

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

EUA EVALUATION REPORT

October 2007

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Introduction

Following two successful conferences on the themes of quality and evaluation, the permanent committee of the former CRE, now the European University Association (EUA), decided, in 1993, to offer its 600 member universities the possibility to be reviewed, so that their strengths and weaknesses in the area of quality management might be assessed. The programme has now been taken over by EUA. It offers an external diagnostics from three-experienced university leaders and one experienced expert coming from different higher education systems in Europe, known as “the review team”, or simply “the team”. This peer-to-peer evaluation offers a very specific tool for institutional leadership preparing for change.

The EUA assessment offers to its members the opportunity to form an opinion about their quality management and strategic planning capacities and to receive recommendations to improve them. By reviewing institutions in different countries, EUA is able to disseminate examples of good practice, validate common concepts of strategic thinking, and develop shared references of quality. This is useful, not only for the institutions themselves, but also for the European countries and the European Union.

In particular, the aim of this evaluation is to help the university to focus its strategic development while strengthening a quality culture in Europe. During the review, the university is helped:

- to examine how to define long and medium-term aims;
- to look at the external and internal constraints shaping its development;
- to discuss strategies to enhance its quality while taking these constraints into account.

During 1994, the methodology for the quality review programme was developed and tested in three universities. The pilot phase of the international quality review was completed in January 1995. Since then, over 180 universities in 37 countries (including Latin America and South Africa) have participated in the programme.

The Rector of the University of Ljubljana (UL), Slovenia, Prof. Dr. Andreja Kocijancic requested that EUA organise a general institutional quality review of the university.

The reasons for such a decision were primarily two:

There has been frequent and strong, although unspecified, criticism publicly addressed to the UL by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. UL needed a view from outside, which is less influenced by specific interests.

The new leadership wrote, in cooperation with all the UL members, the first Strategic plan of the UL. An external evaluation of planned developments was needed in order to enhance this new process.

The general issue is that UL, as the oldest HEI of Slovenia, is a comprehensive and a complete institution in a new country that has grown rapidly, and faces internal and international competition. Then, the UL seeks to keep its leading role, both practically and ethically, in the development of higher education and research, at a moment of crucial transition in the new nation-state: the Republic of Slovenia. In this general

framework, the Rector requested EUA to focus more specifically, but not exclusively, on research topics.

The members of the EUA review team were:

- Prof. Tove Bull (Chair), former Rector of the University of Tromsø (Norway);
- Prof. Maria Helena Nazaré, Rector of the University of Aveiro (Portugal);
- Prof. Ivan Ostrovsky, former Vice-Rector of the Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia);
- Prof. Sylvain Kahn (secretary), former Director for European affairs of Sciences Po (Institute of Political Studies of Paris, France)

The review team came to UL for a preliminary visit from 28th February to 2nd March 2007 in order to get acquainted with the general content and operation of UL and to validate the findings of the self-evaluation report. The main visit to UL was carried out from 1st to 4th July 2007 and the oral report was presented on July 4.

The University of Ljubljana (onwards UL) was fully established in 1919 following the tradition of semi-university institutions from the 17th century. It remained the only Slovenian university until 1975.

In 2006 the number of students was nearly 63,000, of them 4,114 Masters degree and 809 PhD students. Out of 57,700 undergraduate students, 47,000 were full time and 10,400 part time. The number of graduates in 2006 was 9,239, with 642 Masters and 319 PhD graduates.

UL is a comprehensive university, incorporating 22 faculties, three academies and one college with a staff of 5800 (both academic and non-academic). Of these, 2717 are teaching and assistant staff, who are, for the most part, registered as researchers: 378 are full time researchers, 483 are junior researchers and others are professional, technical and administrative staff. The UL has the largest research potential in the country, but is no longer a monopoly. Studies are pursued at the UL by 58% of Slovenia's postgraduate and 64% of the country's undergraduate students. One third of all accredited undergraduate courses in the country and less than 50% are now provided in other HEI of Slovenia. Still more than half of Slovenia's graduates, over two thirds of its Masters and specialist graduates and almost all the country's PhD graduates graduate from UL.

