

SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY IN TOTOVO

EUA EVALUATION REPORT

February 2005

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Foreword

Following two successful conferences on the theme of Quality and Evaluation, the Committee of the CRE (now EUA, the Association of European Universities) decided in 1993 to offer its member universities, which today exceed 750, the possibility of being evaluated so that their strengths and weaknesses in the area of institutional and quality management might be assessed. EUA evaluations are a tool to assist University leaders in their efforts to improve their management and to promote the universities' capacity for change. The cornerstone of the evaluation is the university's self-evaluation, which allows the university staff, as a team, to understand their institution's strengths and weaknesses. The EUA expects that the growing number of its institutional evaluations contributes to the promotion of a culture of quality among its members, and to the dissemination of examples of effective strategic management among the European universities. The EUA does not wish to provide Universities with a blueprint for its development; rather the evaluation process is a consultative and supportive one.

The European University Association Institutional Evaluation Programme began 10 years ago, and has evaluated 130 higher education institutions and conducted 20 follow-up evaluations in 35 countries. South East European University (SEEU) is the third university in Macedonia that EUA has been asked to evaluate. In the preceding year both state universities, the Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, and the University of "St. Kliment Ohridski", Bitola, were evaluated.

EUA evaluation teams are from the academic community, made up of current or former rectors, in addition to a secretary. The members of the EUA Evaluation Team to SEEU were:

- Henrik Toft Jensen, rector of Roskilde University in Denmark, Team chair
- H  l  ne Lamicq, former president of the University Paris 12 University in France
- Johann Gerlach, former president of Free University in Berlin
- Christina Rozsnyai, programme officer at the Hungarian Accreditation Committee, Team secretary

The Team's preliminary visit to SEEU took place 6-8 June 2004, and the main visit was conducted between 17 and 20 November 2004. During the two visits the Team had several discussions with Rector Alajdin Abazi and Secretary-General Denis Farrington and his successor and also head of human resources, Xhevair Memedi. The Team met deans and staff from all five faculties and two higher schools/centres, as well as administrative staff and students. The Team was also given opportunity to meet members of SEEU's external Board, Max van der Stoel, and Murtezan Ismaili, the mayor of Tetovo.

The Evaluation Team appreciated that both visits were superbly organised, and the Team was awarded very generous and kind hospitality. The discussions with the Team were open and constructive. On top of this the University leadership appeared to have a good working relationship with the other members of the University. .

The University's Self-Evaluation Report, in addition to providing background information for the Evaluation Team, was analytical in identifying the University's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, and provided a good starting point for the visits. The University's Strategic Plan further outlined steps to be taken in order to overcome identified shortcomings. In general, the University has produced numerous documents, which indicate that there is an ongoing review and planning on the top administrative level. The additional information the Team requested was readily supplied prior to the main visit.

The Self-Evaluation Report cited as the main reason for requesting an EUA evaluation "the way in which University and Faculty levels inter-relate in helping to achieve a quality culture" (p. 1). In the Strategic Plan, the University also mentioned that it would "ask the EUA Institutional Evaluation Team to comment specifically on the governance structure, in particular, as the University increases in size, on the relationship between central and Faculty organs of governance" (p. 65). It is clear from the documents and discussions that the University has reached a crossroads in its development. In four short years it has grown into a viable higher education institution that has produced its first set of graduates. At the same time there are a number of uncertainties in the immediate future: externally, its role and position as a university in the region and the development of its profile; internally, the internal changes in staff, infrastructure and organisation, which the growth of the University calls for. The EUA evaluation hopes to assist the University in identifying the way forward in these areas.

The Evaluation Team trusts that its Report, together with the entire evaluation process, that involved not only the external review but began with the University's self-evaluation and included numerous formal and informal discussions between members of the University themselves, and between them and the Team, will fulfil the leadership's expectations about the EUA evaluation exercise.

This Evaluation Report was prepared for the University's leadership, who are free to decide on its use. The Evaluation Team chair presented orally the evaluation report to the president and a large audience on 20 November 2004. A discussion of the issues within the University, and with its colleagues in the region and other partners could continue to strengthen quality culture at SEEU and indeed the region.

