



UNIVERSITETI I EVROPËS JUGLINDORE
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ НА ЈУГОИСТОЧНА ЕВРОПА
SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Self-Evaluation Report

2018-2019

Komisioni i vetëvlerësimit

UNIVERSITETI I EVROPËS JUGLINDORE | DHJETOR 2019

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1. Introduction & Institutional Context

This report covers the period from 1 September 2018 through 31 August 2019, but with additional data up to 24 December 2019. During this period, South East European University celebrated its 17th anniversary.

(N.B. During the period of this report, the name of the country in which SEEU is located changed from ‘the Republic of Macedonia’ to ‘the Republic of North Macedonia.’ For purposes of clarity, the latter will be used exclusively throughout this report, even if anachronistically).

South East European University offers tertiary degree instruction in all three study cycles, i.e. Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral study. It operates two campuses, both in the Republic of North Macedonia: the main campus in Tetovo and a smaller campus in the capitol city of Skopje. The University has five constituent faculties: the Faculty of Business & Economics; the Faculty of Contemporary Sciences and Technologies; the Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences; the Faculty of Languages, Cultures, & Communications; and the Faculty of Law. All five Faculties engage in both in-class instruction as well as an online learning platform (the Google Classroom). The University also includes two centres (the Language Centre, which provides non-degree language instruction; and the e-Learning Centre, which provides instruction and assistance for computer technologies). SEEU also hosts the Max Van der Stoel Research Institute, which is the main locus of collective research activities for the institution. Finally, SEEU also incorporates the SEEU TechPark, which provides collaborative interaction between the academic and entrepreneurial worlds through business incubation and start-up development; this is located on the Tetovo campus.

The University is regionally unique in maintaining a ‘flexible use of languages’ policy, supporting three official University languages—Albanian, Macedonian, and English. All official communication takes place in all three of these languages, and staff and students are permitted to use any of them in official communication within the University community. Additionally, SEEU is strongly committed to making education available on the basis of merit and ability, without regard to the student’s gender, native language, religion, ethnicity, nationality, or political affiliation. The University invests substantial amounts of money in supporting scholarships for the most accomplished high school graduates (as evidenced by cumulative G.P.A. in high school), so as to attract the most promising students irrespective of their financial circumstances. The University also enjoys a legal status no other university in the Republic of North Macedonia possesses, being officially recognized as a ‘private-public-not-for-profit’ institution.

SEEU provides an extensive infrastructure to assist students at every phase of their academic career. From the moment they apply, the Student Services office provides assistance and guidance and, once they have enrolled, each Faculty holds a specific Student Advisor who is tasked with assisting students and resolving their difficulties. (There is additionally a Student Advisor specific to the Skopje campus). The academic staff are each required to conduct four ‘consultation hours’ per week, and therefore be available for student assistance or inquiry. The Student Parliament represents students in a formal sense, and students are permitted to run for representative positions themselves. The library is open every day of the week except Sunday, and the library staff are trained to assist students in identifying and locating materials they require for their study. The Career Centre provides assistance throughout the student lifecycle, assisting students with obtaining internships, providing job search training and advice, and advising students about how to interview successfully for jobs.

South East European University is required to abide by the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of North Macedonia, which obligates accreditation of academic curricula (study

programmes) and accreditation of academic mentors (for postgraduate students). Within these broad parameters, however, the University is largely autonomous. It is led by an elected Rector, who reports to the University Board; beneath the Rector there is a management team constituting the Rector's Directorate. The University Senate is the main collective body of decision makers in the University, although many significant decisions originate in the Teaching-Scientific Councils of the individual Faculties.

The University has multiple positive developments, which are outlined in this report, yet it must be acknowledged that the institution still faces a challenging educational landscape. The Republic of North Macedonia shows ongoing demographic declines, resulting in ever fewer candidates from whom to recruit new students; this is a trend exacerbated by ongoing emigration from the country. There remain multiple institutional competitors, both in the form of State Universities and private colleges. The University enjoys increased financial stability in comparison with recent years, yet is still alarmingly dependent upon income that is beyond its absolute control, with major portions of its operating income deriving from student tuition and governmental subsidy.

Despite the challenges presently facing SEEU, they are indeed less daunting than those that accompanied the University's founding in 2001. At that time, through the generosity of the donor institutions and nations, and through the vision of our founding leaders, an institution founded amidst difficulty has transformed into a pluralistic, multicultural, multilingual institution offering education that is highly regarded throughout the Balkans, and conferring degrees that are recognized throughout the world.

2. The Self Evaluation Report and Process

This report is the result of a team of academic and administrative staff employed at South East European University. They were appointed by decision of the Rector's Directorate, which reaffirmed a decision taken in the previous academic year to appoint these specific individuals to the Self Evaluation Commission.

The membership of the Self Evaluation Commission is:

- Dr. Andrew Goodspeed – Head;
- Dr. Xhevair Memedi – Deputy Head;
- Dr. Vladimir Radevski – Member;
- Dr. Veronika Kareva – Member;
- Dr. Adrian Besimi – Member;
- Dr. Gadaf Rexhepi – Member;
- Dr. Sami Memeti – Member;
- Dr. Agron Rustemi – Member;
- Dr. Veli Kreci – Member;
- Ms. Donika Luma – Member.

The team solicited information from across the University community, taking relevant information from administrative offices, the academic Faculties themselves, and academic support units (such as the Language Centre and the e-Learning Centre). The suggestions and insights of each contributor have not been fundamentally altered, although certain contributions have been modified for clarity and for the narrative harmonization of the report itself.

The report when finished is first submitted to the University Senate for adoption, after which it is presented to the University Board. After approval by the Board the Self Evaluation Report is considered officially adopted by the University and, after translation from English, is published in all three official University languages on the University website. It is therefore available for readership around the world to examine without charge or subscription.

The Self Evaluation process is commonly regarded at South East European University as a positive one, as it assembles a holistic portrait of the institution that is often difficult to obtain on a day-to-day basis. The information it gathers is often used by institutional executive and middle management to inform their decision-making processes. It also results in an up-to-date portfolio of useful data on the University which can, and has, been used as an accessible means of concentrating facts about the University for guests, diplomats, or international organizations.

The process, however, presents difficulties to the Self Evaluation Commission. The 'flexible use of languages' often means that data are submitted in one language, translated into another, then summarized narratively by someone who did not generate the initial data. This is time consuming and may potentially lead to errors of interpretation. Secondly, the Self Evaluation process has historically always been undertaken during the academic term time, which means that it places an additional burden on offices and educators who are already busy with the teaching and research work of the University. It is advisable to consider undertaking the Self Evaluation Report during one of the extended University breaks, either the Winter break in January or the Summer break in July/August. Finally, it should be noted that student involvement in the Self Evaluation process is lamentably small. As the group most impacted by the strengths or weaknesses of the University, their participation in greater proportions is recommended.

One final note should be made regarding the Self Evaluation Report and the Self Evaluation process. This report bears formal similarities to preceding reports, in order to make comparison from year to year convenient and uncomplicated. Yet this report is also transitional, including some new elements—such as this section on the Self Evaluation Report and the process by which it is written—in order to accommodate the formal recommendations for structure proposed by the European University Association. Accordingly, this report incorporates several new factors, most notably an increased emphasis on formally identifying challenges and opportunities.

3. Achievements

During the period covered by this report, South East European University inaugurated its third Rector, Academician Prof. Dr. Abdylmenaf Bexheti. He replaced the outgoing Rector, Prof. Dr. Zamir Dika, who had served as Rector for eight years. The process of election was orderly and the transition uncontested.

In this period the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia provided financial support of the University of 500,000 Euros, which later increased to 700,000 Euros. This support enabled the University to extend its commitment to providing scholarships to students who wish to attend the

University, but for whom the cost of tuition might otherwise be disabling. The University gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the Government in providing these valuable subventions.

SEEU continues to cultivate and to maintain a strong commitment to international relations and to preserving our relationship with the international donor community through their diplomatic offices in the Republic of North Macedonia. During the period of this report, the University was honoured to host the Ambassadors of Albania, France, Italy, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and both the outgoing and incoming Ambassadors of the United States, as well as numerous visiting delegates and dignitaries from around the world, with origins ranging from China to Iran to Poland, and meeting with local and Washington-based USAID representatives. Also sponsored by the USA, several Fulbright scholars were deployed to the University during the period of this report, and made valuable contributions for which the institution is grateful. On a more local level, the Rector and his executive management team repeatedly met representatives of the top local and regional Universities to discuss opportunities for collaboration and cooperation. Additionally, South East European University has sought to build or maintain strong ties with the local business and entrepreneurial community, with notable managers, business leaders, and philanthropists visiting the institution.

The University undertook numerous revisions of its guiding Rules and Statutes, and passed them appropriately through the University Senate, to accommodate changes in the recently revised Law on Higher Education of the Republic of North Macedonia. The revision also resulted in the appointment and installation of a new President of the Senate. This was all a major effort of restructuring internal guidelines, and it impacted most of the Rules regarding the conduct of the University, and brings the University fully in line with the legal requirements for its operation.

SEEU also undertook a significant effort of programme accreditation and re-accreditation, resulting in the implementation of a new structure of those study programmes. The most significant consequence of this is the resultant transfer of the undergraduate programmes to the 240 ECTS structure, up from the previous 180 ECTS degrees. Additionally, SEEU undertook a new plan entitled the 'Academic Completion Programme,' which seeks to emphasize institutional support, academic advice, and scholarship opportunities, to re-incorporate inactive students back into their programmes.