UL is the first university of Slovenia to apply to EUA for such a review. It stands in a unique position: this is the second time UL implements such a peer review (the first time it was in 1996). All the faculties of the University, its staff and students, and the external stakeholders, public as well as private, supported the review by their active participation. The team had the opportunity to meet representatives from all of them. The meetings were individual or collective as chosen by the team.

The team had individual meetings with Rector Prof. Dr. Andreja Kocijancic and specific meetings with the Vice-Rectors. The other meetings were collective: external partners, members of the Senate, self-assessment team, heads of departments, administrative staff, etc. The team held interviews in several faculties: where it met the dean, the heads of department, the academic staff and a panel of students. The team also had several meetings with the management of the university and non-

academic staff, and student representatives. Faculties where the team held interviews were Economics and Management, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Law, Medicine, Arts, Mathematic and Physics, Fine art and design.

The team really appreciated the seriousness in the preparation of their two visits, especially that of the self-assessment report and the collection and the presentation of very useful data and indicators. This self-assessment report is properly descriptive and accurate: it insists, of course, more on the strengths of the University, but it does not avoid pointing out some of the weaknesses.

This reflects the very friendly atmosphere in which the Team could do its work. The review team would like to thank warmly the Rector Kocijancic and all the staff of the University for their warm welcome. Special thanks are due to Vice-Rector Prof. Ivan Svetlik, to Dr. Bogomir Mihevc, quality unit coordinator, and Mrs Bibi Ovaska from the of international relations office, for their untiring support and great efficiency in arranging the programmes and liaising with the team.

Constraints and institutional norms

In term of resources

The strongest constraints of the university are the historical constraints. The Team noted that the legacy of the past is heavy and is not adapted to the challenges of the present and the perspectives of the future. This is not a political or an ideological issue. This is a structural and organisational issue. Organisationally, the UL as an institution is a confederation of too many members rather than an integrated university. This lack of integration has many shapes. On the one hand, UL as a University has a weak central structure not equipped by proper competencies. The faculties are very autonomous. They do not see themselves as linked with the others. The Team was aware of this lack of power of the central level from the very first meeting in the preliminary visit. Then, each visit in faculties confirmed this. During the faculty interviews, it became obvious that it is not rare that measures decided by the Senate are not strictly implemented at the faculty and the department levels.

Nevertheless, the Team did not have the impression that there is a lack of respect of the central bodies of the Institution. The Rector as well as the Senate are highly respected and appreciated. However, for instance, it seems that the academic members of the Senate see themselves more as representatives of their faculty than as part of a central body in charge of the general interest of the UL as a single entity.

This attitude was confirmed by the lack of interfaculty relationships and formal horizontal coordination. As a remarkable detail, it is worthwhile mentioning what a faculty dean said during the very fruitful discussion that followed the oral report of the Team's Chair to the Rector and the Senate. This faculty dean explained that, according to him, the UL is so big that freedom is needed in the faculties. Moreover, he added, nobody is interested nor could be interested in what happens in the faculty he chairs. As a matter of fact – is it a cause or a consequence? – the Team noted that there were very few interdisciplinary programmes. The team understood that this

lack of integration was a legacy from the recent past: the former Yugoslavian Higher Education Institution system was based on the strength and the autonomy of faculties and institutes.

On the other hand, University governance faces another major constraint, which is an external one. Political and institutional authorities seem to be extraordinarily strongly involved in the organisation and the funding of the Slovenian universities. There are laws and rules that constrain the recruitment and the careers of the teachers as well as enrolment of the students. The budget of the University is decided and allocated by the government as a set and or mosaic of faculty budgets. In this context, which, of course, is not unique in Europe, faculties may have the possibility of getting funds directly from governmental agencies for research. In addition, it seems that faculties can have direct discussions with the Ministry of higher education, research and technology (MVZT) and a national research agency (ARRS) in order to express their particular needs. Here, it is necessary to mention that the Team did not have the opportunity to meet any representative of the ministries, despite the fact that they were invited to join the discussions the EUA team had with partners and stakeholders of the UL.

This fact strengthened the impression the Team got concerning complicated and unstable university legislation as well as an unpredictable higher education situation. As far as the Team is aware, higher education legislation has changed several times in recent years. Nevertheless, there has apparently been a particular trend over the years in the field of Higher education policy to increase competition. The first time UL asked for a EUA assessment (10 years ago, at the time of the CRE), there were only two Universities in Slovenia. Today, there are four Slovenian universities. And the current government has indicated that it might decide to split the university of Ljubljana into several HEI.

