

SÜLEYMAN DEMIREL UNIVERSITY

EUA REVIEW REPORT

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FOREWORD

1. The concept of the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme

Following two successful conferences on the theme of *quality and evaluation*, the Permanent Committee of the then CRE (Association of European Universities), which became EUA (European University Association) in 2001, decided in 1993 to offer its then 500 member universities the possibility to be reviewed, so that their strengths and weaknesses in the area of quality management might be assessed.

Through this Programme, the EUA wishes to offer an external diagnosis provided by experienced university leaders and experts coming from different higher education systems in Europe. This diagnosis should explain the quality nodes and the main actors in the university's daily decision-making processes. It should be a tool for institutional leadership preparing for change. The EUA 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 EUA 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 re-orient strategic development while strengthening a quality structure in Europe. The review aims at helping the universities derive the following benefits:

- An increased awareness, across the university, for the need to develop an internal quality culture.
- An increased capacity for setting and implementing strategic goals.
- An effective complement to national quality assurance procedures through the use of peers and an improvement-orientated approach.

The methodological instrument of the Programme focuses on the universities' capacity to change, including their strategic planning and internal quality monitoring, and examine if all the preconditions are assembled to make each and every institution more adaptable and responsive to the changing higher education environment at local, national, European and international level.

More specifically, the EUA institutional evaluation methodology is guided by four central strategic questions:

- What is the institution trying to do? This question refers to the mission of the institution. A clear mission is important in order to decide on priorities, strategic objectives and the means to reach these objectives.
- How is the institution trying to do it? The evaluation investigates the way in which the institution attempts to fulfil this mission in terms of organisation, governing structures and processes.

¹ M. Trow: "Academic Reviews and the Culture of Excellence", Studies of Higher Education and Research, 1994/2.

- How does the institution know it works? This question points at the necessity to have sound quality arrangements in place. The evaluation team looks at the institutional policies and practices regarding quality and other relevant processes in terms of actors, structures and procedures.
- How does the institution change in order to improve? This is a key question for EUA's institutional evaluations. It is the institution's capacity for change and improvement that allows it to deal with a fast-changing environment and to respond to evolving needs.

2. The history of the Institutional Evaluation Programme of EUA

In 1994 the Universities of Göteborg, Porto and Utrecht commissioned the then 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 to the process is a set of *guidelines*, developed by Professor Frans van Vught, then Director of the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at Twente University, and Don Westerheijden, also of CHEPS. In 1995-96 a second *experimental* review round took place with the participation of ten universities located in western, central and eastern Europe. The experiences of the first two years led to minor adaptations in the programme, and the 1996-97 round was the first one in the *«full-grown» CRE Institutional Evaluation Programme*, with 13 participating universities participating. With an average number of 10 to 15 universities involved in the Programme every year, the total number of universities that have participated in the Programme until now (academic year 2005-06 included) is **138**, five of which are located in three Latin American countries and one in South Africa. The remaining **132** universities are distributed among **33** European countries and **24** of them have already undergone follow-up evaluations as well.

One more recent development of the Institutional Evaluation Programme over the past few years is its extension to sector-wide evaluations as well which can include an evaluation of all institutions within a specific field, region or national context. Each institution is first evaluated individually followed by an overall general evaluation. The major goal of the system evaluations is to identify the systemic conditions that would serve to increase the dynamic of change in institutions as well as the conditions that would strengthen the anchoring of their national system in Europe.

3. Institutional review of the Süleyman Demirel University

On June 2005 the *Süleyman Demirel University* (SDU), located in Isparta, Turkey, requested the EUA to organise an institutional quality review of the University. The request was made by the Rector of the University, Prof. Dr. Metin Lütfi Baydar.

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The Steering Committee of the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme appointed as members of the review team for the SDU the following:

- Professor H el ene Lamicq, former President, Universit  Paris XII Val-de-Marne, France, as chair;
- Professor Patrick Masterson, former President, European University Institute, Florence, former President, University College Dublin, Ireland;

- Professor Gheorghe Popa, former Rector, “Alexander Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi, Romania;
- Professor Dionyssis Kladis, University of the Peloponnese, Greece, former Secretary for Higher Education in Greece, as secretary.

Ms. Karin Riegler, Senior Programme Manager in the EUA Secretariat, joined the review team as observer.

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The preliminary visit and the main review visit to the SDU took place in March and May 2006, respectively.

INTRODUCTION

4. The evaluation process

4.1 Outline of the two visits

In keeping with the framework of the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme, the institutional review of the SDU consisted in several phases. First, the review team received a 30-page *Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* with many informative appendices. The SER provides a good illustration of the current situation of the University and its development over the last few years. The SER was produced by a Self-Evaluation Steering Committee (SESC) under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. Vecihi Kirdemir, Vice-Rector of the SDU.

Upon receiving the SER, the review team made a *preliminary visit* to the SDU on 15-17 March 2006 to get acquainted with the University and to help clarify any issues arising from the SER. The *main visit* of the review team took place on 15-18 May 2006. During the two visits, the review team had the opportunity to discuss the situation of the University with many of its actors and with the main stakeholders, namely:

- With members of the staff and with students from 7 Faculties (Engineering and Architecture, Economics and Administrative Sciences, Medicine, Technical Education, Arts and Sciences, Fine Arts and Fisheries at Eğirdir) out of the totally 12 Faculties of the University, and from one of its Vocational Schools (Eğirdir Vocational School)
- With members of the staff from 3 of the Research and Implementation Centres of the University (a. Renewable Energy Resources, b. Geothermal Energy, Groundwater and Mineral Resources, c. Gender Studies) and from the University Hospital
- With outside partners, including representatives of local authorities, representatives of the business and industry community and other stakeholders
- With the central university policy-making staff
- With central administration staff members

During the first visit, the review team had also the opportunity to attend the special session of the Senate of the University where the Strategic Plan of the SDU was officially adopted. During the two visits, the review team had also intense and in depth discussions with the Rector Prof. Dr. Metin Lütfi Baydar and his team, as well as with the Self-Evaluation Steering Committee. All those meetings and discussions were efficiently organised under the personal concern of Prof. Dr. Fatma Göktepe, who was the liaison person of the University with the review team and the coordinator of the overall self-evaluation process.

The review team had therefore the opportunity to meet the broad spectrum of actors at the SDU, both at the central level and at the level of the various Faculties and Research Centres. At the same time, the review team had the opportunity to identify the views of the external stakeholders on the role of the University and their relations with it.

On the last day of the main review visit, the chair person of the review team, Professor H  l  ne Lamicq, presented the team's *oral report* to an audience consisting of the members of the Senate and the members of the Self-Evaluation Steering Committee. The oral report was the

basis of the present **Review Report**, which has resulted from all written information, interviews with various SDU members and outside partners and the review team's observations during the two visits.

4.2 Outline of the review

The review team wishes to express its deep thanks to the Rector of the SDU, Prof. Dr. Metin Lütfi Baydar, and his team, especially to Prof. Dr. Fatma Göktepe, for the efficient preparation and organisation of the two visits which provided the review team with effective working conditions in which to fulfil its duties. The help that the review team received, in terms of both the exhaustive and clear information and the precise organisation of all meetings and interviews, was invaluable. The review team is also very grateful for the hospitality of the SDU. It was indeed a pleasure to work in the friendly atmosphere extended by all the people involved.

During the meetings, the review team had the opportunity to interview many leading members of the University, professors, researchers, members of the administrative staff and students. They were all very open and actively participated in lively discussions with the review team, presenting their views about the quality management structures and ethos within the SDU, the mission and the vision of the University and its dynamics for change and improvement, its current situation (including constraints and opportunities) and its future prospects.

As mentioned already, the self-evaluation process was steered by the Self-Evaluation Steering Committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. Vecihi Kirdemir, Vice-Rector of the SDU, and was co-ordinated by Prof. Dr. Fatma Göktepe. As mentioned in the SER and as was explained by the Self-Evaluation Steering Committee, the self-evaluation process was widely diffused and publicised within the University. Separate Self-Evaluation Reports were prepared in each Faculty and respective workshops were organised too.

The review team had the opportunity to verify the degree of involvement, at least of information, at the Faculties that it visited. It seems that the main weakness of the self-evaluation process as such was the weak involvement and awareness of the students. As explained by the SESC, the students were informed but there was no feedback from them.

One important point, for the review team, is the interrelation which seems to exist between the SER and the Strategic Plan of the University. So far, the Strategic Plan has produced one of the main inputs to the SER. The question and the challenge now are whether the results of the EUA institutional evaluation will be utilised by the University in the most proper way in order to further improve its Strategic Plan.

Concluding, the review team realised that the self-evaluation process produced a positive quality culture throughout the University. As explained by the SESC, findings of the self-evaluation process have already produced results in the management of the University, coming either from their findings or from the obstacles they faced in their work (e.g. establishment of new administrative units, like the central data unit and the unit to offer support for projects, as well as the establishment of tracking process for graduates).

This positive quality culture needs now to be utilised and systemised by the University. In that respect, the review team considers the SESC as a reference point in that effort.

Furthermore, the review team appreciated the work done in the SER and considered it as informative, adequately documented and a more or less complete report. However, the review team asked for additional information at the end of the first visit, concerning mainly clarifications of issues related to the selection of staff, the financial management and the decision-making processes. The University provided the requested additional information in due time.

The review team considered the SER as a very honest and critical analysis of the situation, presenting at the same time the vision and the expectations of the university for the future. The lack of a detailed SWOT analysis was perhaps a weakness of the SER, however a first approach to a SWOT analysis has been included in the Strategic Plan of the University.

4.3 Outline of the Review Report

The EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme is not concerned with the assessment of the quality of teaching and research activities; rather, it is concerned with the assessment and the improvement of the existing mechanisms and processes for strategic management and quality assurance and, in that context, with the assessment and the improvement of the capacity of the universities to adapt to the rapidly developing higher education environment in Europe and in the world.