The University had the pleasure to host multiple conferences, roundtables, workshops, guest lectures, and discussion groups during the period of this report. This is in keeping with the traditional commitment of SEEU to provide external speakers and auditors a fair and scholarly forum for the expression of their ideas in an academic and collegial atmosphere. Notable among these efforts were conferences hosted by SEEU, such as those on 'Combating Corruption in Higher Education,' and on the 'Beginnings of Political Pluralism in Macedonia.' The University also hosted a regionally-distinctive 'Western Balkan Regional Roundtable on Ethics and Integrity in Higher Education Systems.' SEEU was also pleased to be able to offer the 'Summer School for Entrepreneurship and International Communication,' which brought together students from SEEU and Germany on the Tetovo campus. The institution also had success with 'Horizon 2020' applications, and expanded its efforts in submitting research proposals and grants. Additionally, a new Research Associate with international experience was appointed to the Max Van der Stoel Research Institute, to augment the MVDSRI's capabilities.

The main achievement of the University, however, remains not its outreach or international recognition, but in the day-to-day working activities of the students, educators, administrators, and management of the academic institution. It is their daily work to pursue and promote knowledge that remains SEEU's most notable accomplishment.

4. Opportunities

South East European University is a regionally distinctive institution of Higher Education, in which the primary mission is the provision of excellent, internationally-competitive instruction to students irrespective of their ethnicity, nationality, native language, religion, or political affiliation. It has a proven history of international engagement and international partnership. These factors make it a valuable partner—and prospective partner—in the region for other universities and research institutes abroad, for international aid agencies or development agencies, and for embassies and consulates. SEEU should pursue such opportunities, and intends to do so. The general view of the University is that the future of higher education is collaborative.

The University maintains two of the most attractive and welcoming campuses in the Republic of North Macedonia, making it a desirable place to study and to teach. The technology employed in both is up-to-date, and is regularly monitored, fixed, and upgraded by a dedicated I.T. staff. These are assets that must be promoted and maintained, as they may provide crucial recruitment and retention persuasion.

The University also maintains a long-standing Quality Assurance model, which is embedded deeply in the culture of the institution. Several significant measures to guarantee quality that SEEU regularly employs are: the teaching observation process (peer evaluation of a taught class); the student evaluation process (anonymous surveys of students about their classes and professors); the staff evaluation process (by which each instructor has a personal, in-depth evaluation by his or her line manager); and the staff training model (by which all staff have training and discussion groups for six days per academic year, 3 in August and 3 in February). These—combined with other University processes, such as the research guidance provided by the Central Research Committee—help to assure that SEEU attains, and maintains, academic excellence in the classroom, and in the research community.

The Business Innovation Centre and the SEEU TechPark represent the University's ongoing commitment to engage with the corporate and entrepreneurial worlds. It has been a focus of the period covered by this report to extend existing cooperation with business leaders in the region, and to build new contacts with the companies, managers, and corporations who are leading the financial and entrepreneurial efforts of the Western Balkans. Both the BIC and the TechPark are efforts to maintain and deepen that collaboration between academia and enterprise.

The cost of SEEU tuition is significantly lower than those of Western European or North American universities; it may be that there is a substantial market for recruitment amongst the Albanian and Macedonian diaspora communities.

It should also be noted that SEEU has proved itself to be adaptable to developing trends in education, quality assurance, student recruitment and service, and the generally evolving landscape for universities in both the Republic of North Macedonia, and in the region. This institutional ability to remain attentive to changing trends, whilst maintaining a strong commitment to the mission and educational principles of the University, indicates that SEEU has established an institutional culture that can withstand the admittedly significant challenges faced by all universities in the Western Balkans.

5. Challenges

The market for Higher Education in the Republic of North Macedonia remains highly competitive, with multiple State Universities and numerous private colleges vying for each student. This, when combined with the decreasing population (due both to demographic decline and emigration) means that student recruitment—and retention—remains a critical priority of SEEU. The University is heavily dependent for operating income on the tuition paid by students, so any decrease in the enrolment or retention numbers has a direct impact upon the ability of the University to pursue the highest standards of education and achievement.

Another significant challenge posed by the multitude of Higher Educational institutions competing in the Balkan region is that attempts to attract research partnerships, institutional bilateral agreements, or project funding are highly competitive. Although SEEU remains committed to such open competition, and seeks to be invigorated by it, it must be noted that major grants and projects are becoming ever more difficult to win, precisely because of this competition. In this field, too, we should note that the heavy focus of SEEU on social sciences, legal studies, languages and business largely restricts the University from applying for some of the more lucrative research opportunities, many of which require extensive physical laboratories.

The main campus in Tetovo is beginning to show signs of facility age and equipment attrition, requiring additional expenditure merely to replace or to fix necessary materials. Dormitories, classrooms, administrative offices and general infrastructure require periodic equipment upgrades, and remain expensive to heat in the winter, and costly to cool in the summer. Expected technical obsolescence, and the general degradation of materials over time, add to the additional costs the University is likely to encounter in the short-to-medium future.

The University has never been satisfied with its on-time completion rate. Although students who graduate prove to have regionally-high employment rates, it is a mark of concern that too many students either drop-out completely (failing to complete their course of study) or do not graduate on-time (i.e., taking longer than the expected time to complete their course of study). This should be an element of concern to the entire University community, and efforts must be made on both macro and micro levels to detect, intervene, and prevent students from withdrawing or delaying their completion of their programme.

The lack of an effective Alumni Association deprives the University of an irreplaceable component of the SEEU community, one that can assist with matters such as social outreach, curricular advice, internship and employment assistance, and valuable business networking opportunities. It should be a high priority of the University to reengage the alumni, as they represent one of the most valuable assets upon which a university may call for advice, development, and promotion.

SEEU academic staff remain committed and highly qualified professionals, but challenges persist in the academic sphere. A greater diversity of course offerings in all academic programmes—perhaps through the opportunities of ‘elective’ courses—would expand the subject matter and permit greater student personalization of the received instruction. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for academic staff. Student surveys also note that material sometimes seems duplicated between degrees (i.e., the same material presented in a B.A. course reappears in a similar M.A. course). Academic promotion in title remains benchmarked to provable achievement as a scholar, a teacher, and as a contributor to the community, yet it is also effectively automatic. Academic staff have accepted the challenge to seek out the most serious and rigorously selective conferences and journals available for their research work, but occasional poor publications or ‘vacation conferences’ occur.

Finally, the University is discordant with contemporary educational trends in having so little full-time international staffing. To address this, SEEU has prioritized the hiring of international staff, or utilization of staff mobility and grant programmes, to increase the presence of international teaching staff in the Academic Year 2020-2021.

Finally, it should be noted that acceptance of applicants to programmes in the first and second cycles is, for all practical purposes, automatic. There exist essentially no processes of rejection for applicants in the first and second cycles (PhD studies are sharply restricted by legal limits on the number of candidates one individual teacher can mentor). This means that the University admits some students who, perhaps through no fault of their own, are nonetheless unprepared or unsuited for tertiary education. It is recommended that basic minimum standards for applicants be considered to reflect the priorities of good selection processes.

6. Structure: Faculties and Centres

South East European University operates two campuses, one in Tetovo and one in Skopje. The University's educational offering is provided by the five constituent Faculties of SEEU:

- Faculty of Business and Economics;
- Faculty of Contemporary Sciences and Technologies;
- Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences;
- Faculty of Languages, Cultures & Communications;
- Faculty of Law.

Students follow a course of instruction of their choosing, which consists primarily of mandatory (or 'core') courses delivered in their Faculty. There are also 'elective' courses available within the selected programme, in order to allow the student to personalize his/her education in accordance with his/her specific interests or job specialization desires. Finally, there are 'free elective' courses, which are general utility courses provided to allow students to study subjects, based on interest, outside of their specific Faculty. Most student course delivery is, therefore, within his or her chosen Faculty.

Within the Faculty the student has access to a Student Advisor, whose primary work is to assist students with advice, or to resolve difficulties. Additionally, the Faculty Administrator often provides student-related service in administrative tasks. Each instructor is the 'tutor' of a group of 4-7 undergraduates, to provide general academic assistance and to identify potential troubles in fulfilling the requirements of the student's programme.

6.1 Faculty of Business and Economics

The Faculty of Business and Economics is the largest faculty of the University, as measured both by student enrolment and by staff. It offers three cycle studies, distributed as follows: undergraduate degrees in Business and Economics (with modules in Economy; Entrepreneurship; Finance and Accounting, Finance and Banking, and Management and Marketing); Master degrees in Business Administration, Finance, Finance and Accounting, Management, Marketing, Professional Logistics and Supply Chain Management, and Professional Sales Management; and Doctoral degrees in Business Administration and Economics.

During the period covered by this report, the staff of the Faculty of Business and Economics participated in multiple international conferences, in places such as Croatia, Romania, Turkey, and the U.K.; the Faculty also hosted a conference entitled 'Transition to Development: Emerging Challenges and Perspectives.' The Faculty of B&E also generated multiple seminars and workshops, such as the student roundtable, the absolvent discussion group on 'bridging the labour market mismatch,' and the FBE Summer School on the theme of 'Critical Thinking in the Digital Era.' On a similar note, the FBE co-hosted (with Yahya Kemal College) a workshop on critical thinking for high school students.

Much of the emphasis of the FBE in this period has been on solidifying relations with students, absolvents, and alumni. Accordingly, the Faculty of B&E organized regular meetings with current students, newly graduated students, absolvents, and alumni. The Faculty also has a leading role in University collaborations with the business and entrepreneurial community, given the proximity of the corporate world's interests and the research subject matter of the Faculty.

6.2 Faculty of Contemporary Sciences and Technologies

The Faculty of Contemporary Sciences and Technologies offers studies in all three cycles, with undergraduate programmes in Business Informatics, Computer Engineering, and Computer Sciences; M.A. programmes in Business Informatics, Computer Sciences (with module applications in Software and Application Development, Data Engineering, Web and Mobile Systems, Software Engineering, and Information Systems), and Application of Information and Communication Technologies in Teaching; and PhD studies in Computer Sciences.

