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 ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

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

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT: Department of Logistics

UNIVERSITY /TEI: Technological Educational Institute

5 December 2013



European Union
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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, CULTURE & SPORTS
 M A N A G I N G A U T H O R I T Y

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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Logistics of the Technical Institution of Central Macedonia consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Dr. *Marianthi Ierapetritou*, Professor, Department of Chemical and Biochemical Engineering, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, USA (*Coordinator*)
2. Dr. *Evangelos Moustakas*, Associate Professor, Department of Marketing and Enterprise, Middlesex University London, UK
3. Dr. *Alexis Papathanassis*, Professor of Cruise Management and eTourism, Bremerhaven University of Applied Sciences, Germany
4. Dr. *Maria Michailidis*, Associate Professor, Department of Management and MIS, School of Business, University of Nicosia, Nicosia, Cyprus

Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

- On Monday the 2nd of December 2013, the EEC First visited the HQAA's offices in Athens for a short introduction and orientation about the institution and the evaluation process. This was conducted by Professor Kleomenis Economou, who is a Member of the Board of the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education.
- Following this briefing, the EEC travelled to Katerini where it had the first meeting with the members of the faculty including the Department Head D. Triantafillou and the following professors: A. Kelemis, D. Folinis, N. Voulgarakis, P. Tsarouzas, D. Aidonis, K. Kleidis, E. Karavaggelis; and the departmental secretary S. Deligiannidou. This meeting covered the introduction to the program and details about all aspects of teaching, research and services of the department.
- On Tuesday December 3rd the EEC first visited a number of classrooms to observe teaching processes and discuss with the students (without the presence of the professor). Moreover, the committee carried out a brief tour of the facilities including classrooms, labs and the library. In the afternoon, the EEC met with the short-term teaching contract academic staff, the rector, vice president, and secretary of the TEI of Central Macedonia who visited from Serres.
- On the Wednesday December 4th, the EEC had meetings with the departmental alumni, alumni employers, members of the local industry, and members of the local authorities, all of which highlighted the importance of the institution for the city and for the local community. At the end of the visit the EEC also met the City's Mayor who pointed out his continuous support to the department and the interactions that the local authorities have with the unit.
- From Thursday onwards, the EEC met in the Hotel base to discuss and evaluate the findings and draft the report.

The schedule below was followed and the indicated personnel attended:

Sunday, 1-12-2013

Arrival in Athens, Meeting of committee's members in the hotel

Monday, 2-12-2013

9:30 - 11:00

Briefing will take place in HQAA offices.
Topics: Procedures and evaluation forms

14.00-16.00

Departure from Athens and Arrival in Thessaloniki's Airport (15.00). Transition by car to Katerini (68km) and arrival to Mediteranean Village (16.00) in Katerini.

17:00 – 18:00

Meeting with the Head of the Department and the members of OMEA

18:30 - 19:30

Short meeting of the Committee's members for preparation regarding the evaluation

Tuesday, 3-12-2013

09:00 - 11:00

Meeting with academic staff

11.00-12.00

Meeting with the President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Personnel of TEI of Central Macedonia

12:00 - 12:30

Coffee Break

12:30 - 13:30

Guided tour in department premises (teaching rooms and laboratories)

13.30- 15:30	Meeting with students
16:00 - 17:00	Lunch
17:00 - 19:00	Meeting of the Committee's members in the hotel
21:00	Dinner
Wednesday, 4-12-2013	
9:00 - 10:00	Meeting with representatives from Local Authorities and Bodies in Pieria
10:00 - 11:00	Meeting with members of administrative and technical personnel
11:00 - 12:00	Meeting with graduates
12:00 - 12:30	Coffee break
12:30 - 15:00	Last meeting with the Head and academic staff of the Department
15.30-17.00	Lunch
17:00 - 18:00	Transition to Thessaloniki. Flight to Athens
Thursday, 5-12-2013	
9:00 - 18:00	External Evaluation Report Preparation
Friday, 6-12-2013	
9:00 - 18:00	External Evaluation Report Preparation
Saturday, 7-12-2013:	
	Completion of External Evaluation Report Departure from Athens
Participants on the discussion with the External Evaluation Committee	
Company Representatives	
• Marmaggelos Charalampos	Olympia Electronics
• Tsiolos George	Tsiolos SA
• Charalampidis Konstantinos	Charalampidis Cables SA
• Zisopoulos Konstantinos	Dilos Consulting Company
• Ormani Sofia	Orfeas Veinoglou Transportations
• Printezis Isidoros	Seaways Logistics
• Vasiliadis Lazaros	MAXI ABEE
Graduates	
• Karasimou Artemis	
• Lemonia Marianthi	
• Karantoniou Christina	
• Zapounidou Maria	
• Kokkali Ioanna	
• Vakalfotis Evaggelos	
• Marsidis Dimitrios	
• Tsolakis Athanasios	

