ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

Α.ΔΙ.Π.

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ & ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF PIRAEUS

July 2013

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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Business Administration of the University of Piraeus consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. *Prof. Emeritus Spyros Economides,* Department of Management California State University, East Bay, U.S.A. (Coordinator)

2. *Prof. Yannis Georgellis, Director* of Center for Research in Employment, Skills and Society (CRESS), Kingston Business School, UK

3. *Prof. Dimitrios Petmezas,* Chair in Finance, Surrey Business School, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey, UK

4. *Dr. Konstantinos Poulis,* Senior Lecturer in Marketing and International Business, University of Essex, UK

Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure
- **Dates and brief account of the site visit.**
- **Whom did the Committee meet?**
- **List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.**
- **Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed**
- **Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee.**

*** IMPORTANT COMMENT ***

The opinions, comments and recommendations in this report should be considered within the general context of the Hellenic Higher Education system, which is financed and regulated by the Ministry of Education and other state agencies. The regulatory framework affects all aspects of university domains including finances, admissions policies, staff recruitment and progression, curriculum design, and teaching provision. The Department of Business Administration at the University of Piraeus operates within this regulatory framework, thus, facing constraints and challenges that often prohibit independent and autonomous decision making and which affect its operational flexibility and strategic planning.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC, the *Committee*) received the Department's Internal Evaluation Report (IER) dated April 2013 before the visit to the Department of Business Administration (TODE, the *Department*) of the University of Piraeus (UniPi, the *University*). The EEC committee was very favourably impressed with the thoroughness and professionalism with which the OMEA (Internal Evaluation Committee, Ομάδα Εσωτερικής Αξιολόγησης) prepared the IER. In fact, the OMEA coordinator, Professor Bohoris, submitted an additional report which supplemented the original one with more updated information. Both documents were very helpful in assisting the EEC to do its work.

After an overview and orientation meeting at the HQA offices, the Committee visited the Department Monday and Tuesday 1-2/7/2013. Upon arrival in Piraeus, later Monday morning, the Committee members were met by the President of TODE, Prof. N. Georgopoulos and immediately started discussions with some of the OMEA members, Professors Bohoris, Sorros, Artikis and Tsogas, as well as with some of the regular faculty members, Professors Maliaris, Hitiris and Kouremenos. The student representative was not present.

Even though there was a pre-planned meeting schedule, all of the participants elected a free format discussion during which several issues of interest and concern were discussed. Specifically, the members of the EEC were informed about the budgetary trend which in this period of austerity for Greece has been reduced significantly and, thus, tremendously affecting services provided by the department as well as personnel workloads and resources available for an increasing number of students. The methodology for evaluation of faculty by the students which has been in place since 1995 and constantly evolving as well as curriculum and resources issues were discussed, noting merits and drawbacks for each. It was mentioned that valuable feedback relative to the above areas of evaluation is solicited from the graduate students, during an annual joint meeting between graduate students who are one year apart into the program.

During the morning discussions, other issues of interest and concern were brought up, such as:

- o The up to now unlimited time allowed for undergraduate students to be enrolled in the program which tremendously increases the active student population at any time.
- o Number of newly enrolled students imposed on the department by the Ministry of Education.
- o Degree of flexibility that the department has in making modifications to its undergraduate and graduate curricula.
- o Availability of resources to support research activity other than the centralized University Research foundation

An important comment that will be repeated throughout this report will emphasize the fact that for a number of departmental issues, policies, and implementation strategies of concern, the department has absolutely no control or decision making capability as they are all dictated and controlled by the central Greek government. This inability for independent decision making by the department for its own affairs on many important issues severely restricts it from making decisions and modifications to its programs, policies and procedures. Thus, all comments and recommendations in this report, as mentioned in the opening Important Comment, are made under knowledge of the existence of this external control factor.

Monday afternoon, after lunch, the IER coordinator, Professor Bohoris, took some time to present to the Committee members the supplementary material that he had appended to the IER. A substantial portion of that presentation referred to the diversity of administrative duties that each faculty member was obligated to perform. As everybody agreed that some of these administrative duties were far beyond the scope and expertise of academic individuals, it became an issue of further discussions later and was identified as a problem to be dealt with relative to the policies and work load allocation for the faculty.

Subsequently, there was a presentation by Dr. Kounoupas, the director of the Alumni Relations Office. He discussed the operation, the mission and the goals of the office and presented vital employment statistics and employer feedback on the alumni of the Department. The information indicated that the alumni have a good professional reputation in the market and that the Alumni Relations Office is widely recognized for its good work in the academic community.

The lengthier and final session of Monday afternoon was a series of free format discussion forums with student representatives of Doctorate, MBA and undergraduate levels, in that order. In all cases, the EEC members asked the students to provide their candid opinion and comment on both positive and negative aspects on all issues of concern in their academic experience, from class instruction to university services and infrastructure.

The main positive aspects of their program mentioned by the Doctoral candidates were the quality and availability of faculty supervision, the ability to earn a small amount of money as a result of their duties in undergraduate class supervision, the comradeship and congeniality between themselves and the relatively good infrastructure support for their needs. The outstanding negative aspect was the lack of financial support to help with their tuition expenses.

The main positive aspects of their program mentioned by the MBA students were the good working relationships with faculty, the opportunity to hear well recognized industry practitioners in class visitations and the ability to earn a small amount of money as a result of their duties in undergraduate class supervision. The negative comments related to the large number of required courses and, unlike the doctorate students, they did not consider the university facilities and infrastructure adequate for their needs.

Finally, the undergraduate students considered their opportunity to attend this institution as a privilege, they consider the easy access to their instructors and the clear advance knowledge of what is expected from them as positive aspects, while they felt that the course load per semester was excessive.

