



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Α.ΔΙ.Π.

Η.Ο.Α.

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ & ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

PANTEION UNIVERSITY



European Union
European Social Fund



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

Co-financed by Greece and the European Union



TABLE OF CONTENTS

The External Evaluation Committee

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

1. Professor Michalis Lianos, University of Rouen, France (Coordinator)
2. Professor Antigoni Mouchtouri, University of Lorraine, France.
3. Professor Petros Stathopoulos, European University of Cyprus.

The Committee acknowledges the stress, financial and otherwise, put over the last two years on all Higher Education staff in Greece. It sees this report as a constructive critical approach that contributes to preserving high academic standards despite current circumstances.

It must also be noted that a series of criticisms touch upon issues linked to the administration and governance of the entire Panteion University or even the decisions of the Education Ministry and the Greek government. Obviously, there is no implication that the Department is at the origin of such problems.

The Committee worked approximately twelve hours per day but it was impossible to address every aspect of teaching, research and administration. *As it is obvious between academics, we do not claim that this report constitutes an indisputable truth.* However, we believe that it constitutes a fair, informed and balanced view of the current position of the Department.

Introduction

The External Evaluation Committee [EEC] visited the Department of Sociology of Panteion University from 21 to 23 of October 2013, and worked on its report until Saturday 26 of October 2013. The EEC resumed its work via e-mail contact after the comments of the Department on the draft of this report.

On Monday 21 October the EEC met the University authorities and the editing committee of the departmental internal evaluation report. On the next day, we participated in a Department staff meeting, where no discussion with the EEC was scheduled but some discussion finally took place. We invited academic staff members to individual meetings and had a series of such meetings. Over the 22nd and the 23rd of October, we also met some undergraduate and postgraduate students who responded to a Department call for meeting the EEC, as well as a long list of support services staff.

As a result of serious and lasting doubts by many Department members regarding the usefulness of the evaluation process, the EEC was informed that the internal evaluation process was delayed for about two years and the editing committee had to work under great time pressure to produce its report.

There was little material provided to the EEC beyond the internal evaluation report. For example, it was not possible to obtain a collective dossier with the detailed CV of every Department member and there is no collective depository of the Department's publications. The EEC was provided with access to some additional documents such as PhD and Master's theses. The Department did not hold a collective presentation of its recent activities, but the Head of Department supplied a largely historical presentation of the Department, which has an illustrious past, both in terms of contribution to political elites and in terms of academic contribution. On October 22 and 23 the EEC invited members of the academic staff to individual meetings with a member of the EEC. We held such meetings with those members of the academic staff who volunteered to participate in the process (16 out of 38 members).

There was some initial reservation regarding the EEC visit, which progressively loosened as members of staff increasingly acknowledged the potential positive contribution of the evaluation process. This is understandable given current economic circumstances in Greece, as fears of instrumentalisation towards staff cuts were rife.

A. Curriculum

APPROACH

Both the undergraduate and the postgraduate Curriculum is designed on a basis that reflects the history of the Department and **includes two parallel streams in sociology and criminology. Although the dialogue between these two components is certainly creative, their integration can be improved. The EEC was made aware of a long and ongoing discussion regarding the establishment of a separate Criminology Department.**

Another well-known problem, due to the regulatory and administrative frame of Higher Education in Greece, is the fragmentation of the Curriculum along individual fields of expertise with which staff members inevitably identify, because of an initial label given at the time of their entry into the system (“FEK of their appointment”). As a result, staff members defend their narrow areas of teaching and are not encouraged to diversify, adjust and modernize their individual teaching and the departmental curriculum according to current needs, national considerations and international trends.

The EEC was not informed of any specific set of learning objectives used by the Department at the undergraduate level. **At postgraduate level, our impression is that the Criminology programme is of excellent quality. More specifically, it is well structured, focused on special skills and hands-on experiences with strong external teaching and research inputs.** The design of Sociology postgraduate programme seems adequate and of high relevance to issues in the Greek society and beyond. There is a significant margin to introduce tighter forms of monitoring and assessing the programme so as to reinforce student employment and impact on the Greek society. Informal contact of alumni with the teaching staff covers around 40% of recent graduates. The rate of admission currently follows a downward trend at about 1/6 applicants. However, the pool of applicants seems to be quite diverse and of high quality.

