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CRE Institutional Evaluation Programme

INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB *CRE REVIEWERS' REPORT*

June 2000

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Foreword

-§1-

Following two successful conferences on the theme of *quality and evaluation*, the Permanent Committee of the CRE, the European Association of Universities, decided in 1993 to offer its 500 member universities the possibility to be reviewed, so that their strengths and weaknesses in the area of quality management might be assessed.

The CRE wishes to offer an external diagnostic from experienced university leaders coming from different higher education systems in Europe. This diagnostic should explain the quality nodes and the main actors in the university's daily decision-making process. It should be a tool for institutional leadership preparing for change. The CRE does not wish to provide the university with a blueprint for its development; rather the review process is a consultative one, or in Martin Trow's terminology, an external supportive review'.¹

By reviewing institutions in different countries, the CRE hopes to disseminate examples of good practice, validate common concepts of strategic thinking, and elaborate shared references of quality that will help member universities to reorient their strategic development while strengthening a quality culture in Europe. During the review, the university is helped:

- to examine how it defines *long- and medium-term aims*
- to look at the external and internal constraints shaping its developments, and
- to discuss strategies to enhance its quality -if quality is defined as the adequacy of means to purpose - while taking account of these constraints.

In 1994 the universities of Göteborg, Porto and Utrecht commissioned the CRE to develop the methodology for the quality review programme and to test it in their institutions. This *pilot phase* of the International Institutional Quality Review was completed in January 1995. Central in the process stands a set of guidelines, developed by professor Frans van Vught, Director of the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at the University of Twente, and Don Westerheijden, of the same Centre. Since 1995 over forty universities in Western, Central and Eastern Europe have participated in the programme until now.

¹M. Trow, 'Academic Reviews and the Culture of Excellence', *Studies of Higher Education and Research*, 1994.

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The Rector of the University of Zagreb, Professor Branko JEREN requested the CRE to organise an institutional quality review of the University. This was the first invitation for a quality review from a university in Croatia to CRE for the faculties of the University, its staff and students supported the review by their active participation.

The members of the review team were:

- Professor dr. Virgilio Meira Soares (Chairman), former Rector of the University of Lisbon,
- Professor dr. Jiri Holenda, former Rector, of the University of West Bohemia,
- Professor dr. Inge Jonsson, former Rector of the University of Stockholm,
- Professor dr. Malcolm Frazer (Secretary), former Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of East Anglia.

We would like to thank the University of Zagreb, and all its staff and students, for their warm welcome and for many helpful and open discussions during the preliminary and review visits. Especially, we wish to thank Professor dr. Helena Jasna Mencer, ViceRector, and Ana Ruzicka, Head of the Rector's Office and their staff for efficient and untiring support for, and liaison with, the review team.

Introduction

-§3-

The CRE International Institutional Quality Review consists of three phases. First, the University of Zagreb produced a *Self-Evaluation Report*. The report was written by a Steering Committee which collated contributions from the faculties. Next, members of the review team made a *preliminary visit to Zagreb*, 8 -10 February 2000, in order to become acquainted with the University. This led to a request for some further information on the key issues which had been identified. In response, the University submitted five papers for the final review visit, which is the third part of the procedure. The *review visit* took place from 30 May to 2 June 2000.

At one or other, or both visits, the review team met: the Rector, the Vice-Rectors, representatives of the Board of Governors and the Senate, the self evaluation steering group, members of the academic staff and students in the faculties visited, administrative staff in the central offices, representatives of the Ministry of Science and Technology and of the National Council for Higher Education, and representatives from the local economy. During the preliminary and review visits the team had meetings with staff and students from eight faculties and one academy. The faculties were: Electrical Engineering and Computing, Food Technology and Biotechnology, Law, Medicine, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Philosophy, Traffic Engineering, Veterinary Medicine; and the academy was the Academy of Dramatic Arts.