For now, UL is a typical non-campus university with facilities spread out over the city of Ljubljana. In combination with complicated and unstable university legislation, the consequences of this situation are also very concrete and can be observed just by walking through the buildings of the UL. This is not one campus but a lot of separate buildings in different areas of the city of Ljubljana. In most cases, just one faculty occupies one building. Those buildings are very diverse. Some are attractive and new. Others are not very modern. Each faculty owns its library. Some faculties provide services to students – career policy, for instance-, and others do not. Members of the academic staff mentioned the lack of common space for the teachers, like cafeterias or university restaurants, for instance. There is even one dormitory for students which is dedicated to the Faculty of medicine and loosely managed by it, without any monitoring of the central administration responsible for housing.

The management of the UL is aware of those constraints. The new Rector has reinforced the central staff. She has appointed a vice rector for economic affairs and set new commissions. With the vice-rectors, the central level planned and wrote a strategic plan. There is now a graphic profile of the University of Ljubljana which has to be implemented in every faculty. It shows that the central management and an increasing number of staff are aware of the advantages afforded by the development of corporate identity and mutual solidarity –both of which are lacking today.

The team noticed many times the satisfaction of the whole staff, despite these constraints. The team was strongly impressed by the motivation of the staff (and by that of the students). Everyone who works in UL that the team met supports the rector and the management in their effort to avoid the split of the UL into several Higher education institutions.

In conclusion, the Team got the impression UL has succeeded in having a motivated and loyal leadership at different levels. The leadership strongly contributes to spreading seeds of change at different levels and units in the whole institution. This has to be supported by enhancing the integration of the UL and its corporate identity.

In terms of teaching

One of the expectations of the Bologna process is that national quality assurance agencies should be created and should be members of ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher education). Although it is the strong intention of the management of the UL to evaluate the quality of teaching, the creation of a European higher education area does not appear to be a priority in the university. Moreover, the team could not be sure if the implementation of the Bologna process was a priority, or not, for the ministry for higher education research and technology.

Concerning the curricular changes implemented within the last few years, the Team was struck by the following fact: if the curriculum has been changed to a bachelor-master-doctor structure, UL did not choose to implement the Bologna process in a unified and coordinated way. Some faculties chose a 4+1+3 years structure. Others chose a 3+2+3 years structure. External partners of the UL expressed very clearly their confusion over this situation. Generally speaking, the Bologna process is used by universities in order to reorganise the courses in a more rational way. This is not exactly the case here. Students have too many hours in class. More than that, the average number of subjects (up to 18 per year) a student has to choose in a semester or in a year is obviously too high. In this context, it seems that time dedicated to practical exercises, study cases and interactive situations is relatively weak. It seems that time dedicated to lecture classes, comparing to the time that is dedicated to seminar courses is relatively high. Several students panel the team met expressed their feeling there is not enough time for self study.

In terms of teaching, the favourable overall impression of the team was enhanced by the good quality of teaching in UL. The academic staff is satisfied with the students and the students are satisfied with the course contents and with their delivery by professors and teachers. The review team met panels of teaching staff in each faculty it visited. The feeling of satisfaction is convincing. The academic staff did not really complain about a lack of offices.

The UL academic staff is well qualified and is a mix of several generations of teachers. Despite several levels of salaries, faculty academic staff members are united: they are altogether motivated and individually concerned by the success of their students as well as their faculty. Despite the lack of room, they work hard and

together: meeting points are coffee machines or regular meetings at department level. They seem to know each other well, and the youngest of them seem to be well integrated. The team could see that UL is considered as an attractive university for teaching, especially if compared with other higher education institutions in Slovenia. Students and staff take pride in belonging to UL.

Nevertheless, the team is aware of the lack of flexibility of the careers of the teachers. The proportion of full professors is unexpectedly high. In at least one department, the whole academic staff is made up of full professors only. The Team was told that the Slovenian law is responsible for this anomaly. According to law, qualified teachers get their tenure automatically. Then, there is no possibility of changing professors, except if the professor has a very reprehensible behaviour. It seems that it is not very motivating. The consequence is also that the Central level of UL has a very weak possibility for managing the academic staff.