The Committee members were left with the following main impressions after these interactive sessions:

- o They felt that all students were sensible, reasonable and intelligent.
- o They were satisfied with their academic environment and had hardly any complaints to register.
- o They were ambitious and serious about the program that they have chosen.

Tuesday's sessions continued to be rather unstructured but informative. They started with a presentation by Professor Makris who is in charge of the computer information systems department for both instructional and institutional support purposes. In the ensuing discussion the limitations that exist for expansion of the computer systems infrastructure, both in terms of funds and physical facilities, were discussed. Professor Makris also gave a brief synopsis of the software systems that are used in support of instructional activities, all of which are also mentioned in the IER, and the comment that lack of financial support severely limits the ability to keep application software upgraded and expanded.

After lunch, the Committee visited two operational infrastructure facilities. One such facility was the student computer laboratories and the department Information Technology Centre. The Committee feels that both facilities were quite adequate under the premise that future expansion and upgrading provisions could be possible. The other facility was the University library which has subscriptions to many reputable national and international electronic Data Bases through university consortium agreements, has an extensive collection of European Community sources of documents and information and adequate physical space and computer terminal work stations for students.

For the major portion of Tuesday afternoon, the Committee met and interacted with a group of faculty members at the Lecturer rank. These faculty members after expressing their gratitude to have the opportunity to be associated with the institution, discussed some of their issues of concern. It was obvious that their top priority academic endeavour of interest was the research activity. From a personal point of view, the main concern was the tedious, government centralized and controlled process of hiring and promotion. The long lead times associated with such decisions, coupled with the uncertainty involved, makes these processes long and frustrating. From a professional point of view, the issues of concern were the lack of research support mechanisms such as funding and time availability due to responsibilities in other tasks. Lack of clear guidelines for research output requirements was also a concern.

The afternoon concluded with a demonstration of the electronic platform "e-class" that is used by the department for instructional purposes that seemed adequate but not the most technologically advanced of its kind, given present day technology.

The Committee feels that its evaluation visit took place in a highly professional, as well as very cordial and collegial atmosphere. The Committee members are unanimous in wishing to express in writing their gratitude and appreciation to all the Faculty and Staff of the Department for their excellent hospitality, help, cooperation and logistical support in all aspects of the evaluation visit.

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure
- **Appropriateness of sources and documentation used**
- **Quality and completeness of evidence reviewed and provided**

- **To what extent have the objectives of the internal evaluation process been met by the Department?**

The production of the internal evaluation report by the Department followed the required procedure. The IER was of high quality, complete, informative and contained the material necessary for the external evaluation. The discussions with the OMEA and other faculty members supplemented and elaborated on all aspects of the IER that merited additional discussion. In particular, the Committee appreciated the presentation of supplementary material which was provided and further clarified some sections of the IER. All documents presented key information in useful graphical and tabular form. The Committee concluded that the Department has met the objectives of the internal evaluation process.

A.1 Curriculum – Undergraduate Program.

APPROACH
- **What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?**
- **How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?**
- **Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?**

The basic goal and objective of the undergraduate program is -through offering a plethora of modules- to equip departmental graduates with adequate knowledge covering multiple sub-areas (management, marketing, international business, finance, accounting, law etc.) within the overarching Business Administration banner.

The plan for achieving the objective seems to be undermined by reasons such as e.g. the staff/modules ratio. The department, in order to maintain student satisfaction rates -which appear to be high- needs to reconsider the number of offered modules. This becomes rather important given that staff recruitment appears to be limited or non-existent lately.

Overall, it appears that a network of actors and institutions was consulted in order to set up the UG curriculum. The objectives have taken into consideration wider societal needs, intra-institutional and intra-departmental concerns (e.g. related to structure, overall departmental objectives, individual interests and resources) and the evolution of respective scientific sub-fields. Notable is the recognition that additional factors (e.g. graduates' career paths) should be also factored into any attempt for further curriculum development.

IMPLEMENTATION
- **How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?**
- **How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?**
- **Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?**
- **Is the curriculum coherent and functional?**
- **Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?**
- **Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?**

The Departmental goal has been served adequately by the curriculum which is

comprehensive. However, due to diverse constraints, the structure and content of the curriculum needs to be reconsidered.

It must be also noted that the curriculum may indeed be wide but, compared to e.g. UK standards, it is definitely an over-loaded curriculum which needs to be revised in the light of institutional and wider economic constraints. The breadth appears to be attractive for students who expressed their satisfaction with the content of the curriculum. However, this needs to be seen in the light of available resources that can allow depth of offering at the highest quality.

The EEC feels that variations can take place following a review process. Scientific developments, input from student bodies and reflection upon current business needs have been and should be further consulted while there is acknowledgment that additional parameters must be considered (e.g. employability prospects of graduates) for further changes in the curriculum.

RESULTS
- **How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?**
- **If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?**
- **Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?**

The program is established, has a good reputation amongst students and is ranked at a high position in comparison with competing institutions in Greece (as reflected in students' choices during the Panhellenic entrance examinations). It appears that existing students are satisfied and through our meeting with three undergraduate representatives, no major concerns were raised.

The overall curriculum structure is supported through the use of a meaningful e-learning platform by several staff members. Its usage should be consistent and universal across the department so that operational efficiency for students' benefit can be maximised.

In a nutshell, the curriculum is logically structured and the thematic areas that it covers are in line with international practice. However, deletions or merging of modules should have already taken place following wider extra- and intra-departmental consultation with the overall purpose of re-directing resources to other tasks such as research.

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

The departmental members are creative in their approaches and seem to know what needs to be done to further improve the quality of the offering. The following are some recommendations that may assist towards this objective and departmental staff may wish to consider them.