IMPLEMENTATION

The content of the undergraduate curriculum is quite abstract and theoretical and there seems to be an imbalance in terms of supplying students with a range of applied sociological skills that lead to better employment prospects. The degree of linking the curriculum to possible needs in the labour market, and the private sector in particular, is of course debated in this Department as everywhere else. With rare exceptions, there is little interaction with practitioners in prospective areas of employment (e.g. social welfare agencies, healthcare, NGOs, private sector organizations etc.) There is no formal procedure for consulting stakeholders.

There is a significant degree of overlapping teaching areas in the undergraduate curriculum and students reported this as a problem.

In addition, there are no prerequisites in the design of the undergraduate curriculum. As a result it is impossible to ensure a coherent, cumulative progression of the knowledge and skills acquired by students as they advance through semesters.

To our knowledge, there is no planned, recurrent departmental process of monitoring and improving the undergraduate curriculum. This is probably due to continuous discussion on a point-by-point basis. However, there is a recently introduced procedure of course evaluation by the students although the students seem to question the benefits of this process as they do

not receive any feedback on amendments and improvements that they might have suggested. The EEC has not been made aware of any instituted course assessment mechanism supplying feedback to the teaching staff.

There are courses being taught with a very low number of students. Albeit recurrent, this problem has not been addressed in the design of the curriculum and the allocation of teaching time.

As it happens in most European countries, there is no taught PhD programme. This is clearly an issue that needs to be addressed, particularly when PhD students from other disciplines are concerned.

RESULTS

The data on student success rates are kept by the secretariat of the Department. The EEC was not made aware of any specific focus on this fundamental aspect of student progress as a basis for curriculum design.

IMPROVEMENT

The members of the Department reported that there have been incremental changes over the last years. No specific improvement plan is currently being prepared but this is probably due, at least to an extent, to deeply experienced uncertainty over both resources and legal provisions across Greek Higher Education.

B. Teaching

APPROACH

The offer of courses covers a large spectrum of interests and possibilities but a tighter and more comprehensive curriculum structure seems to be necessary. The EEC was not made aware of a collective or departmental pedagogic policy. An individual approach is being used, depending on the predilections of each member of staff.

In addition to what has been mentioned in the previous section, one major drawback is the lack of any plan or provision for students who are unable to attend classes, particularly since those students represent around 65% of enrolled students in the Department and approximately 40% of 'active' students. This lack is paradoxical, given that the Department has produced international publications on the issue of 'perpetual' non-attending students.

Established teaching methods are being used, with lectures being the core method. With few exceptions, there seem to be no significant examples of innovation or delay in teaching applied social science methodology.

Audiovisual equipment is not readily available and IT equipment is in some cases outdated. This hampers both teaching and student work with specific statistical software. Access to classes often becomes unnecessarily complex as teachers need to go and take the key from security staff.

Currently, only a small proportion of students have access to work placements¹ (127 or app. 6% of 'active' students). The established criteria for the selection of students for placement include: academic achievement, course marks, completion of courses related to the practice domain and orientation of the placement partner institution, such as NGOs, prisons, social welfare agencies, museums, research centres, etc. On the basis of these criteria, academic staff arrange the placement of each student in telephone contact with the agency field supervisor. With one notable exception, work placements are essentially supervised by partner institutions.

IMPLEMENTATION

There is no personal tutor assigned to each undergraduate student. Although we presume that contact between lecturers and (regularly attending) students is good, a formal link with a specific member of staff would be useful to help all students in building a coherent selection of courses as they progress through semesters.

Teaching seems to be of high quality. The EEC had the opportunity to observe a teaching session by the Head of the Department. The session was well prepared and supported by material of very good quality and use of audiovisual equipment. Contact with students was great and participation was intensive.

It must be emphasised that there are serious problems with establishing even basic forms of teaching contact with non-attending students.

The small sample of approximately 20 undergraduate and postgraduate students that the EEC met with was not necessarily representative. However, the opinion of these students supports the idea that student appreciation of staff teaching competence and accessibility is high. Interviewed students reported nonetheless that the reputation of the Department is not necessarily satisfactory, particularly when it comes to the perception of graduates of competitive degrees in Law, Political Science, Sociology and Economics.

The welcoming session of the postgraduate programme in criminology coincided with the period of the EEC visit. We seized the opportunity to observe and found that it was also impressive, both in terms of student quality and in terms of interaction with the teaching staff.

