficulty in finding employment after graduation at the moment. In addition to this tracking, it would be advisable to create a University Alumni Society or Association and a Career Office to carry out the tracking of graduates systematically and to establish a continuous contact between students and industry so that a sustainable link between graduates and employers is maintained. There is an Alumni Association that was established in 2003 by the Faculty of Science, but the team believes establishing such a unit also at institutional level would have a significant effect. The team also heard about the Graduates Club in the Faculty of Public Administration, but apparently this is merely an informal body limited to a social function.

International students come mainly from Poland or the Czech Republic thus reflecting the limited supply of courses taught in English and the English language competences of teaching staff, although the younger staff and some of the students seem to have improved skills in foreign language. Indeed, a translator was needed during most meetings held with the team. The evaluation team suggests that PJŠU develop a clear strategy regarding foreign language policy to strengthen its European profile as well as providing foreign language courses to the university staff or awakening the interest of the staff towards self-learning methods.

Finally, students would like to see greater funding for student clubs and other facilities including dormitories and better stocked libraries.

4.3 Research

It was clear from the SER that there is a desire to become a prestigious research university with solid recognition '*Košice should become the 2nd scientific and research centre in Slovakia*' through PJŠU.

The evaluation team would like to congratulate the university for its performance as measured by the number of publications and citations per professor in some fields (very good performance by the Science and Medicine Faculties according to ARRA in 2006, for example), the increase in ISI publication figures since 2001, and the eagerness shown by faculties to monitor the number of publications of academic staff. This shows that the whole University is active in research and wants every researcher to be active. Therefore, the reasons for having two categories of academic staff (researchers and university teachers) seems unclear to the evaluation team. One category would be better, thus reinforcing the view that everyone should be involved in teaching and research. The team, however, believes that the universities need both institutes and departments but that their differences need to be clarified further.

The development tools by the University top management to support high quality research are well appreciated by the team. The establishment of a research grant system for doctoral students and young scientists on a competitive basis and an office for European projects are some examples of such institutional tools. The decision of the university to create three centres of excellence (Social Medicine, Low Temperature Physics and Oncology), following the proposals of the Board of University Centres of Excellence, is also welcomed and the team congratulates the university on this step showing the awareness of the importance of the research.

It is important, however, that the Rector and Academic Senate have sufficient financial means to promote strategic and collaborative initiatives in research and development. A lot of minor projects are expected to be financed by VEGA (Slovak Grant Agency for Science) or KEGA (Slovak Cultural and Education Agency) perhaps with support from central funds of the university. The team believes that several of the minor projects could be put together to create a bigger application to the European Union.

The criteria for appointment and promotion of academic staff, set by the University in 2005, are similar to Comenius University in Bratislava and the team heard complaints that the standard is a demanding one. For example, to obtain a scientific title of docent in the medical field, 5 years experience and 20 original papers are the minimum criteria. The criteria for obtaining the scientific title of professor are even more demanding. However, the research awareness at institutional level is generally high and well supported. The evaluation team supports the University in the view that the policy of promotion from assistant to special assistant is based on a PhD degree or similar research performance in order to ensure that academic staff is engaged in research.

The quality monitoring of research, teaching and services to the society appears to be carried out with care and used as a mean for distributing additional salary or other benefits to those who are the most active. The team realised that the University has a very developed system here and some faculties use this very actively even with the small amount of money accessible.

In this connection, the Faculty of Law has external examiners in PhD examinations and this can be considered as an important tool for securing the quality of theses, but the University as a whole does not have such a policy and the team advises PJŠU to develop a uniform institutional strategy in this. The University may wish to consider

introducing a policy of publishing thesis work in international journals. This would both raise the profile of the University and ensure external monitoring of research.

The internationalisation of research varies across fields, with the sciences generally stronger in this area. The internationalisation of the research staff in other faculties could be developed further. This would be to the benefit to the region because the research staff would then serve as a window to the world to a bigger extent than is the case today. Therefore, it would be important to make international travel funding available to a wider set of researchers.

