



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**Α.ΔΙ.Π.**

**H.Q.A.A.**

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

### **DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS**

### **HAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY**

June 2011

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **The External Evaluation Committee**

#### ***Introduction***

##### I. The External Evaluation Procedure

- Brief account of documents examined, of the Site Visit, meetings and facilities visited.

##### II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

- Comments on the quality and completeness of the documentation provided and on the overall acceptance of and participation in the Quality Assurance procedures by the Department .

#### ***A. Undergraduate Curriculum***

##### APPROACH

- Goals and objectives of the Curriculum, structure and content, intended learning outcomes.

##### IMPLEMENTATION

- Rationality, functionality, effectiveness of the Curriculum.

##### RESULTS

- Maximizing success and dealing with potential inhibiting factors.

##### IMPROVEMENT

- Planned improvements.

#### ***A2. Postgraduate Curriculum***

##### A2.1. Master of Science (MS) Degree Studies

##### PLAN

- Plan to achieve the goals of a postgraduate program.

##### IMPLEMENTATION

- The effectiveness of the postgraduate curriculum.

#### ***A3. Curriculum- PhD***

##### APPROACH

- The goals and objectives of the curriculum.

##### IMPLEMENTATION

- The effectiveness of the implementation of departmental goals.

##### RESULTS

- The achievements and the current problems of the curriculum.

#### ***B. Teaching***

##### APPROACH:

- Pedagogic policy and methodology, means and resources.

##### IMPLEMENTATION

- Quality and evaluation of teaching procedures, teaching materials and resources, mobility.

##### RESULTS

- Efficacy of teaching, understanding of positive or negative results.

##### IMPROVEMENT

- Proposed methods for improvement.

### **C. Research**

#### APPROACH

- Research policy and main objectives.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

- Research promotion and assessment, quality of support and infrastructure.

#### RESULTS

- Research projects and collaborations, scientific publications and applied results.

#### IMPROVEMENT

- Proposed initiatives aiming at improvement.

### **D. All Other Services**

#### APPROACH

- Quality and effectiveness of services provided by the Department.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

- Organization and infrastructure of the Department's administration (e.g. secretariat of the Department).

#### RESULTS

- Adequateness and functionality of administrative and other services.

#### IMPROVEMENTS

- Proposed initiatives aiming at improvement.

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

- Short-, medium- and long-term goals and plans of action proposed by the Department.

### **F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:**

- The development and present situation of the Department, good practices and weaknesses identified through the External Evaluation process, recommendations for improvement.

### **External Evaluation Committee**

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics of the Harokopio University consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

- 1. Joseph Kehayias, PhD, Chair**  
Tufts University, Boston, MA, USA
  
- 2. Vassilis Gekas, PhD**  
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus
  
- 3. Francene M Steinberg, PhD, RD**  
University of California at Davis
  
- 4. Nancy R. Hudson, MS, RD**  
University of California at Davis

## ***Introduction***

### **I. The External Evaluation Procedure**

**Summary:** The site visit took place from June 6<sup>th</sup> through June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at Harokopio University in Athens. The three day meeting included meetings with students, faculty, administration, the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC), and alumnae. It also included a tour of the laboratories and library. The scope of the Committee was to evaluate the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, one of the four departments of the University.

#### *Day 1, Monday, June 6, 2011.*

In the morning, the four-member External Evaluation Committee (EEC) met at the offices of the HQAA with professor Achilleas Gravanis who oriented them on the evaluation process.

Then the committee arrived at the Harokopio University campus in Kallithea and met with the IEC of the department including Professors Sidossis, Karathanos, Skopouli, Secretary Bathrellou and Student representative Bitsi.

At that time the Committee was informed that the University was officially closed because of the sudden death of the ex president Giorgos Karampazos. Funeral services were arranged for later that day. The Committee agreed to cut the day 1 visit short and modify the schedule for the following two days.