On the final day of the review visit, after a meeting of the review team with the Rector, the Chairman of the review team, Professor Soares, presented the team's *oral report* to an audience of some of those who had participated in the preliminary and the review visits.

This written report builds upon the oral report. The report is prepared especially for the authorities of the University of Zagreb. They are free to decide on its use and publication. However, some of the issues encountered may be added to the next *CRE Issue Report* outlining the variables of university culture in Europe.

-§4

The University of Zagreb was founded in 1868, although its origins can be traced back to 1669. It is the oldest, and by far the largest, of the four universities in Croatia.

The University of Zagreb comprises: twenty-nine faculties, three academies of art, drama and music and some other units. In addition to the faculties visited, listed in §3 there are faculties of Agriculture, Architecture, Chemical Engineering and Technology, Civil Engineering, Dental Medicine, Economics, Forestry, Geodesy, Geotechnical, Graphic Art, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, Metallurgy, Mining

Geology and Petroleum Engineering, Organisation and Informatics, Pharmacy and Biochemistry, Physical Education, Political Science, Special Education and Rehabilitation, and Textile Technology. The School of Education and the Catholic Theology Faculty are also faculties. The other two academies are Fine Arts, and Music. Two international centres in Istria and Dubrovnik (Centre of Advanced Academic Studies) also form part of the University of Zagreb. There is also an interfaculty university study entitled Croatian Studies.

The University is by far the largest in Croatia and has over sixty thousand students and over four thousand academic staff. The faculties vary greatly in size: the largest Faculties are Economics and Law, whilst the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation is one of the smallest.

The review team was very conscious throughout of the severe problems Croatia has suffered in recent years and the difficult present economic circumstances. In addition to the direct effects on higher education, there is also a serious long term problem of a “brain drain”. Some of the best students and graduates are leaving the Country for employment elsewhere depriving the Croatian economy and universities of many highly skilled and creative people, on which the future of the Country so much depends.

-§5-

The CRE International Institutional Quality Review is concerned only with mechanisms of quality management, not with quality of teaching or quality of research itself. We nevertheless express our impression that, at least in the faculties we visited, standards of student attainment and of research results are high.

However, the review team's task is to scrutinise the University's organisation and its mechanisms for quality assurance. In this report, therefore, we wish to point to present strengths and weaknesses in this respect, and to voice some recommendations that may be taken into account in the future development of the University of Zagreb. We hope that in this way we can contribute to the further development of the quality culture of this University.

The report starts with an analysis of the constraints under which The University of Zagreb has to operate; constraints that influence the possibilities and policies of the university (§6 - §13). The second part of the report consists of an examination of the University's capacity for change, and the needs and possibilities for change (§14 - §23). Finally, the third part contains a brief summary, and some recommendations we wish to make (§24 - §26).

THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

A. Constraints and institutional norms

In terms of resources

-§6-

As with many other universities throughout Europe, a major constraint for the University is a lack of recurrent resources for teaching and research, and of capital resources to provide new, and replace old, equipment. Nevertheless, the review team was impressed with the teaching and research facilities available in many of the faculties visited, and also with the realism of the staff about the chances of obtaining substantial new funding. The review team was particularly impressed with the capacity of some faculties to bring external funding to the institution, and with the enthusiasm and dedication of many staff to improve the quality of the infrastructures and try to bring international standards to their research. The University has developed links with some enterprises in Croatia. The University has found this source of revenue helpful as a contribution to overcoming its financial deficiencies.

The current system of funding of higher education in Croatia is that the Ministry of Science and Technology provides funds to the faculties (not to the University) based on the number of agreed teaching hours for a particular subject. That this method of funding is inflexible and restricts development is described in more detail in §7 and elsewhere in this Report. For research, the Ministry of Science and Technology provides funds directly for particular research projects in faculties. As with teaching, the University has some information about the flow of money for research but no control or influence over it.