References from Companies for the following Graduates

- Karamolegkou Maria
- Nestora Evaggelia
- Rovari Lorena

List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee:

1. Resumes of the permanent members of the faculty
2. Resumes of the temporary members of the faculty
3. Exams of academic year 2012-2013
4. List of documents verifying the participation of the department in conferences, exhibitions, etc.
5. Information regarding internships
6. Publications of the faculty including temporary ones
7. Letters from employers of department graduates
8. Research grant descriptions
9. Sign-up book of department graduates
10. Proposals for the development of new departments
11. Proposal for the creation of Masters program
12. List of departmental seminars
13. Promotional material
14. Material for the promotion of the department in mass media
15. Departmental Curriculum for the years of 2009, 2011, 2013.
16. Employment guide
17. Course Syllabus and samples of exams for the academic year 2012-2013.
18. Information about the mobility program «ERASMUS»
19. Samples of student Bachelor Theses.
20. Student Registration data
21. Student Graduation data
22. Agenda and information of the 1st and 2nd Conference in Logistics organized by the department in Katerini
23. Agenda and information of the entrepreneurship conference organized in collaboration with the chamber of commerce in Katerini

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

All the documentation provided was very helpful and had all the details needed from the EEC to evaluate the department. In addition, the EEC was extremely impressed by the willingness of the faculty to provide any additional information requested by the EEC.

The resources provided were well organized and easy to examine. The EEC was pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm of the entire faculty and their eagerness to accommodate the EEC visit. All the material provided was of high quality and described the entire program in detail.

The objective of the internal evaluation is the realistic and objective representation of the characteristics of the department operation (positive and negative), highlighting the main problems, making suggestions for dealing with them and recording aspirations of staff and students. As such, the EEC believes that the process was extremely successful since it clearly helped the department in identifying its main strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the internal evaluation was instrumental in determining ways to improve the current program and to reach out to all constituents.

A. Curriculum

To be filled separately for each undergraduate, graduate and doctoral Program.

APPROACH

The objectives of the Program refer to the operation of the Department within an international environment where primary "competitors" are equivalent European Institutions.

The BA in Logistics attempts to integrate theory, practical exercises, workshops, case studies, theoretical research papers and Bachelors' theses. The objectives were decided based on the market's needs as well as on the Ministry of Education's guidelines for Technological Institutes. The curriculum of the Logistics Program sufficiently meets the specialized needs of the Greek Economy. It teaches various aspects of the movement and storage of materials on their journey from original suppliers through to final customers.

The Department's Undergraduate Studies Program was created in September 2003 by a committee of professors of the Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki among whom were the President S. Ioannidis, P. Karakoltsidis Vice-President, Professor of Department of Accounting, Mr. Stephen and the Head of Department D. Triantafyllou. The objective was to create a modern curriculum adapted to scientific data on new scientific field of Logistics and the definite needs of the Greek business environment in the field of supply chain management.

There have been two revisions of the Curriculum as presented in the Internal Evaluation with the last one in 2012. Based on the stakeholders' views (local community, alumni, professionals and academics) the curriculum meets the requirements of the society. However, there is no clear structured process on how this has been achieved.