According to students, the balance between permanent academic staff and non-permanent academic staff (professionals who are in charge of courses in a field related to their work and professional skills) is unsatisfactory. The Team was told the law was responsible for this balance. Every teacher, even the non-permanent ones – if there are any – has to have a PhD or, at least, a master degree. This fact is paradoxical. Because UL is a complete University, including several and various faculties related with technical, professional, social and economic worlds, this could be one of the characteristics of the UL identity to be ever more strongly connected to the professional world as well as to the social and economic sphere. For instance, the Team was informed that, in some faculties, in some departments, students receive grants from external partners of the economic sphere (firms). In one faculty, the Team was told that half of the global budget was provided by the business community.

This tradition is obviously one of the reasons that explain why the students are unanimous in their request for more practical courses in their curricula. Since the value of the UL diploma is well appreciated by the students, the students want to have the opportunity to learn practical skills that will be useful in the organisations (public administrations, social institutes, private or public corporate, law cabinet, hospitals and health service) where they will work.

There is no strong and efficient procedure in students' assessments of courses. Students told the team it was very easy to talk with the head of departments or with the dean of a faculty when needed; but, on the other hand, they also expressed the view that there could be as many questionnaires for teaching evaluation as the number of teachers. The students felt that nobody was formally responsible for this procedure, and it was not clear to them what the consequences of those questionnaires were. That is why the team recommends that UL standardises the process of student evaluation of courses, and that those evaluations be given an adequate weight for promotion of teachers. There is no strong and clear procedure for external evaluation of faculties. Departments and faculties do not seem to implement the recommendation from self-evaluation reports prepared by them every year.

However, students also insisted on the fact that the teaching staff is easily available to them. The overall impression gained by the review team is that UL's students are very satisfied with their university. In addition, the team got the strong impression that a main goal of the UL's management is, with justification, for the university to be highly student-oriented. Improving student evaluations and generalising evaluation procedures will allow UL to achieve this ambition.

In conclusion, the evaluation Team maintains that it is generally accepted that, in modern universities, emphasis should be placed on learning rather than teaching. The team was struck by the high number of hours per week dedicated to courses in the students' curricula. So, the team could not be sure that enough time is given to absorb the work-load. Students have to be encouraged to study as much as possible by themselves.

The UL management should think about combining the implementation of the Bologna process, the reduction of teaching hours, the increase of the personal work-load of students, as well as training courses (internship) and thus enhance time and capacity for research.

In term of research

Some faculties at UL have developed a genuine tradition of research. But it seems that the University as a whole does not know how to establish priorities in research. As a matter of fact, it is not possible for a contemporary international university to achieve excellence in all research fields. Choosing research priorities is a necessary condition for establishing a research policy that is efficient and useful for the nation and society.

It is possible to say that this situation is allowed by the very large autonomy of the faculties in the field of research as well. One consequence of such autonomy is the lack of mutual collaboration of UL faculties in research as well as the lack of effort to organise such collaboration and/or university research. Funds allocated by the national research agency are allocated directly to them and to researchers' groups. With those types of constraints, it is more necessary for the UL to create special mechanisms to stimulate quality research and top quality researchers, as stated in the self-evaluation report and try to support an effort for intra-university collaboration and organisation of university research. That is the reason why developing participation of UL and its departments in the EU Framework Programme for research has to be supported. The Team was informed that it was now a priority of the central level of UL, and it noted that some faculties worked well with the new central desk dedicated to help applying for European projects. Apparently, technical faculties work together with industry in order to develop R&D.

UL is aware that excellence in the field of research has to be based on internationalisation. The Team noted that at least one faculty has decided that every PhD student has to go to study abroad at least for one semester. This faculty helps its doctoral students to support the cost of such research.

Development in research in UL is also linked to the issue of the number of hours of teaching class. UL should take advantage of the implementation of the Bologna

process in order to reduce the global number of contact hours. Saving time for research is the most important challenge UL faces.

In addition to European funds, which depend on the capacity of the university to participate in international networks, support from the corporate sector, as an investment for the country's growth, may help to develop the internationalisation of doctoral studies. Internationalisation of research can also be aided by developing courses and seminars in English and other foreign languages.