-§7-

As a result of this policy the university is not really aware of its own financial situation, has no influence on its own future and has its future development jeopardised without legal means to change the situation. Moreover, the Rector and the Senate, who are elected bodies to manage the whole institution, have no room to define an institutional policy for the University. The view was expressed to the team that the current system of funding of higher education: (i) has no advantages, but several disadvantages, (ii) is inflexible and hinders development, and (iii) should be replaced by a system of “lump-sum” funding to the University. There needs to be a controlled replacement of “line by line” funding to the faculties to “lump-sum” funding to the University. This would bring the funding of higher education in Croatia closer to that common in European countries.

It was clear to the review team that not everyone in the University would welcome a change in the present system of funding. It is not unusual in any large organisation to find an element of mistrust between the centre and the component units, and an attitude that change will make matters worse. In particular, it was claimed that “lump-sum” funding will increase bureaucracy and a move to centralisation. The review team took opportunities to attempt to allay these fears during its discussions. The main points made were:

- alternatives should be studied, and the concept of the budgetary process being “bottom up” (i. e. estimates of the resources required would be made from departments and other units, through faculties to the University) made clear to all;
- the concept of cost-centres being as low down as possible in an organisational structure is now well established practice in most EU countries and works well;
- it is a misunderstanding to equate “the University” with “the Rectorate”: it is better to consider “the University” as the whole academic community, which under a “lump sum” funding system would become responsible and accountable for its resources - this is a move to decentralisation rather than centralisation;
- the present system, by which financial decisions are made in the Ministry of Science and Technology, is much more “centralised” than the alternative;
- a university can hardly be described as “autonomous” unless it has control over the distribution of the funds available to it;
- funding directly the faculties favours political intervention of deans and does not foster the development of an academic culture within the university as a whole;
- the criteria for funding faculties are not transparent, and consequently the accountability of deans to the Ministry is not as clear as it might be;
- faculties are not (at least in Western Europe or US) independent members of the universities; they are part of the university and should be treated as such. (“members” are the academic and non-academic staff and the students);
- the present method of funding goes against the international mainstream: more autonomy vs. accountability, thus responsibility;
- the student : staff ratios provided to the team by the University vary considerably for different faculties. Rationalisation of these variations will only be achieved by open discussion and decision making within the University.

As a result of all these observations, it seems to the review team that the costs of the University are much higher than they would be if some sort of integration was achieved. There is much duplication, for example: (1) in all faculties there are offices dealing with personnel affairs, student affairs, financial questions, purchasing, etc., and (2) there are several departments of mathematics, English, philosophy, etc. The case for rationalisation is strong, even taking into account issues of timetables and travelling (the University is spread throughout the City and not on a single campus).

During the visit, the review team met the Deputy Minister for Science and Technology, who indicated that he would be prepared to devolve from the Ministry to the University of Zagreb responsibility for making financial allocations to the faculties. Such a development would provide much needed transparency and bring the University much closer to the normal practices in the rest of Europe.

*In terms of development***-§8-**

University planning and development is primarily related to: (i) the availability of funds, - (ii) autonomy over the mechanisms for distributing the available funds, and (iii) the extent to which there is an academic community agreeing on a vision for the future, and on common purposes. The funding issues, (i) and (ii), have been described in the earlier paragraphs, and the inevitable constraints on development need no further elaboration. In the context of constraints and institutional norms, the review team was concerned about (iii).

An effective academic community should understand that planning needs to be holistic and that the plans of one sub-unit affect all the others. The development process needs to be self-supporting so that the outcome is that the whole is stronger than the individual parts (as was pointed out in 1996 by Vaclav Havel in a CRE Bi-annual Conference, the word University is not only associated to “universum”; its ancestral roots lay in the concept of “ad unum vertere”). The University's self evaluation report refers to one of its weaknesses being that there is ambiguity about the legal status of faculties. The review team can confirm that at present the University of Zagreb is not integrated. The team met some who described it as simply a federation of faculties, but others went further and described the University as a “conglomerate of faculties”. This is partly a result of history, partly a result of the funding mechanism (please see §7), partly a result of ambiguities in the law governing higher education (please see §12), and partly, in the team's view, as convenient practice which has developed over the years. As a consequence, at the University level, strategic planning is non-existent.