IMPLEMENTATION

The program revealed advantages but also shortcomings in the functioning of courses that were given to students. There are subjects, which have a high degree of demand from the labor market (something which was confirmed during the meeting with alumni and employers). However, there are also subjects which their teaching has been interrupted (e.g. Technical English writing) due to staff shortages. This creates knowledge gaps as the majority of publications in the area are in English and students who wish to pursue postgraduate studies abroad will be disadvantaged..

In addition, within the curriculum, specialized education is provided which in several occasions is limited (e.g. SAP software). Moreover, the license of various programs is about to expire and there is no clear evidence if there will be funding for renewal. Alumni and Professionals confirmed the importance of such programs as they play a fundamental role in the success of the program. The internship is a constructive educational and practical experience which is not though systematically monitored and evaluated.

Another critical aspect is the course scheduling and corresponding estimated student workload (amounting to approx. 50 hours a week). A number of students have to commute from Thessaloniki daily and some are forced to do side jobs in order to cover their costs. Although a variety of laboratories and exercises are repeated in order to enable attendance flexibility for students, their schedule and workload remains high. This may be a contributing factor to the relatively large number of deferred students

The assessment for the theoretical courses is mostly based on exams. The examination system has major limitations due to the absence of a Student Disciplinary Board, and lack of tracking mechanisms such as: Selection Committee (examination unit), the institution of the External Examiner, plagiarism control and the conduct of examinations (with numbered desks).

It is fundamental for the curriculum to be updated, partly or in whole, with regular market

research in order to keep up to date with the needs of the economy and the local industry/ environment.

The curriculum assigns importance to both theory and practice. Internationally, logistics curricula tend to follow one of two directions; either focusing on technical aspects, or adopting a predominance of managerial aspects. Moreover, programs tend to also include area-specific, differentiating modules in the syllabus. This program of Logistics has a managerial focus with specialized subjects that are closely connected to the needs of the local community and regional economy.

The structure of the curriculum is rational, clearly articulated and functional. Modules are thematically organized/grouped (i.e. underline courses deal with a single thematic entity). Given the applied character of the program and its practical relevance it maybe worthwhile organizing modules on a basis of application (i.e. courses are grouped in modules dealing with a particular application domain).

Teaching staff consists of lecturers who are employed on the basis of short-term teaching contracts and those who hold permanent positions. The later are involved in research processes, while the first ones are more involved in teaching. It is a fact that ability-wise the Department has sufficient manpower, possessing good knowledge of the corresponding disciplines. The academic group is able to conduct future changes in the curriculum based on their specialized knowledge and educational experience.

There is no distance learning alternative (e-learning) and only a limited number of collaborations with other institutions abroad are available.

RESULTS

The Government Gazette (GG) 222/17-9-2003 does not provide goals and objectives. However, the aim and objectives of the Department are included within the general objectives of the founding laws of TEIs which are described within the Government Gazette of professional rights of the Department. In general terms, the objectives of the Department are achieved. The Department understands the process and the limitations.

IMPROVEMENT

The Department is aware of the limitations and ways to improve the Curriculum.

The Department proposes a number of improvements such as:

- Improving the academic quality of new entry students who are admitted to the program.
- Reaching a more optimal capacity utilisation as the actual number of student admissions should be close to the one proposed by the Department.
- Recruiting additional academic and admin staff who can support the curriculum.
- Enabling faculty members in their efforts to make high-quality research.

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

Overall, the didactical approach can be characterised as 'traditional', with a predominance of frontal lecturing and written exams. Laboratories and exercises complement this approach in order to enrich the program, providing students with key skills and practice-related experiences in the area of logistics. Notable and commendable are the team-cohesion, commitment and motivation of the teaching staff and the excellent staff-student relationship.

This is the basis of creating an excellent learning atmosphere and to a large degree compensates for infrastructural and financial deficiencies. The adopted didactical methodology corresponds to the one of equivalent programs at both national and international levels. Within the defined objectives of the Department of Logistics, teaching plays a central role. According to the internal evaluation report, the aims of the department are (amongst others):

- Education and training in the area of logistics
- General education
- Competence development aligned with the realities and necessities of the Greek economy in the corresponding area of discourse

The architecture and contents of the curriculum are aligned with the stated objectives and comply with the legal requirements and guidelines defined by the Greek Ministry of Education for Technological Education Institutions (TEI).

