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

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS SCIENCE (SERRES)

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

November 2013



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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the School of Physical Education and Sports Science (Serres), Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Science of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Prof. Vasilios Baltzopoulos (President)

Brunel University, London, UK

2. Prof. Theodore Angelopoulos

University of Central Florida, Rolando, USA

3. Prof. George Karlis

University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

4. Prof. Panagiota Klentrou

Brock University, Ontario, Canada

Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

- Dates and brief account of the site visit.
- Whom did the Committee meet ?
- List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.
- Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed
- Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee.

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

Please comment on:

- Appropriateness of sources and documentation used
- Quality and completeness of evidence reviewed and provided
- To what extent have the objectives of the internal evaluation process been met by the Department?

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) received the relevant electronic documentation from HQAA in advance of the visit. The EEC met on Sunday 3 November in Thessaloniki and was briefed by a member of the HQAA on the purpose of the External Evaluation process and the function of HQAA. There was also an opportunity to discuss any questions and issues raised by the EEC members. On Monday 4 November the EEC went to the Rector's Office building in the main campus of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and met with the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Personnel and Chair of the Quality Assurance Unit of the University, the Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Science and the Chairs of the two (Thessaloniki and Serres) Schools of Physical Education and Sports Science.

The EEC then visited the School of Physical Education and Sports Science (Serres) between 4th and 5th November 2013. The School is located in a building in the town of Serres, about 65 km from Thessaloniki. The Committee met and discussed with the Head of the School, the Quality Assurance team, the committee for the review of the undergraduate program of studies, the Student Council representatives, as well as faculty members representing various academic disciplines and academic ranks. In addition, there were oral presentations on the history, structure and development of the School, its research output, productivity and objectives, the teaching and learning structures (both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels), and its future objectives. There were also meetings with representative groups of undergraduate and postgraduate (Master and Doctoral level) students, as well as administrative and technical support staff. The Committee also visited the laboratories, computer teaching rooms and lecture theatre, library and some of the sports facilities.

The visit was very well organised and the School provided a large number of additional material and information during the visit, including electronic copies of the presentations by the Quality Assurance team and the Student Council representative. They also made available undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, books and journal publications of the different laboratory researchers, as well as other information and reports related to teaching and research activity. The EE Committee's view was that we had access to any material and additional information that was required for the external evaluation process and we would like to thank all the members of staff and students for their hospitality, contributions and cooperation.

A. Curriculum

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

APPROACH

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

Undergraduate Program

The School of Physical Education and Sports Science (Serres) has similar objectives with the other sister departments in Greece that being: a) to promote and advance physical education and sport science through basic research, applied research, and high quality teaching; b) to provide students with the necessary skills and qualities as future physical education teachers; c) to support the advancement of sports in Greece, and promote the idea of Olympism Worldwide, and promote the role of physical activity in improving health and quality of life in the society. The objectives of the department are decided collectively by faculty members who take into consideration the needs and aspirations of the students, the policies and regulations of the State, the research strengths of faculty members, and the international standards of research and higher education. The School has an Internal Review Committee that regularly evaluates the undergraduate program and makes suggestions for improvement. There is also a general meeting once a year in which more general issues related to the curriculum are discussed. Students also participate in those meetings.

Our impression from the short visit is that the curriculum is relatively consistent with the set objectives. However, the curriculum needs to be more consistent with the requirements of the society. In its current structure the curriculum does not seem to respond to the professional needs of students as future teachers of Physical Education nor the activity needs of the society. Although the School has made an effort to make changes in the curriculum based on the recommendations of the previous review (2008-09) it is still disconnected from both the elementary and high school curriculum and without making a clear transition towards “clinical” applications and exercise prescription. We propose that the School keeps an open line of communication with the Pedagogical Institute and other stakeholders about the nature and direction of the physical education curriculum that will inform and guide a drastic revision of the applied and practical course offerings.

Graduate Program

The School offers a Masters program in Kinesiology and a doctoral program in Physical Education introduced in 2005. The graduate program is self-funded. The aim of the Masters Program is to expand the undergraduate modules and promote the value of physical activity and health in the society. It also aims to develop and promote evidence-based practices in exercise science. The Masters program’s length is 4 semesters and includes 10 courses and the completion of a thesis. The aim and structure of the program is in line with current policies adopted by Western Universities.