-§9-

As was pointed out before, the Rector and the members of the Senate are elected. In a democratic organisation, the leadership should be able to stimulate debates about the aims of the institution. In particular, the views of the students should be taken into account. At present, many feel that their participation is not given much importance since their suggestions often appear to be ignored.

The review team could see the strong will of the Rector and his team to change the present situation and heard about important discussions in the Senate and about some “integrative” decisions of this important board. The team was impressed with two papers adopted by the Senate: one on the system of financing higher education, and the other on personnel policy. However, one may wonder what is the use of it when it is known that the Rectorate does not have enough staff to prepare documentation and to support the Rector or the Senate on policy issues. Additionally the review team heard that some faculties might not accept the decisions taken by the legitimate bodies due to their legal “independence”.

This is indeed a matter of high concern if the University of Zagreb wishes to join effectively the European trend. The following questions can be asked: Exactly what is the University? Does it really exist, or is it a fiction used when the faculties think it is opportune? The team learnt of examples of the faculties acting independently and only using the title “University” as a marketing tool or brand name.

If the University of Zagreb is not to be a fiction, it has to act like a real university. It must safeguard its autonomy, clarify its mission and objectives, define its strategy and apply it to the whole institution with participation of the academic community and the stakeholders.

The Government, besides being a stakeholder, is the main funding entity and should indeed act as a supervisor and not as “Trojan horse” that undertakes planning with each faculty, ignoring the University.

Such clarity of purpose may have to be achieved step by step, very carefully and with the real commitment of the deans and the faculty councils. It may seem that the team is advocating bureaucratic centralisation. It is not; it is advocating integration in order to improve the management of the whole institution. The faculties appear to be of high quality and, as parts (and not independent members) of the university, they could contribute to give the University of Zagreb the place it deserves in the European context. The team did meet many academic staff, who understood the situation, were realistic about the future, and were willing to contribute to the attitudinal changes needed if the University is to be fully accepted in European higher education. The University leadership needs to engage their participation.

In terms of quality

-§10-

The Higher Education Law 1993, amended in 1996, defined *inter alia*, a national system of quality assurance. A National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) was established by Parliament. It is an advisory body to Government, the universities and others. There are two separate aspects to the national quality assurance system. First, there is *Accreditation*, which is a legal process and the responsibility of the Ministry leading to the approval or non-approval of institutions (i.e. universities and faculties). The second aspect is *Quality Assessment* which is the responsibility of NCHE. This process applies to institutions, although NCHE also advises universities about the quality of their programmes. NCHE uses the conventional approach of self-assessment, peer review and site visit.

Despite these national approaches, the team could find little evidence of a systematic quality assurance system within the University of Zagreb. At University level there is neither a quality assurance committee nor an office responsible for quality.

The concepts of accountability and self-evaluation were not very familiar to many of those who took part in discussions during the visit. In the review team's view, straightforward questions as: "How does your Faculty Council check that its aims are being achieved?", and "How do you monitor the progress of your PhD students?" should not come as a surprise.

-§11-

All faculties have produced self-evaluation reports. The review team was shown two examples, but because they were in Croatian it was not possible to judge how analytical and comprehensive they were. It appears that there is neither a university requirement for regular self-evaluation by faculties or departments, nor any systematic approach for collection and scrutiny by the Senate of any self-evaluation reports that are prepared.