Recommendation A.1.1
Following wide extra-and intra-departmental consultation (including staff from departments where service teaching is offered, external professional bodies, students etc.), the Department should seriously consider streamlining the offering in line with available resources. The understanding of the EEC during the visit was that restructuring the undergraduate program is a simpler and more straightforward task than restructuring the postgraduate one. In the latter case, more formal administrative procedures need to be followed and barriers to be overcome which make the overall process more time-consuming. Therefore, the department should focus on the undergraduate restructuring as a matter of priority so that available resources can be directed towards other related objectives (e.g. research).

Recommendation A.1.2
Given that links with the industry appear to be adequate or significant, the department may wish to consider 'exploiting' these linkages further (e.g. to reduce modules and replace them with placements). This would also be in line with a wider employability agenda which is expected to be of high interest for students.

Recommendation A.1.3
In relation to the aforementioned, staff may wish to consider incorporating focused, additional ways through which employability may be enhanced in each module (articulated in the module guide and content). This may be related to transferable skills, practical experience or hands-on training and will help in two ways: on the one hand, students will feel more confident drafting their CVs and personal statements/cover letters when applying for a job. On the other hand, the department will fulfill aspects of its mission as a unit which enhances job prospects for its graduates in this critical time for employability purposes.

Recommendation A.1.4
The EEC suggests –notwithstanding legal limitations- a more 'strict' number of prerequisites and years of study so that the n+2+ number of students is reduced (the latter is related to burdens on administrative tasks, too).

A.2 Curriculum – Postgraduate Programs

APPROACH
- **What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?**
- **How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?**
- **Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?**
- **How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?**
- **Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?**

The graduate program includes a generic MBA, an MBA in TQM, an MBA in Tourism Management and an Executive MBA with the objective of equipping graduates with fitting skills and knowledge for the contemporary business world.

It aims to meet the objective through a wide curriculum structure, practice-oriented learning techniques and lecturers from both academia and the practitioners' realm. The suite of MBA programmes overall covers a meaningful array of themes relevant to contemporary business activity and reflects ongoing needs of the Greek economy.

Relevant committees have decided upon the objectives, content and structure of the program reflecting upon Greek businesses' needs, individual interests and respective international programmes demonstrating an adequate understanding of contemporary objectives of an MBA portfolio of programmes.

The graduate portfolio of MBA programmes reflects contemporary business needs while specialisations in TQM and Tourism Management provide the opportunity to the University to play a key role when it comes to learning and education in those areas in Greece.

IMPLEMENTATION
- **How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?**
- **How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?**
- **Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?**
- **Is the curriculum coherent and functional?**

- **Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?**
- **Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?**

The MBA specializations are not the most common ones that can be found in a typical MBA program of an international standing. This may be seen as a deviation from the universally accepted norm but it may also be interpreted as an opportunity for the department to offer a novel viewpoint to MBA education in the country and abroad.

It has a rational structure even though the content can be enriched with more discipline-specific modules in respective areas while removing some modules which are too generic and potentially repetitive for students with an already existing business (educational) background.

In the cases of internal resource deficiency, the department has chosen the route of employing part-time practitioners to deliver modules. Provided that the balance is not entirely skewed towards practitioners this is a reasonable practice to follow and more of them can be employed to cover gaps (provided that they have an adequate academic background such as e.g. possessing a Ph.D.)

RESULTS
- **How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?**
- **If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?**
- **Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?**

The department through its focus, wide portfolio of modules and industry linkages manages to achieve goals and objectives of the curriculum adequately notwithstanding the room for improvement (please see some recommendations below).

Students seem fairly happy and progress well with their studies. On the positive side, they noted the collegial spirit in the department, the quality of communication between students and staff, the diverse opportunities to showcase their skills (e.g. through competitions, coursework, presentations etc.) as well as the availability of personnel for queries and tutorship purposes. They also noted that they would expect equal enthusiasm by all members of staff but the overall feeling was positive.

IMPROVEMENT
- **Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?**
- **Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?**

Recommendation A.2.1
The EEC recommends an expansion of the focus on research-led teaching across the curriculum given the multiple interests of a diversified staff body (in terms of expertise). An explicit reference and usage of up-to-date developments in respective fields should feature in each curriculum handbook and module content. Students across the curriculum can be guided and urged to weave contemporary research findings from highly reputable international journals in their coursework. While this is less feasible to implement in the undergraduate curriculum, the graduate programs allow that to take place more effectively. The ABS list can provide a meaningful guide for achieving this and can be used by both teaching staff and students in a consistent and systematic way across the graduate curriculum.

Recommendation A.2.2
The department can enforce a higher degree of self-learning flexibility among students and promote autonomy in knowledge search across the graduate curriculum. Overall, the

department would benefit from a move to andragogy as opposed to a pedagogic logic given that the student body in the graduate programs is of higher age and possesses meaningful practical experience in some cases (e.g. Executive MBA). This recommendation needs to be seen in conjunction with the previous one since a research-led focus in teaching will largely aid this move to andragogy.

Recommendation A.2.3
Following on from the aforementioned points, the EEC recommends that during an induction week (we assume something like that already takes place formally) all graduate students become acquainted with: key journals in respective fields, the process of library search, ways to identify key papers and authors, the importance of research for knowledge purposes as well as ways to maximize efficiency of learning through their reading. Dedicated time slots of 30-45 minutes would suffice and would allow students to know all these critical issues for their study across the curriculum as well as have a first, less formal contact with staff.

A.3 Curriculum-Doctorate Program

The doctoral program is the area where structural changes could immediately take place. Currently, the doctoral process seems to be heavily 'supervisor-oriented' and this may have several positive aspects such as e.g. frequent communication with the student. However, the international practice leans towards processes and milestones at regular intervals which set up pre-determined guidelines for both the supervisor and the student. So, the emphasis could be skewed towards the process and not rely so much on the individuals. This more structured approach is expected to be of benefit for both parties and is associated with resource allocation, time management, reliability of the process, and mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities.