The implementation of the department's curriculum utilises three teaching instruments:

- Lectures (Theory): The didactical method here is the traditional frontal lecturing. This method represents over 50% of the total teaching hours.
- Laboratories (Practice): Within laboratories, students simulate, experiment and train under the supervision of professors and technical staff assistance. Aside from 3 computer labs there is a Chemical Quality Control lab and a Warehouse Simulation area. This form of teaching corresponds to some 40% of the total teaching hours
- Assignments and projects (Self-Directed Learning): Students are also required to complete various assignments incl. case studies and team project reports. This represents 10% of the total teaching hours.

The program features and actively pursues the link with the logistics sector, also in their teaching activities. Excursions to companies, guest lecturers from the industry, and case studies (often alumni) are frequently utilised in the teaching process. Students are familiarised with ERP, CRM, GIS and WMS software and are also trained in the usage of MS-Office products and statistical applications. This software training portfolio is both appropriate and highly relevant for the program's thematic scope.

Finally, with regards to examination approaches, they can also be characterised as 'traditional'. Although, there are mid-term tests, graded assignments and presentations, the grades are largely determined by written exams held at the end of the semester (with an exception or two).

IMPLEMENTATION

The quality of teaching staff and lectures in the department of logistics is deemed excellent as it contains high levels of interaction between students and staff, coverage of practice-related issues and providing opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience in various aspects of their future employment. The corresponding feedback received from the alumni was very positive. More specifically, those interviewed felt very strongly about the relevance and quality of the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies. In this sense, the program's teaching contents fully supports the students' and future employers' expectations.

In terms of teaching materials and resources, there are number of challenges and issues that need to be dealt with. The department has successfully implemented an online learning

platform (e-Class) for a more efficient distribution of teaching materials, scheduling and communication. This is adopted by staff and students alike, utilising a significant part of its functionality. Nonetheless, reading material and library services are arguably insufficient. Even though the department has access to scientific databases, they have limited access/subscriptions to area-specific journals and resources.

RESULTS

The effectiveness of teaching in the Logistics Department of Katerini is directly associated to the institution's core competence: The team-spirit, engagement and motivation of the faculty, the exceptional staff-student relationship and individualised mentoring. In terms of a didactical approach / methodology, it can be asserted that the department complies with the standards in the corresponding thematic area.

Within traditional lectures the student attendance reportedly ranges in the area of 40-50%, which according to the TEI's Staff is considered above average within the national standard. The staff/student ratio ranges between 1/120 (lectures) to 1/25 (in labs). This is admittedly not optimal, but given a 40-50% student attendance is it deemed sufficient at least for lectures. Nevertheless, a staff / student ratio of 1/25 for labs is highly questionable, as it inhibits student involvement and hands-on experience; not mentioning health and safety, when it comes to particular chemicals and / or equipment. In fact, in recent years featuring an increased number of entry students, it was reported that often the staff / student ratio reached 1 /30 in labs.

Although the provided theoretical education and skill-training are fully compatible with the institution's thematic scope and objectives, the 'competence-building' aspect leaves significant room for improvement. More specifically, the aspect of 'internationalisation'. This is particularly relevant within the context of departmental plans to extend their curricular offer (i.e. Intl. Postgraduate Program in Logistics).

Another challenge identified is the relatively high exam failure rate (approx. 60%). The grades correspond to a normal distribution with a low grade bias (i.e. grades on the top quartile are under-represented). Based on the faculty's feedback, this is explained due to the institution's relatively low entry requirements and deficiencies of the pre-university school system.

IMPROVEMENTThe department, having conducted teaching evaluation (also by own initiative) is quite aware of both the strengths and challenges associated with teaching activity in their institutions.

Key recommendations here are:

- Secure ongoing financing of laboratories (at least for the maintenance and supplies)
- Improve availability of foreign language training for students and gradually introduce modules taught exclusively in English.
- Teaching evaluation should be fully (i.e. detailed free text comments) distributed to the corresponding professors
- Follow up on ERASMUS co-operations and actively support student mobility (beyond the agreement level) by installing administration support structures.