In this context, the review team's task is to scrutinise the mechanisms existing in the University for quality assurance and its capacities for strategic change. This Review Report, therefore, emphasises the current strengths and weaknesses in respect of the capacity for change and expresses a number of recommendations that may be taken into account in the future development of the SDU. Of course, this Review Report should be read in conjunction with the SER of the SDU and with the corresponding additional information that were provided to the review team. Furthermore, the comments are based on two intense but rather short visits: One two-day preliminary visit and one three-day main review visit. The review team also collected a significant amount of information on the Turkish higher education system, but it is not possible for the analysis to go into all such details. The comments and recommendations, therefore, will be confined mostly to major issues of concern to the structures and procedures within the University. The recommendations, together with the corresponding reasoning and analysis, appear underlined in the text of the Review Report. A summary of recommendations is presented in page 36.

5. The context: National, regional, institutional and societal

5.1 Higher Education in Turkey

Steering universities at national level

The Turkish higher education system is highly centralised. In that context, there are four upper bodies, regulating, supervising, and coordinating the system:

- Higher Education Council (YÖK), which is the central regulatory body
- Inter-University Council (UAK), acting in some cases as an academic advisory body and in other cases as a decision-making body
- Turkish University Rectors Committee (TURC), which is the equivalent to the Rectors' Conference
- Higher Education Supervisory Board, which is attached to YÖK, supervising and controlling the universities

Given the authority and the power of the above four upper bodies, the role of the Ministry of Education should be considered as rather “hidden or indirect”², being related primarily to issues concerning financing, budgeting, accounting, allocation of resources etc., as it stems from the public finance laws. It could be said that there is a division of power at national level (or, more accurately, a tug of war) between the Ministry of Education and the YÖK, and the balance is not always an easy affair.

It should be noted furthermore that there is also another upper body at national level, the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey, which coordinates basic and applied research and development, affecting also the situation of the Turkish universities in the related activities.

Private (foundation) universities

The Turkish Higher Education Law (1981) has made it possible for private universities to be established by non-profit foundations. They are called “foundation universities” and are subject to the same laws and regulations like the state universities. Foundation universities are under the supervision of the YÖK and their programmes must be regularly accredited.

Although there are only 23 foundation universities in a total of 91 universities in Turkey and enrolment in foundation universities accounts for only 5,7% of the total³, the existence of foundation universities is considered to be a threat for the state universities because unfair competition in many issues.

The foundation universities are funded by the state like the state universities and they enjoy academic autonomy in the same way with the state universities. Apart from these similarities, however, there are significant distinctions which produce the above mentioned unfairness. Examples for these distinctions are the following: The foundation universities enjoy financial

² See National Bologna Report of Turkey for the period 2004-2005, p. 3.

³ See National Bologna Report of Turkey for the period 2004-2005, p. 4.

and administrative autonomy, which is not the case for the state universities. The foundation universities can offer salaries to the academic staff three or four times higher than those offered in a state university and, therefore, they can recruit academics from the state ones. The foundation universities can increase their income by increasing student fees without any limitation, while the student fees in the state universities are fixed by the YÖK. However, and apart from the high tuition fees, the foundation universities (together with the old state universities) attract the best students because they can provide the desired facilities to them.

Density of universities in Turkey

As mentioned earlier, there are currently 91 universities in Turkey, of which 68 are state universities (including 15 recently founded in December 2005) and 23 are foundation universities. Taking into account that the population of Turkey exceeds 70 millions, the density of the Turkish universities is 1,3 per 1.000.000 inhabitants. This density is low compared to the average situation in the European Union and becomes even lower if we take also account of the number of higher education institutions in EU which belong to the non-university sector of higher education.

Regional expansion

Specific reference must be done to the regional expansion of the higher education system in Turkey, which seems to be among the priorities of the national higher education policy in the recent years. Turkey is composed of 81 provinces. Universities exist in 55 of these provinces. There is a concentration of universities in the provinces of Istanbul and Ankara, where 31 of the 91 universities are located (11 of them are state universities and 20 are foundation universities). The remaining 60 universities (57 state universities and only 3 foundation universities) are located in 53 provinces, and this means that there are still 26 provinces remaining without universities. An interesting observation is that the geographical expansion of the higher education system (after its initial phase of development before the Higher Education Law in 1981) took place in two distinct phases: The first one during the year 1992, when 23 new state universities were established in 20 new provinces (the SDU being one of them), and the second one at the end of the year 2005, when 15 more new state universities were established in 15 new provinces.

What we realised from our observations at the SDU was that the establishment of the University in the province of Isparta does not serve in fact as an opportunity for higher education offered to the young people of Isparta. Indeed, the total number of bachelor students in SDU during the academic year 2005-06 was around 18.300 and only 1.300 of them originated from Isparta. If this is the case in the other regional universities, then it seems that the major aim of this regional policy is rather to improve the dynamics of the region through the overall activities of the university and through the presence of new human potential, both at the level of the students coming from various other regions and at the level of the staff. What the review team further realised was that this policy of geographical expansion of Turkish higher education is accompanied with huge investments, irrespective of the level of the annual funding of the universities for their current expenditures. These are investments oriented both to the national higher education system and to the regional development.

5.2 The profile of the Süleyman Demirel University

The Süleyman Demirel University (SDU) is a young, comprehensive, multidisciplinary university, integrating all levels of higher education in Turkey. The SDU was founded on the year 1992. Its first academic units resulted from previously existing ones, located either at Isparta or at other cities (Burdur and Egirdir), which formed the initial core of SDU.

The SDU offers all kinds of programmes which are covered under the higher education umbrella in Turkey. It consists of 12 Faculties, offering undergraduate (bachelor) programmes, 4 Graduate Schools, offering postgraduate (master and doctorate) programmes, 2 four-year High Schools, offering instruction for a specific profession (health), and 17 Vocational Schools, which are considered as higher education units too and offer two-year “associate-degree” programmes of a strictly vocational (training) nature. There is also one High School of Foreign Languages, which does not offer a specific higher education degree, but makes the overall support to all SDU students in foreign languages. This means that the SDU, as all Turkish universities, is characterised by a great diversity in the educational programmes that it offers, ranging from doctorate programmes to two-year vocational (training) programmes.

The main academic activities of the SDU are placed in the University Campus, which is located at a distance of 8 km from the city centre. Actually, almost half of the total student population are studying at the University Campus. However, the academic organisation of SDU shows an interesting but more or less inhomogeneous geographical dispersion. Its bachelor, masters and doctorate programmes are highly concentrated in the University Campus and in the city centre of Isparta (with the exception of the Faculty of Education at Burdur, the Faculty of Fisheries at Egirdir and the High School of Health in Burdur). In statistical terms, this means that only 3.996 students (22%) are studying in programmes out of Isparta and 13.931 students (78%) at the Campus and the city centre of Isparta. The reverse picture is observed regarding the two-year Vocational Schools: Only 1 out of the 17 Vocational Schools is located in Isparta and this corresponds to 3.013 students (20%) in Isparta and 11.943 students (80%) in other places. In total, this makes 16.944 students (51,5%) studying at the Campus and the city centre of Isparta and 15.939 students (48,5%) studying outside Isparta. Of course, all these data change dramatically if we exclude the 8.493 students studying during 2004-05 in units that are moving to the new University at Burdur.

The SDU aims to be a research-oriented university, according to its Strategic Plan. 29 Research and Implementation Centres are currently operating in various scientific and technological areas and form the basis for the implementation of this strategic goal of the University.

The SDU is also a multidisciplinary university, covering a wide range of study and scientific fields. This multidisciplinaryity can be seen both from the educational perspective (in its Faculties and Departments) and from the research perspective (in its Research and Implementation Centres).

5.3 Regional and societal context

As already mentioned, the regional expansion is one of the characteristics of higher education policy in Turkey. This policy requires on the one hand huge investments from the part of the Government and on the other hand the development of a climate, even more of a framework, of cooperation between the university and the society at large. The review team tried to identify this climate in its two visits in the SDU and found that there are too many things to be done to that direction. The analysis and the corresponding recommendation will appear later in the Review Report.

The total number of students of SDU was about 33.000 in the academic year 2004-05 and 17.000 of them were studying at the city of Isparta (including the Campus). Given that the population of the city of Isparta is about 150.000, we have a rather high ratio of 113 students per 1.000 inhabitants. As it was mentioned earlier, only 7% of the SDU students originate from the province of Isparta. This means that the city of Isparta should develop the necessary infrastructure to cover the needs of this large number of students coming from other provinces of Turkey. On the other hand, as it was mentioned in one of our meetings with the stakeholders, each one of these students offers a significant financial income for the city of Isparta.

Apart of the strictly economic dimension of the contribution of the SDU to the city of Isparta, specific emphasis should be given to the social and cultural dimensions of this contribution but also to the general contribution that a comprehensive and multidisciplinary university like the SDU can make to the overall development of the city and the province at large. To that direction, it is evident that some units of the University will have a major role to play regarding the services offered to the society at large. Such units are the University Hospital, various Faculties in their respective specialised fields (technology, economics, agriculture etc.) and, of course, some Research and Implementation Centres together with the innovation centres like the Technocity and the Tekmer.

There is also one more dimension related to that regional context for the SDU. As was mentioned earlier, the SDU was founded in the year 1992 together with 22 other new state universities. Among these 23 Universities were five (including the SDU) which were all located at the south-east part of Turkey and which bordered each other. These five new Universities from the provinces of Afyon, Denizli, Isparta, Muğla and Aydın created a network called ADIMA through which they cooperate in educational and research terms and in which the SDU aspires to have a leading role.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

6. Academic structure and organisation

The academic structure and organisation of SDU is one of the most complicated and compound problems that it faces in its way to implement its Strategic Plan, and especially its aim to be a research-oriented university. As mentioned already, the SDU offers a great diversity of educational programmes, ranging from doctorate programmes to two-year vocational (training) programmes. The latter programmes are offered in the Vocational Schools, while the bachelor programmes are offered at the Faculties and the master and doctorate programmes are offered at the Graduate Schools.