CST continues to enjoy one of the highest graduate employment rates of SEEU, indicating the ongoing market recognition of the quality and modernity of the CST curricula. Yet the Faculty continues to face difficult recruitment and postgraduate continuity challenges, given the high exportability of computer science skills. During the period of this review, however, the Faculty has maintained a stable, unfragmented group of undergraduate students in both Tetovo and Skopje campuses. Leaving FINKI (UKIM) aside, the enrolment data show winning market for CST in both undergraduate and graduate studies in comparison with major State Universities, UNT (Mother Teresa) and USHT (State Tetovo University). Studies in the English language in undergraduate degrees are facing an increase, totalling 42 students in both campuses that follow courses completely in the English language.

Outside the classroom and the laboratory, the main efforts of the CST Faculty in the period of this report have been 1) building stronger relations with local and international business and entrepreneurial communities, and 2) increasing the international profile of CST programmes, instructors, students, and alumni. In support of these aims, CST has worked collaboratively with the SEEU TechPark to secure internships for its students. CST has included 3-4 international staff members to teach, mainly in Master studies in order to increase international staff member participation in the teaching process. Finally, CST has applied for several and won three major research projects, two from the Erasmus+ funding scheme and one from Horizon2020, which is the first of this kind for SEEU.

6.3 Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences

The Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences is primarily focused on those who wish to enter into careers of public service, although CSS envisages students engaging in multiple opportunities within or outside of governmental office. It offers degrees in all three cycles, distributed thus: bachelor degrees in Public Management and Administration (with modules in Management of Non-Governmental Organizations and Public Management and Policy), Political Science and International

Relations (with modules in Political Science and International Relations), and Social Work and Social Policy; Master degrees in Diplomacy, Governance, Public Administration, Political Science, and European Studies (a joint degree with the University of Ljubljana); and Doctoral degrees in Political Science and Public Governance and Administration.

The major self-regulating efforts of CSS in the period covered by this report include reaccreditation of curricula based upon external reports and suggestions provided by both students and staff, a process that included the accreditation of the E-Governance M.A. programme. Additionally, core M.A. courses were revised in light of curriculum mapping exercises. Externally, CSS was pleased to note an increase in students and staff participating in Erasmus mobility programmes, and the Faculty hosted or co-hosted two international academic conferences with strong participation from abroad.

The Faculty of CSS also initiated a policy of monitoring student pass rates, and established a bandwidth of success to serve as a Faculty standard of student progression. In addition to this, the Faculty made a concerted effort to identify, and reactivate, M.A. students who had fallen into 'inactivity,' to try to bring them back into the academic community. CSS also began establishing a local network of employers as collaborators, particularly to solicit curriculum advice and to create potential employment connections for graduating students. Finally, the Faculty has made community outreach a significant effort of the period covered by this report, notably in terms of participating in local and broadcast debates and roundtables, and increasing the Faculty use of social media in relation to student recruitment.

6.4 Faculty of Languages, Cultures, and Communications

The Faculty of Languages, Cultures, and Communications has a unique departmental structure, being divided into the Department of Albanian Language & Literature, the Department of English Language & Literature, the Department of German Language & Literature, and the Department of International Communications. With the exception of International Communications (which focuses on communication theory, public relations, diplomacy, negotiation, semiotics, etc.), these departments offer language instruction aimed primarily at students who intend to become language teachers, translators or interpreters, or those who otherwise may require advanced language skills (in the corporate or hospitality fields). It differs from the SEEU Language Centre (below) in that the Language Centre provides non-degree language instruction to those who are specializing in fields other than language; the Albanian, English, and German departments teach those seeking degrees in those specific linguistic disciplines.

During the period covered by this report, the LCC hosted numerous roundtables and micro-conferences, as well as engaging in many promotional activities outside the University. Academic staff participated in external academic conferences throughout Europe and (in several instances) beyond Europe, and published widely in peer-reviewed academic journals. The academic programmes remained popular, with substantial recruitment success in the English Language Teaching M.A. programme—yet it must be noted that English B.A. enrolment remains worryingly anaemic, and the Albanian programme continues to be tenuous at best. It is hoped that the full curricular review last year will address several of these shortcomings.

The Faculty believes that it needs to continue revising curricula to meet contemporary language needs, emphasizing functionality and usage over traditional 'memorized grammar.' This curricular redesign will be undertaken on an all-faculty basis, so as to solicit the contributions and ideas of all

academic staff. Yet it should be noted that there has been little or no forward planning of long-term Faculty staffing, which means that curricular planning may also impact staffing specialization needs.

6.5 Faculty of Law

The Faculty of Law offers instruction in two major programme fields at the undergraduate level—Legal Studies and Criminalistics and Security—whilst expanding those offerings in the postgraduate cycles to include Civil Law, Criminal Law, Constitutional Law, Cybercrime, International Law, and Security Studies. In academic year 2018/19 the Faculty of Law, in cooperation with the Academic Planning office, successfully completed the process of accreditation of two very important study programmes: Legal Studies/ module: Legal Studies (240 ECTS) and Legal Studies/ module: Legal Informatics (240 ECTS) as a unique programme in region.

In the period covered by this report, as part of the Law Faculty's ongoing commitment to practical and applied learning, the Faculty of Law has engaged judges, lawyers, forensic experts, prosecutors, notaries, and representatives of the Municipalities to address the students. Many of these experts have helped also to comply fully with the legal requirements for 'clinical' teaching (teaching by outside experts of verified accomplishment), whilst providing practical training for the students. Additionally, the faculty hosted guest lecturers from abroad, including guests from Norway and the United States (through the Fulbright programme). One of the most significant developments during this period was in summer semester 2019—with the support of the US Embassy—the Faculty was able to open and operate the SEEU Legal Clinic.

Notable events for this period include the third annual Law Students' Conference (this year on the theme 'Young Lawyers and the Future of Law'), the first conference (organized collaboratively with CSS Faculty) on 'Good Governance and the Rule of Law and the Perspective of EU Integration', and a public debate in cooperation with the Association for Health Education and Research on the topic of abortion. The Faculty of Law has also engaged in multiple outreach activities, specifically in terms of meeting and collaborating with alumni, and in targeted student recruitment.

6.6 The Language Centre

The aim and the mission of the Language Centre is to provide high quality instruction and learning support in the context of learning foreign languages to all undergraduate students, with an exception of those who are specializing in language in the LCC Faculty. The LC language instruction is CEFR standardized instruction in Albanian, English, and Macedonian (the local languages particularly intended for native speakers of the 'other' local language).

In the period covered by this review, some of the main developments for the Language Centre were related to the incorporation of professional skills and soft skills (professional attitude, professional communication, including written and spoken, presenting) into the ESP courses: English for Informational Technology, Business English, English for Social Sciences and Legal English. The syllabi for these courses were modified to include updated materials, more professional components and specialized language usage. New textbooks or materials were selected for the ESP courses, emphasizing that overreliance on textbooks should be avoided as they can be outdated, designed for a different target population or simply not sufficiently engaging. Therefore, compiling or adapting materials and readers was implemented, along with assignments which corresponded to the defined course goals and objectives.

The Language Centre staff also contributed to selection and adaptation of a new placement test, provided by the MM publishing house, which proved to be more accurate in placing the students in adequate levels. The LC Fulbright visitor, Ms. Sophie Aroesty, was instrumental in the LC creation of two clubs and she taught various groups using practical activities and focused on employability skills. Additionally, the LC organized a very successful workshop “Innovations in English Language teaching” which was attended by 200 participants and 5 International speakers. It was also engaged in the celebration of Italian Language Week, the regional and national Spelling Bee contest, Let’s Talk project with Peace Corps volunteers, and a film week.’

The main challenges facing the LC relate to the restrictive scheduling (08:00-10:00 and 14:00-16:00) that is available for LC classes, as it places logistical strain on the staff and provides for logistical difficulties. Another development that the Language Center needs is that it can contribute more on becoming a certified testing center for the languages that it offers and will work in this direction in the near future.

6.7 The E-Learning Centre

The E-learning Centre started to operate from the opening of the University in September 2001. It assists the University community, both students and teachers, to exploit the potential of technology to enhance teaching and learning.

The Centre offers excellent conditions for the incorporation of e-Learning to support students’ studies. Through the E-learning Centre, students have access to four computer labs with over 80 modern computers and one multimedia lab equipped with the latest technologies. The Centre also offers ‘free-elective’ courses on Microsoft office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint and more).

The Centre provides support for the development of interactive, online supplementary material for traditional courses and organizes training workshops related to the development and delivery of online material. The Centre supports the staff by offering training, particularly in how to use the Google Classroom, which is the main platform currently used by SEEU for teacher-student online material sharing. The Google Classroom allows teachers to create classes, design assignments, communicate with students, organize folders, and view student work online and in real-time. Teachers and students can thus use Google Classroom with all other Google applications to share information with one another instantaneously. Furthermore, each student has his or her own Google Drive folder that allows both teachers and students to access those folders, in order to track student progress and work; teachers can also assign grades within the Classroom.

In short, the E-learning Centre’s mission is preparing educators and students who are empowered with the knowledge and skills in e-Learning to deliver outstanding teaching and to maximize student learning.

7. Quality Enhancement

Quality Assurance (QA) has a central role in all University activities and the focus on quality is receiving greater attention every year. The QA Office has carried on with the application of different instruments for measuring the quality of teaching, as well as measuring student and staff satisfaction. These instruments include the teaching observation process; online student evaluation of academic courses; online student evaluation of services; and the staff satisfaction survey. The results gathered have been used for identifying ways to improve teaching and learning with all the components included such as, for example: preparation of syllabi; methodologies for student-centered learning;

ways of providing feedback and organizing assessment; materials used; etc., aiming to increase student capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship and to raise the general student employment rate.

The QA Office has coordinated the preparation, organization and evaluation of staff development sessions twice during the period of this review, with the feedback used for planning further similar events intended to improve the general performance of both academic and administrative staff. The Office is also responsible for the Complaints Procedure and it has contributed towards achieving compromise in a few cases with students and staff.

The activities of the Boards for Cooperation and Trust with the Community (Faculty Quality Teams) have been supported in order to encourage students and external input and focus on professional competences and career progress. The development of the dual audit system for performance evaluation has been actively maintained through various activities in cooperation with other University services. The Office coordinated the implementation plan of the recommendations from the external evaluation (IEP) resulting with a favourable report of the one-year implementation.