In terms of organisation

The review team's diagnosis is that UL is a very decentralised university. The leadership of the university is not equipped with proper competencies, and the team got the feeling that all faculties and departments are very autonomous. At first glance, one can be astonished by the high level of non-integration and by the lack of corporate identity as well as mutual solidarity. The truth is that the persons responsible for management and governance at each level are aware of this particularity. The Team noticed a feeling of satisfaction or of resignation: to everyone concerned within the system, it seems to be natural or impossible to avoid.

However, it does not seem that this type of management is efficient. To be more precise, the EUA's Team is convinced that the organisation of UL is not suited to emphasise or to enhance its strengths, which are real and various. Not trying to change this organisation would be a pity and could cause damage in the very near future. Indeed, UL faces constraints related to the changing regional, national and international context. Challenging those constraints requires an integrated institution.

Those constraints are various. The most important of them is the increasing international and national competition among universities. Faculties cannot face this competition alone: they need to be backed by a well-identified institution, and they need to share the responses to these challenges in order to afford their cost. To be effective, mutualisation and solidarity, co-operation and collaboration, must be organised at an institutional level – it cannot be unstructured. The issue is the same with the second constraint that is the increasing cost of research. In the field of research, that supposes cooperation and competition at an international level, priorities have to be established. What are the priorities of UL in the field of research? The answer is not given by the strategic plan (2006-2009). One of the consequences of this is the lack of a Doctoral school. Every faculty defines its doctoral studies policy by itself. This fact is notably a weakness considering the third constraint, which is the increasing importance of inter-disciplinarity in order to learn to be a researcher as well for preparing students to their future jobs.

There are now 22 faculties, 3 academies and 1 college at UL. At the level of the university, there is one key deliberative body - the Senate. Officially, the Senate uses the range of its current competences to be a source of ideas for strategic vision and for tactical issues. As a matter of fact, the Senate is a genuine deliberative assembly that organises genuine debates and discussions. But it is not a organisation for decision: during the interviews the Team had in faculties, it became obvious that it is not rare that measures decided by the Senate are not strictly implemented at the

faculty and the department levels. The academic members of the Senate see themselves more as representatives of their faculty than as part of a central body that is in charge of the general interest of the UL as a single entity. This particularity has several consequences on the decision making structures and processes, which are too complex and not efficient enough. As a result, the view of the team on the issue of organisation cannot be entirely positive.

The whole university supports this non-centralised management and decision making which is more often bottom-up than top-down. This is most visible where finances and budget are concerned where the management of resources accorded by the Rector to each department is weak. Moreover, the team was told several times that it was possible to obtain extra money directly from the ministry or from external partners without informing the university's presidency.

Nevertheless, academic staff, students and faculties are correctly represented in the Senate. UL is dynamic, expanding, student-oriented, carefully managed, well-kept and correctly equipped. In accordance with the leadership, UL is fair-minded to its stake-holders, who undoubtedly greatly appreciate the university. However, the Team cannot be sure that there is a shared vision of all staff members on the strategic goals.

To keep its primacy as the largest and most comprehensive higher education institution in Slovenia is a goal that is the most shared within UL. In order to achieve this, the team strongly recommends thinking about ways and means to improve corporate identity and integrating the University into one cohesive institution.

The capacity for change

The mission

The issue of “change” in Slovenia has a very specific resonance, and even more, an emotional charge, due to recent changes in national history. This means that the majority of Slovenians and the majority of the people the team met, not only face the challenges of the democratic and the market economy transition; they are also challenged by (re)building a nation-state. Slovenia is a very young state. It has existed for 16 years, since 1991. Although UL’s staff mixes different generations, the team could feel the strength of everyone’s will to be recognised as a part of a successful nation, and more specifically, a successful university.

The history of UL is marked by the national history of this young state. In this case, capacity for change is more than transformation and adaptation to a new political and economic and social order; it includes the capacity to build a leading institution in the field of higher education. A new country needs to produce for itself, i.e. with its own capacity and tools; it needs the new elite for sustainable sovereignty and growth.