If someone looks carefully at the organisational chart of the SDU, he will realise that there is only weak coexistence between Vocational Schools and Faculties. For example, there is only one out of the 17 Vocational Schools located at the university Campus in Isparta. There are also one Faculty and one Vocational School located in Egirdir, but it seems that there are no contacts between them. Finally, there are also one Faculty, one High School and one Vocational School located at Burdur, which now are moving to the new University established recently there. From the above description, we derive the conclusion that the students of the Vocational Schools are not a real part of the student community of the SDU. At the same time, many people in the SDU consider the existence of the Vocational Schools as a weakness (or even as a threat) for the University, primarily because of the fact that, since academic year 2002-03, many of their students enrol without having to pass through the national Student Selection Examination. As mentioned in the SER⁴, the University worries about the lack of quality at Vocational Schools as a result of this new regulation. However, the review team believes that things are not always as simple as they look like. It must be mentioned here that the development of the Vocational Schools has resulted due to the pressure of young population in Turkey⁵. And this means that the development of the Vocational Schools meets a real demand of the Turkish society.

One first thing that the review team has to notice in this point is that the inclusion of two-year vocational-oriented education in higher education institutions is not incompatible to the Bologna Process. We can refer here to the Bergen Communiqué (2005), where the European Ministers adopted the overarching framework for qualifications in the European Higher Education Area, comprising the well known three cycles of studies, but including also “*within national contexts the possibility of intermediate qualifications*” in the interior of each cycle. One second thing, which also comes as a recommendation of the review team, is that the SDU should try to explore and identify through its strategic procedures its overall approach to the post-secondary vocational education, taking account of the needs of the society and the labour market, weighing the advantages and disadvantages for including or not this kind of education in the universities and, finally, seeking for ways to better consolidate two-year vocational education into the overall universities’ activities In the same context, the reconstruction or restructuring of studies in the Vocational Schools, aiming to decrease the number of

⁴ SER, p. 13.

⁵ SER, p. 20.

programmes by introducing specialisations into the programmes, might contribute to the solution of the problem.

Second point concerning the academic structure and organisation of the SDU is the evening programmes (so-called “2nd Education”) existing in parallel to the regular programmes offered during daytime (which are called “1st Education”). 2nd Education is offered both in the bachelor programmes and in the vocational programmes. These evening programmes are addressed to students who cannot enrol in the regular programmes (1st Education) because of the limited number of places which is determined annually by the YÖK (upon the recommendation of the universities). This means that the 2nd Education programmes serve primarily as a means to open access to the universities. However, they could also be considered as continuing education programmes for people working during daytime or for the population of older ages. Therefore, the evening programmes may be considered as having a concrete and strong social dimension.

However, the review team is aware of the reservations raised in the SDU concerning these evening programmes. Main reason is that they are responsible for much of the teaching overload of the academic staff, who actually give the same lectures twice during one single day. This overload does not leave to the academic staff enough room for improving their academic activities. The review team is also aware that one of the strategic targets of the SDU is to reduce or even to abolish the evening programmes. However, there are two obstacles that the University has to overcome to that direction: The first one has to do with the social dimension that these programmes have. And the second one has to do with the fact that the evening programmes bring a significant additional income for the University, raising the salaries of the involved academic staff as well. Given the above difficulties, the review team’s recommendation to that issue is that the SDU should also explore all the dimensions of the problem through its strategic processes.

Last point to be mentioned in this chapter is the one concerning postgraduate studies. Among the strategic goals of the SDU is to increase the number of postgraduate students, both at the level of master and at the level of doctorate, as a prerequisite to improve its dynamics for high quality research and in order to strengthen research infrastructure. The review team strongly supports this strategic choice of the University. However it recommends that the SDU should try to identify the best and more efficient ways for the organisation of master and doctorate programmes by the Graduate Schools, especially regarding best cooperation with the respective Faculties and Departments. The review team has been informed of the following division of tasks concerning organisation of postgraduate studies: Responsibility for teaching lies with the Faculty, responsibility for administration lies with the Graduate School, and responsibility for decision-making lies again with the Graduate School upon proposal from the Faculty. The review team has the impression that this is a rather complicated and confusing scheme which may result to conflicts. For that reason, it recommends that the SDU should at least try to go a little deeper regarding the efficiency of this scheme.

7. Teaching and learning

The following table shows the evolution of student population in the SDU during the five-year period from 2000-01 to 2004-05.

	2000-01		2001-02		2002-03		2003-04		2004-05	
Associate-degree students	11132	41%	13494	45%	14361	47%	12648	43%	14956	46%
Bachelor	14827	55%	15246	51%	15155	49%	15545	53%	16516	50%
Master	757	3%	739	3%	1008	3%	1063	3%	1060	3%
PhD	194	1%	214	1%	238	1%	295	1%	351	1%
Total	26910	100%	29693	100%	30762	100%	29551	100%	32883	100%
Ratio Bachelor/Master	19,6		20,6		15,0		14,6		15,6	
Ratio Master/PhD	3,9		3,5		4,2		3,6		3,0	
Ratio Bachelor/PhD	76,4		71,2		63,7		52,7		47,1	

As derived from the above statistical data for the SDU, its students are distributed as follows for the academic year 2004-05: 46% of them are “associate-degree” students, i.e. they are students in the two-year Vocational Schools, 50% are bachelor students and only 4% of them are graduate students either at master or doctorate level. Even if we take account of the fact that one Faculty, one High School and five Vocational Schools are now moving to the new Mehmet Akif Ersoy University which has recently been founded at Burdur, the above figures will change but only slightly (42% “associate-degree” students, 52% bachelor degree students and 6% graduate students). These data show that the SDU is a teaching-oriented university. However, it is interesting to note that this situation is changing during the last five-year period. For example, the ratio of bachelor to master students was about 20 in 2000-01 and has already improved to 15 in the recent two years. At the same time the ratio of master to doctorate students has also improved from almost 4 to 3, while the ratio of bachelor to doctorate students has shown a rapid improvement from 76 to 47 during this five-year period. This trend is consistent with the strategic goal of the University to strengthen its research activities. As mentioned in the University’s Strategic Plan and in the SER, “SDU aims to decrease the number of associate and bachelor students thereby providing balance between education and research with existing 29 research centres”⁶. However, the relative increase of the number of master and doctorate students is a prerequisite for this change.

The teaching-oriented attitude of the University is reflected also to the large supply of courses and to the persistence on traditional teaching methods, which in turn results to the increase of both contact hours for the students and teaching load for the teachers. The review team had the opportunity to realise on the one hand the large commitment of the academic staff (which in many cases resulted in unequal teaching load) and on the other hand the satisfaction of students with teaching, with the only exception of those students asking for more practice. However, the modern trend in Europe is to shift from teacher-centred to student-centred or, in other words, from teaching-oriented to learning-oriented educational approaches. This necessity has already been recognised in the Strategic Plan of the University and is included among its major aims. As mentioned in the SER, initiatives to that direction have already been taken by some Faculties, but the review team had not the opportunity to identify it during its meetings with students in the various Faculties.

No doubt that the genuine shift from teaching-oriented to learning-oriented educational approaches is a difficult matter as it requires both change in the overall attitude and

⁶ SER, p. 9.

implementation of new teaching and learning methods. This shift is at the heart of the Bologna reforms in Europe today and, in practical terms, it is strongly connected on the one hand with a genuine implementation of the ECTS approach based on the ***factual total student workload*** for each course and on the other hand on a curriculum design based on the ***learning outcomes approach*** regarding ***knowledge, competences*** and ***skills*** that students acquire. The review team had the opportunity to realise the intention and the commitment of the leadership of the SDU to orient and push things to that direction, but it is also aware of the difficulties that such a huge and fundamental change faces in practice. The review team is aware of the resistance coming from traditional attitudes inside the University, and in fact this is the usual case in many European universities as well. In that context, the review team strongly supports the efforts of the leadership of the SDU to that direction and believes that there is strong evidence for the success of this effort. This evidence derives mainly from the fact that the majority of the academics in the SDU are young-aged people and is supported by the will shown by the students to harmonise their steps with the modern European pace. In parallel, the review team recommends that the SDU should proceed to a wide restructuring of its curricula taking due account of the recent developments in Europe concerning ECTS and competence based learning outcomes.

To that direction, strengthening the role of practice in the curricula helps improving the learning outcomes approach. However account should be taken of the fact that the area of Isparta is not an industrialised one and, therefore, students cannot acquire practical training in industries where appropriate according to their curricula.

One interesting point here is the important role that the Faculty of Education at Burdur seems to play to the direction of this change in the educational approaches, concerning application of student-centred approaches. And this role is complemented with the programme for pedagogical training offered by this Faculty for the teaching staff of the whole SDU. The review team had not the opportunity to verify the degree of success of these initiatives, since the Burdur Faculty of Education was not among the Faculties that we visited, but we undoubtedly support this kind of initiatives. The question is how these initiatives are to be implemented and further improved in the future, since the Burdur Faculty of Education is now moving to the newly established Mehmet Akif Ersoy University at Burdur. It seems that a good solution could be if the SDU maintained this kind of cooperation with the Burdur Faculty of Education and this is something that we strongly recommend.

Another point to be mentioned in this chapter is the limited foreign language supply. The review team is aware of the activities and the role of the High School of Foreign Languages and of the fact that English language is in one or another way incorporated in the study programmes of various Faculties. The review team has also been informed that some of the undergraduate courses are taught in English and this, no doubt, is an improvement. However, it seems that there is a real problem in SDU concerning the competences in English language. The difficulties which the review team faced in most of its meetings concerning communication in English give a rather strong evidence for this finding. Thus, the review team strongly recommends that the SDU should make faster steps to that direction and to establish an efficient language policy. What needed is to awake the interest of the students and staff and to build an attitude for learning and use of English language as a requirement for the

development of the European profile of the University. Of course, this policy should make the best utilisation of the possibilities of the High School of Foreign Languages, but, at the same time, it should further improve these possibilities. The establishment of language laboratories in order to develop self-learning methods might be one of these improvements.

Last point to be mentioned in this chapter is the evaluation of teaching and courses by the students, which is another important tool for the quality improvement of the overall educational process in a university. However, this tool will be analysed in the chapter of the Review Report referring to quality culture. What is needed to be noticed here is that this evaluation process is one of the most effective ways for the students to get involved in the educational procedures and to contribute to their improvement.