In many European countries, there is a strong pressure on universities to contribute to applied science. The universities are expected to give advice to industry, to take out patents and to receive royalties from the results of their research sold to industry. The team has learnt that PJSU is aware of this development and wants to contribute to it without harming the basic research at the university.

The initiation of self evaluation of research teams and the idea of the development of a new Euro Office for project management are appreciated by the evaluation team. This central activity must be coordinated with faculty activity in order not to destroy local initiative and local ownership.

Scientific research freedom was given priority as part of the research strategy in the SER. This needs to be balanced with a clear policy for closing down or creating new activities in line with a strategy for research policy and priorities in specific fields.

4.4 Resources

According to the SER, the AHE, effective since 2002, has brought a new philosophy to financing as the University moved from a state to a public university.

The total annual budget of PJSU was 790.670.000SK in 2005 where the total income consisted of:

- State subsidy,
- State subsidy for research,
- State subsidy based on competitive earnings (projects),
- Other sources (student social support, university development subsidy, entrepreneurial activities etc).

A Rector's development fund has been created by setting aside 5% from the salary subsidy for the scientific staff as well 12% from non-pedagogical staff salaries.

The Slovak tradition of setting the budget as late as April for the current year is in fact a disruptive factor in the university's planning can lead to the funds not being used to their best effect.

The formula used for distributing the money among universities and faculties is made up of a combination of,

- teaching activities,
- research activities,
- the activities in other services.

This strategy, mainly based on input rather than output, can create situations where, for example universities admit too many students who are then not able to finish their degrees, particularly in certain areas of science.

On the other hand, the non-campus character of the university leads inevitably to higher operational costs. Therefore, the team supports the initiatives of University leadership to gather together units as well as looking at some distant premises of the University in terms of their cost-benefit balances.

Perhaps one of the important points that the University should focus on is to increase the support from outside stakeholders which is insufficient at the moment. The figures for 2005 show that 10.9% of the total budget was from other sources while entrepreneurial activities constitute only 3.5% of the whole income. However, during the main visit, the team heard about promising initiatives already taking place such as exchanging land in the Botanical Garden, and acquiring ownership of the Childrens' Hospital.

4.5 Internationalisation and the Bologna Process

According to its Long-term Strategy for the period 2004-2010, the main mission of the University is *to provide a three-level higher education on the basis of latest scientific knowledge in a wider international context, according to European trends in this field, according to Bologna Declaration and other documents*² indicating that internationalisation and the Bologna Process are two of the important strategic aims of PJSU.

The evaluation team saw a growing activity in internationalisation and a strong commitment at some faculties and in the central administration. ECTS has been in force since 1999, Diploma Supplements have been issued since 2004 and the University became a full EUA member in 2004. An informative on-line ECTS information package available on university web page for incoming students is also appreciated. This informative on-line package, which is a vital part of the Bologna process, includes written syllabuses, ECTS credits and contents of each course, and contributes to internationalisation of curricula, and easing student exchange.

The number of students going abroad has increased over recent years, going from 17 in 2002 to 106 in 2007-2008, but could be increased even more. The evaluation team proposes that the University ask companies to sponsor grants for such students. There are some subjects at the university where increased activity and inspiration together with systematic motivation in the subject is needed to increase the number of exchange students. As mentioned above, it is necessary now to develop some programmes taught in English as is already foreseen in the statute of PJSU in order to ensure student exchange and an increase in incoming student numbers.

Internationalisation policy includes all three areas of the university: research, teaching and academic management. Increasing the success rate of the university in European research programmes, increasing its attractiveness for foreign graduate

² SeR, Appendix 4, p.2

and doctoral students, postdocs, visiting professors and researchers are all priorities in this field.