In this context, it is not surprising that the strategic aim of the university is to remain the best Slovenian research university in all academic fields (see self-evaluation report §1.3). The major policies of UL for the first decade of the new century are summarised below. This list, compiled according to the Strategy of the University of Ljubljana 2006-2009 approved by a resolution of the Senate, is summarised in the self evaluation report UL drew up in anticipation of EUA’s review :

- to increase the quantity and quality of research and development;
- to implement the reform of study programmes in line with the Bologna process;
- to strengthen and deepen international cooperation;
- to increase the exchange of knowledge with practice;
- to establish a comprehensive system of quality monitoring and assurance;
- to develop supportive students’ services;
- to strengthen cooperation of the autonomous members of UL.

It was clear to the review team that UL definitely wants to improve its capacity “to keep its primacy as the largest and comprehensive university in Slovenia” and to become a top class international university of research in Europe. The fact that UL took the risk of being, once again, the object of a friendly, but nevertheless strict, evaluation by the EUA is to its full credit. This should be underlined since it is the first Slovenian higher education institution to undergo this process. However, the view of the team about the capacity of change of the UL could be more positive. As a matter of fact, UL is working to create the conditions of change: 18 months ago, the university elected a new leadership that is future and Europe oriented. The staff is dynamic and open-minded. The management team has a clear vision of the necessity to develop evaluation and quality processes, as well as the need of a central administration to provide useful tools, services and a clear vision for the university as a whole in a context of competition and challenges. An increasing part of the academic staff is aware of the fact that a correct implementation of the Bologna process could be an opportunity to enhance the capacity for change of UL. An

increasing part of the faculties and the departments see the pressure put by the government on the research issue (Slovenian research agency – ARRS; new law to come) as an opportunity more than a threat. An increasing part of the academic staff seems to be fully conscious of the necessity to base its teaching on research activity.

Mid and long term strategies

The management of UL feels that its mid and long term strategies are under pressure from two phenomena which were stressed by every member of the staff the review team met: first, the threat of the potential decline in student numbers; second, the threat of the potential risk of a split of UL into several smaller institutions.

Therefore, within a depressed demographic context, the capacity for change of the University has to comply with the strict framework that is defined by the laws and rules of the Government.

In order to support its mission, Faculties of the University of Ljubljana have strengthened their links with representatives of the economic sphere, both from the public sector and the private sector. The Team was told how technical faculties (mechanical engineering, for instance), the faculty of computer and information sciences, the faculty of economics, have all developed a genuine capacity to obtain funds from the industrial and business sectors. More of the UL faculties can deal with the support and the cooperation of its stakeholders.

The team approves this orientation. Cooperation with industry, business and law communities, as well as, classically, public administrations means that UL's staff is aware of the opportunities it gives to the university for joint consultation on curriculum change to make UL diplomas more transparent.

Secondly, in order to support its mission, UL has decided to put its research policy as a strategic issue. The Team could see that genuine efforts have been made, with success, to put research at a high international level in several faculties. The fact that the leadership of UL is pushing forward research as a priority is relevant and the Team approves this orientation. The low overhead costs at central level from the research projects of the departments are remarkable. It became obvious to the team that UL as an institution does not underline priorities in the field of research because it does not give itself the tools for it.

Across the review and the fruitful and friendly discussions during the two visits, the EUA team proposed identifying how UL's staff can create more time for research. It could be possible by a modification, in the time of service of the academic staff, of the balance between time dedicated to research and time dedicated to teaching. It could be done by a reduction of the compulsory hours given to each student, which are too high (according to the standards defined in the Bologna process). Such a reduction would also give more time to the students for self-study, which is also a good way of preparing students for autonomy, research and doctoral studies.

The strategic goal of research would also be more easily targeted by reducing the overlapping and duplication of a number of teaching activities. This problem – which

can deplete resources – is directly linked to the lack of a corporate identity and integration of UL. It is clear now for all type of expertise in the field of HEI that the front of excellent research is not necessarily established within a discipline, but on the border of various disciplines. Reducing overlapping and duplication should be linked to the opportunity of developing interdisciplinarity between faculties, both for curricula as for research projects.