8. Research

As mentioned already, the strategic goal of the SDU is to be a world-class research-oriented university. The term “research-oriented university” is used in the SER and in the Strategic Plan of the SDU with the meaning of a university combining high level education and research and not with the meaning of university focusing its activities and its policy primarily on research. The review team had the opportunity to realise that there is strong evidence of research activity in the SDU. The research activities are carried out both at the Faculties/Departments and at the 29 Research and Implementation Centres operating in the SDU. Impressive production can be monitored in some fields, but unequal development of high level research among the various Faculties and Centres can be identified as well. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the increase of the number of master and – primarily – of doctorate students is one of the most crucial indicators, verifying the move of a university towards the research-orientation. Therefore, the review team recommends that the SDU should build the appropriate conditions to make this increase a reality.

The overall impression of the review team is that the research activities in the SDU are dominated today by the principle of *individualism*. The lack of any kind of coordination is evident, and at the same time there are not any structures for cooperative or collective research in the University. It is known that in some cases the principle of individualism is confused with the principle of academic freedom, and in these same cases the resulting phenomenon is the invisibility of research inside and outside the university. Perhaps, this is a situation that can still be acceptable for a young university like the SDU, but, in the beginning of the 21st century, the strategic goal to be a research-oriented university requires a quite different attitude and different processes as well. The University has to *consolidate* research in its overall activities and, furthermore, it has to give *structured visibility* to research in the long-term. In fact, what the University has to do is to combine the existing individual perceptions for research with the necessity for *collective capitalisation of research*. The research reputation of the University cannot be improved through individual research of whatever high level it may be. The profile of a research-oriented university can be built only on permanent research structures.

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The above mentioned principles of *coordination*, *cooperation* and *visibility* of university research form one dimension of the consolidated and structured research activity of a modern

university. There is also a second dimension which has to do with *prioritisation*. A university aiming at high level research has to set priorities, since it is not possible to achieve excellence at all research fields. Prioritisation is a necessary precondition for the strengthening and improvement of the University's research policy and strategy. The research activities should in any case contribute, as a whole, to the image and the overall profile of the University. At the end, prioritisation means to take advantage of strong research fields and further improve them, of course without ignoring other fields.

In that context, the review team considers as a sine qua non in order for the SDU to capitalise its scientific and research reputation, on the one hand to establish structured research activities, based on cooperation and joining of forces inside the University, and on the other hand to set priorities for the high level research that will be supported by the University. To that direction, the SDU has also to introduce permanent structures in order to design or revise its research policy.

Accordingly, the main recommendation here is that the University should set research priorities according to above mentioned principles. This means that the University has to establish the necessary procedures to reach that aim. Once the targets for research are set, progress for achieving them should be carefully monitored.

The review team had also the opportunity to discuss during the two visits some factors which affected the overall research landscape in the SDU, considered more-or-less as constraints. Two of these factors are to be mentioned in our Review Report. The first factor has to do with the heavy teaching load of the academic staff which does not leave room for intense research activity. We have already mentioned teaching overload as one of the weaknesses of the SDU resulting mainly from the persistence to traditional methods of teaching. At the same time, we are aware that much of this overload results from the involvement of the academic staff in the 2nd Education (evening) programmes (giving actually the same lectures twice during one single day). It has already been mentioned that one of the strategic targets of the SDU is to reduce or even to abolish the evening programmes, but the corresponding problems have already been mentioned as well.

The second factor affecting the research landscape is more composite. It was mentioned earlier that one of the weaknesses concerning research in the SDU is the predominance of individual research against the collective, co-operative research designed and coordinated through structured processes. This fact is also reflected to the difficulty of scientific staff to organise high quality research projects and to demand for research funding outside the University through these projects. One of the reasons for this attitude to prevail is the fact that much more importance is given to the individual research work, together with the resulting publications, in the promotion processes of the academic staff, compared to their research work in the context of projects. This situation affects negatively both the overall research performance and the production of competitive projects of high quality.

The review team strongly believes that the attitude of individualism is at the heart of most of the above problems. The SDU needs to develop a global approach to the research activities, including basic and applied research, research conducted at individual or cooperative or

project basis, research conducted in the Faculties and the Departments and in the Research and Implementation Centres or in the external units like Technocity, research connected to entrepreneurial initiatives of the University, research aiming to services to the society at large. This global aspect for the research requires, as already mentioned, coordinating structures, visibility and efficient administrative support. In that context, the review team supports strongly the initiatives of the leadership of the SDU for the establishment of two administrative units, a first one in order to coordinate research and a second one in order to offer support for projects.

9. Internationalisation

According to its strategic plan, “SDU aims to be a global university”, and this means that internationalisation issues should be in the front line of its plans, its activities and its concerns. Being an international university means to try to establish strong *institutional links* with international higher education structures, to carry out high level and competitive research and establish *partnerships* in international research networks and to promote international *exchanges* of students and staff in both directions improving motivation for those going out and attractiveness for those coming in. But, above all, to become an international university requires the development of the appropriate international and open-minded *culture* and *attitude* inside the university.

The review team had the opportunity to realise that the leadership of the SDU puts significant effort and is making important steps to that direction. But, these efforts have to become even stronger and to be carried out in a more systematic way. Perhaps, the most important is that the university community has to be convinced and to be inspired for the importance of internationalisation. Turkey is in its way to the European Union. The Turkish higher education has joined the Bologna Process since 2001 and many of the Turkish Universities are members in various European higher education structures, the European University Association being among them. In that context, the international/European perspective is a one-way route for the Turkish universities.

To convince and to inspire the university community for the international/European orientation of a university is not always an easy affair. The review team had the opportunity to realise that in the SDU things appear to be easier with the students than with the staff. There is more demand from the students, even if it takes the form of the usual exchanges through the Erasmus programme. On the other hand, it seems that there is rather unequal interest of staff. However, it is well known that the academic staff plays the role of the motive force for bilateral agreements in most cases, and this means that lack of interest of staff affects negatively the overall internationalisation policy. This situation requires from the SDU an internationalisation policy with different characteristics for each one of the two groups. This should be a policy that will build upon the increased interest shown by the students and that will create the appropriate motivation and requirements for the staff. For example, the review team has realised that there is insufficient support from the SDU to the academic staff to attend international conferences. This is one point which should be improved, given the importance of scientific mobility in order to stabilise scientific competences.

The review team had the opportunity to realise the strong recent efforts in the SDU for student mobility which show impressive results for both incoming and outgoing students, which are not restricted only to the framework of the Erasmus programme but are also extended to other bilateral agreements outside Erasmus. The review team has to make specific reference to the development of the International Relations Office of the SDU which plays an encouraging role and gives good support in improving the internationalisation issues.

One issue that has to be discussed separately is the one concerning with the internationalisation of curricula, which is at its initial stage. The question here has to do with the European compatibility and comparability of the curricula concerning their organisation and their structures. First point is the genuine implementation of ECTS, which is a reality only in few study programmes in SDU. The weight must be put to the term “genuine”. In many countries and in many universities, implementation of ECTS means simply to transform contact hours to student workload expressed in hours. Of course, this is not a “genuine” approach to ECTS. As mentioned earlier, the implementation of ECTS should be combined with new educational approaches, with new teaching and learning methods, with a new spirit. Second point here is the compatibility and comparability of the overall structure of the studies in higher education in Turkey. The Bologna model of the three cycles (first cycle – bachelor, second cycle – master and third cycle – doctorate) is now applied to all European countries, with only internal diversifications concerning the duration of each cycle (e.g. first cycle with three or four years of studies and second cycle with two years or one year of studies respectively). However, what seems to be generally accepted in Europe today is that finalising the second cycle requires in total five years of studies (or 240 ECTS) and that to obtain a doctorate requires three more years. Given this European landscape, the situation existing in the Turkish Universities (first cycle with at least four years, second cycle with at least two years and third cycle with at least four years) seems to require reconsideration regarding its compatibility to the generally existing situation in Europe.

Last issue in this chapter is the one concerning the low level of knowledge of foreign languages for both students and staff. As mentioned earlier in the chapter concerning “teaching”, this is one of the serious weaknesses of SDU and is reflected strongly in the internationalisation issues. Hence, the review team simply raises here the same concern and repeats the same recommendations.

10. Governance, decision-making and management

The SDU follows the general model for governance, decision-making and management applied to all Turkish Universities. At the central (institutional) level, we can identify three bodies: The Rector, the Senate and the Administrative (Executive) Board. Similar three-body structures exist at the level of the Faculties and at the level of the Departments as well. Restricting the analysis to the institutional level, the review team has come to the conclusion that ***the Rector is the only well identified level of governance and decision-making in the SDU and the only real and visible centre of power.*** According to the Turkish Law, the Senate is the supreme governance and decision-making body in the University. However, the Senate has two significant weaknesses that do not leave place for exercising actual power. The first weakness has to do with the ***huge number*** and the ***inhomogeneity*** of its members, while the

second weakness has to do with its *federal-type composition*. The Senate of SDU comprises 50 members, who (apart from the Rector and the Vice-Rectors) represent all 12 Faculties, the 3 Graduate Schools, the 3 High Schools and the 17 Vocational Schools. All Faculties are equally represented in the Senate with two members each (the respective Dean and one elected Senator) and all the other units are also equally represented in the Senate with one member each (the respective Director). The review team believes that this composition of the Senate does not allow either for *strategic decisions* to be taken or for *priorities* to be set where appropriate. Thus, the supreme governance and decision-making body at institutional level is by its origin undermined. The feeling of the review team is that the only substantial role that the Senate can play is to make compromises between various units or to simply allocate resources according to predefined criteria and formulas or to approve and legitimise decisions taken by someone else, and most presumably by the Rector.

On the other hand, the Administrative (Executive) Board of the University, composed by the Rector, the Vice-Rectors, the Deans and three elected members from different Faculties, is supposed to be responsible for the day-to-day running of the University. However, day-to-day running means (or requires) day-to-day collective operation and this does not seem to be the case with the Board.