#### *Day 2, Tuesday, June 7, 2011.*

The EEC met with the University's Rector, Professor Maridaki-Kassotaki, Vice Rector Professor Antonopoulou, and Secretary of the Institution Haliapa.

Professor Labros Sidossis, the head of the IEC, gave a PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the department and the results of the Internal Evaluation process.

This meeting was followed by meetings with students, first undergraduate students and then graduate students.

#### *Day 3, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.*

The committee met with alumnae of all three degree levels (BS, MS and PhD) and then separately with members of the faculty and laboratory staff. A tour of the facilities that included wet labs, computer and media facilities and the library concluded the site visit.

- Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.

The committee reviewed course syllabi for both the undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as the student handbooks for these programs. Also reviewed faculty CVs, a list of funded projects, the statistical data that related to teaching activities of the department, and the self-study document itself.

## **II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure**

The department provided adequate documentation to the EEC prior to the site visit. This was supplemented on site by whatever was requested by the committee, which included the CVs of the faculty and an English translation of the teaching productivity data for the department. The program also provided the EEC with the FY budgets for 2009 and 2010 and a comprehensive list of grant funding.

### ***A. Undergraduate Curriculum***

#### **APPROACH**

- *What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?*

The program aims to “improve health through research teaching and leadership in human nutrition including basic nutrition sciences and clinical, social-cultural and community aspects of nutrition. The Department also seeks to provide students with the ability to succeed in a wide variety of employment settings such as hospitals, health care facilities, food and nutrition related industries, catering, community and public health facilities, research centres, government agencies, secondary and higher education, sports clubs, private practices and offers a solid academic background in nutrition and dietetics through rigorous science-based coursework.”

Program goals include:

1. Provide the best possible training in nutrition and dietetics.
2. Promote research in all nutrition-related areas
3. Reciprocal relationship with society
4. National Nutrition and Health Policy

The goals are addressed through a rigorous curriculum with a strong base in the natural sciences. The curriculum is well defined, though the prescribed coursework is very heavy with little room for students to take elective courses.

- *How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?*

It appears that the goals that appear in the self-study report have evolved from the work of the Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC). They are the result of intensive work by that committee with representation that included faculty, a student and support personnel. Outcome data collected by the University was used in the development of the objectives.

- *Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?*

It appears that the curriculum goals above are being achieved. Alumnae reported that their preparation exceeded the requirements for graduate school placement in foreign institutions in both the US and the UK. The curriculum address all of these areas and with an emphasis on the didactic and supervised practicum in the undergraduate years.

There is some redundancy in the curriculum requirements which may

provide the students with more information than they need at the undergraduate level, making it difficult for students to take elective courses. There are also some gaps in the coursework which will limit the student's effectiveness as an entry-level dietetics practitioner.

- *How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?*

Since this is a relatively young program, which took its first students in 1994, the curriculum has evolved over time, with input from faculty and staff as the program developed.

Both the administration and the faculty reported that students have been involved in the programmatic areas of the department since they were first accepted into the program in 1994.

The IEC chair indicated that the program was modelled after prominent international programs in Nutrition and Dietetics and recently updated to align with guidelines from the European Federated Association of Dieticians (EFAD) and The Dieticians Improvement Education and Training Standards (DIETS).

- *Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?*

It appears that there is a plan for curriculum revision, since there was a complete revision of the curriculum in 2003 and another review is scheduled in 2012. In the interim, ongoing updates to the undergraduate curriculum include the addition of a clinical practicum in 2009 and the pending addition of two additional practicums in the summer of 2011.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

- *How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?*

The undergraduate curriculum appears to be well –designed with appropriate didactic material to provide the students with the scientific background needed for the practice of clinical nutrition. The program has a particular strength in mathematics/statistics.