SEEU QA is already well established and has managed to create University quality culture that is recognizable in the institutional society and the broader community. Nonetheless, challenges do exist. Some of the processes might become mechanical throughout the years and thus be perceived as purely administrative and not motivating. Novelty and changes should be introduced and the instruments constantly tested and improved. Special attention is needed in order not to turn quality enhancement into quality control as sometimes there is a small difference between them. The ultimate aim is to motivate and award the best performers but this kind of performance management might be also seen as an excessive control.

Opportunities:

- Strong QA Culture already established;
- Good experience with IEP;
- QA mechanisms embedded in promotional and motivation strategies;
- Good practice examples readily available in Europe.

Challenges:

- Need for regular innovation to prevent fatigue with QA instruments;
- Staff could be more pro-active in proposing desired University development sessions;
- Students and staff must be reassured about the anonymity of the evaluation surveys.

8. Teaching and Learning

8.1 Programmes and Status

During the period of this review, SEEU has offered first, second, and third cycle instruction in all five Faculties. The M.A. and PhD programmes require both in-class instruction and, later, a researched thesis that is defended in a formal public oral examination. All SEEU M.A. and PhD theses are mentored

by mentors accredited by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Macedonia and are—with rare exceptions—SEEU full-time staff.

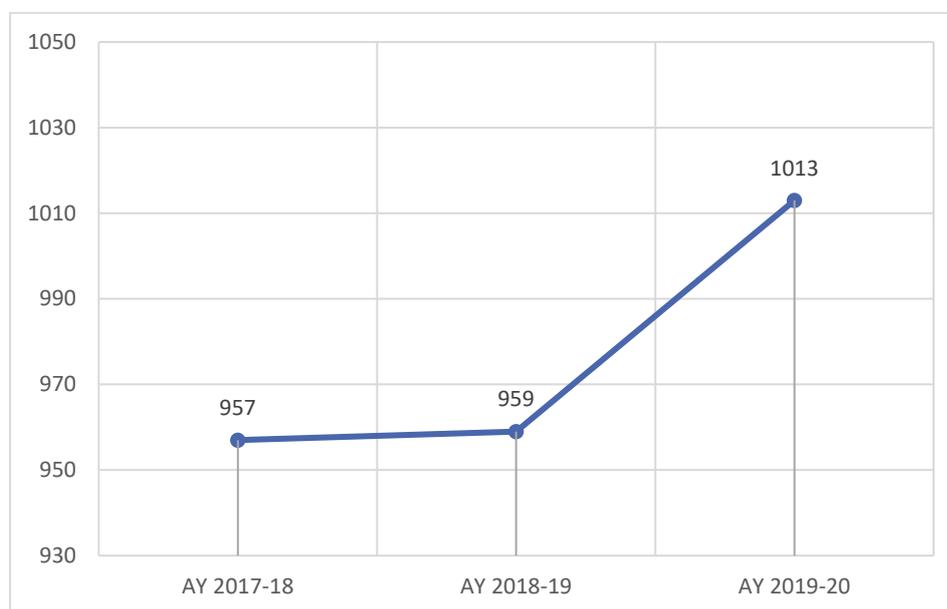
During the period covered by this report, the University undertook significant efforts to emphasize critical thinking and digital competencies in the curricula. Among other elements of this endeavour were updates and harmonization of curricula, to emphasize critical thinking components in courses, and the incorporation of digital learning elements and assessment tasks. All courses in all three cycles now have a digital (Google Classroom) presence.

The data given below describe the student lifecycle, from enrolment to graduation.

8.2 Student Enrolment

Graph 1 presents the total enrolment data for the academic years including 2017-2018-2019-2020. As may be seen, enrolments remain roughly consistent from year to year. Yet the academic year 2019-2020 has seen a notable increase in enrolment, which is a striking success given the demographic and emigration pressures upon all higher education institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Academic Year	Enrollment
2017-18	957
2018-19	959
2019-20	1013

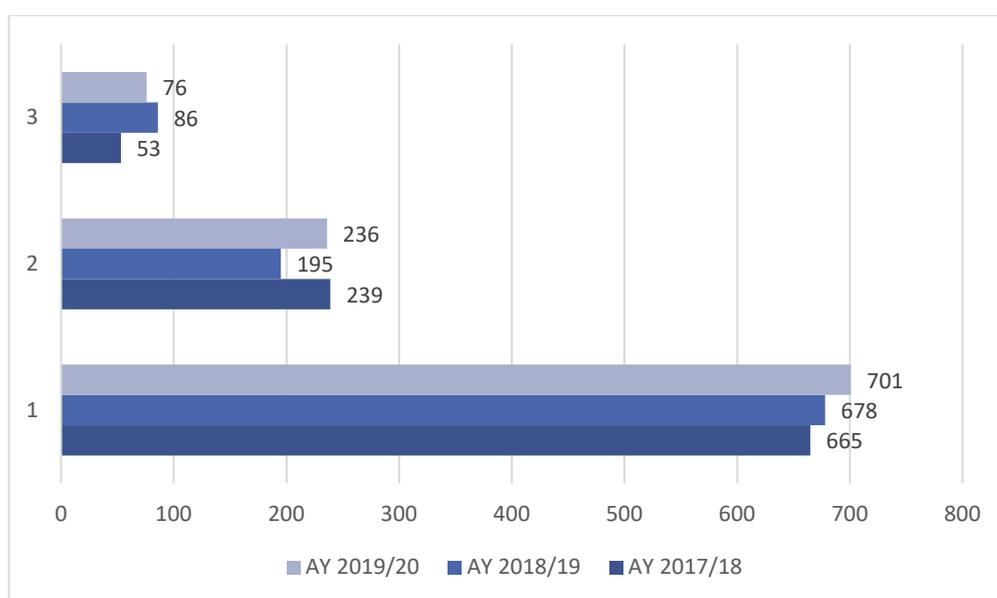


Graph 1. Total Enrolments by academic year

Graph 2 illustrates the enrolment figures by language of study. Albanian language instruction continues to be the primary language of course delivery, followed in a distant second place by English language instruction; English instruction, however, still accounts for over 20% of the language instruction by language of enrolment. Disturbingly, enrolments for Macedonian language instruction

have dropped to under 10% of enrolments, which has significant implications for the social and pedagogical mission of the University.

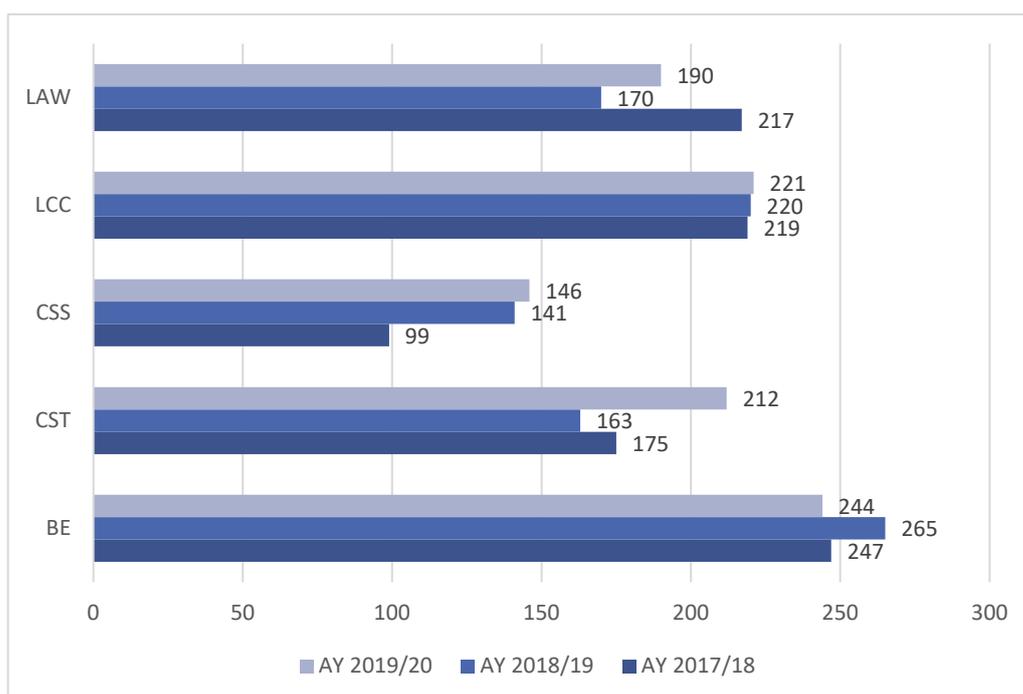
Study Language	AY 2017-18	%	AY 2018-19	%	AY 2019-20	%
Albanian	665	69%	678	71%	701	69.2%
English	239	25%	195	20%	236	23.3%
Macedonian	53	6%	86	9%	76	7.5%
Total	957	100%	959	100%	1013	100%



Graph 2. Total Enrolments by study language

Graph 3 reports the total enrolments by Faculty for the past three academic years. The Faculty of Business and Economics remains the largest Faculty by enrolment, although AY 2019-2020 saw a decline of 21 students for that Faculty. The Faculty of Contemporary Sciences and Technologies and the Faculty of Law saw significant increases in student enrolment in AY 2019-2020 by comparison with the previous academic year, as did (very modestly) the Faculty of Languages, Cultures, and Communications. The smallest Faculty by enrolment remains the Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences.