Cross-registration for courses in other departments is insufficient, particularly since Panteion University has the richest concentration of cognate areas in social science teaching under one roof.

¹ We are referring here to *πρακτική*, which takes the form of unpaid internships.

The EEC was not given any data on student and staff mobility, either via the internal evaluation report or in situ. However, as there was no time to visit the Erasmus Office, we presume that a reasonable level of mobility is maintained. We did not see any evidence of visiting professors being invited to the Department.

There is no instituted follow-up and/or liaising mechanism for alumni.

Video-recording and podcasting of lectures and other teaching sessions has not been introduced.

RESULTS

Despite the limitations mentioned above, there are serious advantages that the Department can exploit in teaching, provided that a robust feedback mechanism be put in place.

There is no system to check assignments and dissertations against plagiarism, e.g. Turn-It-In, Compilatio etc.

IMPROVEMENT

With the commendable exception of the postgraduate Criminology Programme, there is no departmental thinking in improving teaching methodology and student access to teaching.

C. Research

APPROACH

There is neither a departmental research policy statement in the internal evaluation report, nor objectives set at any collective or individual level. It is clearly stated that research is a matter of personal motivation under financial circumstances that are being considered very unfavourable. Although the EEC acknowledges that persevering on an individual basis is highly commendable, it also underlines that a certain degree of complacency is spreading across the Department, particularly inasmuch as references to a glorious past are used to legitimate the present.

The summary publication table included in the internal evaluation report is not composed according to any international standards of bibliographic reference, which would allow the EEC to assess the various levels of national and international research contributions. In order to facilitate future referencing, the EEC attaches to this report a technical addendum on this matter.

The perception of lack of means is often related to an exaggerated representation of means available in universities abroad. Although reimbursement delays, insufficient funding,

bureaucracy and salary cuts are certainly a menacing mix for research activities in Greece, these conditions must not necessarily lead to regression to an individual mode of academic existence. It is crucial under the circumstances that the entire Higher Education structure, from the Ministry of Education to individual members of HE Personnel, do not surrender to instinctive atomising trends.

IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the internal evaluation report, the EEC cannot see any evidence of particular success in the internal promotion and assessment of research. The Department seems to be organized in a way that conceals all evidence of individual research success and failure from its members and smothers the slightest emulation effect.

There is no research seminar and no other form, such as a quarterly departmental newsletter, to keep Department members and postgraduate students informed of each other's progress. There is no forum to discuss research with doctoral and postgraduate students, albeit spontaneous, informal group discussions certainly occur. **It seems to us that the criminology section does better in this area in terms of mutual research awareness.**

Staff spaces are modern, adequate, well equipped and partially underused. Some irritating deficiencies, such as IT consumables, may affect staff morale but the really important problem is the threat of access to international bibliographic data bases being interrupted, which is a fatal blow for any researcher.

Research administration seems to be inefficient. No significant research infrastructure seems to have been built over a long period of continuous affluence of funds. Raising research funds is still not a reflex. The history of Panteion makes research administration deeply defensive and little initiative is undertaken. In 2012 the University ratio of competitive (not strictly peer-reviewed) funding per academic member of staff is approximately 1500€. This is not satisfactory for such an institution.

RESULTS

The external funding table included in the internal evaluation report shows a great margin for improvement. Only a fifth of the total funding seems to come from peer-reviewed sources and the total of € 227,948.13 is definitely inadequate for a 'top-heavy' Department of 38 academic staff members over a four-year period (i.e. a ratio of app. € 1450 per researcher).

It seems to the EEC that only a small minority of Department members manage to achieve an international research presence commensurate with the advantages that Panteion offers, namely a long tradition of highly regarded work in the social sciences, a very attractive location and an influential population of alumni, among others.

The EEC notes that the Department's recruitment policy is not clearly legible. The thematic areas of members recruited in the last decade or so do not indicate any specific planned approach, either in terms of teaching or research. The Department is completely 'top-heavy' with 21 full professors (and 2 Associate Professors in the process of being promoted), 6

Associate Professors, 7 Assistant Professors and 4 Lecturers (in the process of being promoted). This is a highly unusual distribution, often justified by lateral transfers from other universities and a mentality of automatic promotion once the law allows it; we cannot verify the credibility of this piece of information, but it has been communicated to us more than once that there is no precedent of an application for promotion to tenure (μονιμοποίηση) having been rejected.