Thirdly, in order to support its mission, UL has developed a strong international orientation. This long-term policy is already bearing fruit. According to the meeting the Team had during its two visits, it is obvious that there is excellent foreign language proficiency among students and staff. In several faculties, the number of exchange students is relevant and is increasing. In the Strategy of the University of Ljubljana 2006-2009, UL claims its goal to increase student exchanges with the aim of making it possible for each student to spend one semester abroad by the end of the second level. At the same time, UL wants to increase the enrolment of foreign students, “whose number should reach at least 10%, and enrol them in Slovenian language courses”. At present, there is already evidence of the implementation of such a strategy. The team noted that each doctoral student of the faculty of economy is helped to achieve at least one year of study abroad.

The operation of change

Effectiveness of change may be dealt with in several ways.

The first is to improve corporate identity, mutual trust and university culture. As far as the EUA team could see, the strongest challenge that faces UL is fragmentation. This preoccupation is underlined in the Strategic document of the UL as a weakness (but it is not mentioned in the self evaluation report). However, when it appears in the strategic document, it is only as the seventh priority (out of seven): “goal 7, strengthening mutual cooperation among autonomous members”. This goal should be put at the top of the list of strategic goals because the capacity to reach all the others goals depends on this one. The problem is not new, and seems to be a difficult one to deal with – it was already pointed out in the first institutional evaluation process that UL asked the CRE to do 10 years ago. That is why it cannot be avoided now. The Team understand that several deans are worried about the project of the government on the future of UL and its support. Only if UL can manage to obtain strong autonomy as an institution will this academic autonomy be respected. And autonomy of UL as an institution will be high only if the faculties understand it is in their interest to support integration and a strong central level.

The second concerns the implementation of the Bologna process in a proper and efficient way. Using the Bologna process makes the diplomas and the curricula that are proposed by a university clearer and more transparent for the students, the stakeholders and actors from the economic sphere. It allows for comparison of the quality and the content of the curricula with those that are proposed by other universities in Slovenia as well as in Europe. Finally,, implementing Bologna allows cooperation between disciplines and faculties that belong to a same Higher education institution. In UL, it seems that there are several ways to implement the Bologna process: there are faculties that choose a 3+2 formula; others that have decided to

adopt a 4+1 formula; and others that have not decided yet to implement the process! All this despite the fact all faculties are obliged to implement it since the Slovenian government signed the declaration. This failure to implement the Bologna process in an harmonised way in UL has had the undesired effect of enhancing the three other Slovenian universities and encouraging those who might push to split UL into various entities. Implementing Bologna requires improving the capacity of change of UL into one cohesive institution.

The European commission is leading a deep reflection on this subject, and it is now an issue for debate in several EU countries. The Scandinavian higher education systems, for instance, show that interdisciplinarity and harmonisation in implementing Bologna is compatible with the enforcement of each discipline and innovation in teaching. It could even be a support for creation of joint programmes and joint degrees.

To take full advantage of the excellent motivation and skills of the academic staff the Team suggests that UL use the implementation of the Bologna process to avoid duplication of courses, to save time for research and to encourage cooperation between faculties or to merge faculties.

This is why the third way to deal with effectiveness of change is then to enhance a comprehensive quality assurance system. Implementing such a system will be very helpful in facing this challenge of cooperation, interdisciplinarity and saving time for research. UL has put a stress on evaluation for several years. It has established several self-evaluation reviews. Deans and faculties, increasing parts of the staff are involved in and supporters of evaluation practices. The administration of UL has developed a knowledge and a specific know-how in quality evaluation, notably in the field of production of databases. This process has to be continued – and the self-evaluation report happily and rigorously focuses on this point (“3. quality practices of the UL”). The EUA team would add here some specific remarks on the issue of evaluation. First, the evaluation of teaching by the students: the use of this very fruitful tool should be improved. Presently, there are too many students who do not see the effectiveness of the process. They have to complete questionnaires, but they are not informed about the results. In some faculties, it students are asked to complete questionnaires at the beginning of the following year. The team was often told that students didn't really have specific interlocutor on this issue – it can be the dean alone. If the Team then approves the fact that two professionals have recently been involved in the field of quality, it firmly encourages all the faculties to engage special QA staff, as it is already the case in the Faculty of economics, or see to it that someone has an explicit dedicated responsibility for QA. Secondly, the evaluation of the scientific activities by the peers: apparently, UL does not have reviews including members from outside. It could be done easily and usefully.