Introduction

SEEU is one of four universities in the Republic of Macedonia. There are two publicly funded, traditional state universities in the capital of Skopje and in Bitola whose teaching language is almost exclusively Macedonian. State institutions in Macedonia draw tuition fees from some of the students. SEEU was founded with international funding in the wake of the Balkan War, for the purpose of providing higher education to the Albanian community. Between the Team's two visits, the Tetovo University has been recognised as a Macedonian university. It also teaches in Albanian. SEEU is an accredited, private higher education institution. It is vying for public funding for those of its study programmes that produce graduates to work in public service and teaching. This is

possible only since the ‘Ohrid’ Agreement of 2001, which includes provision for private higher education institutions to receive state funding.

SEEU celebrated its third anniversary just at the time of the EUA Evaluation Team’s main visit; the first class of about 900 students began their studies here in autumn 2001. SEEU was established as an international foundation, with funds from international donors, and as a private university with funds from tuition fees. It operates as a state recognised private university. With the beginning of the academic year 2004/05 the total number of students has risen to 5330, with 1110 full-time and 353 part-time first-year enrolments. The numbers cover only first-cycle students, with second cycles to be launched in 2005. There are 249 academic staff, 91 of whom hold PhD degrees and 155 hold Master’s or Bachelor’s degrees. Further, there are 94 administrative and support staff. (University Board Newsletter, October 2004)¹. The University supports the education of its junior academic staff toward Master’s and PhD degrees.

While SEEU was originally established to provide higher education for the Albanian minority, the students and staff make up a mixed University community. Twenty-six percent of the students have a Macedonian language background. From its beginning, SEEU has adhered to the concept of providing education in both local languages in addition to English, and to a lesser degree in German and French. Its ‘Western’ way of teaching, which is interactive and project-oriented, as well as the opportunity to study in English, has proved attractive to students and ensures a higher enrolment than the originally planned total of under 2800 (Self-Evaluation Report p. 5).

The University has five faculties. The largest is the Faculty of Business Administration with 1569 students, followed by the Faculty of Law with 1249 students, the Faculty of Communication Sciences and Technologies with 1008 students, the Faculty of Public Administration with 795 students and the Faculty of Pedagogical Methodology Training with 709 students. There are two centres teaching language and computer skills to SEEU students, with plans to offer services to the local community as well. There is a plan to incorporate the centres into faculties and in parallel to establish new centres so that each faculty will have its own centre offering services.

The University facilities have steadily and rapidly expanded since SEEU’s establishment in 2001. In addition to buildings housing offices and classes there are dormitories with 450 beds, with additional space planned (Self-Evaluation Report p. 14). Recently, the library building has been extended and a restaurant complex whose services are to be leased out is under construction. A Business Centre is planned.

Given the conditions of the creation of SEEU, the results are impressive. After three years of operation the infrastructure is very good, there is a strong sense of institutional identity, a strong commitment on the part of the staff, a high level of satisfaction among students, and a real recognition from the external stakeholders.

¹ The Newsletter is cited because it contains the most recent data. Figures vary among the various documents provided, most likely depending on the time of their compilation.

The mission of the University

SEE University was conceived by the international community together with members of the local Albanian community with the mission to

“... pursue excellence in teaching and research, to be open to all on the basis of equity and merit regardless of ethnicity, actively seek co-operation with other universities, both in the Republic of Macedonia and in South East Europe as a whole,” and with the aims

“to contribute to the solution of the problem of Albanian language higher education, to promote inter-ethnic understanding, to ensure a multilingual and multicultural approach to teaching and research, and to develop its teaching programme in a broad international and European perspective.”

This mission - with all its elements - is as well the University's *raison d'être* as it is a challenge within the current environment at this point in Macedonia's history.

According to its mission, SEEU is in favour of the Albanian minority improving academic and educational quality (given the under-representation in the state and public sector), in peaceful co-operation with the Macedonian majority. SEEU would like to produce teachers for the Albanian schools, and academically qualified people for state and public services and society in Macedonia. Concerning the teachers for these schools, the team met many students who want to be teachers in these schools despite the low wages.