The doctoral program has no course requirements and no comprehensive examination. Students are only required to conduct empirical research and write a thesis. Students are also

expected to publish their research in peer reviewed journals. We think that the requirements should be intensified with the inclusion of higher level courses and a comprehensive examination. This will raise the quality of the doctoral candidates and the reputation of the program.

IMPLEMENTATION

- How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?
- How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?
- Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?
- Is the curriculum coherent and functional?
- Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?
- Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?

Undergraduate Program

The Curriculum was last updated in 2008. Overall, the structure is well defined, and very prescriptive. The four first semesters are common for all students and include all core practical and theory courses. In the later four semesters students choose one of the four theoretical fields of study and one of 15 practical specializations. The program has a similar structure with the other sister programs within Greece but does not comply with international standards due to the high number of required courses.

Although one of the primary objectives of the program is the adequate preparation of physical education teachers there is no required or elective course in Growth and Development neither as part of the core curriculum (years 1 and 2) or within the four fields of study offered (years 3 and 4). There is also a lack of clear process of how a student signs up to complete an undergraduate thesis. Students expressed frustration in regards to supervisor availability and willingness. Our impression is that there are no guidelines as of what topics are available every year and the selection of a supervisor.

In terms of functionality, faculty members and students expressed concern about the heavy student workload induced by the large curriculum in the first 2 years of the program. Students must take 12 (6 practical and 6 theory) courses in the first four semesters. They all recognize that the Department made progress since the last review in 2008, when they reduced the required ECTS per semester. However, the number of 26 to 28 weekly hours that are required in the first four semesters still create an unreasonably heavy workload. This happens for two reasons:

- there is a large number of required activity courses, which have low ECTS coefficient. Many of these courses are not related to the career direction of the program; many of the sports offered are not used in schools due to lack of infrastructure. So the curriculum does not correspond to the professional needs of students as future teachers of Physical Education nor the activity needs of the society.
- there is a large number of introductory theory courses. Expansion of courses over two semesters contributes to the problem.

A weakness of the program is that there are a large number of elective courses in the book that are not offered on regular basis creating a sense of false advertisement among students. The same is true for many of the 15 areas of specialization that are advertised but not offered due to the lack of expertise within the regular faculty members. It is unreasonable to design areas of specialization without appropriate expertise within the regular faculty compliment.

Graduate Program

Based on the data in the self-study and our meeting with approximately 10 graduate students (mostly PhD students), students appear to be satisfied with their programs, and the quality of supervision. There is considerable evidence that the graduate degree outcomes are being achieved. Some tensions were detected, however, especially in relation to funding. Faculty members and students expressed concerns about the limited funding and the long Ethics approval process from the Education Institute. This affects their progress and some of them cannot complete their degrees within the appropriate timeline. Furthermore, due to lack of financial support for equipment maintenance, students must pay from own funds to repair and transfer equipment. Students also self fund their attendance to international conference.

Conducting research for masters' theses and doctoral dissertations encourage the application of knowledge, and the same is true for graduate level courses. Because there are no courses offerings in the doctoral program, students do not have the opportunity to be exposed to upper level statistics and qualitative research methods. However, several doctoral students thought it is important to be exposed to different approaches rather than relying so heavily on their supervisors. In addition, there are no opportunities in courses and research projects for graduate students to develop strong communication and other research related skills. These are core graduate competences that are mostly needed when students try to publish their research and present it at conferences. On the other hand, there is no support for graduate student travel due to university-wide budget reductions is severely limiting opportunities to further practice these skills.

Graduate students are forced to travel to Thessaloniki because of the limited library resources on campus. Doctoral students should also have the opportunity to teach courses and this should be reflected in their academic record to strengthen their future employment applications. No office space provided to graduate students. Students working in labs have an advantage but students working in non-lab based areas of study do not have study space.

RESULTS

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

There is evidence that the department has already achieved a number of goals and objectives and has the willingness and energy for curricular improvement. The undergraduate program is strengthened by the implementation of the fields of study in the upper years, and the teaching skills of the faculty members. Both the Masters and PhD programs are of good quality and have adequate numbers of core faculty to support them. Overall, the availability of research space, and equipment is another program strength. The overall weakness of curriculum is the heavy student workload in the first four semester, the societal and professional relevance of the program, the non standardized course outline and student evaluation practices, and the absence of a professional orientation program that will enable students to gain valuable working experience in the community in the form of internship opportunities.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The School's strategy for the future involves the revision of the undergraduate curriculum and their differentiation from the other Department within the University with the same name. We strongly support this initiative as it will strengthen the position and reputation of the program as distinct entity. The emphasis on sport sciences or physical activity and health is in line with contemporary developments in the curricula of leading North American and European institutions and can attract students with diverse professional aspirations.