The evaluation team realised that students are not aware of the European Student Union (ESU), so the team advises PJŠU to encourage its students to take part in international student organisations to help the University make its European dimension stronger.

The evaluation team believes that, along with a language policy, good dormitory facilities and concern for buildings and surroundings are also very important factors in ensuring a successful internationalisation strategy.

4.6 Quality Assurance

For a sustainable quality assurance system, it is essential that the university management creates the appropriate conditions for the academic community to deliver quality and to ensure that there is an agreed institutional profile, commitment to institutional goals and objectives by the university community, and clearly defined and agreed objectives and strategies to meet them³.

PJŠU has many quality mechanisms in place that can contribute to an effective quality culture and to improve the quality of education. The participation of PJŠU in the EUA Quality Culture, Rounds II-III and in the EUA Creativity Project is also appreciated in this respect. The team understands that there is a consensus on the continuous development processes of quality taking into consideration the constraints of the changing world outside. However there is no consensus yet on the methods, the how and the when correction will be made in the process within the framework of the Strategic Plan. Thus, while progress has been made, a more systematic quality assurance needs to be further developed. It would be important in this context to clarify further the current mission statements and strategic plan of the University. The recommendations of the team on this issue are given in Section 5.3 in detail.

To accomplish the process outlined above, the University needs to establish a systematic strategic plan, and the team hopes that the Institutional Evaluation Programme will act as a catalyst to speed up the whole process within the University.

4.7 Staff Development

For today's knowledge-based organisations, academic and administrative staff members are the most important assets of higher education institutions as they are the main actors in implementing any change processes and anchoring it in institutional reality.

Staff development is a major requirement for increasing the quality of staff and quality culture within an institution. Staff development schemes must include training and other measures (funding for participation in international conferences etc.) to develop

³ EUA, Quality Culture in European Universities: A Bottom-up Approach, Report on the Three Rounds of Quality Culture Projects, 2002-2006, p.6

skills, strengthen accountability and quality awareness and increase the motivation of staff. Such training should be offered on permanent basis⁴.

Staff development should be designed specifically to the needs of the groups concerned, e.g. leadership development for members of the institutional leadership, specific training for young researchers who will become the future of the University and training in new methods for teaching staff. Skills development for the administrative staff would also have a sound effect on the human resources of the University as the team often heard about limited operational staff especially ones with the necessary qualifications. The team finds that there is a strong need for the development of the administrative staff qualifications. However, since staff development often might be perceived as time-consuming, unnecessary and a means of control by senior management, it is essential that the benefits of training and professional development be clearly communicated and staff development measures tailored to the individual as well as institutional needs.

IT skills and teaching skills, for new teachers as well as the existing ones, language skills and skills in human resource management should be developed by internal courses provided by departments of public administration, languages, IT development and sociology. This activity has to be financed by the University. However offering such services to the staff at the University opens up the possibility offering this service to other organisations, and hereby creating a potential source of income for the University. For example, there is a big potential in offering Life Long Learning programmes by the Public Administration Faculty.

The University should be aware of the need to improve the balance between academic and support staff. The growth in the number of support staff should not be sustained especially since the proportion of support staff in relation to academic staff is already high.

4.8 Buildings and Surroundings

The University consists of a complex of buildings of varying ages. Several buildings are more than 100 years old, and there is a great need for not just maintenance but improved maintenance and renovation of the buildings. This is not just a question of ensuring that buildings are in good shape without broken floors and windows, but also in creating a well-kept attractive atmosphere. This is an important part of a modern research university as creativity requires inspirational surroundings with environmentally friendly facilities within the campus. It is difficult for colleagues from abroad and for students to see a centre of excellence in a building where entrance, corridors and several rooms are unkempt. This maintenance, or lack of it, will also affect the recruitment and retention of students and staff.

The evaluation team strongly recommends that those old but historically valuable buildings should be renovated. It might well be possible to tap national heritage funds if they are listed buildings and this would add great value to the atmosphere of the University making it more attractive for both its staff and students.