It can be said that SEEU is well on its way to achieving its mission, in spite of the obstacles it has met and knows it must overcome in the near future. These include the main threats it has identified in the Self-Evaluation Report (p. 7):

- losing its edge in modern teaching methods and provision as competing institutions catch up,
- the political support for which it must compete with the newly recognised Tetovo University, and
- financial sustainability by balancing tuition income with enabling the broadest possible student access from the local community, in accordance with its mission, and avoid “falling prey to a market-driven ideology prevalent in private institutions”.

The actual situation of the University

Budget

The Evaluation Team could observe a good transparency in financial and budget management. It wonders, however, how far it should be possible to establish a university budget, taking into account the whole spectra of resources used for the development and operation of the University (the international programmes, exchanges, funds and grants, etc.).

The Evaluation Team is aware that the University is in the process of developing different resource allocation models for distribution of the budget in the University, and also to create a transparency of the resource allocation models for university members. Parts of

the model-allocated budget to the decentralised units should be allocated to the activities after decentralised decision-making. It would help to create different scenarios of relative weight of the different sources of income, and facilitate the formulation of different scenarios for the future of SEEU's financial development.

Buildings, facilities, infrastructure

SEEU has set up an attractive, fully functioning campus in the three short years of its existence. This includes not only office and classroom buildings but also dormitories, especially important for the geographically diverse student community the University serves. The building up of the accompanying infrastructure in what was once a green field has been an enormous accomplishment. Great effort is being made to continually upgrade the computer system, with the teaching of computer skills being an integral part of the curriculum. In the short months between the Team's two visits, the University completed the addition to the library building, including meeting rooms and reading space, and started a restaurant complex that is still under construction.

By law, universities must set aside a certain amount of money for depreciation. The Team would like to point out, however, that this amount, 0.5 million euros per year, may not be enough also to cover maintenance several years from now. The central administration may wish to re-evaluate its financial policy in this regard.

Staff

SEEU has successfully managed to secure an ample number of staff in the three years of its existence. Given that currently the ratio of part-time to full-time academic staff is roughly 4:5, the Evaluation Team agrees with the policy to move toward more full-time professors, not only in teaching but also research. The University is aware of the difficulty in continuous recruitment of an adequate number of qualified staff. Given the difficult access to qualified academic staff, the Team supports a policy of staff development, especially because most of the staff is very young. The Team recognises the efforts the University has made and continues to make to alleviate this problem; indeed it has a policy in place and allocates a part of its budget to staff training, in large part abroad.

The Team can only emphasise the importance for the future competitiveness of SEEU to increase the number of highly qualified professors in the next year, otherwise it will not be possible to expand the research activity at the University. For developing post-graduate programmes it is especially necessary to increase the number of qualified staff. This should include exploring possibilities to engage guest professors at the University. This means also that the University needs to take good care to maintain intense collaboration and exchange programmes with foreign universities, in order to recruit guest professors.

It would help to keep a healthy diversity of points of view in developing young staff continually, which should remain an enduring part of the University's policy.

Students

A quantitative aspect regarding admission of students is the capacity of the University to accommodate its students. A qualitative aspect is the conflict between the "best" students and those who pay tuition. Grants from foreign donors and work study programmes for 10

per cent to 12 per cent students should continue to be planned in the future, to admit the best student, irrespective of their ability to pay tuition fees.

The Team appreciates the efforts SEEU makes to provide scholarships and grants for its underprivileged students. This is not only a financial issue but also a strategic one, which serves to ensure access of the best students and is thus in line with the University's mission. In aiming to be a high-ranking higher education institution, the University must be committed to providing access to all capable youngsters in the region.

SEEU has nearly doubled its student population from the originally planned 2800 to the current 5300. While this shows the attractiveness of the University, and represents an advantage for an institution whose income derives from tuition fees, it also poses a management challenge. The Evaluation Team agrees with the leadership that this expansion has provided a good foundation for the University, and also agrees that a ceiling must be set now for expansion in order to avoid jeopardising the quality of education. The development of the academic staff must be given priority.