Given the above situation, it is easy for someone to understand why the Rector of the University is indeed the only visible centre of power. However, the Rector cannot act alone, without some mechanisms to operate close to him, supporting him either in advisory or in executive terms. The Team of the advisors to the Rector, comprising ten Professors or Associate Professors, with advisory tasks for various issues seems to be one of these supportive mechanisms. The Self-Evaluation Steering Committee and the Strategic Plan Committee are also two mechanisms that have offered significant input to the Rector so far, especially on strategic issues. Finally, it is the central administration of the University, managed and coordinated by the office of the Secretary General, which offers the real administrative support to the Rector. However, and since all these mechanisms are informal or ad hoc or opaque in the system of power of the University, the Rector is the only visible and well identified centre of power in the University.

The feeling of the review team is that real leadership does exist in the University. But, under the new circumstances, including the size and the inhomogeneity of the University, the new national and European landscape and the corresponding new needs, the wide diversification of the activities of the University, the tasks arising from its Strategic Plan, the need to open up to the society, and, finally, the need for the University to make choices and set priorities, the governance, decision-making and management mechanisms of the SDU cannot remain a one-person affair. The Rector of the University needs visible structures and mechanisms and explicit processes to support his leadership, especially when difficult, hard and delicate decisions are to be taken. And, from the opposite viewpoint, the University needs all these structures, mechanisms and processes to democratically control the Rector's leadership and optimise his decisions (especially when difficult, hard and delicate decisions are to be taken).

In that context, the review team recommends that the University should reconsider the role and the composition of the Senate and of the Administrative Board. If the Senate is to meet its

role as the main strategic body of the SDU, then it needs to acquire the appropriate features. And if the Administrative Board is to act as an executive body for the day-to-day running of the University, then it should also have a flexible, efficient and fast-moving composition. However, if the University has to retain the existing structures with their current composition, then it must find out some alternatives (either formal or informal, but in any case visible and global) to fill this gap.

One of the most serious issues in the governance of a university is the question of sharing or transferring the power, either horizontally among the other governance, decision-making and management bodies at the same (institutional) level, or vertically among the various bodies at the different levels (University, Faculty, Department). The review team has the feeling that the SDU does not face major problems in these two ways of power sharing. The strong personality of the Rector is perhaps one of the reasons. But, at the same time, it must be noticed that the lack of any kind of prioritisation in the SDU may be another reason which diminishes the need for power sharing in both directions. The SDU's approach to this issue is given in the following sentence appearing in the SER⁷: *“Transferring the authority from the top of the pyramid to its bottom and realising of authority sharing will rise in parallel with an increase in the awareness of institutional culture and academic transitions”*. The review team's approach here is that the SDU will need to establish the processes to come to such kinds of balance or sharing or transferring of power, when it will have to take decisions concerning strategic choices and prioritisation. It seems that the current regulation leaves room for such initiatives and the SDU has to make best use of it, starting to build such processes as soon as possible.

Final point, concerning the governance, decision-making and management processes at all levels, is the one concerning the active student participation to these processes. The review team will deal in details with this sensitive and delicate in the chapter concerning students, but it also wants to raise its concern in this chapter too that the SDU has to make a reality the real, genuine and active participation of students in all these collective processes in order to adapt to the current European situation and trends.

11. Financial management

One of the points that the review team tried to clarify during both its visits to the SDU was the overall structures and processes for financial management. What we very often heard in our meetings was that the resources coming from the state were restricted and that the University had not enough degrees of freedom and flexibility to manage these resources. In one single phrase, what we realised was ***lack of funding and rigidity of processes in using the existing resources***. However, we tried to find out what lies beyond these two major weaknesses. What we realised is that the lack of an explicit management structure reflected also to financial management. The financial system seemed more-or-less to be fragmented, and this did not allow us to get a global view of the total resources used to develop the University. For the same reason, it seems that the University cannot ***rationalise*** the direction of income to the various destinations in order to ***optimise*** its use. And, at the same context, there are no clear

⁷ SER, p. 10.

mechanisms to *set priorities* in order to allocate financial or human resources or in order to make rational use of the part of the budget that does not come from the state. Therefore, the establishment of central mechanisms, which will allow the SDU to overcome the above mentioned problems and finally make best use of its resources, is the main recommendation of the review team in this chapter.

The review team is aware that state funding is insufficient, but this is the case everywhere in Europe. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the establishment of the SDU in Isparta is a huge investment of the central Government. And this is an investment both for the Turkish higher education at large and for the region of Isparta. The return of this huge investment requires of course constant and sufficient state funding, which has to be complemented by other sources of income. But it also requires cost-effective management of all the resources from the part of the University. And this is the purpose of our recommendation in this chapter.

12. Human resources policy

The review team was impressed by the human resources policy followed by SDU, especially regarding the administrative staff. We would like to notice the consideration given to the administrative staff and their competences, which are thought as complementary to the scientific and academic staff. The SDU has also established a dynamic and already successful policy in terms of staff promotion and career development, using transparent procedures. At the same time, the SDU has introduced clear mechanisms for allocation of administrative staff, based on a global view of human resources and on concrete assignment of tasks and clear job description. In that sense, the review team recommends that the SDU should continue and further improve its human resources policy and insist on equality of opportunities and opportunities of equality.

As for the academic staff, its major characteristic is that it appears to be young, dynamic and productive in teaching, research and services to society. However, the positive implications of this characteristic are compensated by two other characteristics. The first one has to do with the fact that the state universities in Turkey are not practically in position to establish any policy that may have negative consequences to the academic staff, because in practice tenure exists practically for every member of the academic staff, both for those who are in tenured positions (full professors and associate professors), but also for those who are under restricted term of employment and who finally are protected by court decisions. This is another weakness of the state universities in Turkey compared to the foundation universities. The second characteristic has to do with the fact that this young academic staff seems to stick to traditional attitudes concerning new teaching and learning approaches in the universities. For the review team, one reason for that phenomenon may be the lack of analytical information about these new approaches. If this is the case, the review team recommends that the leadership of SDU needs to find the way in order to take advantage of the dynamics of this young academic staff, improving information and awareness and diminishing any negative attitude.

Furthermore, there is also one issue concerning long-term strategies. The concentration today of such a young aged academic staff means that this staff will stay for many years in the

University. Therefore, the question of how to face the inevitable ageing of the today young academic staff is quite reasonable. It is actually a question of how to retain and renew – and even more improve – the dynamism of a young staff as it is getting aged and how to update their competences in the long term. And, at the same time and apart of the strictly education and research tasks, this dynamic academic staff has to get prepared – or trained – for modern, efficient and effective management. This is a question which has to be answered by the SDU in the context of its strategic plan, since its implications will appear in the long term.

13. Infrastructure

Even if many of the SDU's activities are distributed in various places at the city of Isparta and all around the province, the large part of the activities of the University are gathered at the Campus. Although the University exists since 1992, its facilities in the Campus are still in the making. As mentioned in the SER, only 29% of the verified Campus plan has been realised so far. This means that there is lack of space and the review team heard many complaints for that. On the other hand, there is undoubtedly a dynamics for the future. We had the opportunity to see new buildings under construction all around the Campus. But, as mentioned in the SER, *“the physical process takes longer than it is planned because of state investment budget delays”*.

What the review team would recommend to the SDU is to rethink priorities concerning the use of new buildings. Almost 15 years after 1992, the current situation and the future prospects of the University require this kind of rethinking. It may be related to the distribution of space between Faculties and Departments because of different dynamics that have developed in the meanwhile. But, there are at least two issues of which the University has to take account in this rethinking of priorities. The first one is that space is needed in order to consolidate research structures in the overall university activities and the second one is that even more emphasis must be put on services to students and the required space for that.

14. Necessity for central tools and services

The review team realised, both during its meetings but also in its effort to understand the data and the information presented in the SER, the lack of a system of tools and services acting globally at the central level of the University. This lack derives also, but indirectly, from the SER⁸, where specific reference is made to the problems faced in reaching the desired data and correct resources, which brought to the importance and the necessity of establishing central statistics and archive units.

The development of such central tools in order to pilot a university of that size is one further recommendation of the review team. However, it should be stressed that we speak about a system of tools and services which operates independently of the central administration structures and which supports both central administration and central governance and leadership of the University as well. The development of a central data system is one example to that direction. But we can also mention another example concerning the necessity for the

⁸ SER, p. 2.

University to have a global view of all kind of resources, supporting the rational and optimal use of them.

15. Students and student life

The review team was impressed by the good feelings that the students in the SDU have for their University. What we identified during our meetings with students was that they are satisfied with their studies, with their teachers, with the university authorities and with the social conditions in the University. However, this does not mean in any case that they do not see the existing problems. They do realise that resources are not sufficient, they do realise that they will face difficulties in their employment after graduation. But what is encouraging and optimistic with them is the perspective from which they face the difficulties. In one of our meetings with the students, we heard that, for them, insufficient resources are a challenge to try and work harder. And in another meeting we heard that the employment difficulties which the graduates face are another challenge for them to acquire more and better competences to increase their probabilities.

One of the issues which the review team considers as a weakness for SDU is the one related to the *student participation in the governance and decision-making processes*. During our meetings, we did not hear complaints from the part of the students. On the contrary, they declare that their voice is heard in the University and they feel that they can influence issues concerning their studies through their constructive communication with their teachers. The review team does not dispute these arguments presented by the students. However, it has the impression that there is rather lack of information and false perception concerning the real role that the students should play in a modern university.

The review team is obliged to remind at this point that two major statements appearing in the official Bologna documents specify today the role of students in the universities: According to the first statement (Prague Communiqué, 2001), “*Students are full members of the higher education community*”. And according to the second statement (Berlin Communiqué, 2003), “*Students are full partners in higher education governance*”. The review team believes that one can hardly find elements of implementation of the above two statements-principles in the SDU. For example, the participation of one student representative in the Senate (namely of the President of the Student Council), upon the invitation of the Rector and without having the right to vote, just “*in order to discuss educational matters and /or problems of students related to the University and to offer proper solutions to these problems*”⁹, cannot be considered as “full partnership in higher education governance”. And, furthermore, the existing possibility of the students to influence their studies solely through the communication with their teachers, as they stated in all our meetings with them, cannot be considered as “full membership in the higher education community”.