Faculty	AY 2017/18	AY 2018/19	AY 2019/20
BE	247	265	244
CST	175	163	212
CSS	99	141	146
LCC	219	220	221
LAW	217	170	190
Total	957	959	1013



Graph 3. Total Enrolments by Faculty

8.3 Student Retention

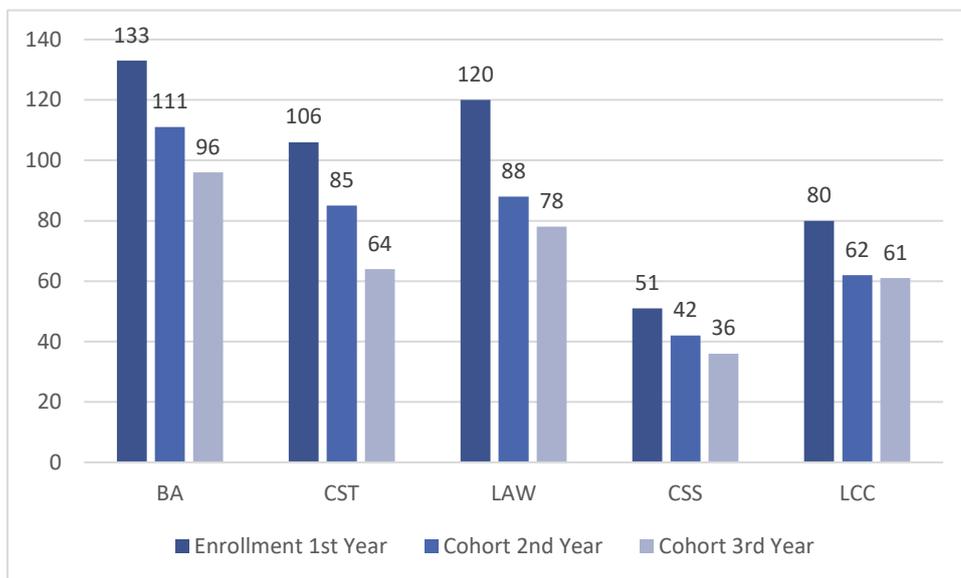
Student retention and graduation are crucial determinants of whether a university is succeeding or has failed. While some students may withdraw for reasons external to their academic efforts (illness, marriage, family difficulties, finances), it is the conviction of South East European University that every student who enrolls should ultimately graduate.

Graph 4 displays data relating to on-time graduation. These data are current as of 5 December 2019. On-Time graduation is defined as the percentage of students who complete their studies in the three-year period intended by the academic curriculum. One trend remains disturbingly evident: too many students who reach their third year do not graduate at the end of that year.

AY 2015-16 UGS						
Faculty	Enrollment 1st Year	Cohort 2nd Year	%	Cohort 3rd Year	%2	Graduated
BA	142	130	92%	109	77%	21
CST	109	91	83%	71	65%	48
LAW	138	123	89%	107	78%	66
CSS	114	96	84%	86	75%	76
LCC	98	82	84%	73	74%	68
Total	601	522	87%	446	74%	279

AY 2016-17 UGS						
Faculty	Enrollment 1st Year	Cohort 2nd Year	%	Cohort 3rd Year	%2	Graduated
BA	132	116	88%	107	81%	45
CST	93	81	87%	73	78%	17
LAW	112	98	88%	95	85%	32
CSS	105	79	75%	73	70%	36
LCC	103	83	81%	80	78%	39
Total	545	457	84%	428	79%	169

AY 2017-18 UGS						
Faculty	Enrollment 1st Year	Cohort 2nd Year	%	Cohort 3rd Year	%2	
BA	133	111	83%	96	72%	
CST	106	85	80%	64	60%	
LAW	120	88	73%	78	65%	
CSS	51	42	82%	36	71%	
LCC	80	62	78%	61	76%	
Total	490	388	79%	335	68%	



Graph 4. Retention and On-Time Graduation by Faculty (AY 2017-18)

8.4 The Career Centre and Employability

The SEEU Career Centre is a consistent help to the student throughout his or her time at SEEU and, indeed, after graduation. The Career Centre provides job training, application assistance, mock interview training, c.v. assistance, internship placement and advice, and job posting notifications. The Career Centre also hosts an annual 'Career Festival,' in which more than forty different employers all set up booths to speak to potential employees amongst the interested students. Finally, the Career Centre is the primary contact point that graduates have with the University, and the Centre commonly conducts surveys of the alumni to learn of their employment status. (The data presented here on employability derives from that survey).

The data show that the overall employment rate of graduates for 2017 (the most recent cohort of graduates surveyed) is 59.87%, and unemployment is 40.13%. This latter number is slightly misleading, however, as it combines both those unemployed but seeking work and those who are volitionally unemployed (usually for reasons of health, marriage, or maternity); when the voluntarily unemployed are factored out, the employment rate is approximately 68%. (The other unemployed are those continuing their studies because they cannot find work.)

When considered by individual Faculty, the highest rate of graduate employment is seen in the Faculty of Contemporary Sciences and Technologies (with 92.60% employment), followed by the Faculty of Business and Economics (76.50%) and the Faculty of Languages, Cultures, and Communications (70.00%). The lowest employment rates are to be found in the Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences (62.20%), and the Faculty of Law, which reports employment of 54.10%.

Taken individually, male graduates are more likely to be employed than are female graduates; men report an employment rate of 74.60% while women report an employment rate of 65.80%.

When examined through the perspective of language of study programme, graduates of the Albanian language programmes report employment of 68.50%. Graduates of the Macedonian language programmes report unemployment of 74.10%. Graduates of the English language programmes report unemployment of 79.40%.

The highest rate of employment is found amongst students who graduate with a cumulative Grade Point Average of between 9-10; they report an employment rate of 75.00%. The worst employment rate is to be found amongst students who graduate with a cumulative G.P.A. of between 6-7; they report an employment rate of 61.70%. These data suggest that the University is doing the work of assessment in a manner comparable to the demands made by the labour market.

It should be noted that all of these data derive from self-reporting by those graduates who chose to respond to Career Centre surveys, and cannot be independently verified for accuracy without violating graduate privacy and confidentiality.

8.5 Alumni Association

The inactivity of the Alumni Association is a critical and avoidable loss to the University. An effective Alumni Association could provide valuable internship/employment opportunities to new graduates; advise University academics and policy-makers on curricula, skills building, and the labour market; promote the University in the general community; and provide a valuable recruitment ally for SEEU's student enrolment efforts. None of these things are happening.

In order to address this lost opportunity, SEEU began in the period of this report a new initiative for alumni outreach. It is too soon to determine how effective or lasting this initiative will be, but it is a first attempt to rebuild the necessary—and mutually beneficial—relations between the University and its alumni.

9. Research

Research is a significant effort of South East European University, being a core pillar of the second and third cycles of study, and one of the main elements of academic performance measurement for the teaching staff. Students participating in the M.A. or Ph.D. programmes are required to complete a research-based thesis and to defend it in a formal public academic examination; Ph.D. students are additionally required to publish at least two (2) academic papers in peer-reviewed academic journals before a defense is permitted to be scheduled. The academic staff are also required to publish their work in peer-reviewed academic journals, and the resulting portfolio of published research is an essential element in the academic promotion process.

To facilitate and monitor this research productivity, the research work of the academic staff of SEEU is continuously evaluated by the Central Research Committee. The members of this Committee have a two-year mandate. The current composition of the CRC was approved in December 2018 and started working on January 2019. During the period of this report the CRC continued the process of regular assessment of the research work of the academic staff, with an increased tempo of meetings and decisions. Since implementing this revised pace of CRC meetings the CRC has managed to assess fully the research work of the academic staff of the Faculty of Business & Economics; the Faculty of Contemporary Sciences and Technologies; and the Faculty of Law; and has created respective lists of approved journals and conferences that the academic staff are advised to attend or to publish their work.

The Decision on the allocation of the Individual Research and Professional Development Fund (IRPDF) introduced the Procedure for the utilization of FIHZP which began to apply from November 1, 2018 with the right of use until August 31, 2019.

In the period covered by this report there were 109 requests submitted by academic staff for regional, national or international conference attendance; 8 requests submitted for the publication of scientific works in regional and international journals; and 5 requests submitted for participation in different professional trainings to the Research Office. The majority of staff used the Fund for attendance and publication of research works in international conferences. All of the requests were reviewed and registered by the Research Office and approved or disapproved by the Pro-Rector for Research and International Relations. Requests, when disapproved, were usually declined because the journal or publisher involved was recognized as a predatory publisher, or because a conference was identified as being a purely commercial undertaking and thus was deemed to lack academic merit. In such cases, the Research Office and Pro-Rector for Research and International Relations advised the applicant to seek more qualitative opportunities, and were assisted to do so.

The total amount utilized from the Individual Research and Professional Development Fund is 33837 Euros. The funds were allocated by Faculty or Centre, thus: Business & Economics—7870 Euros; Contemporary Sciences & Technologies—7442 Euros; Language Centre—7305; Contemporary Social Sciences—6150 Euros; Languages, Cultures & Communications—3518 Euros; and Law—1552 Euros.

In regard to Research Project proposals at the University level, in the period of this report there were 17 applications for different national and European/International research projects and research

funding. Among the International proposals, for the ‘ERASMUS+ KA1 Jean Monnet’ project programme, one application was submitted and we await feedback; SEEU is in a partner role in this project. Similarly, for the Horizon H2020, SEEU submitted three applications of which two were approved and one is pending; SEEU is again in a partner role in these three projects. Most of the applications of the SEEU staff were towards calls of ERASMUS+ KA2 programmes, of which from a total of 7 applications, two were approved, two were rejected, and three were in placed in the reserve list.

The University also submitted project proposals for programmes available at the national level, in which SEEU is in the leading role. Two applications were submitted to the Ministry of Culture of RNM, of which one was approved and one is pending a decision. Project proposals were additionally submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science of RNM for a bilateral project with the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology entitled “Macedonian - Chinese Scientific and Technological Cooperation”; both of the projects were approved and will begin in January 2020. The University has the leading role in these projects.

Additional project proposals were sent in response to calls from Central European Initiatives (CEI) and the European Commission—Civil Society Faculty and Media Programme 2018-2019, both of which are pending decisions.

Finally, the University maintains an academic journal relating to the main research and teaching elements of the five SEEU Faculties, entitled *The SEEU Review*. This journal is peer-reviewed, free of charge to contributors, and is published online without subscription or cost to any reader.