- *How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?*

In comparison to accepted standards for dietetics education, are three major gaps in the curriculum as it exists. These are:

1. No exposure to food, culinary skills, or sensory evaluation are present in the curriculum. It lacks adequate preparation in “food and nutrient delivery” which is part of the internationally accepted nutrition care process. Program graduates working as dieticians are required to counsel clients on both food preparation and the alteration of food components without having been exposed to the techniques for achieving this, except theoretically. Furthermore, dieticians are responsible for managing food production in hospitals and the program provides only didactic preparation in this area.
2. The clinical practicum lacks consistency between and among students, with the types of learning based on the clientele of the clinical site to which the student is assigned. All students should have experience “with patients/clients with, including, but not

limited to weight management and obesity, diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and renal diseases.” (Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education)

3. The experiential portion of the curriculum may not expose all students to various populations including “infants, children, adolescents, adults, pregnant and lactating females, and the elderly”. (Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education)

- *Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?*

This appears to be true for the undergraduate curriculum.

- *Is the curriculum coherent and functional?*

There is appropriate progression of learning in the curriculum design for the undergraduate program. Students learning progresses from the simple to the complex. Students expressed a desire for all courses to be strongly related to nutrition practice. For example, the physics course provides the students with practical applications of the science to the field of nutrition, but the economics course appeared to students to be all theory and classroom activities were unrelated to nutrition. Application of economic principles to food production and distribution systems and to health care delivery systems would make that information more relevant and useful to the students.

Students reported that the language requirements are troublesome. If they are competent in one language, instead of being able to “test out” of the language requirement, they are required to study another language.

Students, who wish to participate in exchange programs through ERASMUS, find that the opportunities are limited due to lack of affiliations with institutions where instruction is carried out primarily in English.

- *Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?*

Yes, the course materials presented in the undergraduate syllabi appeared to be current and relevant to the discipline. However, given the unmet curricular needs articulated above, and the redundancy in the curriculum, some courses may need to be consolidated in order to include the coursework related to food.

- *Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?*

One of the strengths of the program is the accessibility of the faculty to the students. Students report that it is easy to reach faculty when they have questions and problems, and that this can usually occur within 24 hours. Some faculty reported that they are available well after office hours through e-mail and Internet chat rooms.

There are adequate numbers of faculty and staff to carry out the curriculum and to enhance it with additional courses related to food. However the physical facilities are currently insufficient to do this. The food and culinary requirements would require the addition of laboratory space for food preparation that could accommodate all students. (The current kitchen can accommodate only between 6 and 9 students at a time.) This could be supplemented by experiential learning in healthcare foodservice facilities or in commercial foodservice operations.



## RESULTS

- *How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?*

Relative to the undergraduate program, the program is meeting its goals with the exception of those items listed above. The didactic component does include courses in Food Chemistry, Food Service Hygiene, Food Service Management, Food Biochemistry and Food Biotechnology. The students reported that Clinical Dieticians in the facilities where they do their practicums are responsible for both food and nutrition services. However, the student's experiential learning is limited to only the provision of nutrition services.

It would strengthen the program considerably if the practicum courses required that the students to work with patients in all stages of the life cycle and with specific diagnoses including but not limited to diabetes, renal disease, hepatic disease, metabolic syndrome, etc. Clinical practice hours may not actually coincide with those that the curriculum implies are present.

- *If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?*
- *Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?*

## IMPROVEMENT

- *Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?*

The department has proposed adding practicums in community nutrition and in industry. However, the job market suggests that dieticians are not generally hired in positions in industry and that the practical experience might better be directed toward private practice, which is a current market for dietetic practitioners.

There is no indication that the department as a whole feels the need for hands-on training in the area of foods and food preparation, though there individual faculty members recognize the need for students to have this type of knowledge.

- *Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?*

The current plans include adding two additional practicums in community nutrition and in industry settings, to be initiated in the summer of 2011.