The review team knows that this is a situation deriving from the existing legislation in Turkey. In that case, the review team is obliged to raise the issue of *compatibility* of legislation with the principles ruling the Bologna Process which Turkey has joined since 2001. We can once

⁹ See Regulations for SDU Student Council in SER (appendix P), p. 131.

again remind the Berlin Communiqué, where the European Ministers “note that national legal measures for ensuring student participation are largely in place throughout the European Higher Education Area”, which brings us to the commitment of Turkey to adapt its legislation accordingly. Further on, at the same paragraph of the Berlin Communiqué and apart from the existing legislations, the Ministers “also call on institutions and student organisations to identify ways of increasing actual student involvement in higher education governance”. To that direction, the review team recommends that the active participation of the students has to be strengthened and become systematic in governance and decision-making processes in the SDU and stresses that this is a task for both the leadership of the SDU and the students (i.e. the Student Council).

As mentioned already, the great majority of the students of the SDU come from provinces other than Isparta. In such cases, the way in which the student community can be organised, either in the University Campus or in the city, is an issue of great importance. The review team has been told that the social opportunities in the city of Isparta are restricted. One solution to this problem could be to increase the social activities for the students in the University. This could also increase the socialisation of students among the various Faculties which, as we were informed, is rather limited. This might be, therefore, a good solution for the students, but on the other hand it would lead to the isolation of the University from the city. The interaction with the city at the social and cultural levels is among the main goals of a regional university. Therefore, the review team recommends that the SDU should move to both directions: On the one hand, increasing the social activities for the students inside the University and on the other hand acting as a catalyst for the increase of the social opportunities in the city.

It comes to be even more difficult to handle the issues concerning the student community and the social opportunities, when referring to the other sites of the University. As mentioned already only half of the total number of students study in programmes at Isparta, the others being spread across various other sites. The review team had the opportunity to realise the problem when it visited the units located at Eğirdir. Their students are isolated from the main Campus and this is also the case with most of the staff. The University has to develop an efficient policy to face this problem in order to strengthen the links between main Campus and other sites, concerning both students and staff, and it has to consider the situation in a global way in developing and implementing this kind of policy.

16. Relationship with the society

As mentioned already, the regional dimension of the higher education policy in Turkey seems to be strong enough. This dimension is based on the role that the establishment of a university plays on the cultural, economic, social and technological development of a region. The impact that the university has to that development is expected to be the actual return to the huge investment made by the Government. On the other hand, the relation between the university and the region should not be considered a one-way relation, i.e. a relation where the university simply offers to the region. It has to be a *two-way relationship* where both sides – the university and the region – offer each other and get from each other. It is in that context that

we have to deal with the relationship of the SDU with the city of Isparta – and furthermore with the province of Isparta at large.

The review team faced serious difficulties in its effort to identify such kind of relationship, either during its meetings with the people of the University or during its two meetings with the stakeholders and the external partners. We heard enthusiastic comments and statements from the stakeholders regarding the role of the SDU and the regional universities in general. We were informed that the Turkish Union of Chambers considers universities as number one factor for the accession of Turkey to the European Union. And we also heard that the SDU has already changed Isparta at fast rate. However, we could not identify the level of real cooperation in the case of the SDU and Isparta.

The University seems to be committed to providing services to society at large, through scientific activities and support given to the community. And, in some fields it also offers expertise, but this could be extended to more fields and be further improved and rationalised given that Isparta is not an industrialised area. The “Technocity” is an interesting example of such an initiative, which however requires further improvement and better utilisation. We heard, for example, that there are 20 “Technocities” established throughout Turkey, and the dominating question still is whether and in which way do the University, the “Technocity” and the needs of the respective region match. Therefore, if the University has to extend and/or improve these initiatives, its primary goal should be to serve the needs of the society at large. And this, by itself, means that the University should take account of stakeholders’ needs and views.

On the other hand, the University is a living organisation, operating in a given social environment which in turn has also to provide to the University appropriate conditions for its operation. A regional university cannot rely only upon its own forces and upon the support that it gets from the state. It needs support from the region. The kind and the extent of this support can only be determined through the genuine communication between the two parts.

The review team has however the impression that this kind of communication does not exist. It seems as if the University and the stakeholders live in *two separate ivory towers*. This situation cannot help either of the two parts. What is necessary is that both partners should realise that they are going to live together and grow up together in the years to come. They have to realise that they have a common future and, therefore, they have to speak together about this common future. They need to join forces in order to achieve best results. Speaking for the sake of the University, we can say that the University has to improve its links with the external stakeholders. But, on the other hand, greater support by stakeholders may consequently facilitate this development. The establishment of a formal way for consultation and cooperation between the two parts is, according to the review team, the first step to that direction.

DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITIES AND CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

17. Strategic management

The first methodological question in the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme is “What is the institution trying to do?” and refers to the vision, the mission, the aims of the institution and its mid- and long-term strategies. This question, together with the second one “How is the institution trying to do it?”, form actually the process through which the institution draws up its Strategic Plan. Then, we have the third question “How does the institution know it works?” which actually deals with the quality culture that dominates the overall functioning of the institution. And, finally, the fourth question “How does the institution change in order to improve?” defines the operation of change as such, which expresses the capacity of the institution to transform its strategic targets into appropriate strategies and operational plans to be implemented within reasonable timeframes.

In this chapter of the Review Report we will deal with issues concerning strategic management, i.e. with issues related to the first two methodological questions, while in the next two chapters we will deal with issues concerning quality culture and operation of change respectively.

The SDU has already finalised its Strategic Plan for the period 2006-2010. The Strategic Plan is in accordance with the major aims of the University, resulting from its mission and vision statements. As mentioned earlier, there was significant interrelation between the processes which led on the one hand to the Strategic Plan and on the other hand to the SER of the SDU.

The review team has outlined in the previous sections of the Review Report its observations, its analyses and its recommendations for the most important issues concerning the present and the future of the SDU, taking due account of the Strategic Plan of the University.

According to the review team’s perception, the *vision* of the SDU can be expressed through its aim to be a global, research-oriented university, offering in parallel high quality education to its students and services to the society.

The Strategic Plan of the SDU is based on its vision and mission statements and it has been worked out through a SWOT analysis, followed by the action plan which is extended to seven concrete strategic objectives. The review team cannot deal with the details of the Strategic Plan in this Review Report, but it will comment on the most important points, in relevance to the analysis presented in the main body of the Review Report.

Distinguishing between constraints and weaknesses, and defining constraints as those elements of the current situation at the institution which beyond its immediate control, the review team has the view that insufficiency of resources and lack of autonomy are indeed the most important *constraints* for the SDU, originating either in the existing legislation or in the overall higher education policy in Turkey irrespective of its source (Ministry of Education or Council of Higher Education). Another issue which the SDU considers as constraint is the inclusion of Vocational Schools in the universities according to the Turkish Law. The review

team realises the problem, but insists on the need for a deeper analysis on this issue. The Vocational Schools may as well be treated as “opportunity” for the universities if the social dimension of this policy is analysed in depth.

However, the review team is obliged to add two issues which actually act as constraints, since they are stipulated in the existing Law. The first one has to do with the undoubtedly weak student participation in the governance and decision-making processes of the Turkish universities and the second one has to do with structural issues concerning studies (e.g. issues concerning the duration of studies and the genuine implementation of ECTS). These two issues are real problems for the SDU (and the other Turkish universities) and will become even more intensive when it will come to the compatibility of the Turkish higher education system with the Bologna principles.

Further on, the review team considers as real *weaknesses* of the SDU, i.e. as elements which are subject more or less to its immediate control, the following:

- Evening programmes (2nd Education)
- Traditional attitudes concerning new educational approaches
- Lack of visible central structures allowing for prioritisation and strategic choices
- Federal-type composition of the Senate
- Lack of competence in foreign languages
- Low number of master and doctorate students

Although with varying weights, the above weaknesses have been dealt with in the main body of the present Review Report. The review team is not sure whether e.g. the composition of the Senate should be considered as constraint or as simple weakness (depending on the degrees of freedom left to the universities from the legislation). However, it is an issue that needs to be handled by the University. As for the evening programmes, the review team has realised that the university has not a clear view whether to consider it as a weakness or as a strength (increasing the income of the University) or as an opportunity (opening the access to higher education or offering continuing education).

The review team is also aware of the generalised view of the state universities in Turkey which consider the foundation universities as *threat*. However, and since the foundation universities are a reality for Turkey, a state university like the SDU has two possibilities for action. The first one should be addressed to the Ministry of Education and/or to the YÖK and should aim at the weakening of what the state universities consider as unfair competition between state and foundation universities regarding legislation and any other measures. The second possibility for the state universities should be to strengthen all their comparative advantages and to accelerate their development and improvement rates, concerning research excellence, quality culture, European dimension, links to the society and other issues which will finally increase their attractiveness both for the best students and for the best academics.

For the review team, one of the major *strengths* of the SDU is its staff, both administrative and academic. The expression used to describe it in the Strategic Planning and the SER¹⁰ is

¹⁰ SER, p. 80.

quite eloquent: “*Young and dynamic academic and administrative staff comprehending country problems, being experts in their fields and open to development*”. The review team believes that taking advantage of this staff is the key for the even faster development of the SDU, under the precondition that a policy will be established that will multiply the potential of this staff.

Coming to the *opportunities* of which the SDU should take advantage in order to better implement its Strategic Plan, the review team has the view that the most important points have to do with the positioning of the University at the region, with its advantages compared to the other state universities that were founded in the same year 1992, with its leading role in the ADIMA network. All these points have to do with the profile and the identity of the SDU, but most of all with the reputation that it has already built at regional and at national level. Now, the SDU has to start building its international profile, taking advantage of another significant opportunity which has to do with the opening of Turkish higher education to the new European landscape.