At its preliminary visit, the review team suggested that, as the University had not included a "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis" in its self-evaluation report (this is not to imply that such an analysis is essential), it might wish to submit a further paper indicating some of its strengths. In response, the Rectorate asked the faculties to provide this information. The review team was disappointed to receive short uncritical statements, which read more as advertising material than academic analytical papers. The need for some training in undertaking self-evaluation is indicated.

When teaching staff were asked about evaluation, responses were usually about *teaching*, and it was noted that *student learning* was rarely mentioned. The review team also noted that wider aspects, management, staff development, planning, relations with the local community, etc. were rarely mentioned. For example, obtaining the views of employers of graduates as one element of quality assurance appeared strange to many the team met. The main approach to evaluating teaching (learning) appears to be through the use of student questionnaires, and there was no widespread use of other methods of collecting evidence for self-evaluation. The University introduced a standard form for student questionnaires on teaching, and it was thought at the centre that these had been widely circulated.

The team came across several faculties where staff and students seemed unaware of them. There was a lack of clarity about the purpose of these questionnaires and how the results are to be fed back to faculties and used to secure improvements. The team was also surprised to hear that in some faculties students are apparently subjected to procedures during examinations contrary to the published regulations, but fear to complain about it.

Students identified two issues affecting quality as: the high teaching load of teaching assistants, and the observation that most students are subjected to too many lectures and that more active teaching methods are rarely used. The review team was unable to verify the accuracy of these comments, but suggests that this issue is addressed first at

the level of the faculties and later at the level of the whole University. The Rector should be the catalyst of both steps. The review team is pleased to say that in many faculties there are conditions which may help the situation to change rapidly.

In terms of organisation

-§12-

An issue raised in the Self-evaluation report for the CRE Review was the extent of aintegration of the University and we already referred to it extensively. There has been a long tradition in Croatia, and in former Yugoslavia, of the faculties having a large degree of independence. In the view of many academic staff, it is the faculties that are the autonomous units within the higher education system, and the universities largely have only a ceremonial and international representation role. There are moves to change this structure and to transfer powers of the Ministry of Science and Technology to the University Senate. The change is likely to be resisted, but unless it is made, there will remain a major constraint on development. It is not so much a question of resolving the legal position, and the niceties of the interpretation of legal statutes, but more of deeply held convictions of where the “power” (the review team would prefer “responsibility”) should lie. Although a decentralised (“disintegrated”) university is one model, it does produce problems in the areas of particular concern to the CRE Review, *viz.* quality management including accountability, and improvement of quality and strategic planning. The disintegrated model also makes developments such as: interdisciplinary courses, which often relate strongly to the needs of the community; credit transfer arrangements; and better use of limited resources much more difficult to achieve. One example, which clearly illustrates that the University of Zagreb is not integrated, is the lack of any regular and formal contact between faculty secretaries (please see **§18**).

-§13-

At the level of the University, there are two key deliberative bodies, these are the Senate and the Board of Governors. The review team asked to meet both, but was disappointed with both meetings.

The Board of Governors, which according to the State laws on higher education and the Statutes of the University has considerable powers, has chosen so far not to use them. The Board consists of twelve people, but only five were able to come to the meeting. The team was disappointed not to meet the President of the Board. Of the twelve, ten are from academic staff of the University.

The meeting with the Senate was also not well attended. The composition of the Senate is the Rector and Vice-Rectors, all the Deans and six students. Only the Rector, seven Deans and eleven Vice-Deans attended the meeting. As a result of a misunderstanding the students had not been invited. By the time the review team met the Senate, it had already established that the University has no quality assurance policy (please see **§10**) or a strategic planning role (please see **§8**), but it was surprised to

hear from some Senators that even on directly academic matters the Senate can be overruled by the Ministry.

It was noted that it has been the practice to invite representatives of the media to Senate meetings. This is not the normal custom in other countries, and the team expressed its doubts whether this practice should be continued.