There was a recent attempt to be commended i.e., provide lectures on specific methodological topics. However, this should take the form of a more structured doctoral module which involves all staff. The decision on whether the module will be assessed or not can be internally discussed further but at least, its provision to students should be a requirement.

Recommendation A.3.1

Design milestones that doctoral students have to achieve (e.g. every 6 months or year) where clearly defined outcomes are expected (e.g. completion of conceptual framework by the xth month of study)

Recommendation A.3.2

Design a dedicated doctoral research methods module which covers fundamental areas for all students (e.g. philosophy of science, ontology, research ethics, research design etc.) as well as offering more narrowly focused sessions on specific methodological tools in respective fields (e.g. Accounting Professors to offer sessions in Accounting Research Methods or e.g. qualitative researchers to offer sessions on focus groups). All staff should contribute to that module so that students can avail of multiple research foci and methodological expertise.

Recommendation A.3.3

Complement existing workshop/seminar series dedicated to doctoral students where all students and staff annually present their ongoing research work and their target journal for publication (the ABS list and its 4*, 4, 3 outlets should be a good guide for that). This will allow all parties involved to get feedback from each other in a collegial atmosphere, exploit synergies within a closely tied network and identify areas for joint work.

Recommendation A.3.4

Identify one conference of international standing (e.g. Academy of Management for Management scholars, Academy of International Business for IB scholars etc.) where students and their supervisors are expected to present their work once before completion. We assume this is already happening at some level but it can be more formalised as a practice.

Recommendation A.3.5

Identify one ABS-listed journal where students and their supervisors can submit and hopefully get an R+R before completion.

Recommendation A.3.6

Design a dedicated section in the departmental website where all staff members disclose their research focus, methodological expertise and published outcome (e.g. ABS journals, international conferences etc.) calling for prospective doctoral students who are willing to work in these areas. This will hopefully expand the recruitment base beyond own postgraduate students and will communicate the research focus of the department to all stakeholders.

Recommendation A.3.7

Systematically involve external examiners from varying locations (e.g. universities abroad) as the lead examiners of a doctoral thesis. In this way, students will be exposed to a wider network and the examination process will gain in international recognition. This is suggested following that all of the doctoral students we met expressed the need to find a lectureship abroad. So, such an externally-oriented approach will enhance students' employability prospects.

B.1 Teaching – Undergraduate Program

APPROACH:

Does the Department have a defined pedagogic policy with regard to teaching approach and methodology?
- **Teaching staff/ student ratio**
- **Teacher/student collaboration**
- **Adequacy of means and resources**
- **Use of information technologies**
- **Examination system**
- **Teaching methods used**

Teaching in the department is delivered by highly qualified academics, experts in their respective fields, who have accumulated extensive teaching experience. The students are selected through rigorous, national entry examinations, which makes for an enthusiastic and highly motivated student body. The EEC was indeed impressed by the quality and enthusiasm of the students during the two-day visit at the department. The collegiate, respectful, supportive, and collaborative relationship between staff and students was also noticeable. By and large, the quality, motivation and enthusiasm of students and academic staff set the scene for a rewarding teaching and learning experience.

Nevertheless, during the committee's two day visit, it became apparent that academic staff were under immense pressure to maintain teaching quality standards due to the deterioration of staff/student ratios in recent years, without a commensurate increase in resources to compensate for it. Students, although generally understanding and optimistic, also felt that financial cutbacks, the reduction in the number of academic staff, and cutbacks in library budgets had a direct adverse effect on their learning.

The student to staff ratio is objectively very high by any national or international standards, which limits the potential for innovative teaching and assessment methods. The main mode of teaching delivery used by academic staff in the Department is lectures in large theatres. Examinations are predominantly based on undisclosed written examinations at the end of each semester. The large number of students and the shrinking number of academic staff limits the extent at which continuous assessment, group discussion, project work, presentations, and other modes of delivery and assessment could be used. There is only limited use of such methods in elective courses with smaller numbers. As a result, there is a risk that graduates, especially those who did not select electives offering such opportunities, could have only limited exposure to such methods and consequently insufficient training in acquiring essential transferable skills (e.g. presentation, team work, conducting independent investigations).

A holistic view of skills, teaching methods and assessment at the degree level will highlight potential deficiencies and spur corrective action , where necessary, in order to enhance the students' learning experience. However, this cannot be done in isolation from a review of the existing curriculum of undergraduate studies. The deteriorating staff/student ratio and the prospect of further cuts in higher education budgets necessitate an urgent review of the structure of undergraduate programmes. The EEC was surprised to discover that the department offers 65 undergraduate courses for a four-year BSc degree. The delivery and administration of such a large number of courses puts immense pressure on staff (academic and administrative) time and physical capital resources, it overloads students with a large number of contact hours per week and a large number of examinations.

The revised degree structure and curriculum will initially be implemented for the new cohort of students joining the programme and it will be extended to all students as they progress through their degree in years 2, 3, and 4. The new degree structure will be fully in place by the end of the four-year BSc cycle studies.

This restructuring could result in significant savings, without sacrificing the quality of the teaching provision. Such savings will be direct financial savings as well as savings in staff (academic and administrative) time required to deliver and manage the degree programmes offered by the department. Furthermore, the rationalisation of the curriculum, resulting from this restructuring, will address issues of potential overlap and replication of effort across courses (e.g. courses covering similar material with similar reading lists, or recommended textbook). Savings in staff time and resources will facilitate the introduction of innovative and more diverse methods of teaching delivery and assessment (e.g. presentations and discussion in smaller seminar groups).