C. Research

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

APPROACH

The department had discussed the research objectives in a faculty meeting on 4/5/2010 and agreed that the faculty members should give equal priority to teaching and research. The main areas are the ones that are related to the main departmental theme domains and the continuous collaboration with national and international members of the community. In particular they decided that their research should focus on the following areas:

1. Agri-food Green Supply Chain Management
2. Humanitarian Logistics
3. Transportation and Maritime Logistics Services

The main focus of the department is teaching. However, research is considered to be at a very satisfactory level especially if we compare with other Greek Institutions. Further research has a positive value for the students' bachelor theses.

According to the internal report there are annual reports to evaluate the research output of the department.

IMPLEMENTATION

There is no specific mechanism outside the fact that research is mostly used for academic career advancement. Some funding is available (from external grant support) that enables conference attendance, where papers are presented by full time faculty.

Although the institution lacks dedicated research infrastructure, publications per faculty is at a quite satisfactory level again in comparison with other Greek institutions.

Currently there are some (mostly small size) grants available for research in the department, even though it was noticed that the faculty are highly motivated to pursue collaborations with other institutes to enable additional research funding.

RESULTS

The main focus of the department is clearly the practical education of its students in current tools for logistics with different applications. The research is done mostly due to the scientific motivation of the faculty members.

As mentioned above however the number of publications per faculty member is considered satisfactory. The students are required to work on a Bachelor's thesis at the last semester of their studies. This in most cases is the way of performing research.

All the faculty members are motivated to research but the resources are rather limited. Research collaborations are due to personal communication with the faculty of other institutions especially those of Thessaloniki. In its majority, the research work has an application focus, mainly consisting of case studies. The department's unique selling point is its educational focus in the area of logistics.

IMPROVEMENT

The department recommends the development of a Masters program in Logistics as a means to facilitate and improve research outcomes, since it is mentioned that undergraduate student projects are mostly focused in case studies.

D. All Other Services

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

APPROACH

The program's administrative support services are dependent on the Central Administrative office in Serres – TEI of Central Macedonia. These include the physical presence of two administrators: a full time administrator and a temporary one, and the access of an electronic system which offers a large number of services for all stakeholders (http://teiser.gr/index.php?cat_id=40).

Furthermore, as clearly indicated, the program's administrative services have been developed mostly on an electronic basis and have been supported by several software packages used by faculty, administrative staff and students. These include: StudentsWeb for the students and the ClassWeb. Via these services, students and faculty have the on-line capability of communicating with the administrators. These services provide the following:

- Via the 'StudentsWeb' the students are able to check on line their biographical data, to select courses, submit assignments, and request documents, check grade reports, and examination schedules.
- Concerning the ClassWeb's services, these offer faculty members the opportunity to electronically check the students' records, submit grades and perform statistical analysis.
- Moreover, the GUNET eclass platform is an additional service provided for online as a pedagogical tool for uploads and updates of courses including power point presentations and feedback to assignments.

Although official evaluations have not been provided rating the relative satisfaction levels of the users and practicality of these packages, the usefulness of the program's electronic administrative services have been demonstrated and commented on as being extremely helpful.

With respect to the administrative office, its aim is to support faculty and students with a standard range of services. Nevertheless, the services of administrative staff extend way beyond their standard duties, due to the high volume of work. These duties include liaison with industry of student placements and maintaining record keeping of the industrial settings, assisting with the organization of seminars and annual conferences. Additionally, the administrative office is the main link with the Central Administrative office in Serres.

Regarding the Library, TEI Katerini's infrastructure (located in the current premises since 2004) was enhanced in 2011 with the current library facilities. Library resources are used by students and faculty. The Library also provides access to online material by the use of the HEAL-LINK. However, this aspect could be extended much further using some additional resources. Examples of resources that would be considered as standard in other competing institutions in Greece or abroad include access to a wider range of books and journals, and in particular for support of a unique Logistics program to Logistics related databases.