B. The capacity for change

The mission

-§14-

The University of Zagreb does not have a Statement of its Mission, although there was a brief mention of the mission on the first page of the self-evaluation report. The starting point for strategic planning at university and at faculty level should be based on a statement of the mission. The academic community should be aware of it and feel that they have contributed to it.

-§15-

We have already indicated in this report that the University's capacity for change is severely limited by the present arrangements for direct negotiations between faculties and the Ministry of Science and Technology (please see §7 and §9), and the underlying tension within the University concerning the interpretation of the autonomy of faculties (please see §12).

The view was expressed to us by some members of the Senate that the University is too large and that it should now be dissolved into separate universities of humanities, natural science, technology, etc. We disagree. There are many successful universities in Europe larger than the University of Zagreb, and the opportunities for interdisciplinary studies (please see §12) and interfaculty co-operation including economies by avoiding duplication (please see §7) would be lost by such a dissolution.

The institutional policies

-§16-

It is clear from the self-evaluation report and from the review team's discussion and visits to faculties, that the University of Zagreb is a research as well as a teaching university. There is also evidence in several fields that the research has an international reputation. At a time when resources for university research are limited, the amount of research activity is to be commended. However the review team has a number of observations to make about research and research policy.

Not all the faculties have an agreed statement of research policy. Such a statement might include issues such as: the priorities to be given to basic, applied and interdisciplinary research, the sharing of research facilities between groups within the University and

with others external to the university, staff development for PhD supervisors, and the monitoring of progress of PhD students.

Although there are some examples of collaboration between researchers in the University and those in industry and small enterprises (please see §17), they appear to be ad hoc. A University policy to encourage and support linking research expertise to national needs would pay dividends. The review team had two opportunities for discussion with senior representatives from major Croatian companies who endorsed this view (please see paragraph 17).

-§17-

Quality management is not only a matter of maintaining and enhancing academic standards of programmes and research, but should cover all aspects of the life of a university. One aspect is personnel policy, and this should include non-academic staff as well as the academic staff.

The importance of staff development as an instrument of change is referred to in §23.

The University is in a strong position to develop other aspects of its policy. There is a strong commitment to develop further international co-operation. There are already bilateral links with at least 40 universities in Europe and the USA, and the University participates actively in many multilateral higher education projects and in regional and European associations: IAU, CRE, DRC, CMU, CEEPUS, etc. The number of staff and student exchanges with other countries is growing. Furthermore, the rebuilding of the Centre of Advanced Studies in Dubrovnik, destroyed during the war, may be a source of increasing international co-operation if the policy of using its facilities to organise international conferences continues.

One of the shortcomings of the positioning of Croatia in the international context has been so far the refusal of European Union to include the Country in its programmes. Although this is not a matter to be commented by the review team, we feel that the fact has strongly limited the ability of the University to improve its international activities. Therefore, it was with pleasure that the team heard about the steps already taken by the European Commission to open the TEMPUS programme to Croatia.

The University recognises the contribution it can make to the national economy. The business people who met the review team were extremely supportive. However they feel that a more structured form of institutional co-operation should be considered. It is their view that the co-operation is mainly fostered by personal contacts than by institutional contracts, a fact that does not favour the University's intention of playing a more important role in the Croatian economy. The employers strongly endorsed the view of the team that much would be gained if faculties established external advisory boards.

Mid- and long-term strategies**-§18-**

There is an undressed resource in the University. This is the Collegium of faculty secretaries. The review team asked to meet this group and had a very positive meeting. It appears that the Collegium does not meet, but would greatly welcome the opportunity to meet and share their approaches to common problems. Many faculty secretaries have long experience and understand the problems of the University. They saw advantages in a more integrated approach to staff development, student record keeping, purchasing, etc.

There were many times during the visit that the review team became aware of the need for the University to develop a policy for, and attempt to secure funding for, a programme of academic and non-academic staff development (please see §23).

Concerning the criteria for promotion to professorial level, the review team appreciated the efforts to demand levels beyond the minimum (defined by the Ministry). The University needs to develop its own policy in this respect.