The introduction of online courses will further reduce the pressure on physical capital resources and it will expose students to an innovative learning experience. It is likely to also offer the students the opportunity to benefit from a wider array of bibliographic references and learning material beyond the single-item, recommended reading in most course syllabi. While the existing information technology (IT) infrastructure is satisfactory, further investment and improvements are needed in order for IT to be fully integrated and to be used more widely for the delivery, assessment, and the management of courses. For example, all lecture material (e.g. lecture notes, case studies and main readings) should be available online for all registered users (with password protected download capabilities), subject to security and copyright issues being resolved. The use of IT could be extended to examination and assessment (e.g. technology based examinations using multiple-choice/true-false examinations), where appropriate.

Recommendation B.1.1

It will be useful for the department to have a holistic view of the various skills and assessment methods that students are exposed to during their 4-year studies. A summary 'skills & assessment grid' will be a useful tool to this end.

Recommendation B.1.2

An urgent review of the undergraduate curriculum and the structure of undergraduate programmes to drastically reduce the number of undergraduate courses. As a guidance, in each semester students will have to take a maximum of 4 courses (core and electives), bringing the total number of course required for the BSc degree to 32.

Recommendation B.1.3

To achieve further improvements in efficiency in delivering high quality teaching, the Committee recommends the more extensive use of information technology and the introduction of online courses.

IMPLEMENTATION
- **Quality of teaching procedures**
- **Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.**
- **Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?**
- **Linking of research with teaching**
- **Mobility of academic staff and students**
- **Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching and (b) the course content and study material/resources**

The EEC noted the high levels of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching procedures and the dedication of teaching staff. However, under the current constraints and the real pressure of very high student to staff ratios, the main driver behind such success is the devotion and the level of engagement of academic staff who are willing to go the 'extra mile' on a daily basis to maintain high standards. The EEC felt that a rationalization of the curriculum, as mentioned above, will help address staff workloads and to improve quality. A direct benefit from such a rationalization will be to release staff time for research activity, which will further inform teaching. Research led teaching will expose students to the latest developments in their field of study and it will be a main driver for the continuous updating of course syllabi and reading lists.

Recommendation B.1.4

The department is encouraged to continue to enhance the link between research and teaching, with further efforts to incorporate the latest research (by staff and the literature) into the course content and syllabi.

RESULTS
- **Efficacy of teaching.**
- **Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are stified.**
- **Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.**
- **Whether the Department understands the reasons of such positive or negative results?**

Failure rates in a number of undergraduate courses are high reaching in some instances 50%. Although this statistic masks underlying factors that are beyond the control of the Department (e.g. students registered for more than 5 years, who do not attend), it remains an issue that needs to be addressed with a concrete action plan and specific measures.

IMPROVEMENT
- **Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?**
- **What initiatives does it take in this direction?**

At this point in time, there are no plans for a major overhaul of the teaching curriculum, teaching delivery methods, student assessment, and a general rationalisation of the

Undergraduate degree structure. **The EEC feels that there is an urgency to undertake such a task, given the severe constraints on financial resources and the new realities in the Greek Higher Education sector.**

B.2 Teaching – Postgraduate Program

APPROACH:

Does the Department have a defined pedagogic policy with regard to teaching approach and methodology?

- **Teaching methods used**
- **Teaching staff/ student ratio**
- **Teacher/student collaboration**
- **Adequacy of means and resources**
- **Use of information technologies**
- **Examination system**

Postgraduate teaching provision in the Department is subject to a similar regulatory framework to that for the Undergraduate programmes. In this respect, many of the issues arising are similar to those raised above for the undergraduate degree. However, by and large, any issues arising for the post-graduate provision are less pressing and less of a concern in the medium term.

Student numbers in the postgraduate program are reasonably healthy and manageable, failure and attrition rates are very low, and there is less urgency for any major rethink of the curriculum. The low student to staff ratios in the postgraduate program allows for more interaction between academic staff and students, a more extensive use of the IT lab facilities of the Department, and more opportunities for international collaborations, educational visits, which are highly commendable.

The examination system is considered fair and can be enhanced by additional methods of self-assessment during course time.

IMPLEMENTATION

Quality of teaching procedures
- **Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.**
- **Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?**
- **Linking of research with teaching**
- **Mobility of academic staff and students**
- **Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching and (b) the course content and study material/resources**

One area that takes on particular prominence in the case of postgraduate teaching is the link between research and teaching. At this level of specialist training, it is paramount that teaching is informed by high quality research output by members of the academic staff and by other experts in the field. Updating the content of postgraduate courses on a regular basis (i.e. bi annually) to incorporate the literature findings in the literature and the latest developments in industry needs to be an integral part of the quality assurance checklists in the department.

RESULTS
- **Efficacy of teaching**
- **Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are justified.**
- **Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.**
- **Whether the Department understands the reasons of such positive or negative results?**

The combination of using faculty members and external teachers from the Academia as well as experts from the industry and the government to teach the postgraduate program is a very good practice. Postgraduate students are very committed with a drive to succeed. There is no real issue of students failing exams and the only recommendation is that the department continues to monitor the assessment methods at the postgraduate level to ensure that such assessment methods assess effectively the indented learning outcomes of each course and each program overall.

C. Research

APPROACH
- **What is the Department's policy and main objective in research?**
- **Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?**

The Department does not have a clearly formulated research policy or a set framework for carrying out research, although the main research objectives may be implicit in the activities, publications and research projects undertaken by the Department. Faculty members conduct research in their own area of scientific training and specialization, as evidenced by their publications and other research accomplishments such as journal reviewers, etc.

Based on the Internal Evaluation Report (IER), the excellent presentations to the EEC by academic staff of the Department and discussions with them, the EEC noted that the current research strategy of the Department of Business Administration is to conduct both fundamental and applied research in a wide range of subject areas, such as, finance, accounting, marketing and management. The Department's research orientation is evident through its activities in the above areas and, as such, the EEC strongly recommends that this ethos is maintained and further promoted. The multi-disciplinary nature of research work performed within the Department is in line with its mission statement and aims to enhance and disseminate scientific and practical knowledge at the interface of management and with the view to effectively managing and service enterprises in Greece and improving their efficiency. As such, the research objectives are consistent with those of other similar Departments in Europe and worldwide.