## **A2. Postgraduate Curriculum**

The objectives of the Postgraduate Program (PP) are to promote research, development and dissemination of new knowledge in the area of Nutritional Sciences, in particular to train specialized scientists capable of designing and managing nutritional interventions at a personal and/or group level, thus addressing the needs of executive personnel of institutions operating in the fields of Clinical Nutrition, Nutrition and Exercise, Nutrition and Public Health. Also to establish a framework for cooperation with other academic institutions in Greece and abroad, to facilitate student and academic personnel outgoing and ingoing mobility implying that some courses or specific teaching units are delivered in English.

### *A2.1 Master of Science (MS) Degree Studies*

#### **PLAN**

To achieve those goals a PP was planned to offer both Master's degrees on a full time and part time basis in three specializations:

- ✓ Clinical Nutrition
- ✓ Sports Nutrition
- ✓ Public Health Nutrition.

and also PhD degrees in subject areas pertinent to the discipline of Applied Nutrition and Dietetics. The full time Master of Science program is of a duration of 1.5 years and the part time Master of Science program of 2.5 years. In both cases the ECTS equivalent is of 120 units.

#### *How were the objectives decided*

At the level of the Department the Postgraduate Program General Assembly (PPGA) is in charge of framing the policy on research and postgraduate studies and the administration of the programs.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The external Committee has the following sources of information

1. The booklet of the Study Guide of The Post Graduate Program , edited by the department
2. The Power Point Presentation given by Prof. Sidossis
3. The meetings with the students, the academic staff and the administrative and laboratory staff, above all the meeting with the postgraduate students

in order to answer the questions below,

- ✓ *How efficiently is the department's goal implemented by the curriculum?*

The goal of the department as an overall impression the EEC noted that the department has efficiently implemented in the curriculum. The fact that the students pay a reasonable amount of fees (7000 Euros for the entire duration of the studies) enables the Department to have a degree of autonomy towards the Institutional and Governmental bodies of decision.

- ✓ *How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific areas of study?*

This compares well with international standards.

- ✓ *Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated? Is the curriculum coherent and functional?*

The structure of the curriculum is rational and clearly articulated, it is coherent and functional.

- ✓ *Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?*

The impression of the EEC is positive although in some cases there could be improvement. For example, concerning the environmental constituent the course of Nutrition and Environment could be offered in all three specializations, not only in the discipline of Nutrition and Public Health. Also the subject of novel and functional foods could be offered as compulsory course.

- ✓ *Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?*

The teaching staff of the Department cannot cover all the requirements of the curriculum but the fact that the students pay fees, as it is mentioned above, enables the Department to call outside experts to give guest lectures and help to cover partly the needs of the program.

The IEC report and discussions with the students and the academic staff point out lack of space and lack of infrastructure.

Both professors and the postgraduate students have many ideas for research projects, but there is the shortage of money for funding this research.

### ***A3. Curriculum - PhD***

#### **APPROACH**

*What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?*

- See goals described above for the MS study – these are aims of the Postgraduate program including both MS & PhD.
- The PhD is completely research-based with requirement of a dissertation, 2 semesters of service as a teaching assistant and minimum of two peer-reviewed publications prior to awarding of degree. No courses are required.
- The number of PhD students admitted to the program is set at a maximum of 5 students per faculty, and in actual practice it is kept to three or fewer per faculty. There are 15 faculty eligible to mentor PhD students, so there is a maximum of 45 students in the program at a given time. Currently 43 students are enrolled in the PhD track. The program experiences less than a 10% drop-out rate.

*How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?*

- No information was provided beyond information in the department study guide.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

*How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?*

- The committee met with a group of 16 current graduate students (mixed MS & PhD students) and separately with a group of 13 alumni, of whom most had achieved their MS as well as BS, and 3 had completed a PhD. The 3 PhD holders worked in private practice, clinical practice as a preceptor, and as a consultant. These roles serve society as described in the curriculum goals. The alumni felt satisfied with the education that they received. The current students expressed the following comments:
  - 1) The PhD students were pleased to be working with their faculty mentors and felt that they were well qualified in their chosen

field.