⁴ EUA, Quality Culture in European Universities: A Bottom-up Approach, Report on the Three Rounds of Quality Culture Projects, 2002-2006, p.22

The separation of waste with modern methods of litter collection on campus and in dormitories could also increase the attractiveness of the surroundings and be a symbol of environmental responsibility.

Some of the University premises are in buildings owned by different parties. The University needs to set priorities in this area which will be followed by further reconstruction of its buildings and gaining new premises. Therefore, the team strongly supports the policy of the University to create an urban campus by acquiring ownership and developing the former Children's Hospital and other centrally situated buildings to house the most distant faculties. By buying new buildings, faculties would also benefit from further collaboration among each other.

Students want to have more space where they can meet for group work and for self-study at the University. The team advises that the University should try to create such a space because it can increase the quality of education by facilitating the possibility for mutual learning among students.

It is understood that the University wants to sell some buildings it owns in the countryside which are under-used but expensive to run. The team strongly supports such a rationalisation.

The municipality of Rožňava wants some university teaching activities to be developed in the town. However, it is expensive to distribute the teaching activities across several cities. The team understands that Rožňava and Eastern Slovakia can benefit from creating a small education and research entity in this far eastern area of the country. In the team's opinion it is not solely an obligation for the University to finance this but it should also be supported by the municipality of Rožňava.

4.9 Communication Policy

One of the points raised by university staff and students during the visits was about insufficient information being available regarding important decisions of the university management as well as forthcoming events within the university. The University and its faculties would benefit from having a clear communication policy. The University might develop a weekly or monthly newsletter on the web, which both notifies readers about recent events and also gives information about the forthcoming events.

The newsletter should publish committee agendas, minutes and diaries and should be emailed to the relevant constituencies in order to improve transparency at institutional level.

A student radio could also contribute to the communication and information and thus meet the wishes of the students. It might be also linked to the Arts Faculty's ambition to develop media studies.

5. The Capacity to Change

The capacity for change requires three important institutional elements:

- A clear mission and vision,
- An effective strategic planning and establishment of quality culture,
- Action plans and milestones.

It also requires financial and human resource management within the national legislative framework.

As mentioned earlier, the first question in the Guidelines is: What is the institution trying to do? i.e. this refers to the mission and vision, along with mid-term and long-term strategies of the institution. The next question - How is the institution trying to do it? - relates to the activities of the University. The third question - How does the institution know it works? - deals with quality monitoring and assurance tools used within the institution. The last question - How does the institution change in order to improve? - relates to transformation processes taking place within the University to implement new strategies for improving the university's position at a higher level as foreseen in the strategic plan. In the following part of this section, the answers to these questions that the evaluation team were able to garner from the SER and during both visits will be analysed.

5.1 Mission

PJŠU has a Long-term Strategy for 2004-2010, which was discussed by the Rector's Board and the Board of Trustees respectively and then approved by the Academic Senate on 29 April 2004. The document is a set of development strategies in following areas: Higher education, science and research, strengthening international dimension, public service, information and communication technologies, organisation and management, investment strategies and multi-source financing. This document was prepared on the basis of Programme Declaration of PJŠU: Management for Period 2003-2010.

In the Long-term Strategy of the University, its main mission was given as *to provide the three-level higher education on the basis of latest scientific knowledge in wider international context, according to European trends in this field, according to Bologna Declaration and other documents*⁵.

Although the University has made good progress in its efforts to fulfill such a mission, the evaluation team recommends it clarify its mission and vision further in relatively short statements and develop goals for academic activities in teaching, research and services to the region alongside the more practical goals in areas such as staff and building development and rationalisation of administrative structures. It would be desirable if such a plan could identify resources needed and a timetable as well as quality assurance mechanisms to monitor if the goals are achieved.