Recommendations (Undergraduate Program):

1. Consider reducing the number of sport specific core courses required in the four first semesters of the program. The basic principles of sports education can be developed in the context of 5 basic, thematic courses in the first and second semester, and with fewer sport specific courses in third and fourth semesters. Such thematic course units could include: swimming/aquatics, fitness activities, games, fundamental movement/gymnastic activities and outdoor activities. The ECTS of each of these courses should increase to 1.5 to accurately reflect the effort required from the student.
2. The first four semesters should focus on basic theory courses that are prerequisites for upper level elective and field specific courses. These foundation courses should be offered in one semester with an increased 3 hour/week format. To be more effective, this should include 2 hours of common lecture followed by a 1 hour tutorial or lab, where the student cohort will be split into a number of small tutorials or labs. This small group learning format will allow for critical discussion of current literature, in class quizzes, and completion/presentation of individual and/or team assignments.
3. It is advisable to include a course on Growth and Development in third or fourth semester (following anatomy and physiology). A basic motor behaviour course should also be considered in the core, common curriculum. Generally, attention should be paid in the pedagogical order of courses offered along with the inclusion of prerequisites.
4. Hands-on type of course content delivery is an effective and popular way to engage students. An increase in the number of laboratories and clinical workshops will be welcomed by students. It will also strengthen the applicability of the acquired skills to the needs of today's society.
5. Consider developing a Sports and Professional Ethics course as a common, culminating experience of the final year so that students are introduced to the basic Ethical principles that apply to their professional area. This could also be accompanied by a professional development/Internship course as part of the students' specialization experience in the last 2 semesters of the program.
6. Consider restricting the number of available elective courses and specializations to what can be covered by regular, permanent teaching staff.
7. Student evaluation should use different types of evaluation and the criteria should be clearly defined and presented in a standardized course outline format. This diversified student evaluation format should progressively move from the simpler, traditional types of examinations, tests and lab reports used in the first 2 years to more complex, critical, reflective types of examinations, essays, assignments, and literature reviews that can be employed in the upper two years.

8. An academic advisor to help students with their academic and professional planning will enhance the program effectiveness.
9. Consider developing, posting and communicating more clearly the policies and procedures associated with the completion of an undergraduate thesis.

Recommendations (Graduate Program):

1. Consider the inclusion of a small number of courses (2-4) in the doctoral program. These courses should be taken in the first and/or second semester of their doctoral program and can include a combination of Advanced Research Methods and Biostatistics, Qualitative Research Methods, Philosophy of Science, Research Communication.
2. A Research Communication course could focus on the development of academic and research communication skills and could involve a series of seminars and workshops on topics such as: manuscript writing, research presentations and posters, Ethics applications and implications, community involvement with research etc. As part of this course, students could also accumulate credits for teaching undergraduate lectures, attending conferences, and reaching out activities such as public lectures.
3. Develop, post and communicate a Student Handbook for both the Masters and Doctoral levels. These Handbooks will describe the process and timelines of the program with clear deliverables, roles and outcomes.
4. Consider a comprehensive examination for the doctoral program.

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

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

Please comment on :

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

The teaching methods used vary according to the nature of the different courses (practical or theory-based) and include a variety of delivery techniques that are appropriate for each course.

The overall undergraduate teaching staff/student ratio is ~16 (27 academic staff and 424 'active' students in 2012) and this is considered appropriate for the subject area and compares quite favourably with international experience. However, there is an issue with the large number of courses offered and elective choices because this leads to inefficient teaching when only a small number of students is registered for a specific course, usually practical/sport elective course. On the other hand, there are some instances of large number of students registering for popular sport or laboratory electives because there is no electronic registration with appropriate class size limit checks.

Teacher-student collaboration is generally very good and is enhanced by the geographical isolation and concentration of the main academic activities in a single building. However, more formal mentoring opportunities through an official academic advising system and designated academic staff office hours for student tutorials will enhance the student educational experience.