There is no collective representation of the Department's research position. Only administrative aspects of teaching are collectively discussed.

IMPROVEMENT

There is no instituted process to develop a departmental plan for encouraging and improving research, although such a collective reaction is more necessary today than ever before, given that vital public research resources are threatened.

D. All Other Services

APPROACH

The administrative services of the Department seem to be efficient and have been gradually ameliorated over recent years, partly thanks to in-service training and civil servant training programmes. Although, lack of staff is reported, it seems that efficient inter-departmental coordination has been established in recent years. This has led to a newly acquired team spirit. Volunteering students are often depended upon to help with unpaid administrative and secretarial work.

One major step towards efficiency was the introduction of a web platform for student enrolment and mark notification, which drastically decongested departmental administration according to the staff involved.

There are no e-mail lists to address student and staff collectively. This is a major drawback.

IMPLEMENTATION

There is an internal annual assessment procedure of the administrative staff by the Head of the Department in the first instance and the University's Director of Administrative Services («Γενικός Γραμματέας») at a second level.

The Department has no administrative autonomy, in the sense that many services, such as IT, finance etc., are exclusively centralised. The EEC met with the University's IT department and was informed of progress and obstacles to service improvement. In particular, there is no web drive for students and staff, no university mail addresses given to students and little planning for continuous IT development. Despite impressive numbers of non-attending students, e-teaching solutions are not being introduced and neither academic staff nor IT staff take any initiative to deal with this gaping deficit. Off-campus access to bibliographic databases is available.

A wide range of student welfare services («φοιτητική μέριμνα») is supplied, including health and social insurance, restaurant and accommodation management, housing, disabled student support. There seems to be high student demand and staff efficiency in this area. The EEC had no time to visit the Centre for Student Services («Κέντρο Εξυπηρέτησης Φοιτητών»), which would have helped shape a comprehensive understanding of all services supplied to students.

Currently, medical services are provided on a voluntary basis of four hours per day by medical students (possibly interns?). The general ambulance and emergency services are used when an incident occurs.

A psychologist is on campus but there was no spontaneous information provided on this matter. The EEC found that interviewed students and staff, at all levels, were unaware of that counselling service.

The main space of the Library has been renovated. However, there is little other evidence of very good funding levels over several past years (up to app. 1 M € per year). There are too few working stations (app. forty) and too few reading stations. There are no cost-effective provisions for dealing with readership surges (e.g. at examination times). The Library contains 85,000 titles, which is disappointingly low for the only exclusive social science university in Greece, particularly after a history of over eighty years. Non-user spaces are inadequately maintained (e.g. the archive of periodicals is exposed to very high humidity, there is no fire-detection system and smoking seems to be allowed in that area!). There is no thinking on reducing cost by drastically increasing the acquisition of digital books instead of hard copies.

There is great sensitivity to disabled access across Library services, ranging from appropriate facilities to volunteering support networks. Some infrastructure for visually impaired students is available.

The staff of the Library seems motivated and competent, and many students volunteer to do unpaid work for the Library. There is no development plan and we have not seen any particular attempts to innovate and adjust management to current funding cuts. Many important decisions seem to be taken at a central level, which may be a cause of frustration in Library staff.

The introduction of a University Board in Greek Higher Education is in its infancy. The EEC met with the President of the Board who supplied information both on the operation of the Board and on the general position of the University. The Board is on good terms with the Academic Board («Πρυτανεία»), which should not be taken for granted in the Greek context.

The Board's main concerns currently are the supervision of financial operations and the setting up of a Company, provided by Greek legislation, which will include the entire assets of the University.

The EEC was not made aware of any development plan for the University. Both Boards seem to focus on day to day management under successive changes in legal, administrative and financial requirements. The lack of a strategic plan by both Boards is being attributed by interviewed members to these frequent changes.

RESULTS

Student satisfaction with secretarial services can be improved but the EEC has no opinion on whether student expectations are excessive.

The quality of the food provided to students seems to be quite good. The EEC had no time to inspect accommodation and sports facilities.

Administration at all levels seems to be haunted by a pervasive defensive attitude, possibly as a result of serious problems in financial management over a relatively recent period. These problems have affected the perception of the University both by its own staff and by the general public. It has repeatedly been reported to the EEC that reluctance to take any initiative, sign any document and make any decision is widespread. Inevitably, this adds an additional layer of management obstacles to the heavy, slow regulating framework of Greek Higher Education. All members of staff that we met report that "everything is difficult" and there is no trust between colleagues in terms of undertaking shared initiatives and developing common projects. Regression to an individual mode of operation is rife.