-§19-

Two major, and related, problems for the University concern the age profile, and the over staffing in some faculties by standards in other European countries. The review team appreciates the sensitivities of social policy, employment legislation and traditions in Croatia. However, the University cannot be considered to be efficient with such an overall low staff: student ratio², and without a strategy for replacing the staff as they retire, and at the same time reducing the excess staff in some faculties. This does not necessarily imply making staff redundant. They may be re-deployed to contribute to the work of the University in other areas. The University might find it useful to explore from universities in other countries how over-staff has been dealt with in a humane and socially acceptable manner, whilst at the same time benefiting the university. Transferring the day to day responsibility for ensuring the best use of the available human resources from the Ministry to the University would bring many advantages.

² These ratios were requested by the review team, and because such data are not held centrally they were collected specially. The review team had no means of checking their accuracy and consistency. The team certainly found some departments with extremely high staff: student ratios.

-§20-

The University intends to introduce an academic credit rating system. This is to be commended, since it will provide students with a richer and more flexible education. It will bring the University into line with many universities in other parts of Europe and make it easier for Zagreb students to participate in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). In the longer term, a credit system will lead to more efficient use of resources. However, the full implications of introducing a credit system may have been underestimated. Experience elsewhere shows that strong leadership by the Senate and the Rectorate is essential. It is not simply a question of assigning credit points to elements of the existing curricula. Participation in ECTS will inevitably be preceded by curricular change. There is usually opposition from some parts of a university to a change of this kind, and too many compromises and exceptions can make a credit system unworkable. Initially, there will be extra costs and these need to be budgeted. It is not clear under the present funding arrangements how these extra costs will be absorbed. A central student data base is required to record credits awarded, and a strong counselling system for students will need to be established. The University will need to become more aware of the implications of the Lisbon and Bologna Declarations.

The operation of change**-§21-**

It has already been indicated that there are two largely external factors inhibiting the capacity for change. These are: the current arrangement for funding the educational programmes (please see §7), and the uncertainties and tensions arising from ambiguities about the status of faculties (please see §12). It appears that the former is likely to be resolved with the move to “lump-sum” funding. The latter will take time, and is largely a matter of developing confidence that faculties have nothing to lose, but much to gain, as they share responsibility for the health of the whole academic community.

-§22-

Significant and sustainable change is best achieved by an objective and honest appraisal of the present situation. In other words, the capacity for introducing change depends on the ability of a university community to evaluate itself. Self-evaluation is not an easy process. The Self-evaluation Report presented by the University for this CRE evaluation was an informative document. The team would like to emphasise that it was more critical than many others the reviewers have read.

As experience and confidence in self evaluation develops in the University, reports from faculties and departments are likely to be more critical and therefore form a basis for self-improvement.

There are several factors contributing to a successful self evaluation:

- a clear statement of purpose (i. e. improvement),
- a non-threatening atmosphere (generated largely by the senior management),
- resources (the process of self evaluation does have a cost, and it needs to be recognised that this in fact is an investment),
- staff development for all those who will be involved (please see §23).

The review team hopes that as the University develops its programme of monitoring and assessment (please see §10), it will be able to provide support for these factors.

-§23-

A key element in managing change is staff development. The review team was unable to discover any university level policy statement, or action plan for academic, and nonacademic, staff development. Furthermore, there did not appear to be much staff development activity at faculty level. It might be argued that staff development is a luxury at a time of severe financial restrictions. The review team does not share this view. It is unlikely that the University will reach its full potential unless some resources are set aside so that the academic and non-academic staff can keep abreast of new knowledge and technologies and develop new skills in a fast changing world. The capacity for change is limited without a plan and resources for staff training and development at all levels and for all categories of staff. Particular areas of staff development are mentioned in other sections, but in general there is a need for staff development in:

- general, resource, personnel and quality management;
- introduction of modular curricula and credit rating systems;
- new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment at university level;
- research student supervision;
- self-evaluation;
- strategic planing;
- student guidance and counselling;
- use of information and communication technologies.