Organisation

Administrative structure

The coherence of the University's administrative structures and the on-going dialogue in the university council with its weekly meetings make it possible for the University to react quickly and to implement some new initiatives on a short notice.

This coherent structure has a number of advantages concerning budget decision-making and the provision of services to faculty staff and students. At the same time this centralised structure creates a need for the administration to be quick and precise and here the Team notes that there is room for improvement.

The University should be aware of the need of improvement in this area and support it through the development of administrative staff. This could be done after an evaluation of the services. The university leadership seems to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the University and prepared to act in relation to this.

At a small or medium-size university it is often better to have one central unit than five or six decentralised ones dealing with student statistics, students' registration, etc. (A quick transfer of data and a better flow of correct information should be ensured).

Leadership and governance

SEEU has outlined a new governance structure to begin in 2004/05. This was in part due to the reorganisation of the International Foundation in Zürich and the Local University Foundation in Tetovo into the University Foundation Tetovo, which is governed by a Foundation Board (identical to the University Board) consisting of local and international members. It is advised by an Advisory Board with a fully international membership. The University's internal structure has recently been reorganised to include the position of pro-rectors. The University leadership is conscious of the necessity to continue to allocate

authority and responsibilities to all levels of management and leadership, including the faculty deans. The Team is aware that it is only possible to use budget resource allocation models as the financial structures become developed. It also appreciates that in the context of SEEU's mission the University Board members are recruited from both ethnic communities in Macedonia and two appointed members from the Advisory Board.

The rapid growth of the University and the specificities of its situation make it necessary to develop ownership and governance structures of a private institution in charge of a public good. This specification of the university's ownership goes with the clarification of the respective roles of the different governing bodies.

The Team appreciates the University members' conviction of the efficiency of its University Council. The relatively small size of the institution and Council make this the forum for debating issues at hand. It is the members' belief that the structure ensures an effective flow of information to other levels of the University. The Team agrees that if the levels of initiative and responsibilities for the implementation of the different programmes are clearly transparent, it can strengthen the University leadership in carrying out its executives responsibilities. It is necessary to have procedures in place for the formulation and planning of the University's long-term strategy, in which the balance between centralisation and decentralisation must be carefully weighed, also with regard to the local environment.

Curriculum, teaching and learning

Curriculum

The faculties are continuously updating their curriculum in line with European standards, while keeping in mind local needs. The Team appreciates the University's awareness for the need to continue curriculum development, parallel with its ongoing staff development. Great effort is being made to fill the need for good textbooks, several foreign ones are being translated, and the library is gradually expanding its stock of international journals. The Team supports these efforts, especially since some students have reported their need for more copies of textbooks and reading material in the library.

The University is about to launch second-cycle programmes and has worked out various scenarios for the different faculties. This will offer at least some of its first Bachelor graduates the possibility to continue their studies if they so chose. The SEEU leadership is well aware of the challenges it faces in establishing itself as a research institution of higher learning, and is to be commended for the strategic steps it has taken and continues to take. This includes developing its staff for this purpose and working out interim scenarios, such as interdisciplinary Master's programmes taught together by more than one faculty. It also extends to co-operation with foreign universities in exploring joint Master's programmes, franchises, etc.

Teaching and learning

The issue of practical training for students was raised several times during the Team's visits. The students stressed that they need opportunities for practical training as part of

their education, either in schools, administration or courts, etc. The Team agrees that it is important to establish the possibility to practice and is aware that it also could help in getting a job after graduation. The Team has learned that this is an important part of the planning of the 4th study year at SEEU, which will be implemented in the coming months. The setting up of the planned centres at each faculty could help in alleviating the problem by providing ongoing links with the outside community in the respective fields.

The Evaluation Team supports the establishment of a career counselling office, which has been mentioned in the discussions (part of the USAID-funded project). It should establish contacts in the local, national and international communities as well as the relevant ministry. It would facilitate access to job opportunities as well as to practical training for students, and would conduct the necessary administration. With the collection of relevant employment data it could also contribute to strategic information for curriculum development.