- 2) They felt that the primary problem was lack of funding; both in support for the graduate student themselves (living expenses and payment for work performed as part of graduate experiences as a TA or GA), and in support of the actual research activities.
  - 3) They felt that the laboratory facilities were reasonably adequate given the space constraints, but research activities were limited by funds available, depending on needs for specialized equipment or analyses.
  - 4) Those students not requiring high technology or high-throughput equipment felt that there was no impediment to their research progress.
  - 5) They felt that their opportunities to present research at scientific meetings were limited, which negatively impacted their professional development and scientific exposure.
- In general, the students were frustrated and disheartened by the challenges of pursuing their PhD studies in the face of very limited resources and were very worried about eventual job and post-doctoral placements. The combined reasons behind the concerns were the economic realities facing society as well as doctoral training constraints.

*How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?*

- The curricular approach is closely aligned with the typical European approach of no specific courses for a PhD study.

*Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?*

- The department has highly qualified faculty and staff to implement the doctoral degree.
- The research facilities (laboratories and equipment) are reasonably well equipped with shared space among research groups. While the physical space is limited, it is well utilized and contains essential equipment.
- The very limited funding resources to support graduate students as salary for their teaching & research work and to cover actual costs of research activities is the primary concern and limiting factor in the doctoral program.
- The financial constraints interfere with ability to conduct some sophisticated sample analyses such that when equipment is not available at the university, the researchers must seek outside collaborations.
- The limited funding means that students rarely have the opportunity to travel to professional society meetings to present their work in an international forum.
- The worry is that limited funding will adversely impact the PhD student experiences to the extent that they will not be able to achieve

their academic potential and will be disadvantaged in getting post-doctoral positions.

## **RESULTS**

*How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?*

- The department has graduated 35 PhD students since the PhD track began in 2000. The graduates are helping to achieve departmental goals of promoting research and contributions to society through their career positions.
- Sheer numbers of graduates however do not denote success or quality. It is the opinion of the committee that the PhD program is very constrained by research funding difficulties.

*If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?*

- The department has admitted students without funding for the research projects or for student support in the past. The department has since last year moved to recruiting PhD students linked to specific research projects, which will attract students to faculty mentors based on research interests and qualifications. But this action has not served to limit the number of students admitted based on available funding. The department needs to better support its PhD students and their research efforts and should promote this effort by securing funding for incoming PhD students.

*Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?*

- The department is well aware of the funding problems (due in large part to the economic crises), but has diverse opinions regarding the depth and impact of the problem on PhD education, and how to best support the students.

## **B. Teaching**

### **APPROACH**

- *Teaching methods used*

The department uses a variety of teaching methods including lectures, laboratory work, exercises, case studies, library research, field trips and experiential learning.

- *Teaching staff/ student ratio*

The EEC calculated a ratio of 17:1 at the undergraduate level (based on 21 faculty to 364 undergraduate students). This is consistent with best practices in the field, and is better than the ratio in many programs outside of Greece.

In the doctoral program, the ratio of student:faculty ratio is 3:1 maximum. Though it is acceptable in Greece for this ratio to climb to 5:1, there is insufficient funding for more doctoral students at this time. In fact, funding limitations suggest that the 3:1 ratio is not sustainable at this time.

- *Teacher/student collaboration*

Students state that the faculty are readily available to them, and that they are encouraged to participate in assisting research at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- *Adequacy of means and resources*

Financial resources are limited at the moment, due to both national and international economic issues.

- *Use of information technologies*

Harokopio University has good information technologies available to faculty and students. These include a dial up network for individuals who are off campus, computer laboratories on campus, and wireless connectivity in the library. The library provides access to a wide variety of web-based journals and other resources, so that students have access to current references. Didactic classes are supported by e-classroom software. The SPSS program is available for statistical analysis and a variety of nutrient analysis programs are among the programs that are available to students by site license.