It can be argued that the Departmental policy in terms of research evaluation can be directly inferred from the internal practice and publication of papers in international journals and other peer-reviewed conferences and symposia. A note by the EEC is that there is still room for improvement in terms of the quality of publications. Therefore, one of the recommendations stated clearly by the EEC is commitment to high quality research targeting highly ranked journals using the common practice or ranking lists used by Business Schools (for instance ABS ranking list).

The Department has not set internal criteria and systematic standards or processes for assessing research, but as it is the case with Greek educational institutions, these are built into the process of tenure and promotion of individual faculty.

Based on the discussions of the EEC with faculty members, it is noted that the Department does not have a formal committee to undertake the role of setting evaluation standards for research. Moreover, it has become evident that the more junior academics spend a significant amount of time for the delivery of courses due to the high teaching load dictated by the formal university procedures as well as several admin roles, which in many cases do not have an academic scope. This allows relatively limited time for them to carry out research. On the other hand, it is known that the current Greek educational legislation imposes that research output is essential for academic promotions. Hence, junior faculty will have to put more emphasis on research for promotion purposes and this may have a negative impact on the quality of teaching.

The above situation imposes a big burden on the academic staff and may severely affect their research performance and career development within the Department. Hence, as already

recognized by all staff, determining trade-offs between the teaching, administrative and research commitments allocated to junior faculty is of crucial importance to the successful running of the Department.

During the discussions of the EEC with junior academics of the Department, it has become clear that collaborative research with senior faculty works well and this is already evident by the joint publications produced as well as the participation in a limited number of joint research projects. The EEC considers that to be good practice and recommends that the senior Faculty takes a more active and leadership role in setting research targets and forming teams of researchers working in specialized fields of knowledge.

Additionally, academic staff and PhD students attend the research seminar series offered by other departments in the University to enhance their knowledge. Finally, PhD students have stressed that there is very good interaction with other departments and most importantly with their supervisor having very frequent meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION
- **How does the Department promote and support research?**
- **Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.**
- **Scientific publications.**
- **Research projects.**
- **Research collaborations.**

It is the EEC's opinion that the academic and professional qualifications and practical experience of the existing faculty and their continuous exposure to the international research community are sufficiently adequate to respond to the multi-disciplinary research needs of the Department and the University of Piraeus. Acquiring additional faculty personnel of high caliber from international well-known institutions can further enhance the departmental research activities.

Based on information provided in the IER and the meeting held with PhD candidates of the Department, the EEC feels that doctoral candidates are active on the doctoral program. Faculty members of the department who share similar research interests supervise these individuals on a frequent basis. It is noted that the Department or any other Department of the University covers PhD tuition fees without however covering the living expenses. Discussions with PhD students have shown that they are happy with the desk space, computers and building they work in. The PhD students are sponsored to attend one academic conference per year either European or American. The Doctoral program offers the choice for the PhD theses to be written either in the English or Greek language and the vast majority of students prefer Greek. Building a significant student body of high quality doctoral students can potentially make a substantial contribution to the Departmental research output in the relevant field of knowledge. Upon graduation, these individuals (alumni) may further contribute to the Department or University in different ways through their connections to the Greek or overseas industry and other academic.

To increase the quality and quantity of research output, the Department must have the critical mass required in specific areas of research. To achieve that, new hires of high caliber are planned, however, the recruitment procedure for new faculty has proved very time consuming and this situation has worsened over the last couple of years. Currently, there are two Faculty personnel leaving the department due to retirement but no new hire is in the pipeline. As a result, the existing faculty will be overloaded and this may negatively impact research output. Furthermore, lack of well qualified research laboratory personnel is noted.

A careful examination of the Departmental research output over the last years shows that there is no significant change over the last 10 years, both in terms of quality and quantity. This is indicated mainly by the publications in journals with increasing, however, trend in citations over the last 10 years, as well as the number of conference papers presented by the

academic faculty at various national and international conferences. The Committee considers that to be good practice and comments that the reputation of an academic department greatly depends on the quality of its scientific publications, a strategic goal that should actively be pursued by the Department. Nevertheless, as will be also mentioned in the recommendations below, there should be a better focus to more reputable journals using common practices in Business Schools (ABS ranking lists, impact factor or a combination of both).

Additionally, it is noted that there are a few European projects involving collaborations with European partners or private organizations; The EEC highly recommends that Faculty have to be proactive in their participation in sponsored research projects seeking funds by EU, the Greek Ministry of Education or from private sector organizations.

Based on evidence provided by the IER and also obtained at the meetings with both senior and junior Faculty, the general opinion was that various forms of research collaboration is evident both at the teaching and research levels:
(i)   Research collaborations are already in place between the faculty from the Department with staff from other University departments, such as, the Department of Banking and Financial Management.
(ii)   Joint research work with authors from Universities outside Greece.

The EEC encourages this good practice as a platform of promoting research and developing links with reputable institutions in Europe and worldwide.

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

Faculty has indicated that their working load is quite heavy and the EEC has agreed with this comment. During the meeting with Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers, some academics expressed the view that they may engage up to 30 hours per week in research activities in addition to their teaching load. Junior faculty would be happy if there was a Committee of senior professors to provide guidance and research direction and also to set some more specific rules with the research output needed for promotions. To this end, the Committee would urge the Department to allocate reasonable teaching load to the junior staff in order to facilitate their career development and enable them to realize their research potential. Finally, academic staff expressed the need for additional funding in order to attend Conferences. Discussing these issues with junior staff, they agreed that they would be interested in having some rules regarding the quality of Conferences they can visit.