Opportunities:

- Committed staff with growing experience in serious international research;
- Increasing success in applying for projects/research funding;
- Significant research support provided by SEEU to academic staff;
- Increased pace of CRC deliberations allows for oversight and assistance for researchers.

Challenges:

- Valueless conferences and meaningless journals are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their Calls for Papers, making it ever more necessary for SEEU scholars to be skeptical and vigilant about where they share their research;
- Room for improvement exists in coordinating research and teaching;
- Research still incentivized towards individual performance and not collaborative projects;
- Modest support infrastructure (laboratories, databases, grant-writing expertise) results in an improvable number of research applications.

9.1 Max Van der Stoel Research Institute

The Max Van der Stoel Research Institute is the primary locus of collaborative University research. Although most individual research has been conducted under the auspices of the individual Faculties, the MVDSRI organizes seminars, workshops, and conferences to promote collegial and group research, specifically in the fields germane to the Faculties of the University—social sciences, political discourse, business and commerce, language and linguistics, and legal matters.

During the period covered by this review, the MVDSRI improved the administrative and research capacity of the Institute by dealing with certain administrative and organizational restructuring. Specifically, the Institute began employing streamlined management strategies, and by identifying the need for a Research Associate with strong international experience. (This individual was hired, but slightly after the period of this review; the need for the position was advanced procedurally during this period). The functioning of the Institute was also regularized by a new Rule for Work of the MVDSRI Council, which was approved by the Senate; a Council has been appointed, and now functions. The MVDSRI has revised and updated the MSVDSI website.

The Institute has continued its work of organizing gatherings, such as roundtables, networking opportunities, and talks. MVDSRI also hosted several visiting guests through the Fulbright Senior Research Program, as well as a University of Warsaw student visit-lecture. Additionally, the MVDSRI increased substantially the number of project and grant applications for which it applied, and was awarded an H2020 project, and a national project sponsored by the Ministry of Culture. Finally, the MVDSRI developed a concept paper for the research potential of the Institute and SEEU in general, for international partner institutions.

Opportunities:

- A new Research Associate should expand the Institute’s capabilities;
- Projects have begun to be won, building crucial application experience;
- An MVDSRI Council has been appointed, and has convened.

Challenges:

- Staff remain reluctant to pursue research through MVDSRI;
- SEEU orientation to social sciences limits available research projects;
- Budgetary constraints make large-scale or long-term research problematic.

10. International Relations

South East European University has been international in orientation since its founding, which was impelled by multiple donor nations and international organizations (such as the OSCE). The University has been fortunate to have collaborated with distinguished international partner institutions, of which the most notable must be Indiana University in the USA. The international compatibility—and comparability—of the SEEU educational offering, and the international recognition of the SEEU degree, have always been major considerations of the University stakeholders. For these reasons, International Relations remain a major element of SEEU’s institutional identity and future intentions.

During the period of this report, one of the main international elements of the University’s efforts has been to utilize the funding and opportunity provided by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme. During the academic year 2018/19, SEEU was awarded a total number of 76 mobility grants, out of which a total number of 58 mobility grants were implemented: 44 student mobility grants and 14 staff mobility grants. Most of the student grants were exchange mobility grants which enabled the students to spend one semester in a university with which SEEU has signed an Erasmus+ agreement. Several student mobility grants consisted of internship grants which enabled the students to participate in internship programmes with companies or universities in countries with

which SEEU has Erasmus+ agreements. Internship grants were implemented for the first time during this academic year. The aim of SEEU is to increase the number of students who make use of these grants, as this experience can be very influential for their careers. Moreover, SEEU has signed 9 new Erasmus+ agreements during 2018/19 and has hosted 3 incoming students and 7 incoming professors/staff members. In terms of the ability to implement the awarded grants from the Erasmus+ programme, SEEU stands in the second position in North Macedonia. Staff mobility grants are implemented at a 100% level, whereas student mobility grants are implemented at a relatively high rate.

In regard to cooperating with universities in the United States, during the academic year 2018/19 SEEU signed cooperation agreements with the University of Southern Indiana, Montana State University, Billings and Kent State University. SEEU renewed the connection with Indiana University, an institution which has been the main supporter of the Development of SEEU since its very foundation. A new cooperation agreement with Indiana University is under development and which aims to establish a strategy for closer cooperation between the two institutions. In regard to cooperation agreements with US universities, a continuous challenge is finding funds to support exchange. Therefore, the aim of the cooperation with Indiana University is to identify projects and develop joint ideas that would make such exchange and cooperation possible. SEEU hosted one Fulbright postgraduate scholar and one Fulbright English Teaching Assistant during 2018/19.

SEEU signed 7 new mutual agreements with different universities during 2018/19. Some of these agreements have aimed to renew the cooperation with traditional regional partner universities whereas other agreements relate to newly established collaborations.

Opportunities:

- Strong Erasmus + participation by students and staff;
- Renewed collaboration with historical partner Indiana University;
- Regional distinction makes SEEU an attractive international partner;
- Goodwill towards internationalization from students and staff.

Challenges:

- Adequate funding for international cooperation is difficult to secure for all regional higher educational institutions;
- Erasmus + mobility opportunities should not go unused;
- North Macedonia is not an internationally-prominent ‘incoming’ destination for mobility;
- SEEU remains committed to identifying more modular, guest, and full-time international teaching staff.

11. Entrepreneurship and Development

Because SEEU has the legally unique status of being a ‘public-private-not-for-profit’ higher education institution, it is particularly well placed to bridge the worlds of entrepreneurship and academia. The University is simultaneously both a scholarly entity and an entrepreneurial endeavour (needing to pay its own costs). It is therefore a crucial concern of the University community that we maintain strong financial viability as an academic institution, while continuing to innovate to meet the

evolving partnership needs of commercial collaborators, entrepreneurial associates, non-governmental agencies, and international governmental partners.

The University's Entrepreneurship and Development initiatives follow multiple-strand development, emphasizing particularly the 1) reliable viability of the University as a valuable partner of business and commerce, and 2) development of skills in students that promote creative initiative as well as contemporary labour-market readiness (employability). This intended nexus of academics-employers-industry aims to provide the most reliable employee graduate pool in the region as well as to influence the modernization and rationalization of University curricula.

To meet these needs of both the University and its commercial partners, the University created the Business & Innovation Centre (BIC), which unites the University's Business Development Centre (BDC) and the SEEU TechPark. This latter institution—the TechPark—was founded in 2013, and is the University's primary effort to foster external and graduate entrepreneurship with the mentorship of the academic community. Housed in a separate building on the Tetovo campus, the TechPark provides startup companies with the assistance, facilities, and prestige of the University at a crucial period of their corporate incubation. Conversely, the University benefits by fostering fledgling businesses at the initial moments of their creation and adaptation to market realities. This enables these initiatives to engage an educated labour force, access venture capital, and collaborate with the University. For the period covered by this report, the SEEUTechPark has 13 new tenant companies, 4 of them new just this year, which have opened more than 150 new tech jobs on the market, and provided more than 3.000m² of dedicated space for entrepreneurship activities.

The Business Development Centre is the centerpiece of SEEU's desire to provide its own expertise and advice to the local business and corporate community. The BDC offers business planning, staff training, executive management exercises, consultancy, expansion or optimization assistance, seminar organization, and networking opportunities. The BDC seeks to make the University's access to, and reputation in, the local communities of Tetovo and Skopje available to the corporate community. Although the following is by no means an exhaustive list of recent partners, the BDC is proud to have worked recently with: Dauti Komerc; Alkaloid; Sparkasse Bank; NB Construction; Ecolog; Harbini Cosmetics; and Mercure Hotels.

The BIC intends, in the next several years, to focus on several major initiatives for development: 1) the continuing provision of training and consultancy for local businesses and industries; 2) the ongoing hosting of startup companies in the TechPark; 3) the development of a TechPark Fund, essentially to provide seeding to promising but underfunded entrepreneurs; and 4) to involve ever more closely the business and employment worlds with curricular design and advice.

The University strongly believes that entrepreneurship and business fostering is a major area for future development, as it deepens our engagement in the community, helps our graduates begin to advance their ideas, and assist SEEU to guarantee diverse and fluid revenue streams.

Opportunities:

- Good local reputation and strong facilities support on campus;
- BIC usefully harmonizes entrepreneurial efforts and entities;
- Helps both graduates and SEEU by promoting ongoing collaboration after graduation;
- May diversify income streams.

Challenges:

- Further development of training and consultancy efforts remain a challenge;
- Staff should be encouraged to pursue cooperation through and with the BIC.

12. Financing

Because of its unique status as a private-public not-for-profit higher educational institution, funding for the University's teaching and research activities has always been of major significance to the success of SEEU. This funding is largely supported by the institution's own funds and partly from outside income. In the present context most of the income is derived from student tuition fees. This reliance upon tuition is not expected to change in the practically foreseeable future, making it the primary source of income for the University. Additional sources of income originate in the activities of other University services (such as providing training for external companies or the design of development programmes for businesses). Another additional source of financing for University operations is the state budget that, for the fifth consecutive year, has continued to subsidize the University, this year with an increase of nearly 40% and by the registration of SEEU as a fiscal entity in the RNM Budget. This step taken by the Government of RNM has been both generous and appreciated, and has helped SEEU to maintain regionally excellent standards of education and research. Yields of short and long term bank deposits as well as investments in low risk investment funds are yet another supplement to the budget of the University.

The land of the Tetovo campus does not belong to the University or the Foundation, but to the government and is used on a long-term agreement.

If we have a close look at the income portfolio for the academic year 2018/2019 it is as follows: Tuition accounts for 82.50% of the income, commercial income is 2.50%, financial activities are 0.40%, projects are 0.60%, and state subventions are the remaining 14.00%.

SHARE OF THE ASSETS FROM THE BUDGET IN TOTAL ASSETS

According to the most recent data, the total assets of the University are 1,149,217,000 MKD. For the academic year 2018/2019, according to the budget execution report the total income from tuition was 204,841,000 MKD. The total revenue for that year was 252,015,000 MKD.