With few exceptions, both student and staff seem to view as a rare benefit of the Higher Education regulatory framework the exclusion of student organisations guided by political parties from central university decision-making mechanisms in general, and staff recruitment and promotion in particular.

IMPROVEMENTS

Departmental administration is currently working on improving the procedures of access funds and scholarships. The EEC has no detailed evidence of other planned improvements, although there are certainly incremental attempts to ameliorate services and amenities.

There is generalized hope that a new Administrative Charter («οργανισμός» ή «εσωτερικός κανονισμός»), which is under development, will solve a myriad of problems.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

We have already mentioned that the Department has an illustrious past, both in terms of contribution to political elites and in terms of academic contribution. Beyond that, there is a

wide spectrum of organizations, mainly in the public sector and a series of NGOs, that the Department collaborates with for the placement of its students.

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

There is no evidence of strategic planning. Incremental improvements emerge as reactions to existing needs. This leads to developments which are sometimes significant, such as restructuring the University by creating new Schools and Departments, acquiring and refurbishing a new building for housing students, renting appropriate space etc. However, the EEC was not made aware of strategic, anticipatory or contingency planning.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

Despite the asphyxiating legal framework and the current funding cuts, a series of steps can be taken to reduce weaknesses, preserve strengths and generate new opportunities. The EEC believes that the condition of the Department is not commensurate with its advantages and opportunities. The EEC believes that the members of the Department are aware of these circumstances and need encouragement to start a process of collective, dynamic change. Although talents and capacities are not equally distributed, as it is the case everywhere, the Department has the collective capacity to substantially ameliorate its position. Collaboration is crucial in realizing the Department's full potential.

It is in this spirit that the EEC provides its recommendations.

TEACHING AND CURRICULLUM

A personalised link between each student and a member of staff would be particularly helpful. Each student should be able to refer to an Advisor in order to choose his or her courses on the basis of interests, capacities, vocational preferences, current level of achievement and employment aspirations, i.e. an integrated personalised educational project. Given the number of students, this might be a daunting task. Electronic communication and specialised e-tools may facilitate such a process.

The most significant teaching challenge that the Department faces is that of the large number of non-attending students. Given current economic circumstances in Greece, this problem is likely to increase, therefore a cheap and urgent solution is needed. It is obvious that a significant part of such a solution is the development of e-teaching and the introduction of a fully functional remote teaching platform. Obviously, this includes as a fundamental step the introduction of allocating individual e-mail addresses and e-mail lists across the University.

Given the attraction of Athens as a prime international destination, a full programme of inviting visiting professors should be established. This will naturally lead to reciprocal exchange arrangements. Although funding may be a problem, there is no reason to believe

that various sources of sponsoring are impossible to find. Furthermore, poor funding should by now be part of long-term planning and alternatives must be intensely explored.

Work placement should be as generalised as possible, given the significance of liaising with the labour market and ensuring the right balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Placements should become eligible for the basic ECTS requirement that leads to the undergraduate degree. The EEC strongly supports the rationale and the hope of the Department's Work Placement Committee, as stated in the Internal Evaluation Report, that work placements be mandatory and available to all students. The EEC has anecdotal information that the students of the Department are appreciated by partner institutions for their analytical skills but they have serious deficits in skills required to apply their knowledge in concrete practice situations. Although funds are not easily available at this time, efforts should be made to raise the necessary funding so as to generalise student placement. This is also an excellent means to link theory to practice.

At least as early as the third semester, a reinforcement of teaching in qualitative and quantitative methods seems to be necessary in order to provide students with the necessary methodological applied skills when working as sociologists. Particular emphasis should be placed on field analysis practices and software use in both statistics and qualitative analysis.

As mentioned in the internal evaluation, Panteion has the highest number of courses in its undergraduate curriculum. This number should be reduced for a series of reasons, e.g. a tighter and more focused structure in terms of academic and professional pursuits, cost effectiveness, coherence and progressive accumulation of knowledge. This reduction should be accompanied by a higher ECTS equivalence per course. Optional courses should be reduced in favour of core courses. The intensive use of continuous assessment (e.g. via essays and presentations) could possibly contribute to an increase in attendance.