The low utilization of the library's facilities and resources could be a result of the large number of text books and limited number of reference books, limited access to computer terminals and the absence of a librarian. It is important to note that there were no security systems to protect the library.

TEI Katerini has a Student Support faculty advisor– system with the aim to support students in the development of a professional career. This provides a standard range of services, although the EEC was not provided with information regarding the extent of take up of those services.

One interesting feature is the “Alumni Association” which seeks to connect students and graduates with organisations which offer job positions or programs of lifelong learning. TEI’s infrastructure including classrooms, amphitheatres, labs, faculty offices, students’ common rooms, gymnasium, and library appear to be adequate.

IMPLEMENTATION

The organization and infrastructure of the Logistics program’s administration seems to be simple and effective, and indeed constitutes a very lean operation. The EEC was very appreciative of the support provided by the program Head, and his team, whose enthusiasm and passion was evident. Additionally, the EEC is also obliged to Mrs. Sofias Deligiannidou, for her keenness and eagerness to provide to the EEC immediate access to all the information requested.

RESULTS

Overall, the administrative and other services are in general adequate and functional. However, it was very apparent that budgetary constraints, were clearly inhibiting certain desirable developments such as the enhancement of the administrative office in terms of another permanent administrative officer, the purchase of software for the computer labs and the enrichment of the library with on-line journal, e-books and a qualified librarian.

IMPROVEMENTS

A range of improvements were underway, nonetheless the budgetary constraints (already mentioned) were clearly limiting what and how could be achieved.

Examples of such improvements were associated with the purchase of lab equipment and updated software, exploration of the feasibility of providing a greater range of on the premises facilities for student practical, hands on experiences, and library resources.

The library stock is minimal and it mainly consists of textbooks. Study areas are insufficient and a functional library administration is absent. Indicative of this is the observation that within the syllabus / course description, the required bibliography is not recent (i.e. 5-10 years old). In addition, significant investment on library stock, room facilities and instalment of professional administration is also highly important.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

TEI’s mission is to provide students with the most up to date and competitive Logistics program in the region. Consequently, TEI can cover the educational needs of a wider spectrum of students interested in acquiring competencies in Logistics in a holistic approach.

This was reflected by the materials and processes that the EEC was presented with, by the teaching staff, industry representatives, delegates of the local government, and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce. For instance, there is a continued collaboration for projects where the Logistics program is partner with local and national stakeholders.

TEI also offers numerous connections with business and other Greek institutions. By the very nature of its operating model, where all students have to attend internships for a semester under the supervision of the TEI’s tutors and an industry supervisor. These annual collaborations do not only help the students gain industrial experience, but also facilitate the exposure of the program.

Also, numerous graduates of the program are employed by local businesses and other Greek organizations, and this provides further opportunities for collaboration with a wide range of institutions which suggests that the program is an asset.

Furthermore, collaboration with cultural, social and commercial organisations is effected through the Bachelor Thesis Module, as was evidenced by the range of topics of theses – mostly case studies - undertaken.

During the EEC visit the members of TEI's faculty provided additional evidence of collaboration with business in the form of guest lectures.

Moreover, the social and cultural aspect of the educational process is carried forward by the recent development of an Alumni Association which could make use of the diverse careers of TEI's graduates and ultimately be the ambassador of the program. Below is the list of the activities undertaken by the Logistics program which the EEC was presented with:

Research projects with social, cultural and local production organizations:

- Warehouse Management Project in Municipality of Katerini. (2007)
- Waste Collection Management Project in Municipality Katerini (2007)
- Development of Quality Management System for Ecotourism Enterprises in the Prefecture of Pieria.(2006-2007)
- Opinion survey for the evaluation of Olympus Music and Theatre Festival in Pieria (2008)
- Public opinion survey for market conditions in Pieria county in collaboration with Pieria Chamber of Commerce (2011)
- Project for Warehouse reengineering of new construction warehouse in the Municipality of Katerini (2008)
- Cooperation with Local Development Agency "PIERIKI ANAPTIXIAKI S.A." in research projects (i.e. Black Sea Program "SETRACON") (2013-2015)