- *Examination system*

Undergraduate students and Masters level students are evaluated using a number of different strategies, including examinations at the middle and at the end of each semester as well as by written papers, exercises, laboratory reports, etc.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

- *Quality of teaching procedures*

Given the use of classroom technology and the comments of the constituencies interviewed, it appears that the teaching procedures for most courses (with the exception of economics noted above) are meeting the needs of undergraduates, postgraduates and the faculty.

- *Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.*

Though classroom technologies, library resources, and software are up to date, some of the textbooks listed in the course syllabi are not the most recent editions of those publications. For example, the Nutrition Therapy text by Mahan and Escott-Stump that is used here is the 11<sup>th</sup> edition, but the current edition is the 12<sup>th</sup>, the Foodservice Organizations text is the 2006 edition rather than the 2009 edition.

- *Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?*

The course material is supplemented by readings from the current literature, and faculty supplement with additional information as well. The material appears to be up to date at this time.

- *Linking of research with teaching*

Undergraduate students, especially those who began their post-secondary education at other institutions, reported that they had extraordinary access to faculty and were encouraged to participate in research. Because there is limited laboratory space, most laboratories function both as teaching and research labs. This further enables students to explore the linkages between the two.

- *Mobility of academic staff and students*

As mentioned earlier, the undergraduate students need greater access to English language ERASMUS exchanges.

- *Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching and (b) the course content and study material/resources*

Students are encouraged to evaluate the courses and the instructors at the end of each course. The response rate exceeds 90%. It is unclear that these evaluations are used effectively, however, given the ongoing problems with the way that the course material in economics continues to be presented.

## **RESULTS**

- *Efficacy of teaching.*

Appears to be effective and appropriate, and both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Student evaluation of teaching effectiveness was reported by the IEC. Undergraduate students rated the faculty at 3.8 out of 5 (SD 0.5); the graduate students rated the faculty at 4.0 out of 5 (SD 0.3).

- *Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are justified.*

The students who are accepted into this program are among the best performers on the entrance exams. Given this and the close relationships between the faculty and students, the undergraduate program completion rate is relatively good. The percentage of students who complete the program in 4 years is about 80%. Masters students also manage to complete their degrees within the desired parameters. The doctoral candidates may not be able to complete their programs in a timely manner due to limited research funding at the moment.

- *Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.*

The program completion rate exceeds that which is the standard for the country, since the majority of the students in this the undergraduate program graduate in between 4 and 4.5 years of beginning work on the degree. This is also true for the Master's students, but not for the Doctoral candidates.

- *Whether the Department understands the reasons of such positive or negative results?*

The department credits the high completion rate to the quality of the students admitted to the program.

## **IMPROVEMENT**

- *Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?*

NA

- *What initiatives does it take in this direction?*

The department limits the number of PhD candidates to 3 per faculty member rather than the 5 that are allowed under the protocols of the Ministry of Education.

## C. Research

### APPROACH

In spite of budget restrictions and limited laboratory space the Department strives for excellence in research that involves a variety of subjects. Research is driven by the individual faculty members and is supported by a variety of collaborations, research grants and contracts. The University is taking full advantage of the quality of its students by getting them involved in research projects. The EEC was provided with a list of research and development grants received by faculty members for the period of 2000-2011 totalling more than 7 million euro.

The EEC felt that the diversity of funding and the human studies were highly relevant to the mission of the department. It demonstrated diversity in issues of nutrition covered including from clinical educational to highly specialized biochemical topics of interest.

At the same time, the grants were provided from a variety of funding sources that included Government, the European Union, Foundations such as Daskalopoulos and Latsi, Pharmaceutical companies such as Novartis, Roche Hellas, Pharmaserf Lilly AEBE, professional athletic organizations, food companies including the ones that provide product related to the “Traditional Greek Diet” etc.