SHARE OF STUDENT TUITION IN TOTAL ASSETS

According to the numbers the share of student tuition in total assets in the academic year 2018/2019 is 17.82%.

Opportunities:

- Continuing financial viability in difficult circumstances;
- Valued governmental support increased substantially this period;
- Financial optimization efforts are reducing costs.

Challenges:

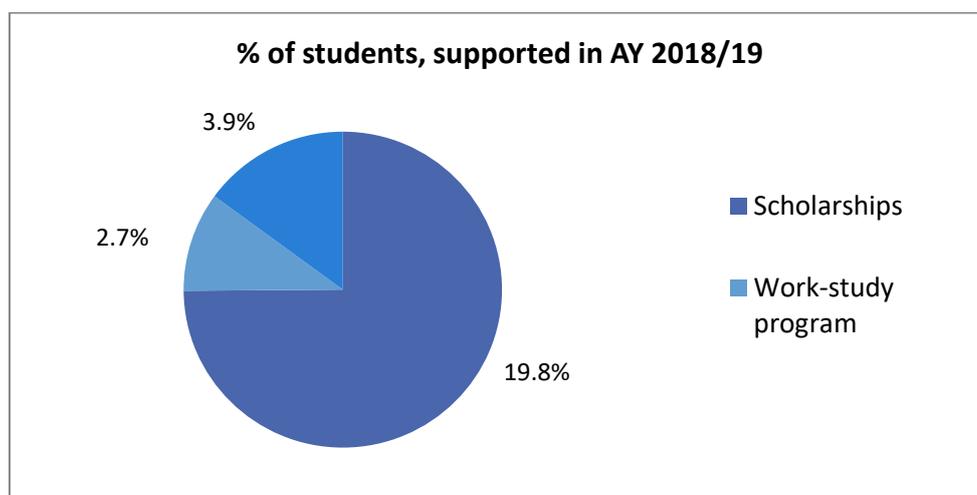
- Perilously reliant on tuition and governmental subsidy for 96.50% of income;
- Aging infrastructure imposes additional replacement or maintenance costs;

- Further development of commercial income, projects, and financial activities should be pursued not only in the BIC but through all other University organs.

13. Campus Environment and Services

13.1 Student Support

Student support is mainly realized through Student Services and the Financial Aid Office. Students for the academic year 2018/2019 were financially supported by the university scholarship programmes, “Work-study” programme, sponsorships from business community as well as financial discount programme for siblings. In total, 26.4% of the full-time undergraduate students are financially supported to some degree.



Scholarships are given based on merit and the merit has been assessed by student’s academic performance. At the University level 316 scholarships were granted, that is about 19.8% of the total number of full-time students and scholarships cover partial to full tuition fee of the respective study programme.

From the financial point of view, about 2.7% of full-time students are supported through the "Work-Study" programme. Through this programme, students were engaged in various services to the university, taking advantage of their relevant experience, and by this service they earned financial means to cover part of their tuition fee. In this academic year 43 students were engaged in this programme.

Also, in support to families that have more than one student studying at SEEU, a sibling discount is granted for the tuition fees of a second or third student from the same family. By this programme the University has supported 63 students, which is 3.9% of all full-time students.

Special attention is given to the development of effective access for students with special needs and opportunities for scholarships exist for this group of students.

SEEU in liaison with the business community has sponsored 29 students covering 100% of tuition fees in different study programmes. This will serve as an addition to existing instruments for student support, and it will help to maintain the strong links with companies willing to support SEEU students with scholarships.

13.2 Facilities

The University is close to reaching the beginning of the third decade of its existence and its capacities remain the same and well maintained. Its appearance continues to be an institutional example not only within the country but also in the region. This is largely due to the exemplary work of the devoted facilities and maintenance staff, who ensure that all technical capacities, logistics, and grounds are managed appropriately, and that all assets owned by the University are properly maintained.

The University continues to invest in the Tetovo campus, seeking new systems that increase effectiveness and efficiency, on the one hand, and optimize operating costs, on the other. The Facilities Department follows the modern trends of permanent standardization and, this year, in collaboration with the Max Van der Stoel Research Institute, has piloted the 'smart classroom' project, which is a completely in-house idea and will give the first results of complete automation of all facilities in early 2020.

The Facilities Department seeks to achieve the objectives set by the management by strictly adhering to established standards and by always advancing them to meet the optimal conditions for all service recipients. Students and academic staff members remain key users of Facilities Department services. Guaranteed spatial capacity for each student—and of course the maintenance of safety conditions and of excellence of service—continue to be the priorities of the Facilities Department. The Department continues to maintain the outdoor and indoor environments with a high rating by SEEU stakeholders.

New concepts incorporated this academic year include development of areas such as energy management; the conceptual creation of an asset management framework; detailed records of all services rendered; and processes optimized in accordance with international standards procedures. This process, as evidenced in larger organizations, will bring results in the ongoing preservation of assets, and in the timely prevention of possible incidents of equipment deterioration or damage, thus facilitating their replacement.

The Department continues to achieve its cost reduction objectives by replacing standard consumables with efficient A-class consumables. This implementation has mainly continued through the permanent replacement of LED lights, public lighting, and the automation of light control in any facility.

13.3 The Skopje Campus

Although the main campus of SEEU remains the splendid Tetovo campus, the University also runs a full-service campus in the capital city of Skopje. Located in a symbolic 'bridge' location that literally spans the area between the older and newer parts of Skopje, it is both one of the most centrally-sited educational institutions in the capital, as well as offering all services and student support that are available to students of the Tetovo campus. The only notable difference between academic offerings between Tetovo and Skopje is that Skopje campus offers only first and second cycle instruction; doctoral students are required to attend their lectures in Tetovo.

Because of its central location, SEEU Skopje has often been the hosting location for conferences, roundtables, workshops, and guest lectures organized by the University. As just two examples of this tendency, one may note the 'Business Angels in Macedonia' conference hosted at SEEU Skopje (in cooperation with CEED Macedonia), and the Business and Economics Faculty conference 'Transition to Development,' held in Skopje SEEU. Other activities located in the Skopje Campus during the period

of this report would include the Spelling Bee competition (hosted by the Language Centre, in cooperation with the Ohrid Red Cross and the U.S. Peace Corps), and the English Filmmaking Camp (organized again by the Language Centre, in cooperation with the N.G.O. 'Koreni'). All of these activities and events served the dual purposes of providing intellectual opportunity and idea exchange to the students of the Skopje Campus, and simultaneously helped to promote the University in the country's largest demographic market.

A significant effort has also been made in the period covered by this report to increase revenue generation through the favourable negotiation of necessary service contracts. These would include new arrangements for the location of ATM space on University property; new agreements for the food and coffee vending machinery; and renegotiating the hours of the security personnel and the cleaning and maintenance staff. Although these result in relatively minor cost reductions, it is believed that every saving, however small, is valuable, and builds momentum for useful optimization. The Skopje Campus also provided 6,000-7,000 Euros to the BIC through the rental of Campus services and locations to NGOs for organizing conferences and training sessions. The Skopje Director and his Directorate remain committed to seeking out opportunities to reduce local costs and to increase revenue generation.

In the period covered by this report, the new project 'Alumni for University and University for Alumni' was launched, through which the SEEU alumnus Ejup Ahmeti (owner of the international company 'Doni Fruits') donated 10 computers to the Skopje campus, in order to facilitate teaching and learning during lectures and exercises.

Finally, efforts have been made to strengthen cooperation with the public enterprises of the City of Skopje. During June 2019 a donation of around 1,700 Euros was provided by the City of Skopje, specifically the Public Enterprise 'Parks and Greenery,' for the arrangement of the Campus mini-park, where a 'drop-by-drop' irrigation system is installed, and flowers of various kinds, trees, and other horticultural products have been planted. Additionally, the Public Enterprise 'Municipal Hygiene' has provided five internships, through which students from the Faculty of Business and Economics have stayed in this enterprise for one month and have completed internships in the finance sector.

13.4 Human Resources

In order to ensure adequate and quality human resources during the academic year 2018-2019, the Office of Human Resources has continued to play an important role, in line with its competencies and authorizations, in leading and managing the staff recruitment process and the academic promotion process. All these processes have been completed successfully and on time, as a result the University has recruited 2 administrative staff members and promoted 22 staff members in teaching-scientific titles (5 Full Professors, 11 Associate Professors and 6 Assistant Professors/ Docent).

During the academic year 2018-2019 there are 244 employees of South East European University. They are distributed as follows: there are 139 academic staff members, 96 of them are full-time employees, while the other 43 are part-time employees; there are 105 administrative staff, of which 102 are full-time employees and 3 are part-time employees.

In addition are given data in tables regarding academic and administrative staff.

Table HR1. Teaching-scientific/professional/collaborator titles for the full-time academic staff:

Teaching-scientific/ Professional/ Collaborator	Law	CSS	BE	CST	LCC	LC	eLC
Full Professor	3	7	3	2	6		
Associate Professor	4	3	10	13	5		1
Assistant Professor	5	2	6	2	2		
High Lector						18	
Lector					1		
Collaborator	1	1	1				

Table HR2. Scientific titles for the full-time academic staff for the last three years:

Scientific title	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019
PhD	77	75	79
MA	25	20	17
BA	0	0	0

Table HR3. Table regarding scientific titles for the full-time administrative staff for the last three years

Scientific title	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019
PhD	4	5	5
MA	18	16	15
BA	61	59	57

The highest number of employees in the last seven years was recorded in 2012, when there were a total of 347 employees (254 full-time and 93 part-time employees). These numbers have been steadily reduced through intentional reduction of part-time support, optimization and retirement or resignation. These trends are as follows: in 2013 there were 320 employees, out of which 249 full-time and 71 part-time employees. In 2014, there were 300 employees, out of which 229 were full time and 71 were part-time. In 2015, there were 285 employees, out of which 223 full-time and 62 part-time employees. In 2016 there were 278, out of which 221 full-time and 57 full-time employees. In 2017 there are 261 employees in total, out of which 205 full-time and 56 part-time. And in 2018 there are 244 employees in total, out of which 198 full-time and 46 part-time.