Language policy

The University has an impressive language policy, reflected in its effort to answer the request for running higher education in three languages, which is very important and fruitful for the future. Students have the choice to learn in their native language but are also exposed to the language of the other ethnic community. All students are, moreover, required to study in English (alternatively German or French) at some point.

The Team noted appreciatively that the language policy was amended to raise access requirements for language majors and to expand the required time all students must attend foreign-language classes.

Interactive teaching

SEEU has made a special effort in modernising the learning process: special interest for teaching languages, small groups, good access to professors, good equipment and access to computers, the library, and commitment to recruit good professors (with difficulty, because of the lack of qualified academics). The effectiveness of this policy is evident. Still, this process needs to be fed by a standing policy for academic staff development in new teaching methods, in order to keep an up-to-date high level.

The Evaluation Team has studied the curricula of the University and noted positively that the common curricular structure allows the University to require the fulfilment of the language policy and the policy of requiring all students to acquire a basic knowledge in ICT. The Evaluation Team is sure that the students benefit from these basic skills in their future careers.

The interactive teaching across the University is the up-to-date alternative to the traditional *ex cathedra* teaching. It facilitates the students' learning process and retention and opens the way for more creative thinking and communication skills, all indispensable in a modern working environment. The Evaluation Team expects that other universities in the region can learn and benefit from the SEEU teaching model. It was also evident from the discussions with staff and students that the latter have easy access to their professors and are accustomed to engaging in discussion and dialogue with them. This, too, is a

thoroughly modern mentality, which stimulates interactivity and creativity in students as well as academic staff.

Bologna process

Concerning the curriculum the SEEU has developed modern curricula on the basis of European curricula. Macedonian universities can benefit from their experience.

The Evaluation Team has noted that the SEEU is engaged in the Bologna process. SEEU was the first university in the country to implement the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which involves credit accumulation (during the studies and for life-long learning), and credit transfer (promoting mobility). There are activities to amend the study structure to the Bologna model. The planned 1+3+2+3 study structure model includes a preparatory year in which incoming students acquire the necessary skills for university-level learning, and get computer and language training. The number of 60 credits for a full year of study complies with the Bologna guidelines, and Bachelor degrees will thus be awarded after completion of 60+180 credit points. This is an interesting model that ensures that the language and ICT policy of the University can continue at the same time as the Bachelor model with three years in full-time studies. SEEU plans to introduce the Diploma Supplement in 2005.

Part-time students

The part-time programme has just been launched in 2004 with about 350 students. As far as the characteristics of these new students are known, they come from different age groups and social backgrounds, consequently their individual goals are likely to be different. The reasons for students choosing part-time studies range from studying while holding jobs to the large proportion of those who were not accepted into SEEU's full-time programmes. It might be useful to take notice of this diversity in developing the first or maybe also the second year of this programme, and to specify the different needs of part-time students, such as diversifying the kind of courses, or the rhythm of study, or the combination of levels they can choose. These initiatives would allow the programme to offer better conditions for students and ensure their success in their higher education.

The Team is convinced that such a programme fits with the regional needs, and supports the idea of diversified development, better adapted to the real characteristics of the different types of potential part-time students.

It is important for the Evaluation Team to stress that the quality of the part-time programmes is more important than the fee income. Part-time students should be regarded as an extra opportunity for the student and it should be possible to change from part-time to full-time if the student performs well.

Quality assurance

SEEU has taken the first steps in establishing an ongoing quality assurance system in line with the Bologna process. Many quality assurance elements were already in place prior to that. They include:

- the recognition of the importance of quality assurance on the part of the University members

- SEEU's compliance with the formal national requirements, currently extending to "initial licensing and *ex ante* accreditation" (Self-Evaluation Report p. 2)
- student evaluations, completed online, and
- peer evaluations

An initial phase in setting up a coherent system has been the creation of quality enhancement teams at each faculty and the Quality Assurance Commission established by the University Senate, as well as the appointment of a "Quality Champion". As a result, each faculty has compiled a quality evaluation report following the Quality Champion's guidelines. A quality manual was planned for completion in December 2004.