The EEC considers the above reported results very promising and encourages the staff of the Department to continue engaging in research with high impact for Greek production and service enterprises and industrial markets. It must be noted that a number of faculty personnel have been given honorary awards for their research achievements.

IMPROVEMENT

- **Improvements in research proposed by the Department, if necessary.**
- **Initiatives in this direction undertaken by the Department.**

The EEC recognizes that very strict legislative guidelines imposed by the Greek State severely limit the flexibility and autonomy of the Department in the development of its strategic

plans, such as, the design of long-term research strategy, recruitment policy, financial planning and sourcing. Hence, the academic development of the Department is limited and can only be viewed within the legislative mandate restrictions imposed in the Greek education system, Nevertheless, the EEC makes the following recommendations for the Department:

Recommendation C.1

The IER does not have a section of strategic planning on research. Research is, however, an important issue regarding the image of the Department and the advancement of its Faculty at the personal level, in particular the younger members. The EEC recommends that the Department should make serious efforts to formally define its strategic research direction and major research themes in line with the Departmental mission statement so as to provide clarity and direction to its members in terms of priorities and research standards. Plans should be put forward for implementation. The EEC believes that a major improvement would be possible if the Department were to have and manage its own research budget.

Recommendation C.2

The EEC Committee recommends that the Department maintain the positive research attitude within the Department and would like to see the good practice continued and enhanced. For example, faculty is strongly encouraged to increase the number of their publications in internationally respectable journals, making use of ranking lists that are commonly used in Europe (for instance ABS) and the impact factor of journals. New faculty hires from top international institutions should be pursued to strengthen the existing academic community of the Department. Research excellence should be recognized and promoted by the Department.

Recommendation C.3

The Committee recommends that the Department should make every effort towards establishing internal research evaluation benchmarks as well as identifying and disseminating best practice. This would ideally include the peer review of research publications with the view to developing a shared understanding of research quality and impact. The EEC recommends that there should be a well-defined process linking research quality to promotions. There are many internationally used journal rankings, as mentioned above, that can be deployed by the Department to assess the quality of various publication outlets.

Recommendation C.4

The Department is encouraged to pursue a more aggressive public relations campaign in attracting sponsored research from European research programmes. The Committee also recommends closer research collaboration with the industrial markets. Additional financial resources will allow the modernization of the research labs to have up-to-date equipment and software systems with the view to improving the research infrastructure and support.

Recommendation C.5

Building a significant student body of high quality doctoral students can make a substantial contribution to the Departmental research output in the relevant field of knowledge. To make this possible, the Committee suggests that the Department should make a firm commitment to the PhD program and make every effort so that additional financial resources are allocated to attract high quality researchers, for example, offer a number of PhD scholarships, on the top of their waived tuition fees, to the most competent candidates.

Recommendation C.6

State income, or part of income sourcing from Masters programs, should be driven towards research, purchasing databases that are essential tools for high quality research and software that will facilitate the academic staff to produce high quality research.

Recommendation C.7

As a motivation towards high quality research, the Academic staff would be benefited from some income bonuses for research only that will be offered on the top of their salary and beyond the constraint that academics have in relation with their income. These bonuses should be related with high quality journals (3* or 4* according to the ABS ranking list-with higher bonuses offered to 4* publications).

Recommendation C.8

Given the extremely heavy teaching load and the very large number of courses offered in the Bachelor degree (65), the Committee would recommend the reduction of the modules offered in order to allow staff have more time for research activities. Additionally, we recommend outsourcing of the admin work that is not directly related to the academic programmes, research etc. (for instance admin work related with the building facilities), in order to facilitate staff do research.

Recommendation C.9

Development of Infrastructure for Research Laboratories (or development of new research laboratories).

D. All Other Services

APPROACH

- **How does the Department view the various services provided to the members of the academic community (teaching staff, students).**
- **Does the Department have a policy to simplify administrative procedures? Are most procedures processed electronically?**
- **Does the Department have a policy to increase student presence on Campus?**

The EEC got the impression that the Department is in general satisfied with the results of the services that it provides. The teaching staff has an excellent working relationship with the outgoing Department Chair, Professor Georgopoulos, who has been appointed the new Rector and indications are that this close working relationship will continue with the new Department Chair, Professor Sfakianakis, to meet the goals that have been set.

Comments regarding the services provided to the academic community were solicited from all groups that the EEC committee met with, as they related to their needs. Students at all levels indicated that they were satisfied with the access they had to faculty, administrative services and support personnel and facilities. The administrative staff felt that their working relationship with both faculty and students is excellent and that they are happy and proud to provide support to the best of their ability. The student related administrative load that they handle seems to be excessive, especially during peak periods. A number of processes have been computerized and the staff is satisfied that steady progress is being made toward continuing the automation and computerization trend. Nevertheless, the staff is enjoying the personalized interaction that they have had with the students traditionally.

Implied in a number of various discussions was the clear intent of the Department to adopt and promote any possible technological tool or system that would improve efficiency, subject to availability of funds. This was also mentioned within the context of one of the strategic

goals of the Department.

There has been no discussion about a policy to increase student presence on Campus. The department is already overwhelmed with the number of students that is requested to serve, while its faculty, staff and resources are continuously being reduced.

IMPLEMENTATION
- **Organization and infrastructure of the Department's administration (e.g. secretariat of the Department).**
- **Form and function of academic services and infrastructure for students (e.g. library, PCs and free internet access, student counseling, athletic-cultural activity etc.).**

The organization of the department is well established and the office of the Chair is working in close cooperation with the other administrative staff. It appears that IT services, both instructional and administrative, are distributed (department based) rather than centralized. Apparently, there is no system integration underway to effectuate economies of scale; the Central Administration of the University should consider this.