Staff	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Full-time	254	249	229	223	221	205	198
Part-time	93	71	71	62	57	56	46
Total	347	320	300	285	278	261	244

13.5 Information Systems

During this academic year Information Systems staff have worked on enriching and expanding electronic platforms and procedures in order to serve students, academic staff, and administrative staff. In this regard, the electronic Graduation Module system has been expanded to include the

requirements of students in Specialist Studies. eGrading has been expanded and rules have been redefined for the deadlines for entering and announcing grades in eGrading. This has resulted in a higher rate of deadlines met for entering grades during exam sessions.

The electronic procurement system has also been expanded. At the request of the Business Innovation Centre, the system has been developed so that this unit within the institution can be serviced through the electronic procurement platform. This has helped to optimize procurement within the BIC. Additionally, as a result of BIC's request to start electronic system of archive in this University unit as well, the electronic system of the archive has also been upgraded.

Information Systems staff have continued the migration of the UMS system to the WEB application. In this regard, it is worth emphasizing the successful development and introduction of some electronic reports, specific for the maintenance service, in order better to manage when optimizing heating costs.

Within the electronic portal MySEEU, Information Systems staff have worked to disable access to certain services rather than closing the student account access to the University computer network. This has eliminated the problems encountered in the past when students—as a result of a blocked account—were unable to attend certain lectures.

Regarding computer infrastructure this year, IS has worked on cleaning and removing old electronic equipment. Every space on both campuses was checked and all the old and unnecessary equipment that was occupying space and unnecessarily spending electric energy was removed. The printing service has been completely reorganized and optimized. The number of printing machines has been greatly reduced and a system for measuring the amount of printing for each user individually has been implemented. This has resulted in a significant reduction in printing costs without diminishing the printing service.

Because the University remains a regionally unparalleled example of academic digitalization and the incorporation of technology in the teaching and research processes, the Information Services staff continue to regard their work as requiring the highest amount of dedication and professionalism.

13.6 Library Services

The Max Van der Stoel Library is the institutional library of South East European University and is conveniently located in building 702 on the Tetovo campus; it occupies a total space of 565 square meters, including reading rooms, meeting rooms (or group learning spaces), computer rooms, and spaces for debate. The library branch at the SEEU Skopje Campus works in the same way with all services. Independent of the Central Library, SEEU also has branch libraries in the University Faculties and a well-organized library at the Language Centre.

For the successful operation of all library operations the MVDS Library utilizes PMB software which is an integrated open access library system. This regularly synchronizes data with the SEEU central database and automatically generates user accounts. PMB also has an online catalogue of open access OPAC.

The current holdings of the Library include: 32,858 books in the Tetovo library, and 3094 books in the Skopje campus library, for total book holdings of 36,465. This total represents 17,403 different titles (the rest being multiple copies of those titles). The library is also the main University repository of successfully defended dissertations and theses, of which the library maintains holdings of 143

dissertations (51 electronic); 374 theses (303 electronic), for a total of 517 significant student works (354 electronic).

In the time period covered by this report, all requested relevant materials for students and staff have been provided, i.e., the library has acquired new titles proposed by the Library Committee. Nearly 870 titles are catalogued including 417 theses and dissertations of all postgraduate students at SEEU. The library also provides regular annual access to electronic databases such as EBSCO, EconBiz, Academia and Edward Elgar Publishing journals and, at the same time, additional access to five electronic databases for a fixed period of up to three months. In the library are also available informational materials printed by the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank, for which a special corner has been provided.

The library also serves as a central venue for the display of postgraduate theses before their public defence, and for review reports on candidates for promotion in academic title. In collaboration with the Faculty Administrators, and with the assistance of the IT office, in the period of this review—and for the first time at SEEU—the procedure for public review of master theses and dissertations has been digitized. Electronic copies have been published (for review) by the relevant Faculty, and interested parties have local access to the Library premises in Tetovo and Skopje on a regular basis.

The Library frequently organizes activities and presentations for new students and training for postgraduate students on the sources of information the library provides, as well as on how to use electronic databases. Thanks to successful presentations the MVDS Library has experienced increased use of the library's online catalogue, especially the mobile version, where there has been an increase of 10700 visitors.

The reading rooms of the Library 'Max Van der Stoel' are also open to the public and, in the academic year 2018/2019, 70 students from outside the SEEU student population who are registered and students who are not enrolled at SEEU but who are accommodated in the SEEU dormitories have been served by the Library.

The Library maintains good cooperation with the National and University Library in Skopje (NUL), in particular through the provision of ISBN and ISSN numbers for new publications of which SEEU is the publisher. Cooperation with the NUL has continued with other professional activities, such as membership of the Consortium of Public Libraries of RNM; membership of IFLA; and membership of the Association of Libraries of RNM.

13.7 The Student Parliament

The Student Parliament and Association is the formal elected body of student representatives. Students of all cycles are permitted to compete for election to the SPA, and the elections themselves are overseen by a group of academic and administrative SEEU staff members nominated by the Rector's Directorate. After successful candidates have been elected, there is then another internal SPA vote to determine who will serve as officers in the Student Parliament, most notably for the position of President of the SPA, Vice-President of the SPA, and Secretary of the SPA. By University rule, the President and Vice-President come from different campuses. Finally, there exists the external position of Student Ombudsperson, who does not serve in the SPA, but also holds an important position of student advocacy, and who is also—like the Parliamentary membership—directly elected by the student body.

During the period covered by this report, the Student Parliament placed its primary focus upon student representation in academic and educational areas, such as providing advice and assistance in cases where students feel overwhelmed by their obligations, or perhaps object to the assessment their work has received. Additionally, the SPA has made a concerted effort to expand the cultural and social offerings available to the students, most notably by inaugurating several clubs based upon shared interest or social concern: for example, the SPA has continued or begun clubs of such varied natures as an Ethical Hacking Club, a Debate Club, a Feminist Club, and a Sport Club. The SPA has also continued to support the student Euroidea magazine, and has continued the provision of entertainment and excursion possibilities for students.

13.8 Sport and Recreation

As in other academic years, during 2018/2019 the Department of Sport and Recreation within SEEU has been very active in organizing various sports activities, thus enabling the students to utilize all the capabilities and conditions that the University offers for the development of sporting activities.

Regular sport activities were organized on the campus, particularly football, volleyball, basketball, fitness, tennis, chess, ping-pong and dancing courses for any interested students and staff. In addition to these daily activities, there have been also activities that were organized periodically, including: various tournaments in football, ping-pong and chess. There is also a small football tournament for Tetovo high schools that is traditionally organized on the University campus. Additionally, in honor of November's holidays and the SEEU Anniversary, the SEEU Department of Sport and Recreation organized the traditional chess tournament "Arben Xhaferi-Memorial."

The futsal team was a participant and represented the University in the First League of the Republic of North Macedonia. Also, SEEU staff participated in the Tetovo Municipal League in football. During this academic year, students took part in various inter-university sport competitions. We also hosted ping-pong competitions at state level, organized by the ping-pong Federation.

It is important to note that Department of Sport and Recreation has also organized ping-pong and football tournaments for SEEU students in Skopje. In order to insure comfortable sport conditions, we have signed a contract for the usage of the hall and pool "Boris Trajkovski", which students can use to practice sports activities.

14. Conclusion and Recommendations

As South East European University nears its third decade of existence, it can take measured pride in the significance of its contribution to the individual lives of staff and students, and to the larger social role it has played in the Republic of North Macedonia. It remains one of the few institutions of higher learning in the region explicitly committed to the provision of internationally-competitive education, in all three cycles, irrespective of the student's ethnicity, native language, religion, gender, nationality, or political beliefs. The value of this commitment to mission is reflected in many aspects of University life—the variety of students and staff who choose to be here; the model of diversity and educational excellence provided by the institution; the success of alumni and staff in internationally competitive markets; and the generous governmental provision of subsidy to assist in continuing that work.

Yet any institution of this scope and size must have failings that need serious evaluation and difficult effort either to eliminate or to ameliorate. During the process of compiling the data and evidence for this review, the following areas of concern were raised in multiple settings. They deserve

serious consideration by University management, staff, students, and alumni, as many of these challenges require coordinated effort across the University community:

- maintain or increase undergraduate student enrolment, without diminishing quality;
- maintain regional leadership in second and third cycle programmes, without diminishing quality;
- consider implementing basic admissions standards in the second cycle Call for Enrolment;
- diversify income streams to reduce disproportionate dependence upon tuition and governmental subsidy;
- continue optimization efforts to identify avoidable expenditures;
- encourage staff to cooperate with the BIC and the TechPark to identify areas through which the University may provide services to the external community;
- improve on-time graduation rates;
- re-activate students—particularly M.A. and Ph.D. students—who have become inactive;
- vigilantly align curricula and course offerings to market needs, to improve graduate employment rates;
- reestablish an active, dynamic Alumni Association;
- aim to generate more successful research project participation, or grant receipt, through the Research Office and the Max Van der Stoel Research Institute;
- make promotion in academic title more challenging, and less ‘automatic’;
- increase international teaching staff through full-time contracts;
- identify areas of potential collaboration between Faculties, to combine course offerings where possible (in terms of subject and language of delivery);
- consider expanding research database access, particularly for second and third cycle students, and the staff.

The University continues to provide a strong regional example of the value of diversity and the success of an inclusive educational atmosphere. The success of the students and staff verifies that SEEU remains a place committed to the values of its mission, and of its founders, where a high quality education may be obtained irrespective of gender, native language, religious belief, or political affiliation. Yet it is also the distinction of SEEU that it openly acknowledges its challenges and difficulties, and the Self-Evaluation Commission notes these weaknesses openly, hoping to engage the creativity, innovation, and strength of the University community to identify solutions.

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