5.2 Institutional Policies, Human Resource Strategies

The Rector and members of PJŠU seem very aware of the transformations that the University has to face. For example, they are aware of the changes in regard to the planned classification of the universities in Slovakia into three categories that might take place in near future. They are also aware of the influence of the European research programmes and Bologna process.

Especially during the second visit, the evaluation team observed the intense will for change within the University management. Such a will is more important as the

⁵ SeR, Appendix 4, p.2

driving force for a university than any external stimulus, and the team believes that, along with a strong strategic planning within the University, this should be based on a bottom-up approach. The team would like to contribute to this internal process and hopes that this evaluation will be a useful impulse in the change process.

A Strategic Plan is expected to give key answers in terms of the desired level especially in teaching and research, but the current version seems to lack these solid goals.

Some faculties feel that they do not need to change, especially as regards staff responsibilities (as teachers, researchers etc.). This is causing unbalanced working conditions in the same faculty leading to some tension between the different staff categories. Classification of Docents, Associate Professors and Assistant Specialists seem to be vague in certain places. Normally assistant specialist positions should only be given for those who have a PhD degree, but there are more than 60 staff in the Medical Faculty who are assistant specialists without PhD degrees. The evaluation team understands that the University is working on initiatives to make sure that all assistant specialists will be offered the possibility to study for a PhD degree. The status and theoretical level of the medical doctors at the University Hospital have to be seen also from the perspective of their main mission as medical doctors.

5.3 Mid-term and Long-term Strategies

Strategic planning has been identified as the main factor for embedding quality culture successfully in an institution. This needs to be embedded in the strategic thinking in order to ensure a proper level of motivation. Therefore, the institutional strategy can serve as a catalyst for quality culture and gives it a strategic direction by describing it as a goal in the strategic plan. Such an approach would ensure that the ways to achieve quality are coherent with the specific institutional mission.

The discussion of institutional strategy highlights three main aspects⁶:

- The substance of the strategy,
- The process of strategic development,
- The challenges of implementing a long term strategy.

The team has seen strategic plans from 2001 and 2004 and learnt that a new strategic plan is in progress and would like to congratulate the University for this achievement.

However, the current Long-term Strategy of PJŠU for 2004-2010, is a static one which is more like a wish-list of the University for the future but lacking clear answers on the desired level in terms of teaching and research quality, therefore in fact it is difficult to discern mid-term and long-term strategies. Thus a comprehensive and dynamic strategic plan, which is updated regularly, is recommended by the team.

The academic strategy also would benefit from drawing up priorities in the development of different scientific units. It would also be desirable to have a clear

⁶ EUA, Quality Culture in European Universities: A Bottom-up Approach, Report on the Three Rounds of Quality Culture Projects, 2002-2006.

vision for the development at the University. The university's strategic plan would benefit from such a clear vision indicating where the University wants to go.

It is very important to have five-year strategic plans developed at faculty and university levels. The formulation of these plans should be widely discussed and disseminated in order to develop a common vision and common ownership of the university's development and the plans must be comprehensive. Developments at both faculty and university level should be made widely known throughout the University and should be clearly identified as components in the realisation of the strategic plans.

At faculty levels, the plans should include clear identification of:

1. Real Estate development requirements,
2. Teaching strategy including the identification of desirable new study programmes and closure of ineffective programmes. The creation of a clear quality assessment strategy should be part of the strategic plan of faculty as well as a reduction of the drop-out rate at some faculties,
3. Research strategy with the identification of research foci and associated facility development, identification of collaborative partners (both within the internal and external organisations), identification of potential funding sources (regional, national, European),
4. Staff development should be part of the faculty plan including a policy of recruitment or relocation of existing staff.

The faculty plans should be submitted to the Academic Senate so that these can contribute to the University Strategy.