There are several courses where student number is under five. Steps should be taken to group courses, offer alternatives (e.g. tutorials), etc. in order to avoid opening courses for fewer than five students.

The increase of interdepartmental cross-registration of courses should be encouraged. This will benefit the students in terms of specializing according to their individual interests and professional aspirations. It will also entail significant cost reduction across the University and an overall opening towards interdisciplinarity and collaboration.

One major practical amelioration is fast and easy access to classrooms for staff. Code operated locks can be a cheap and convenient alternative.

ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER SERVICES

1. Debating issues and 'thinking about' everything seems to be a generalised practice. The introduction of Schools and Deans creates an opportunity to initiate proactive management, priority setting per academic year, swift decision-making and consequent realisation of objectives.
2. There are several operational aspects that should be preserved and enhanced. These include the following:
 - a. the enrolment and marking e-platform

- b. continuous staff training via various programmes, including those of the National Public Administration School (ΕΣΔΔ).
 - c. flexible, cheap and lasting substitutes for major lacks under current circumstances, such as the commendable initiative of appealing to students of medicine and nursing in order to provide on-campus healthcare for Panteion students.
3. A system of periodic, possibly biannual, internal monitoring of staff progress should be introduced.
 4. Given space limitations and low student attendance, teaching space management should be improved. The amelioration of the classroom allocation e-tool as an interdepartmental structure is probably part of such an improvement.
 5. Library services must urgently focus on reducing costs in all areas (including space), in order to preserve access to e-resources, on which all postgraduate and research activity vitally depends.
 6. Make sure across the campus that everyone is aware that a psychologist is available to provide counselling services to students and staff. Collaboration with the Psychology Department would enhance the capacity of the counselling service in order to address the needs of a greater number of students through the placement of postgraduate psychology students as part of their training.
 7. Given that according to oral information received by the EEC there was never a fully spent budget at Panteion, and taking into account the lack of building infrastructure commensurate with funding over 'good times', it is vital that all possible sources of funding be explored in order to avoid further deterioration of the University's financial position. As part of such fund raising, a charter of conditions of academic independence under which the Department (or the University) will accept funds should be drafted.
 8. Parallel remunerated work and activities carried out by some members of staff may become a serious problem as salary cuts affect essential revenues. As things develop, we are not far from a 'second job' model that should be avoided at all costs. There is still time for the Department to focus on academic funding in order to compensate for loss of staff income instead of allowing for individual solutions of seeking revenue from non-academic sources.
 9. To the extent that funding allows this, audiovisual equipment should be made more readily available in classes.
 10. The concentration of multiple senior duties in one person should be avoided.
 11. Although close family and friendship links are an essential part of Greek culture, it is important that the Department make provisions to avoid exposing itself to criticism.
 12. Video-conferencing at all levels (from the University Boards to contact with non-attending students) should be introduced. Current circumstances make physical meetings unsustainably costly, particularly when contact beyond the Athens area is involved.
 13. Despite the heavy legal and bureaucratic framework, both the Department and the University should encourage initiatives and produce a basis for lasting creative interaction and structured coordination between members of all categories of staff.
 14. Finally, the University Board should become fully operational and settle the regulatory issue of videoconferencing, given its highly international composition.

RESEARCH

The EEC is convinced that the Department does not provide a strong and detailed representation of its overall research position to its members. **With the exception of strong interaction among criminologists, few, if any, members seem to be aware of strengths and weaknesses across the departmental team.** We suspect that this has spontaneously and unintentionally led to a culture of “don’t ask, don’t tell” that hampers initiative and motivation towards research. The EEC finds no reason why this situation should continue and believes that it is easy for the Department to redress it. In this context, we propose the following improvements:

1. A recurrent departmental research seminar for staff and postgraduate students needs to be urgently introduced. This should be accompanied by a quarterly newsletter on all departmental activities distributed to these participants.
2. The Department is paradoxically ‘top heavy’ with 21 full professors (and 2 Associate Professors in the process of being promoted), 6 Associate Professors, 7 Assistant Professors and 4 Lecturers (in the process of being promoted). This creates by definition an obligation for a very strong international research presence and possibly international excellence in some cases. That is accordingly the natural objective that the Department should set for itself, starting with focusing on international article publication. Although publications in Greek are necessary and commendable, they do not put the Department on the world map, where it must find its rightful place as the first provider of sociological knowledge in Greece.
3. The previous point is closely linked with increasing fund-raising for research activities since public funds are currently scarce. However, good quality research can be produced with very low funding in sociology and lack of funds cannot be a blanket excuse for contracting towards a national environment.
4. The EEC was orally informed that there has never been (at least in living memory) a rejection of an application for promotion at the Department. This is a counter-motivational approach, particularly since junior colleagues are certainly capable of achieving significant results.
5. Planned recruitment based on internationally acknowledged research must be introduced (whenever recruitment starts again).
6. The issue of non-active PhD students needs to be urgently addressed.