Contribution to cultural events

- Co-organization of the event "Fair Trade" with the non-governmental and non-profit organization Fair Trade Hellas (April 2008)
- Establishment of University Theatre Group in collaboration of local Theatre Company "Pegasus"- Production and presentation of three theatrical plays (2009, 2010,2011)
- Film screenings in collaboration with the Film Club in Katerini (October 2012, December 2013)
- Establishment of Blood Bank in collaboration with the General Hospital of Katerini. Organization of 4 blood donations (24/05/2011, 01/11/2011, 31/05/2012, 35/05/2013)
- Collection of food in order to support indigent citizens in Katerini (December 2012,December 2013)
- Participation as student group in sport events (i.e. Olympus Marathon 24.06.2012, Marathon in Katerini 07.10.2012 & 10.03.2013).

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

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

In relation to the current economic crisis in Greece and the chronic under-financing of public education, the departmental head and faculty of the institution have adopted a pragmatic perspective. Close cooperation and excellent relations with the communal authorities and employers are effectively exploited.

In terms of longer-term success, the department emphasizes the importance of its thematic scope. Although fundamental for the development of the Greek economy, the area of logistics is highly under-represented within the Greek educational landscape. Moreover, there are also above-average levels of graduate employability and a solid anchoring in the local community. Both the thematic scope of the program and the institutions' educational performance justify and defend the institutional sustainability.

Apart from ensuring viability and autonomy in the short-term, the department is ambitious and optimistic for the long-term. The 'mission statement' expressed by the departmental head is to: "Become the number 1 institution in logistics in wider region (national / international)".

More specifically, achieving this, translates to the following groups of goals:

Short Term – Risk Minimisation, Added Value Maximisation

- Consolidate academic staff, without inhibiting the positive and engaged learning & working atmosphere
- Ensure viability and autonomy of the department
- Remain in its current location (Regional anchoring)
- Support regional development

Medium Term - Quality Improvement:

- Achieve a higher level of student entry qualification
- Reach a larger number of applicants (first choice)

Long Term - Reputation Improvement

- Increased visibility of department in the intl. logistics community (Presence in sector-specific conferences, web-presence (social media), Intl. Masters Program)
- Activate alumni to act as multipliers of the department's activities and achievements
- Maintain focus and continue improving graduate's employability

EEC's Input for to the Institution's Future Strategic Debates

The institution is concurrently faced with a number of operational pressures as well as important strategic dilemmas. It is imperative that longer-term, strategic issues are not neglected as a result of to the daily operations and challenges. More specifically, the institutional decision-makers would be advised to define their direction in relation to the following key questions:

- Importance of generalist vs. specialist employability focus? In other words, to what extent can logistics graduates seek employment in different domains and what are the implications for their career development
- Balance between theoretical and applied learning in the curriculum? The curriculum needs to enable graduates to apply for and attend postgraduate programs, whilst also

preparing them for the industry. Would a larger number of electives be desirable?

- Size and viability ('Small and beautiful' or 'Too big to fail'). Finally, departmental development and activity expansion is always two-sided. The current size and differentiation of the department is a major critical success factor. Nevertheless, political logic suggests that a critical mass should be achieved to ensure long-term viability. At what point does this critical mass act counterproductively for the educational quality of the institution?

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

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

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The department is characterised by a positive culture, motivated faculty and staff, team-spirit and positive atmosphere. Moreover, one observes involved and motivated students, who maintain an outstanding rapport with the teaching staff. This is feasible due to relatively small numbers of students. Increasing student numbers in the medium-term, will inhibit the current excellent learning environment

There is also a dominance of informal communications and problem-solving approaches (e.g. catering to commuting students – schedule). This enables flexibility and effectiveness with the limited resources. Over-formalisation in this context would be regarded as unproductive. Exception to this are the procedures that are concerned with: Ongoing grading / evaluation of students and faculty, personal development (i.e. professional training and competence development events – offline / online).