The committee was able to identify a direct connection between the variety of funding type of facilities available, the list of publications and the enthusiasm and innovation of faculty and students.

Standards for assessing research:

The department is using international standards to assess the quality and impact of the published research. Comparisons to other institutions with similar programs were presented to the Committee by Professor Sidossis who compared the department with other international programs by compiling data from a publication using the Normalized Impact Ratio. (Normalized impact: ratio between the average scientific impact of an institution and the world average impact of publications of the same time period and subject area. Values expressed in percentages)

Harokopio University is placed very well among the leading institutions using this calibrated scale. (SIR World Report 2010 ~ <http://www.scimagoir.com> )

### IMPLEMENTATION

- *How does the Department promote and support research?*

Due to budgetary restrictions the department does not have significant means to support research. In spite of this difficulty most faculty members seem to be successful securing external funding for their research programs.

- *Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.*

The quality of research is high but the in-campus recourses are limited and perhaps over-committed. The committee noted a serious limitation on the number of technical staff which has to split their time between training students and supporting research projects.

- *Scientific publications.*



Number, quality and impact is very high considering the limitation of recourses.

- *Research projects.*

A variety of Government and private grants has supported about 95 research projects for the period of 2000-2011. The projects span a wide range of studies highly relevant to the mission of the department. A strong point for this University.

- *Research collaborations.*

Faculty members have made arrangements with other local institutions for access to experimental and analytical facilities to support their research projects. This includes highly specialized Greek laboratories such as the groups of archeometry at the Democritos research center and possibly the Nuclear Research Reactor for trace element analysis. This type of access to highly specialized laboratories will be a very valuable asset to the department. Details or specific examples for other analytical laboratories were not provided. The list of international institutions collaborating with Harokopio University was provided to the EEC.

## **RESULTS**

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

The department is very successful in meeting its objectives with high quality research projects, scientific publications and collaborations.

The scientific work is highly relevant to the advancement of nutrition and includes several unique problems dealing with "Traditional Greek" and Mediterranean diets.

As a result the University has built National and International reputation in this field.

## **IMPROVEMENT**

- *Improvements in research proposed by the Department, if necessary.*

Faculty members expressed the desire for simplification of administrative procedures regarding the support and approval of new research studies.

The EEC felt that the Department's scientific research already contributes significantly to public health interests in Greece and should further capitalize on its reputation by expanding into targeted public information campaigns for modern issues of nutrition, health and preventive medicine.

## ***D. All Other Services***

### **APPROACH**

- The department views the efforts of the support staff to the academic community as being reasonably good and that most individuals work very hard to do the best that they can even with limited resources.
- The overall infrastructure provides a pleasant environment for students, faculty and staff to work in.
- Administrative procedures are burdensome.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

*Organization and infrastructure of the Department's administration (e.g. secretariat of the Department).*

- The department includes the secretary of the department and also a secretary of the office for post-graduate students to assist with record-keeping, grade submission, logistics, etc.

*Form and function of academic services and infrastructure for students (e.g. library, PCs and free internet access, student counseling, athletic- cultural activity etc.).*

- The University provides to students of the department, services such as career counselling, personal and psychological counselling, a small student gathering area, and a new library.
- The library is inviting, holds a relatively large selection of volumes and has established a public portal for access to nutrition and dietetics internet and electronic resources.
- The graduate students had differing opinions about whether the Internet access to electronic journals within the nutrition field was adequate. Some felt it was limited for their area of interest, while others using a different search engine and area of expertise were satisfied.
- The department provides to the students a computer laboratory area with 25 desktop computers. Software available for campus use includes eClass teaching platform, the latest version of SPSS data analysis software, Nutritionist Pro nutrient analysis software, Windows version of word and excel and free internet access. It would be desirable that some of these programs would be licensed for off-campus use by students.