BEYOND THE DEPARTMENT

1. The University Research Administration Service (EAKE) should provide continuous support on the managerial and financial aspects of research proposal submission to academic staff. Strict staff recruitment criteria for this service should be introduced (or preserved), such as proficiency in English, specialized software use, knowledge of administrative and financial aspects of research proposal preparation.
2. An observatory for research policy development should probably be created by the University.

3. The legal provision that PhD committees can be composed exclusively from internal members must be urgently attended to. Panteion staff should be a minority in such committees.
4. Higher Education policy design at national level should drastically move towards a more “bottom-up” approach (to give an example of the current top-down approach, during this evaluation we have been surprised by the fact that the name of a Panteion School that everyone agreed on was changed without any justification by the Ministry of Education). Panteion seems to be a good example of an HE institution not realizing its significant potential. More autonomy – and consequent responsibilities – in all aspects of HE governance is necessary if the Greek Higher Education is to survive, and possibly thrive, despite these difficult times.

TECHNICAL ADDENDUM²

The following observations are not specific to this Department but reflect broad tendencies within Greek Higher Education. Hence, these technical observations are not meant as individual or collective criticism but as suggestions for improvement and alignment with international scientific standards. This is not to say that the EEC is uncritical of current bibliometric and linguistic hegemonies, but a meaningful, albeit critical, relation to these hegemonies is indispensable for international scientific exchange.

Unpublished PhD dissertations should not be classified as ‘monographs.’ They should be listed under separate entries. Similarly, academic textbooks should not be listed as ‘monographs’. While academic textbooks serve important functions and are indispensable for teaching – especially in Greek – they are not equivalent to nor can they be considered as ‘monographs’. The goal of a monograph is to produce new academic knowledge while the goal of a textbook is to communicate established academic knowledge to students. Unfortunately, there is no separate entry for ‘textbooks’ in the staff’s CVs. A single chapter authored as part of a collective volume should also not be listed under a ‘monograph’ entry. Consultants, editors of Greek editions or translators of foreign publications into Greek should not take credit or appear as the authors of such publications.

An additional distinction not made in the staff’s CVs concerns the choice of national as opposed to international publishing. International publishing and local publishing is presented indiscriminately: one can go from an edited volume published by a global publisher to a volume published locally by a cultural association, a municipality, the University. A great number of publications is linked to the Greek system of supplying free books to the students. All these publications are of unequal ranking and significance; yet, their listing as of equal standing reveals quite a problematic understanding of what constitutes academic excellence. It is as if no difference exists between a book published by a local publisher (often without the benefit of peer review) and an article published by a major international journal (after anonymous peer review). The formal acknowledgment of the difference between the two could greatly enhance the quality of Greek academic scholarship.

One often observes that articles in popular semi-scientific magazines are classified under the list of refereed journals. Such practices do not enhance academic profiles. A similar problem appears in the referencing of paper presentations – where often the participation or organization of panels in international conferences is listed alongside local symposia. The organizational structure of the CVs ought to allow for the differentiation of such presentations and modes of participation; moreover, invited presentations are listed alongside regular presentations, in spite of the vast difference between the two.

With regard to cited reference results, it is possible to select the far more accurate ISI-Web of Knowledge as an appropriate indicator of citations in journals that are central in various fields. This could and should be supplemented by additional indicators – especially for books

² We are obliged to a colleague of another EEC for allowing us to base this addendum on his suggestions.

– and Google Scholar could also be used. The department's updated report includes a Table (Table 21) in which the information on publications has been grouped together indiscriminately. This raises issues of validity.

Reporting libraries in which a book is held is not of any use regarding the quality of a publication. Again, the admitted, albeit debatable, criterion is the number of citations by other authors.