The *challenges* for the SDU are ahead. No doubt, its Strategic Plan is an invaluable tool. But, its implementation requires three actions. The first action is that the SDU should shape carefully its profile and its identity and then work intensively for their continuous improvement. The second action is that the SDU should set priorities. The elements of a Strategic Plan cannot be implemented in the same time or with the same speed. And the third action is to establish the appropriate structures for the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The above actions are part of what we call “*strategic management*”. And when it comes to strategic management, it is important to consider the need for the effective and efficient implementation of the Strategic Plan, especially in conditions of insufficient resources, which leads to the need for prioritisation regarding strategic planning. It is necessary, therefore, that the SDU establishes a systematic procedure, which will continuously monitor not only the implementation of the strategic plan, but also the validity of the objectives as well. Nevertheless, and irrespective of this monitoring procedure, the efficiency of the strategic management in a university is affected greatly by the way in which a clear strategic perspective dominates the functioning of its leadership and of its governance, decision-making and management collective processes, both at institutional level and at the level of the various Faculties. This means that, in the case of the SDU, both the Senate at the institutional level and the respective bodies at the level of the Faculties should be in position to take strategic decisions, i.e. decisions that will improve the strategic goals of the University. And, in that context, an important task for the leadership of the University is to *inspire* and to *lead* the university community in the context of such strategic perspectives.

18. Quality culture

The term “quality culture” defines the overall attitude of a university which focuses on the concept of “quality” and which, thus, applies to issues like quality assurance, quality assessment, quality improvement etc. Quality is a central element in European higher education today. Furthermore, it has also assumed a key role in the Bologna Process, and the report of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance) “*Standards and Guidelines*

for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” has already been adopted by the European Ministers in Bergen in May 2005, building also in this way a European perspective and a European context for quality assurance in higher education. Furthermore, every country participating in the Bologna Process is committed to have established its own national quality assurance system by 2007 according to the above standards and guidelines by ENQA. In parallel, EUA actively encourages its member universities to implement their own internal quality assurance mechanisms and to develop a quality culture shared among universities throughout Europe.

The review team is aware that there is not any formal system for quality assurance in higher education at national level in Turkey so far. But, on the other hand, the establishment of such a national system by the year 2007 is among the commitments that the Turkish Government has taken in the context of the Bologna Process. In that context, the review team strongly supports the initiatives taken by the SDU towards the development of internal procedures aiming to the spreading of a quality culture inside the University. The review team recommends that the internal quality culture processes in the SDU should become systematic and should be related to the strategic management processes and help in the assessment of both the implementation rates of the Strategic Plan and the validity and feasibility of its objectives. In that context, the SDU should utilise the experience and the expertise gained so far by the members of the Self-Evaluation Steering Committee.

One specific point that the review team wishes to raise regarding quality assurance is the procedure of assessment of teaching and courses by the students. The review team is aware that the evaluation of teaching is just beginning in the SDU and that very few cases of courses evaluation by the students exist so far. The review team is also aware of the related surveys and of the assessment forms used. However, the students in all our meetings claimed that this process is **gradually degenerating** because of the lack of interest shown by the students. Students ascribe this attitude to their feeling that the process has **no visible consequences** at all. The review team wants to stress that students should be brought in the centre of the evaluation process, since it is one of the most effective ways for the students to get involved in the educational procedures and to contribute to their improvement.

The evaluation of teaching and courses by students is a very sensitive procedure. This process is quite common in most European countries. Students have the opportunity and the obligation as well **to evaluate** both the courses and the teachers by filling a questionnaire. As mentioned earlier, this process is already applied in the SDU, but with serious weaknesses. One question usually raised concerns the consequences of this process. In principle, the main purpose of the process is to improve the quality of education (concerning either courses or teaching). And the university has to find the ways to make this improvement a reality perceived by everyone, but especially by the students themselves. Apart from this, there is a second area of consequences referring to the academic staff members themselves. The simplest answer to this question is that the results of the evaluation should affect the promotion of the academic staff members. However, this is a consequence that has to be handled with care, and the review team would rather recommend that the process and the results of the evaluation are used as an **inspiration** to promote quality control and to staff development. If the results of the teaching evaluation procedure are not adequately exploited, if they are not analysed properly and integrated into

the continuous improvement of the content and the methods of teaching and learning, then it is probable that the teaching evaluation process will *degenerate* into a bureaucratic and meaningless operation.

Therefore, the review team recommends that the SDU should pay increased attention to the teaching evaluation process and to organise and systematise it as soon as possible. The teaching evaluation process should be carried out with the proper methodology and with a visible impact on the improvement of teaching, and should be integrated into the overall internal quality assurance process. It must be stressed, however, that students and teachers should be *convinced* and, even more, *inspired* and *motivated* to get actively and effectively involved in such a process. Opportunities for staff members to address weaknesses in their teaching should be made available, and even be made compulsory in cases of continued failure.

19. The capacity for change

The general perspective

Besides the quality assurance issues, the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme focuses on the *capacity for change* of the universities visited. The reason for this is a widespread conviction that European universities are exposed to increasing *demands* from society and the labour market and in many countries they are also exposed to growing *competition* from other institutions of higher education, either from the non-university sector or from private institutions.

If the universities do not seize the initiative themselves and show their capacity for change and their adaptability to radically new conditions in an era of mass higher education, then there may be *risks* that even the important core academic values, which we undoubtedly all want to preserve, might be jeopardised.

Universities have always had and still have the twofold duty of *defending* traditional values and of *leading* society into new areas. There have been periods in their very long history, when the universities were too successful as defenders of the traditions at the price of *isolation* from society and petrification. But fortunately enough, we can also look back to epochs, when the universities were true centres of *innovation* in many respects.

The capacity for change requires firstly the determination of all the factors requiring change, as well as of the features and the content of the change needed. Secondly, it requires each university to determine its own mission in conjunction with the changes needed and to set its priorities. Thirdly, it requires determining the strengths and weaknesses of each university with respect to its own identity and characteristics and to the existing external conditions. And finally, it requires an efficient mechanism to continuously assess the course of each university towards its objectives, towards the changes required. What we have to ask ourselves is whether the traditional organisation and leadership of a university will be capable of fulfilling its task at the beginning of the 21st century.

The review team wants to stress that ***the capacity for change is a sine qua non condition for a modern university in a modern society***. The capacity for change requires clear mission, inspired vision and realistic objectives for the university. It also requires effective strategic planning and the establishment of a quality culture. And, furthermore, it requires tools such as action plans and milestones. These are the internal requirements. There are of course external requirements as well. They have to do with resources (both financial and human), and with the legislative framework and the relationship between the universities and the state, which have to encourage and support the universities in strengthening their capacity for change.

But, apart from these internal and external requirements, the capacity for change requires, above all, inspiration. It requires inspired, motivated and determined people. It is extremely important to realise that elements of strategic planning do not themselves change the universities. Changes in universities have to be driven by people: Staff and students and an inspired university leadership making sure that the actions in the action plans are in progress and that the milestones are achieved.

The specific perspective of the Suleyman Demirel University

Coming to the specific case of the SDU, the review team has to stress on some factors which by themselves constitute a positive aspect for the capacity of a university for change. The SDU is a young university with young personnel and with young leadership. The dynamics for change has already been outlined in the Strategic Plan and the will of the people is quite clear. The question now is how this will and this intention are going to be transformed into action. No doubt that first thing needed is inspiration. But, equally and quite reasonably, motivation is needed as well.

In that context, therefore, if we have to speak about the capacity of a university like the SDU for change, we should refer to six principal action lines:

- Actions concerning the changes needed in order to adapt to the new European landscape built through the establishment of the European Higher Education Area
- Actions concerning the changes required to adapt to the new landscape of higher education in Turkey
- Actions concerning the changes needed to improve its reputation in the international higher education and research environment
- Actions concerning the changes needed to strengthen its links with the society
- Actions concerning changes needed to improve efficiency and visibility of the governance, decision-making and management processes
- Actions concerning the changes needed to improve its capability to take strategic decisions and to make strategic choices

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

20. Conclusions

The Süleyman Demirel University is a young, comprehensive, multidisciplinary university, integrating all levels of higher education, which aims to be a world-class research-oriented university, to offer high level education to its students and to play both an expertise and a service role to the region.

Over the past 15 years since its foundation, the growth of the SDU is constant, but with ambivalent consequences. Its growth refers to the number of students but also to the number of staff, but it also refers to the growth of its infrastructure as a result of the huge investments made in Isparta for that reason.

The academic staff is young, dynamic and productive in teaching, research and services to the society, being the motive force for the growth of the SDU.

Today, the SDU is at the crossroads, having to adapt to the emerging higher education landscape both in Europe and in Turkey. The implementation of the Strategic Plan 2006-2010 and the establishment of quality culture in the years to come are the basic working tools for the University.

It is in that context that the review team tried to approach the work done so far by the SDU, its achievements and its weaknesses. It is in that context also that the review team made its analyses and presented its recommendations throughout the whole Review Report.

If there is something left to be noticed here, it could be some words concerning the necessity for the people of the SDU to shift from their individual approaches and attitudes to more collective or to more “institutional” ones. It could be for example the necessity to share the individual aims with the institution’s ones or the necessity to take distance from what they live intensively in a day-to-day basis, so that they can analyse it, moving from simple descriptions to analyses. This change of attitude will make it possible for them to take more initiatives at the institutional level, to get acquainted with the need to make strategic choices and to set priorities, to realise the necessity for changes in the University in order to adapt to the new era.

This change of attitude can be considered as a bottom-up process, regarding the gradual consciousness and commitment of the individuals in an institutional perspective. It provides the proper potential and builds the necessary dynamics for the institutional change. But, it also requires inspiration from the institutional leadership (a top-down process?) so that every member of the community can be convinced.

21. Summary of recommendations

Before coming to the end of this Review Report, we summarise here the main recommendations, as they have appeared underlined in the respective paragraphs of the text.

Academic structure and organisation

1. Referring to the two-year vocational programmes, the review team recommends that the SDU should try to explore and identify, through its strategic procedures, its overall approach to the post-secondary vocational education, taking account of the needs of the society and the labour market, weighing the advantages and disadvantages for including or not this kind of education in the universities and, finally, seeking for ways to better consolidate two-year vocational education into the overall universities' activities. In the same context, the reconstruction or restructuring of studies in the Vocational Schools, aiming to decrease the number of programmes by introducing specialisations into the programmes, might contribute to the solution of the problem.