Teaching resources and facilities have been improved through the efforts of academic staff and University support in recent years and are of adequate standard. Information technology is being used extensively in relevant courses but the teaching computing facilities require upgrading and maintenance support from central University services. There is no Wi-Fi access in any of the buildings in Serres and this is required urgently for both students and staff. Sports facilities include both University and municipality owned sport centres that are of good and well equipped in general. However, they are spread throughout the city and students require extensive travelling between different sports facilities with no efficient transport infrastructure or efficient transport arrangements given the large number of practical classes in the timetable.

The examination system is very well organised and supported administratively and in general the examination and assessment methods are appropriate for the different courses and their contents and syllabus. The course outlines are available electronically in the e-study guide so students have access to the relevant course and assessment details. However, there are some inconsistencies with the level of detail and information provided. Although the majority of courses specify the detailed breakdown and percentage contribution of different assessment techniques (exam, project, presentation etc), there is a small number of

courses in the e-guide where there is no specific information or breakdown of the different examination methods. The assessment criteria for practical and sport skill courses as well as laboratory practical reports and projects must also be specified clearly in the individual course outlines or with generic assessment criteria for projects, presentations or laboratory reports. There are also a few courses with no information provided in any of the sections of the course outline and these inconsistencies must be rectified. The Program Committee also needs to consider the overall examination and assessment matrix across semesters and consider issues of progression and workload of students. Although there is currently no provision in the University system for a formal or structured system for the internal moderation of the examination and assessment material or external examination, such an approach could be suggested for the new organisational guide. This is an essential element of quality assurance in student assessment.

IMPLEMENTATION

Please comment on:

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

The main teaching methods and procedures are based predominantly on lectures and practicals either in the laboratories or in the sport facilities. There are very few examples of other teaching methods such as small group tutorials and seminars that can engage students with the content of the courses and facilitate independent learning. The requirements of attending seminars or tutorials where students will be required to participate actively with individual or group presentations can also facilitate studying and engaging with different individual or group learning activities outside the main lecture contact hours. Formal and structured interaction with students during lectures (e.g. class quizzes, question-answer sessions, discussion points) would also facilitate participation and engagement of students during lectures, especially in theoretical subjects. Guidance and training for enhancing lecture and teaching methods should be compulsory and available for all academic staff and especially for junior or newly elected lecturers. The undergraduate dissertation selection process is currently quite unstructured and needs to be managed more effectively to ensure that students have the opportunity to be supervised by academic staff in their areas of interest and expertise.

Teaching materials and resources are generally of high quality and are based on modern and current information and knowledge sources. Course material is regularly updated and includes recent information and examples from academic staff research in relevant subjects. There is some mobility of staff and students mainly through the Erasmus scheme and some very good international links but these tend to be based on existing collaborations of some researchers with limited interaction with new centres abroad.

Student evaluation of teaching is performed routinely and there is a very well developed electronic evaluation system of teaching quality by students. The results are collated and presented electronically to both staff and students and there is comprehensive analysis and statistical reports as well as qualitative written comments and suggestions for improvement.

Although the teaching evaluation system is managed and administered effectively there are some issues that affect the efficient use of the information for future improvements. These include the design of the electronic questionnaire which is quite long and generic with no possibility to adapt it for specific courses in different Schools and the requirement for students to perform a large number of evaluations at similar times (end of semesters). More importantly, there is no system or process through which academic staff consider the results of the student evaluation and feedback and improve the course outline, teaching methods or any other element of course delivery. This is usually done through an annual course review by each member of staff based on the results of student evaluation analysis and feedback received.

RESULTS

Please comment on:

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

Teaching is generally efficient and the results of student evaluations and discussions of the external evaluation committee with the students indicate that they are in general very satisfied with the quality of their studies and educational experience. Time to graduation is better compared to some other similar Schools in Greece and final degree grades compared very favourably with similar departments and other University School averages.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The School has adopted a very proactive approach for program review and improvement with frequent internal evaluation reports following the last program modification in 2008-09 that was part of the EPEAEK II program assessment. The School also recently formed a program review board to consider the Study Program and suggest changes to the direction and content of the undergraduate course program of the School within the structures of the new Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Science of the University.