The department maintains a reasonable standard in lab / equipment. Nevertheless, the funding for replacement, maintenance and operation of labs is deemed inadequate. It is essential, for a specialised program of this sort, that technical infrastructure is regularly upgraded and updated to maintain effectiveness / competitiveness. Health and safety cannot be any means be compromised.

Finally, there is a respectable and reasonable contribution to research (incl. publications and projects); however additional research funding could help in terms of participation / visibility in intl. related scientific communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the material examined and the interviews with the various stakeholders, the EEC recommends the following:

Administration and Governance:

- The department is to maintain and strengthen its current positioning. The Ministry of Education should refrain from merging or moving the department to another location. The location of the city, in conjunction with the needs of the market and local industry dictate geographical proximity. The fact that the department belongs to the TEI of Central Macedonia (Serres) implies non-constructive and ineffective administrative controls, interdependencies and formalities. Given that autonomy and flexibility are the institution's critical success factors, the EEC recommends a higher degree of decentralization.
- A functional sabbatical system should be established to enable faculty development and encourage applied research. While some staff members mention that this option is theoretically possible, current staff levels and workload do not permit this.
- The Department should set up a formal process of establishing medium-term (e.g. five year) plans along with a strategy for achieving them. This would cover all main aspects, such as curriculum, undergraduate and postgraduate programs, research activities and outreach to the local and broader community.

Research, Facilities & Resources:

- At this point it needs to be mentioned that the operation and maintenance of lab equipment and lab supplies are largely dependent on project-related funding. This effectively means that there is no secure, ongoing funding for 40% of the institution's teaching activities. To date, this situation has not resulted to any incidents and / or noticeable restrictions in the students' learning process. This can be attributed to the staff's commitment, flexibility and time-investment. Nevertheless, in the face of

increasing student numbers and a potential departmental scope expansion, this issue needs to be resolved.

- The development of multidisciplinary research agendas should be encouraged. It is expected that partnerships and teams across disciplines and sectors may provide a vehicle for the development of new knowledge resulting in a significant push for both innovative applied science teaching and research
- It is recommended that the job responsibilities for admin and technical staff should be re-defined and be specific. Future hirings should be made based on the basis of a re-designed job description.
- The Department is encouraged to create momentum by benchmarking itself against leading international institutions both in terms of teaching and research excellence.
- The Department should use widely accepted lists such as ABS and JQL as well as metrics such as ISI's impact factors to monitor the quality of research and set objectives and criteria for research performance.

Post-Graduate Program (Planned):

- The department has expressed a strong intention to develop a thematically-related, English-speaking post-graduate program. This option can be considered on the basis of the following: an extended market analysis, an international benchmarking study and a feasibility study (focusing on long-term viability). It should be noted that currently human resources are stretched to the maximum, which implicitly raises the question of feasibility and sustainability of an additional, highly-demanding program. The fact that the department aims at maintaining the current student numbers (i.e. by no means increase), due to resource constraints, supports the above argument. A future master program have a consecutive scope / focus (main target market - existing students)
- Although we commend on their research-related ambition (e.g. consecutive master program) , we recommend the evolution of the department in the direction of its core competences; Namely, regional industrial networking (e.g. Automatisation and hosting of the city's archives), professional training, development of the alumni.

Under-graduate Program (Existing):

- Although instructors are evaluated by students on the delivery and content of the course, it is not clear how these results are used. Staff are encouraged to explain how they aim in responding constructively in criticisms raised by students (e.g. course content and delivery style)
- The Department needs to focus in updating the curriculum, improve teaching performance and importantly improve research record and publications in high quality peer reviewed journals. The curriculum of undergraduate level needs continuous improvement to be up-to-date and comparable to institutions of international standing. Innovation in teaching methods is encouraged.
- Introduce induction weeks (first semester) and intensify promotional activities to increase the number and quality of applicants

To summarise the Department should focus on quality of both teaching and research and take particular care in the next four years to monitor its progress and systematically track its performance. Course attendance, student evaluations, grade distributions and exam pass rates should be tracked and stored in databases in order to identify trouble spots and strong points and used to make curriculum decisions.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1.	_____
2.	_____
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