Conclusions and recommendations

In terms of academic leadership

Work load: it is generally accepted that in modern universities emphasis should be placed on learning rather than teaching. This implies more free time for students and more practical activities, such as seminars, debates, internships, personal research, etc. At the same time, it implies closer contact between professors and students, and professors taking responsibility for the learning outcome of the students. It also implies getting rid of duplication and overlapping. UL teaching staff should belong to the faculty responsible for their core discipline.

Curricula and courses: it is generally accepted that in modern universities emphasis should be placed on inter-disciplinary issues because it is the appropriate way to develop knowledge as well as skills the graduates, society, the labour market and individuals need. Efforts should be made in order to give a real interdisciplinary education to students. In this perspective, UL should create and implement inter-faculty degree programmes that guarantee sharing of credits.

Student evaluation of courses: this process must be standardised and seriously considered as a useful tool by the management of the university. It will increase UL's advantage as a student-oriented university. Those evaluations must be given adequate weight in promotions in the academic staff career path.

In terms of quality management

Among the strengths of UL are the awareness of the necessity of strategies, the high qualification of the staff and its future oriented and dynamic rector. Those strengths give confidence in the capacity of UL to improve its quality of management in order to deal with the necessary changes.

Research: reducing the teaching also implies saving time for research; it would help the scientific and academic staff to focus more strongly on cooperation in research, nationally and internationally. Here also, it is vital to develop inter-disciplinary university research projects, which are essential in modern research.

Quality evaluation: UL is a dynamic institution. It has developed a know-how in the field of quality assessment over many years. This trend should be reinforced by:

- using more of the human resources of the university, notably by developing human resource management;
- enhancing a comprehensive quality assurance system, particularly by the identification of a person or a team responsible of the QA in every faculties;
- putting in place quality assessment on a systematic basis across faculties.

General operating and cohesion: the link between the central level and the members of UL should be tightened in order to help the institution to challenge its threats and its constraints. It could be improved by:

- the generalisation of the use of information and communication technologies across the different services of the faculties and UL;
- the implementation of a common accounting system for the whole university;
- the continuation of building up of academic and research staff services and students services at the central level of the university – including knowledge about employability.

In terms of strategic management and capacity for change

The main shortcoming is fragmentation and lack of cohesion and integration. Improving corporate identity, mutual trust and university culture is the basis for becoming a European research university in a world-wide context. However, it is a difficult problem: acquiring such culture takes time, practice and effort – as is shown by the fact this shortcoming was already underlined in the previous CRE review ten years ago.

Bologna process: the Bologna process has to be understood and used as a cohesive tool that makes everybody stronger in UL. This implies standardising the Bologna structures of study programmes toward the prevailing 3+2+3 model. This aim could be targeted jointly with the help of partners or European and national networks specialised in the Bologna process. UL shouldn't hesitate to seek help and training for this purpose.

Integrating the university into one cohesive institution: this issue is crucial if UL really wants to face the challenges of competition not only on a European level but also in Slovenia. It implies :

- strengthening the decision-making capacity of the governing bodies; faculties have to be aware that the lack of power of the academic senate as well as a complex and inefficient decision-making structures and processes weaken the university as a whole (and as a corollary, every part of it) and not only the central administration;
- creating a financial fund for the support of common initiatives and services, using overheads as is done in the huge majority of universities. It is an easy way to avoid the institution becoming a confederation of too many members rather than an integrated university; it creates common interests, common goals and common work;
- looking properly and genuinely at the issue of merging faculties; the fact that the leadership at different levels is motivated and loyal as well as the fact that the staff takes pride in belonging to UL will guarantee this type of process could be done with objectivity and in the interests of the institution as well as of each faculty.

Envoi

The EUA Team wishes to thank the University for the excellent arrangements for its visits and the work undertaken by the Team, and also for the generous hospitality extended by the University and its staff. As has been noted at various points in this report, the University is facing a challenging period. It has been a great pleasure to discuss with staff, students, and external stakeholders, the strategic challenges now facing the University of Ljubljana, and the opportunities available for meeting these. The Team hopes that the University finds its comments and suggestions helpful and supportive in its planning for the future. We believe that University of Ljubljana will be able to achieve its future goals and aspirations, and we wish the University well in its next stage of development.