The Strategic Plan also mentioned that SEEU would seek a variety of quality assurance approaches, including specific programme evaluations by international agencies (p. 23). This can only be commended as it will ensure the programmes' competitiveness in addition to disseminating a quality culture at the University.

One problem reported to the Team heard concerns the assurance of anonymity of student evaluations. Not all students seem to be confident that their opinions will not have negative repercussions. This is most likely an issue primarily linked to culture. Nevertheless it needs to be sorted out. Otherwise, students seemed not to attach great importance to the exercise, perhaps not aware of the actual impact their opinions would have. To make this a coherent management tool within the scope of an ongoing quality dialogue is a task at hand for the Quality Commission and the University management.

As regards student participation, the students' engagement in SEEU' life and activities is clearly successful and appreciated by both sides, especially the student's participation in the faculty councils is promising. To include student members in the faculty council is an important achievement, bringing a student voice into the discussion of the development of faculties.

Until now no systematic recording or overview concerning research activity and publication has been conducted. This is planned for 2005, however, with the introduction of annual reports also covering research activities and publications.

Components of a long-term strategy

The Evaluation Team admits that a fruitful strategic planning process is difficult in a country where the legislative conditions concerning universities are not yet matured. SEEU elaborated a very detailed strategic plan, impressive, and well skilled, precise on mission and implementation. However, the Evaluation Team believes that SEEU should develop strategic planning processes involving faculties and students. This task, consisting of a detailed specification of objectives, programmes, human resources profiles, investments and costs is difficult to elaborate. Nevertheless, it is probably the main tool to structure the long-term development of SEEU in accordance with a clear, explicit and commonly shared long-term strategy.

One of the main concerns of SEEU is "the way in which University and Faculty levels inter-relate in helping to achieve a quality culture" (Self-Evaluation Report p. 1). The

initial steps the University has taken to set up a quality assurance system have been described.

A co-operation in teaching and later research between the three faculties of Public Administration, Business Administration and Law would be not only possible but also necessary if the possibilities of interdisciplinary Master's programmes should be used.

The University is at the moment in the beginning of the next phase of university creation. In three years of successful work in undergraduate studies, it is now discussing various scenarios for setting up Master's studies and research at the University. The Evaluation Team agrees that the creation of Master's studies has to be done in collaboration with other European universities, whereby responsibilities are shared until the basis of academic competencies has been built up at SEEU. The University should be careful in choosing the areas of Master's studies with consideration to those fields in which it is able to create a good research basis for this.

When creating research centres at the University it is important to ensure that their academic staff will continue to be integrated members of the faculties. Moreover, all academic staff, including those at the research centres, should be active in teaching a substantial amount at the Master's as well as at the Bachelor's level.

When planning the research development of the University the Evaluation Team would recommend that the University is aware of the following important points:

- that research needs a critical mass and co-ordination also within the university. To do this in an interdisciplinary way, as the University foresees, is highly commendable;
- that research at the university should be developed in areas in close connection with the field of teaching to ensure that the University can develop research-based teaching;
- in developing research areas in a region with limited resources for research it is important to ensure that the region can benefit from the research in areas such as economic development, small and medium business activities, administrative processes, law, ethnic questions, etc. This could be developed together with regional stakeholders and to formulate co-operative research programmes in collaboration with Macedonian and international research teams.

The Evaluation Team wishes to stress that it is important to continue the success in new ways of teaching. When research is on the agenda, a big effort should be made to ensure that all academic staff members are aware of importance of the quality of teaching as well.

Other partners

Created in a very special historical context, SEEU has grown quickly with good results. The new steps - that is, the development of post-graduate courses and of research programmes and units - should be done at the same time as SEEU becomes better situated in its social, economic, institutional, scientific and intellectual environment.

This change in scale in SEEU and in the level of its ambitions requires it to outline a complete design of local, national and regional competences in order to precisely identify the potential fields of collaboration and the complementarities in teaching and research.

The better use of the regional competencies for academic and social gains is the best guarantee for the autonomous development of the regional university project, and the University's full integration into the European academic and scientific networks.