C. Research

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

APPROACH

- What is the Department's policy and main objective in research?
- Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

It is evident that the School of Physical Education and Sports Science (Serres) has made notable efforts to promote and support academic research in financially challenging times. It is very clear that the school recognizes the importance of the role of physical activity and its implications on health and chronic diseases, and continues to foster research in this area. Furthermore, significant research efforts in other areas such as adapted physical education, sport history and sport management are also notable. The research platform of the School includes motivated graduate students and an impressive list of talented young faculty with exceptional training and academic credentials that are working in four Research Laboratories: 1) The Laboratory of Adapted Physical Education, 2) The Laboratory of Neuromechanics 3) the Laboratory of social studies 4) the Laboratory of Physiology, Exercise Biochemistry and Health. Research is mainly driven by the motivation and interests of the faculty members. To the best of our knowledge, there are no mechanisms or procedures to systematically guide, promote, support and reward research endeavours.

The quality of the School's research infrastructure is quite high with some very modern facilities and equipment in some laboratories but some older and specially developed equipment as well. The School provides the facilities and instrumentation to support research in applied sport sciences. Of particular importance, there is an impressive list of research equipment presently housed in the laboratories. Such equipment is essential for the research endeavours of students and faculty. It is of concern, however, that the School's operating budget does not allow maintenance of research instrumentation mainly due to budgetary cuts.

IMPLEMENTATION

- How does the Department promote and support research?
- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.
- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.

The School has been very productive with significant contributions in the scientific literature. Some of these publications appear in peer reviewed journals with high impact factors. It is obvious that there is commitment for high quality research by some of the faculty. However, we also noted that some faculty members have made minimum contributions in the research efforts of the department. This discrepancy in research efforts and subsequent productivity is due to diversity in faculty training and role in the delivery of the programs. As such, there is a need to establish a formal process that will develop and implement internal research expectations and standards with discipline specific metrics for assessing productivity. An internal annual report process will encourage the research engagement of the faculty members. Faculty members can submit an annual activity report that will include their teaching, research and service outcomes. These reports can be collected by an internal committee that would be responsible for the data analysis and the production of the

Departmental statistics to be posted on the web. This will increase the participation, reputation and transparency of the department.

Research efforts were mainly supported by funding received from National (EPEAK) programs. This funding helped the school to build a strong research culture. The amount of received funding and the number of funded applications is rather impressive given the competitive nature of the process. It is a growing concern of the faculty that most of these funding opportunities were eliminated by the financial crisis in the Euro zone. However, it is very obvious that the faculty in the School recognize the need to secure additional funding. They are in the process of exploring strategies towards developing novel approaches in securing funding during these difficult times. Of particular importance, some faculty in the Department have established some important research collaborations (domestic and international). These collaborations perhaps have the potential to enhance funding opportunities and engage some faculty in multi-site projects.

RESULTS

- How successfully were the Department's research objectives implemented?
- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.
- Efficacy of research work. Applied results. Patents etc.
- Is the Department's research acknowledged and visible outside the Department?
Rewards and awards.

As it has been noted above, the research productivity of the department in terms of published research articles is exemplary. Of particular importance, the school has produced high quality publications that appear in prestigious journals. Having said this, however, it is important for the school to better articulate its research objectives by establishing research foci representing all active research faculty clusters. Further, faculty are members of editorial boards, elected members of committees of international organisations, have assisted in the organization of international conferences and events, and have well-cited research output. These activities clearly demonstrate the school's potential. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the department has reached most of its research objectives. Existing collaborations have also brought success in some areas, but additional collaborations may be key to high impact research and additional/continued funding. It is important that the Chair of the school along with senior faculty continue to emphasise the importance of impact research and sustained funding efforts. Finally, senior departmental leaders should mentor junior faculty in the development of research focus. This has the potential of establishing excellence in certain research and enhance the visibility of the School nationally and internationally.

IMPROVEMENT

- Improvements in research proposed by the Department, if necessary.
- Initiatives in this direction undertaken by the Department.

The School has notable accomplishments in research, although the variability in research output among faculty members is evident. Those who have contributed in these efforts need to be commended for their motivation, leadership and professionalism. The recommendations proposed below, may help the department to better support the research enterprise long-term

1. Allocation of resources. There are limited resources (i.e., equipment maintenance, consumables) in the School. The lack of such resources does not affect equally all disciplines since the department is very diverse
2. Develop a mechanism (i.e., Central) to support research efforts
3. Develop distinct research foci. The School should initiate a dialogue in order to better articulate its research objectives and develop research foci by prioritising areas for research. These efforts will allow a better and more effective planning and allocation of resources (monies for new hires, technology, etc.)
4. Implementation ion of a mentorship program for junior faculty. There is no evidence that such a formal program exists at the present time. This effort should be led by the two senior faculty in the School.
5. Develop Concentrations areas for the Doctoral Degree. Although they clearly exist they are not well articulated in documentation reviewed.
6. Assemble a research committee. This committee will oversight strategic vision for the school's long-term objectives. This committee should also assist in terms of compliance, grant applications while supporting other functions (research conferences, presentations, etc.)
7. Establish a more active research environment for young researchers with events such as regular research seminars, a journal club etc.