At University level,

The Rectorate should secure the development of a comprehensive strategy for the whole institution which integrates the faculty plans. The University Strategic Plan could be subject to comment by the Board of Trustees and a select group of external stake holders and should be discussed in the Senate before the decision. The university plan would automatically include all the holdings of the faculty plans but would also require dealing with external relations, other institutional collaborations and links to the Ministry as well as university initiatives and mission development.

The Strategic Plan should be monitored every year to make sure that it is on track and responsive to the changes in the environment.

The team learnt that there is some collaboration between PJŠU, the Technical University of Košice (TUKE) and the Academy of Science. For example, the Centre for Advanced Material is a consortium between three Academy of Sciences, TUKE and PJŠU as well as being a good opportunity for collaboration between TUKE and PJŠU in IT valley mentioned in the SER. Many of the research institutions are small and we would recommend even more collaboration between universities in the region and between universities and the Academy of Science and other research institutes. The team is sure that the universities, the Academy of Science and other research entities in Košice will benefit from the creation of more critical mass through collaboration and other common initiatives. This will provide a good basis for creating strong groups in research and teaching which, in the long run, will be to the benefit of

the region. In addition, the team recommends that e PJŠU and the universities in the region, for example the University of Veterinary Medicine, discuss close collaboration.

6. Special Focus: Faculty of Science

It is the intention of the University to become a prestigious research university with a solid reputation within the European educational and research framework. Knowing that contribution to science is a must for a respected university, PJŠU is determined to improve its research profile further and has therefore asked for special focus on the Faculty of Science, as it is the largest and second oldest natural science centre in Slovakia according to the SER.

The mission of the faculty is given in the SER as *'training of natural scientists, mathematicians, and computer scientists in compliance with European educational trends and programmes with a strong emphasis on master and doctoral study based on scientific background. A second mission is to provide further education for both graduates and the public in accordance with society demands. The main research mission is to comply with the Lisbon Strategy to widen the scientific knowledge in compliance with EU priorities and to apply interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary goals and seek new possibilities of innovations of academic knowledge in practice'*⁷.

The faculty has the greater share in terms of total student number of the University with over 2000 students although only 5% of those are PhD students.

The faculty plays a leading role in terms of international publications. In ARRA (Academic Agency of Research Rating Accreditation) the Faculty of Science was rated as the 1st one nationwide.

One of the strong points the team observed in Faculty of Science is the new educational degree model implemented in the faculty to enable students to study interdisciplinary academic subjects at bachelor level that may also continue in various ways at master level. The Bachelor degree in natural science in combination with psychology, philosophy, British and American studies, German language can be given as an example for that.

The faculty also plays a leading role in implementing the Bologna recommendations within the institution. It has implemented ECTS in all fields since the 1999/2000 academic year supported by a Tempus Project which was coordinated by the faculty, and has been issuing bilingual Diploma Supplements since 2005.

The faculty has also contributed not only to the needs of the University in terms of tailor-made software and IT systems but also to other national higher education institutions. The Academic Information System (AIS), which is an authorised product of the faculty, is a very good example for such contribution and strength and has been used in 11 different Slovak universities as well as at PJŠU currently.

The Science Faculty has a long tradition in international research co-operation with 16 foreign partners under contract, around 400 short-term and long-term trips within a year and over 100 foreign guests indicate this tradition.

⁷ SeR, Special Focus, p.36

The faculty's strong academic background led to the establishment of an institute in Rožňava in 1999, the Institute of Education, which offers a bachelor degree study programme on Sport and Leisure.

However, there are some examples of duplication and parallel academic organisations in the faculty that require a careful analysis and regulation of such programmes within the University.

The low success rate of students of whom only 40-50% are able to complete their studies in the standard period of time and low success of doctoral study completion (38%) has been seen as other serious drawbacks observed by the team and it advises the faculty to reduce the drop-out rate as far as possible.

7. Conclusions and Final Recommendations

Pavol Jozef Šafàrik University has a long history stretching back to the 17th century, and is the second oldest classical Slovak university integrating all levels of higher education and contributing to regional development in terms of educational, social and cultural dimension, which aims to become a prestigious research university.