REVIEW SUMMARY

In terms of academic leadership

-§24-

(1) By its own admission the University of Zagreb is not integrated. The Senate is the highest academic authority in the University. Change must be led by the Senate, and to do this it needs to be a cohesive body taking a university-wide view. The strategic direction for the University must be the responsibility of the Senate. The new arrangements for funding (§7 and §21), and gradual resolution of the ambiguity about the status of faculties (§8, §12 and §21), will enable the Senate to adopt this leadership role.

(2) The University of Zagreb has neither a strategic plan, nor currently any clear process for developing one. The University needs to develop a strategic plan based on a widely agreed statement of mission. The plan should be built from the bottom up, so that departments and faculties submit to Senate realistic plans based on the agreed mission (§8, §14).

Policy making for the University is ultimately the responsibility of the Board of Governors and the Senate, but implementation of policies (day to day management) lies with the Rectorate.

(3) There is much to be gained if the Ministry of Science and Technology does, as the Deputy Minister indicated, devolve responsibility for funding to the University by making available a “lump sum”(§7). When the University accepts this responsibility, the Senate will need to develop procedures for financial planning, control and decision making. Whatever funding mechanism is decided by Senate, it must be open and transparent to all.

In terms of accountability

-§25-

(4) The University of Zagreb does not have a system of internal quality assurance. The University should not depend on an external body (NCHE) for its quality assurance, but should urgently develop its own internal system of maintaining and improving quality (§10). The Senate should establish a high level committee to oversee quality assurance across the University. Such a committee will need support staff, and a small quality assurance office will need to be established. The main task of the committee will be to

oversee quality management by devolving responsibility for quality to faculties and departments, and receiving regular reports from them.

(5) Maintenance and improvement of quality should cover all aspects of the University's work (teaching and learning, research, management, relations with the community, etc. (§11).

(6) More emphasis should be placed on evaluating student learning in contrast to teaching (§11); and it should be recognised that maintaining and improving quality requires much more than distributing questionnaires to students.

(7) When feed back on quality is obtained, it is important that respondents are told what actions are being taken as a result (§11).

(8) Statements of research policy at University and faculty level should be prepared (§16). Consideration should be given to establishing external advisory boards at faculty or departmental level in order to improve co-operation with industry and other employers (§17).

In terms of managerial capacity

-§26-

(9) There should be regular meetings of the Collegium of secretaries (§18).

(10) The full implications of entering ECTS (curricular change, costs, staff development, etc.) should be recognised (§20).

(11) The University should develop and implement a policy for its human resources, in order to overcome the pressing problems of a skewed age profile, and over staffing in some areas (§19). Implementation of any new policy must be undertaken sensitively: not only being consistent with Croatian social policy and employment legislation, but also having due regard for traditions in higher education. A staff development programme would assist with re-deployment of staff and preparing younger staff for more senior posts (§17, §23). The human resources policy should include the University's own criteria for academic promotion (§18). The management of human resources is clearly a matter for the University.

(12) There needs to be a comprehensive programme of staff development (§23). An early priority should be to encourage new and more active approaches to teaching.

Envoi

We wish, once again, to thank the Rector, and all the staff and students of the University of Zagreb for their warm and generous hospitality, and for the excellent arrangements provided to the review team. The leadership is to be congratulated on its serious concern to introduce change so that the University is ready to meet the challenges facing all European universities at the beginning of the 21st Century. We were impressed with the openness of all the staff and students, and the determination of all to learn from the review process. We hope that this evaluation will assist the University of Zagreb to alleviate some of the shortcomings it has recognised, and that the report will be useful as a tool for promoting institutional change and enhancing quality management.

27 June 2000