D. All Other Services

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

APPROACH

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

The central administration unit of the Department, including the undergraduate and graduate directors maintain a positive and optimistic viewpoint of the various services provided to the academic community which includes the teaching, staff, and students. A number of "open-communication" channels evidently exist between all parties. A proper working environment appears to be paramount for all Department administrators. Administrators recognize the relevant place and importance of all services, technical and well as physical to the Department, including the 4 labs, and it's resources. The administrative heads of the Department also conceptualize the importance of service delivery in teaching and appear to be open to change for improvement.

The undergraduate, graduate as well as central administration all abide by collective policies that have become the norm through time for service delivery. The use of electronic communication exists between and amongst staff members for the implementation of policies.

The approach to increase student presence on campus extends beyond the auspices of the Department to include the physical structure of the campus as well as the means used to deliver teaching. The nature and size of the campus limits student presence on campus. Limited hours of operation for computer and library resources restricts the presence on campus. The omission of a distinct "student centre" - either in the form of a separate building or lounge - is also vital in diminishing the lack of student presence on campus. Mandatory attendance in courses would also increase student presence on campus. All of the aforementioned appear necessary to enhance student presence on campus yet were not evidently revealed in any policy.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

The organization and infrastructure of the Department's support staff is not conducive to the needs at hand. In essence, this Department, is structured in isolation from the main campus - thus physically resembles a campus in itself. Only 2 full-time and 1 part-time secretarial staff employees exist. This is not feasible or conducive for a program of this size and magnitude. The two- full time Secretariat staff are responsible for the implementation of the day-to-day administrative tasks of this Department (campus) and well as addressing all faculty and student concerns (including course and program questions). The organization

and infrastructure of this Department is in dire need of more full-time Secretarial help (at minimal one position), as well a full-time technical support staff member. At present, the technical support concerns (including those in the classroom are attended to by one of the Secretariat staff members.

The form and function of academic services and infrastructures for students is lacking, and in some cases, even missing. Library resources and space is limited to the existing infrastructure of the original "high school" building. No library liaison representative is in place to bridge the gap between the library, staff and students. PC's are old and outdated and require up-keeping - something that a full-time multimedia staff member would aid. Internet access exists, yet has its limits. A full-time student counsellor is a resource that is needed, as this task has typically been administered more from a technical course-selection perspective by one of the Secretariats. A properly trained student counsellor is needed to address the concerns of students beyond technicalities to include logic and career development concerns behind course selection. The implementation of the labs appears to be conducive to the needs of the Department. Lab equipment is good, yet lab technical support staff would be beneficial.

RESULTS

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

The administrative and other services are somewhat adequate, yet in some areas are in need of serious change. Of critical concern is the addition of the following full-time positions: (1) Secretary, (2) Student Counsellor, and (3) Multimedia professional (who can also serve as a lab support technical assistant). Department members consulted tended to concur to the aforementioned needed positions.

IMPROVEMENTS

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

The Administrative heads of the Department have identified the above as ways to improve service delivery. They are conducive to the fact at hand - the economic crisis - and have managed to make due with what they have. However, to address certain standards necessary for service delivery in institutions of higher learning, the aforementioned results are deemed as necessary actions.

Initiatives to improve service deliver seem to be carried out by all staff members doing "more with less." The reality is nonetheless that a critical need for an additional Secretary, one Student Counsellor, and one Multimedia position is critically needed to fulfil university standards of service deliver.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

Please, comment on quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives.

The quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiative is limited when it come to the establishment of external collaborations. The Department has taken action on improving this however through the hosting of conferences on its campus, the active involvement of many of its staff members in delivering papers at various internal scientific conferences, and the collaborative relationship that have been established with other European universities. More academic collaborations are needed to not only enhance exposure and recognition of the Department, but also for professional development. Staff and students alike would benefit from international collaborations that extend beyond Europe. Efforts should be placed on establishing working agreements with international universities for student exchanges and professor exchanges.