### **RESULTS**

- Most services (computer, library, career and psychological counselling) are viewed as adequate and functional.

- The faculty complained greatly of the administrative burden placed upon them by bureaucratic tasks. This is an area that could be streamlined considerably both at the department and university level and that of the government.
- The faculty would like better and more transparent communication between the department and the university administration. Additionally, they would like more cooperation and assistance from the university sponsored programs office for management of grants and contracts.

### **IMPROVEMENTS**

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

The EEC is unable to address this question.

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

*Potential inhibiting factors at the state, institutional and department level.*

- The inhibiting factors at the state level are: the limited funding opportunities and diminishing financial support from the Ministry of Education over the recent years; increased competitiveness for external funding and the levels of accountability required for grants awarded; long delays in approval of requests and funding of hiring new faculty; and degree of state intervention and over-regulation coupled with changing priorities and personnel following elections.
- The potential inhibiting factors at the institutional level are: reduced support of funds for the departmental operational expenses; inadequate support from the offices of sponsored programs and international relations; lack of consistent communication from the institution regarding academic and institutional priorities; and the lack of transparent metrics for the distribution of funds from the institution principals to the department which need to reflect the quality of the research and teaching programs and to be distributed based on documented excellence and recognition.
- The potential inhibiting factors at the departmental level are: few faculty at full professor level; faculty burdened with administrative functions while carrying a heavy load of teaching and research; inadequate numbers of secretarial and laboratory staff; limited space; and lack of a clear strategic developmental plan for the future of the

department; lack of guidelines for faculty promotions and tenure.

*External factors serving as primary barriers to the department's achievement of excellence:*

- Economic conditions – increasingly limited public funding; greater competition and lower funding levels for private and other international grants; dire economic conditions of Greek economy; diminished return on private Harokopio investment/endowment gifts for university use
- Political conditions – uncertainty regarding pending legislation (both timing and content) to change funding and administrative oversight of Greek University system.

*Goals and actions proposed by Department;*

- Expand faculty within department to facilitate achievement of external research collaborations, research productivity, and further contributions to the nutritional health and welfare of society; and also to facilitate achievement of goals to prepare high quality nutrition and dietetics professionals for Greece.
- Toward these goals, the department has applied for, been approved for two new faculty, but not provided with open positions (Faculty priorities are focused on 1) Nutrition and Metabolism expertise and 2) Clinical Nutrition/Dietetics expertise)
- Promote research through continued pursuit of research grants and other funding, as well as further development of support facilities (teaching and metabolic kitchen, clinic setting, etc.) for carrying out human nutrition research studies

## ***F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC***

*Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC*

### **Strengths**

- High quality of the students
- Faculty/student ratio, positive interactions between the two groups
- Pleasant working environment
- Quality of research , meeting high international standards as far as publications and citation index of the performed
- Uniqueness in Greece through the promotion of the Greek Diet
- Effectively administrated and unique in Greece Master of Science' s

program

- The only PhD program in Greece concerning Nutrition and Dietetics
- Contribution to the Public Health

### **Weaknesses**

- Desperate need to properly fund the PhDs program
- Need of hands on practical experience with foods, need for a proper foods lab
- The foreign language requirements are severe
- Limited administrative independence from the Ministry of Education
- Limited finance resources
- Limited laboratory space and staff
- Not fully realized potential in the public services
- Inconsistency in the practical placements experience gained by the students

### **Recommendations:**

- Availability of funds should be a criterion for accepting a PhD student
- Preparation for private practice for those interested should be offered
- Acquisition of food preparation facilities both for education and metabolic studies
- Students who already have knowledge with the foreign language not to be obliged to fulfill the foreign language requirements
- Develop competencies for practical experience with diagnoses and populations specified by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education(CADE)
- Establish a departmental strategic plan
- Expand departmental contribution to public health by translation of research findings into practical information for the public.

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HAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY  
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