The Evaluation Team has learned that the Macedonian Education Minister has initiated meetings with SEEU and the University of Tetovo. The Evaluation Team agrees that co-ordination between the activities of the two universities should be discussed and that meetings are necessary. The Team finds, however, that higher education institutions should hesitate in building up competencies in areas that neighbouring institutions have already established themselves. If a genuine collaboration between the two universities is indeed planned, it should be done with due respect of the qualities of the two universities for the benefit of the region.

The Evaluation Team believes that the Albanian community could be more active in creating the conditions in the region that would allow better use of existing and potential Albanian competencies. This would ensure that the whole Macedonian and Albanian communities would benefit from these academic competencies.

Achievements and a capacity for change

SEEU is clearly a model university for Macedonia and the region. It has taken full advantage of being a new institution and has explored the international trends and models to follow. It has achieved:

- its primary goal of providing higher education for the Albanian community
- peaceful co-existence within a multiethnic student community
- being a regional model, attracting students even in light of the emerging competition
- teaching structures and content that are new to the region
- an international perspective among staff and students, including teaching in a foreign language and
- the involvement of international professors
- integration into the Bologna process with ECTS, student and staff mobility and
- quality assurance
- an ambitious and active university community
- openness toward diversifying its funding sources

With its first set of graduates the University is entering a new stage in its history. It now has to establish itself as a university known not only for its innovativeness but also its reputation for scientific and scholarly achievement. At the same time it has to face a number of structural changes as the University is still in a phase of expansion and is consolidating its financial footing.

The Evaluation Team's main recommendations to achieve the above goals are summed up as follows:

- in terms of strategy, leadership and administration
 - develop long-term strategic planning processes that are clear, explicit and shared in order to structure the long-term development of SEEU

- strengthen the sense of ownership at all levels of the University by making the roles of various University bodies explicit
- ensure a good flow of information throughout the University,
- administrative staff may need to be expanded to improve efficiency, in parallel with improving IT tools for administration, thereby concentrating on data-collection centrally

- in terms of financial strategy
 - weigh choices about sources of income and set against various scenarios about SEEU's financial development
 - re-evaluate financial policy to cover long-term building maintenance

- in terms of academic and research development
 - as the University is launching itself as a research institution, it must continue to focus on developing a highly-qualified academic staff, by making it a core policy to train its young staff, as it is currently doing, and exploring and training in new teaching methods
 - expand research activities at the University and develop feasible post-graduate programmes, keeping in mind the University's strategy to develop its profile, which should encompass and link both research and teaching, and continuing to search for various sources of co-operation with other institutions but also gradually building up its own programmes
 - develop the University's profile in research and teaching in line with local and regional needs and involve local and regional business and other stakeholders in programme development and execution
 - co-operate with other universities in the area with due consideration for the established competencies of each institution and in the context of regional needs
 - the academic staff at the new research centres must remain integrated into the teaching strands of their faculties and teach at both Bachelor's and Master's levels, striving toward research-based teaching throughout
 - expand its number of full-time professors both in teaching and research, also by inviting qualified guest professors and promoting international co-operation
 - consider the advantages of co-operation between faculties in teaching and research, especially with the onset of interdisciplinary second- (and third-) cycle programmes
 - continue to develop availability of up-to-date background materials in enough copies for students, also by keeping the translation projects ongoing
 - define the various needs of part-time students and offer programmes tailored to those needs

- in terms of student access and services,
 - ensure the possibility of access to the best students by continuing to seek various sources of financial support for good students from the region, so that the tuition fee will not be an obstacle to admission,
 - at the same time the University must set a ceiling for expansion to safeguard teaching quality

- develop the planned centres as well as a career office to provide links with the outside community in order to identify practice places and jobs for students
- in terms of quality assurance
 - continue the work of the Quality Assurance Commission and ‘Champion’ to develop a coherent, long-term quality assurance strategy in line with the University’s overall strategy
 - drive home the advantages of student evaluations as a democratic exercise affecting the University as a whole, and assure students of their anonymity

Envoi

In the end the EUA Evaluation Team would like once more to congratulate the University on its impressive results in having created a well-structured and well-managed higher education institution with five thousand students in four years. Now is the right time to take further steps and to develop the research capacity in order to continue the process of building a university.