2. Referring to the evening programmes (2nd Education), the review team recommends that the SDU should also try to explore all the dimensions of the appearing problems through its strategic processes.

3. The review team strongly supports the strategic choice of the University to increase the number of postgraduate students, both at the level of master and at the level of doctorate. However it recommends that the SDU should try to identify the best and more efficient ways for the organisation of master and doctorate programmes by the Graduate Schools, especially regarding best cooperation with the respective Faculties and Departments. Furthermore, the review team has the impression that the existing division of tasks between Faculties and Graduate Schools is a rather complicated and confusing scheme which may result to conflicts. For that reason, it recommends that the SDU should at least try to go a little deeper regarding the efficiency of this scheme.

Teaching and learning

4. The review team strongly supports the efforts of the leadership of the SDU towards the shift from teaching-oriented to learning-oriented educational approaches and recommends that the SDU should proceed to a wide restructuring of its curricula taking due account of the recent developments in Europe concerning ECTS and competence based learning outcomes.

5. The review team strongly recommends that the SDU should maintain the cooperation with the Burdur Faculty of Education, regarding the programme for pedagogical training offered by this Faculty for the teaching staff of the whole SDU.

6. The review team strongly recommends that the SDU should make faster steps in order to establish an efficient language policy. What needed is to awake the interest of the students and staff and to build an attitude for learning and use of English language as a requirement for the development of the European profile of the University. Of course, this policy should make

the best utilisation of the possibilities of the High School of Foreign Languages, but, at the same time, it should further improve these possibilities. The establishment of language laboratories in order to develop self-learning methods might be one of these improvements.

Research

7. The review team recommends that the SDU should build the appropriate conditions in order to increase the number of master and – primarily – of doctorate students, being one of the most crucial indicators, verifying the move of a university towards the research-orientation.

8. The review team considers as a sine qua non in order for the SDU to capitalise its scientific and research reputation, on the one hand to establish structured research activities, based on cooperation and joining of forces inside the University, and on the other hand to set priorities for the high level research that will be supported by the University. To that direction, the SDU should also introduce permanent structures in order to design or revise its research policy.

9. The review team further recommends that the University should set research priorities according to above mentioned principles and to establish the necessary procedures to reach that aim. Once the targets for research are set, progress for achieving them should be carefully monitored.

10. The review team strongly recommends that the SDU should develop a global approach to the research activities, which requires coordinating structures, visibility and efficient administrative support. In that context, the review team supports strongly the initiatives of the leadership of the SDU for the establishment of two administrative units, a first one in order to coordinate research and a second one in order to offer support for projects.

Internationalisation

11. The review team recommends that the SDU should develop an internationalisation policy with different characteristics for each one of the two main groups of the University (students and staff). This should be a policy that will build upon the increased interest shown by the students and that will create the appropriate motivation and requirements for the staff. For example, the review team has realised that there is insufficient support from the SDU to the academic staff to attend international conferences. This is one point which should be improved, given the importance of scientific mobility in order to stabilise scientific competences.

12. The review team recommends that the SDU should proceed to the genuine implementation of ECTS which should be combined with new educational approaches, with new teaching and learning methods, with a new spirit.

13. The review team recommends that the existing situation regarding the minimum duration of the three cycles of studies (first cycle with at least four years, second cycle with at

least two years and third cycle with at least four years) should be reconsidered regarding its compatibility to the generally existing situation in Europe.

Governance, decision-making and management

14. The review team recommends that the University should reconsider the role and the composition of the Senate and of the Administrative Board in order to adapt to the new circumstances and meet the new needs. If the Senate is to meet its role as the main strategic body of the SDU, then it needs to acquire the appropriate features. And if the Administrative Board is to act as an executive body for the day-to-day running of the University, then it should also have a flexible, efficient and fast-moving composition. However, if the University has to retain the existing structures with their current composition, then it must find out some alternatives (either formal or informal, but in any case visible and global) to fill this gap.

15. The review team recommends that the SDU should establish the appropriate processes in order to achieve the balance or sharing or transferring of power, either horizontally among the other governance, decision-making and management bodies at the same (institutional) level, or vertically among the various bodies at the different levels (University, Faculty, Department). The review team considers these processes as particularly important, especially in the cases where decisions are to be taken concerning strategic choices and prioritisation. It seems that the current regulation leaves room for such initiatives and the SDU has to make best use of it, starting to build such processes as soon as possible.

Financial management

16. The review team recommends that appropriate central mechanisms should be established, which will allow the SDU to have a global view and make best and rational use of all kinds of resources.

Human resources policy

17. The review team recommends that the SDU should continue and further improve its human resources policy and insist on equality of opportunities and opportunities of equality.

18. The review team recommends that the leadership of SDU should find the way in order to take advantage of the dynamics of this young academic staff, improving information and awareness and diminishing any negative attitude.

19. The review team recommends that the leadership of SDU should find also the way how to overcome in the long-term the implications of the inevitable ageing of the today young academic staff and how to retain and renew – and even more improve – its dynamism as it is getting aged.

Infrastructure

20. The review team recommends that the SDU should rethink priorities concerning the use of new buildings. Almost 15 years after 1992, the current situation and the future prospects of the University require this kind of rethinking. It may be related to the distribution of space between Faculties and Departments because of different dynamics that have developed in the meanwhile. But, there are at least two issues of which the University has to take account in this rethinking of priorities. The first one is that space is needed in order to consolidate research structures in the overall university activities and the second one is that even more emphasis must be put on services to students and the required space for that.

Necessity for central tools and services

21. The review team recommends that the SDU should develop appropriate central tools in order to pilot a university of that size. This will be a system of tools and services which operates independently of the central administration structures and which supports both central administration and central governance and leadership of the University as well. The development of a central data system is one example to that direction. But we can also mention another example concerning the necessity for the University to have a global view of all kind of resources, supporting the rational and optimal use of them.

Students and student life

22. The review team recommends that the active participation of the students has to be strengthened and become systematic in governance and decision-making processes in the SDU and stresses that this is a task for both the leadership of the SDU and the students (i.e. the Student Council).

23. The review team recommends that the SDU should on the one hand increase the social activities for the students inside the University and on the other hand act as a catalyst for the increase of the social opportunities in the city of Isparta.

24. The review team recommends that the University has to develop an efficient policy to strengthen the links between main Campus and other sites, concerning both students and staff, considering the overall situation in a global way in order to develop and implement such kind of policy.

Relationship with the society

25. Among the primary goals of the University is to serve the needs of the society at large. And this, by itself, means that the University should take account of stakeholders' needs and views. On the other hand, the University needs support from the region. The kind and the extent of this support can only be determined through the genuine communication between the two parts. In that context, the review team recommends that the University has to improve its links with the external stakeholders and, at the same time, greater support by stakeholders may consequently facilitate this development. The establishment of a formal way for consultation and cooperation between the two parts is, according to the review team, the first step to that direction.

Strategic management

26. The review team recommends that the SDU should establish a systematic procedure to support strategic management, continuously monitoring not only the implementation of the strategic plan, but also the validity of the objectives as well.

Quality culture

27. The review team strongly supports the initiatives taken by the SDU towards the development of internal procedures aiming to the spreading of a quality culture inside the University. The review team recommends that the internal quality culture processes in the SDU should become systematic and should be related to the strategic management processes and help in the assessment of both the implementation rates of the Strategic Plan and the validity and feasibility of its objectives. In that context, the review team also recommends that the SDU should utilise the experience and the expertise gained so far by the members of the Self-Evaluation Steering Committee.

28. The review team recommends that the SDU should pay increased attention to the teaching evaluation process and to organise and systematise it as soon as possible. The teaching evaluation process should be carried out with the proper methodology and with a visible impact on the improvement of teaching, and should be integrated into the overall internal quality assurance process. It must be stressed, however, that students and teachers should be ***convinced*** and, even more, ***inspired*** and ***motivated*** to get actively and effectively involved in such a process. Opportunities for staff members to address weaknesses in their teaching should be made available, and even be made compulsory in cases of continued failure.

Capacity for change

29. In that context, therefore, and speaking about the capacity of a university like the SDU for change, the review team should refer to six principal action lines:

- Actions concerning the changes needed in order to adapt to the new European landscape built through the establishment of the European Higher Education Area
- Actions concerning the changes required to adapt to the new landscape of higher education in Turkey
- Actions concerning the changes needed to improve its reputation in the international higher education and research environment
- Actions concerning the changes needed to strengthen its links with the society
- Actions concerning changes needed to improve efficiency and visibility of the governance, decision-making and management processes
- Actions concerning the changes needed to improve its capability to take strategic decisions and to make strategic choices.

ENVOI

Coming to the end of this report, the review team feels the need to express once again its sincere thanks to the Süleyman Demirel University for the excellent arrangements provided to make its two visits a challenging and delightful, although very intensive, experience. At the same time the review team wishes to thank the SDU for the generous and overwhelming hospitality.

It has been a great pleasure and a very stimulating experience for the review team to be introduced to the SDU during this specific and crucial period, both for the Turkish higher education but, also, for higher education in Europe at large. And it has also been a privilege and a sheer joy for us to meet so many enthusiastic and highly committed people.

The review team has been positively impressed by the developments it has seen and by the momentum and the dynamics of the University. The review team is convinced that the initiatives undertaken by the leadership of the SDU are taking the University to the right direction and strongly supports the leadership to continue on this course.

Our recommendations are intended to be our own contribution to the process of change and to help the SDU take best advantage of the opportunities and cope with the threats existing in its route to the future. But, at the same time, our report aspires to function as an inspiration for the University as a whole, but more specifically for all those people, students and staff, who have a concern for the future of the University.

As our final words, we want to express our hope that our report will indeed play the role that was described in the concluding words of the SDU's Self-Evaluation Report, being therefore *"a triggering, exciting and extraordinary beginning in the quality journey"* for the Süleyman Demirel University.