Outreach to the academic community is not the only aspect of collaboration for this Department. The Department's collaboration with the local community is unique, as it shares in the use of the municipalities services (i.e., closed gym, pool, etc). Indeed, the mere fact that this Department relies on municipal structures and facilities to provide its services poses a unique challenge both for convenience and for usage. Ideally, services and resources that are essential for program delivery should be on campus with priority given to students.

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.

Please, comment on the Department's:

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

The current economic condition poses a number of significant problems and challenges for strategic planning - particularly when it comes time to long term planning. Public institutions such as this Department are currently subject to economic cutbacks, restraints, and downsizing. This is an inhibiting factor when it comes time for short-term strategic planning. Indeed, any decisions for immediate change need to be carefully considered and evaluated.

For short term change the implementation of necessary support staff (as previously mentioned) to better help implement the technical dimensions of undergraduate and

graduate students is needed. From a medium and long-term change perspective, a clearer focus of the orientation of both the undergraduate and graduate program needs to be considered.

The Department has a keen interest on implementing plans and actions that would lead to improvement. First, it plans on continuing to "do more with less resources" considering the current economic situation. Second, there seems to be a consensus amongst Departmental members to continue to plan for improvement and growth in the future. The expansion and development of both the undergraduate and graduate programs is of particular importance for members of this Department.

The Administrative heads of the Department proposed a long-term plan for the future to distinguish the program according to two-distinct streams. Emphasis is to be placed on health sciences, thus giving it a unique and timely orientation. This would have an impact on both the undergraduate and graduate programs. This long-term plan is conducive to current global trends and would have an impact on how the Department delivers its material.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

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

Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:

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

The School of Physical Education and Sports Science in Serres was established in 1985 and its development and curriculum programs were guided by internal and major external evaluations in 2003-04 and 2008-09 as part of the EPEAEK II program. The School has a well developed quality assurance process with particular emphasis on the improvement of course content, delivery and student satisfaction and on embracing and using information technology for course management and delivery. These have led to increased rates of graduation at both undergraduate and postgraduate level and student evaluation scores. Although the School is one of the smallest in the country with 27 members of academic staff, its performance in terms of student average grades and satisfaction and research performance adjusted for staff numbers are amongst the highest in comparison to the other Schools of Physical Education and Sports Science in Greece. One of the main factors for the research achievements is the collaboration between researchers and laboratories leading to high quality publications and increased citation counts. At the same time, some research groups in the School have been very active in community outreach and public engagement events. These are very notable achievements and are testament to the dedication and drive of most senior staff and researchers. The School has identified specific weaknesses relating to staff and student exchanges with Universities abroad and graduate employment statistical information and alumni links. The School has proposed specific measures to address these weaknesses and, in addition, increase funding through competitive sources, increase national and international collaborations and improve links and communication with the central University in Thessaloniki.

Based on the external evaluation process, the main recommendations of the EEC for improvement are the following:

1. Complete differentiation of the School from the same School in the Faculty based in Thessaloniki and distinct mission, direction, focus and curriculum.
2. Drastic reduction in the number of courses in the curriculum and the amount of passive lecture and practical instruction contact time.
3. Increased active participation opportunities for students in courses with laboratory practicals, seminars, tutorials, group work and work placements/internships to enhance the quality of contact time and active learning.
4. Improve student evaluation and feedback process with appropriately designed electronic questionnaires, promotion of student feedback importance and facilitation of student course evaluation opportunities.
5. Establish frequent (annual or biennial) process of course quality evaluation and improvement through effective use of student evaluation scores and feedback and course performance statistics.
6. Establish an academic advisor scheme for student guidance and mentoring.
7. Establish a Research Committee to include School head, laboratory directors and senior academic staff to coordinate research activity in the School based on well defined

strategic directions and a focused research plan.

8. Improve the research environment for young researchers through an active program of interaction, participation, support and mentoring events.
9. Establish a monitoring and evaluation process for all faculty members that includes an annual activity report summarizing their teaching, research and service outcomes. These reports can be collected by the quality assurance team or a special internal committee responsible for the data analysis and the production of the Departmental statistics to be posted on the website. Such a process will increase self-motivation, accountability and transparency and could also be linked to the quinquennial process of evaluation of professors and associate professors according to Article 21 of Law 4009/2011.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1. Vasilios Baltzopoulos	_____
2. Theodore Angelopoulos	_____
3. George Karlis	_____
4. Panagiota Klentrou	_____