The evaluation team has seen many examples of quality awareness, quality assurances and important quality improvement initiatives at the University and thinks that Pavol Jozef Šafàrik University will benefit from a formulated policy for quality culture within the institution to inspire quality development in all areas.

In brief, the following main points derived from the evaluation process are recommended by the evaluation team:

i) Governance, Decision-making and Management

- Development of a new five-year strategic plan at both faculty and university levels having clear answers to which levels are desired and how the institution would reach to those levels.
- Regulating the autonomy of the faculties without restricting their flexibility in their specific issues, but making both their staff and students feel they are the first and foremost part of this University rather than the faculty.
- Further improvement of communication within the institution.
- Reviving the possibilities for collaboration and maybe amalgamation with some of the other research and higher education institutions of Košice.
- Further improvement of student participation in decision-making bodies and quality issues by providing appropriate support for student groups developing their leadership skills and their capacity to understand strategic institutional issues.

ii) Teaching and Learning

- Regulating similar departments in different faculties.
- Clarifying the distinction between institutes and departments.
- Reducing student drop-out rate in some units.

iii) Research

- Creating a clear strategy for research policy and priorities in research fields.
- Creating bigger research project applications to the European Union to get better funding for research.
- Supporting research staff to join international scientific activities.

iv) Resources

- Re-shaping the scattered structure of units within the University as well as looking at some distant premises in terms of their cost-benefit balance.
- Increasing financial support from outside stakeholders by introducing new mechanisms within the institution.

v) Internationalisation

- Increasing internationalisation activity, the number of exchange students and teacher mobility further in some areas together with systematic motivation and clear foreign language policy to strengthen the University's European profile.

vi) Quality Assurance

- Creating quality assurance structures within the University to monitor and develop all sectors of the University regularly.
- Development of a uniform institutional strategy for securing the quality of postgraduate programmes and studies.

vii) Staff Development

- Improvement of staff development programmes by offering training programmes for example related to IT skills, teaching skills, language skills and human management skills.

viii) Buildings and Surroundings

- Development of a planned urban campus by creating new areas for some units through property transfers as well as renovation of some buildings so that the University would become more attractive to the staff and students.
- Creation of a well-kept, attractive atmosphere and more environmentally friendly facilities within the campus as these are important aspects for a modern research university to ensure effective recruitment and retention of both students and staff.

Envoi

The evaluation team would like to express its deep thanks to both former and current Rectors of PJŠU, Professor Vladimir Babcak and Professor Ladislav Mirossay respectively for beginning and successfully finalising the process as well as for their warm welcome and hospitality that turned both visits into an enjoyable experience *in the city of tolerance, Košice*. The team also wishes to express its sincere thanks to Professor Eva Cellarova, former liaison person, for the work of the Self-evaluation Steering Committee in preparing the self-evaluation report, supported by 5 sub-committees, and for the very efficient organisation of all meetings during the preliminary visit as well as providing effective working conditions for the team. Similarly, the team would like to acknowledge the contribution of Professor Alexander Brörtl as the current liaison person, for the co-ordination of the main visit, the preparation of supplementary documents needed and providing the means for an efficient work during the main visit. The consistent care and support of both Professor Cellarova and Professor Brörtl helped to finalise the evaluation phase smoothly without any interruption despite the change in university management.

The team also would like to thank all members of staff and students with whom they met and provided valuable information through open and frank discussions.

The review team strongly supports the leadership of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in its strong willingness to reshape the future of University and to become a world university. The evaluation team believes that the Institutional Evaluation Programme is not the final target for PJŠU but a significant milestone in its quality journey, and wishes luck to the University in these efforts by concluding this evaluation report with the quotation from Pavol Jozef Šafárik himself which opens the SER of the University: *On deed on actions we should focus...*