There is a clear intent by the Department to offer to the students good infrastructure services. For example, the lack of classroom space to accommodate the number of students was brought up many times. However, this is a task that should be planned and realized by the Central Services of the University. It was mentioned that neither human resources nor funds are made available to the University in order to renovate and utilize the building facilities at Nikaia that the Greek government has designated as a University of Pireaus additional site.

The digital resources of the Library are not yet available for undergraduate students, the PC pools are under the supervision of dedicated groups and do not form a global service, the wireless LAN is not accessible in any room of the main building. The Central University Services should address all those deficiencies. Within the IT Sector there is no offer of a digital id for each student with access to different digital services (single sign on), there is no central content management system that can be used by all administrative and academic staff in order to keep their website updated. In fact, the university website as a whole has quite a bit of room for improvement.

RESULTS
- **Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?**
- **How does the Department view the particular results?**

There is no doubt that the administrative services of the Department, as they relate to tasks delegated to and performed by the Department faculty, are in need of professional support. It is very unusual and at the same time legally risky for faculty members to be assigned to committees and to be delegated decision making authority and held responsible for decisions on tasks and matters that are unrelated to their expertise, such as legal contracts, facilities management, engineering project supervising and others. Needless to say that these are also non-productive activities that are utilizing time and effort that could be spent more effectively and efficiently within their sphere of knowledge and expertise.

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

Initiatives to reduce or better yet disengage from these unrelated administrative duties have not been taken by the Department as it recognizes that during these times of resource reductions there is not a great likelihood that additional, specialized personnel could be hired to undertake the work load and free these administrative tasks from the hands of the faculty. They recognize that if they do not consent to undertaking the tasks, they would not realize

the benefit that comes back to the Department from some of them.

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

- **Potential inhibiting factors at State, Institutional and Departmental level, and proposals on ways to overcome them.**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term goals.**
- **Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit**
- **Long-term actions proposed by the Department.**

The brief IER section on strategic planning indicates that the improvement plan focuses on teaching, research activities and the existing infrastructure.

In the short term horizon, the department focuses on goals of:

- o Continuous review and evaluation of the undergraduate and postgraduate programs. In this report, the EEC proposed some concrete suggestions based on their review.

- o Within the restrictive policies and practices of the Greek educational system regarding admissions, (number legislated externally, quality of the entering students depending on their grades and their declared choices in the Panhellenic Admission Process), the Department will continue its public relations efforts (presentations visits, forums etc., to middle school institutions) to convince qualified student candidates to choose the department for enrolment.
- o Increase the use of computer and electronic communications technology to further streamline teaching and administrative processes.

In the medium term horizon, the department plans to focus on goals of:

- o Implementation of a departmental framework to utilize Post-Doctoral personnel to alleviate somewhat the heavy teaching load of the regular faculty and increase its potential for quality academic publications.
- o Accelerating the efforts of establishing the functionality of the Nikaia building facilities in order to alleviate the congestion and operating limitations of the Piraeus facilities.
- o Improving the student/faculty and teaching load/faculty ratios as to bring them closer to international standards of comparable institutions.

In the long term horizon, the department plans to focus on goals of:

- o Internationalizing the educational programs offered by reaching to foreign markets such as Albania and China where demand has already been manifested. This would not only increase visibility but will bring about some additional financial resources.
- o Continuing the effort of upgrading the research activity not only as a means of academic quality recognition but also as a means of possibly attracting faculty peers from the Greek pool of academics or of Greek descent from foreign institutions who wish to relocate in Greece.

The Department admits that there is no formal mechanism or procedures to gather information, formally track, manage and implement the departmental strategy and goals.

Recommendation E.1

EEC recognizes the administrative overload that departmental faculty has to undertake. Nevertheless, it would seem appropriate to institute a formal standing committee to

formulate, propose and track the progress of future plans and goals of the Department. Perhaps it could be a formally implied responsibility of the OM.E.A as part of the ongoing self-evaluation process.

Recommendation E.2

It is recommended that the Department drafts, adopts and publicizes a brief, formal departmental Mission Statement which articulates the Department's emphasis and priorities on issues and concerns and serves as a focus and implementation plan for the future. It is something that could be posted on the departmental website.

The EEC feels that is extremely important to mention that the strategic plan and goals of the department, in this period of extremely austere financial policies and resource availability seem more like a wish list rather than items of possible real implementation as they are contingent on governmental rules and restrictions. The Department is totally deprived of its operational independence since it has little or no control of the number of entering students, the number of faculty positions and the availability or allocation of funds. These issues transcend this evaluation and can be addressed at the national level since:

- o There is a tremendously burdensome, complicated and extremely slow moving and non-responsive bureaucracy that controls academic affairs and decisions to which this department, like all other institutions, are subjected to.
- o There are laws, often controversial in nature, which are continuously modified and implemented that present obstacles to academic freedom in all other aspects of the educational system's decision making capabilities.
- o There is an extremely austere budget available, coupled with mandatory higher quotas for student admissions and non-replacement of retiring faculty members that results in unreasonable teaching and administrative work loads to the faculty, inhibits the ability to attract and hire high caliber faculty that can improve and upgrade the research profile of the Department.

In general, the above interventional control mechanisms imposed by the State on the University and the Department result in some paralysis and/or long delays, thus, hampering implementation of strategic plans and hinder routine operations in the Department. There is, however, freedom in the definition of the curriculum and in the definition of the profiles of new faculty to be hired that has certainly a strategic impact on the Department and can be exploited to create new opportunities.

The EEC was also pleased to learn that the Department is monitoring its educational activities via the course evaluations, grades obtained in courses, distribution of students in elective courses, examination results, etc.

Recommendation E.3:

The EEC generally recommends increasing the Department's interactions with the outside actors and stakeholders: industry, other academic institutions, alumni, etc.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:

- **The development of the Department to this date and its present situation, including explicit comments on good practices and weaknesses identified through the External Evaluation process and recommendations for improvement**
- **The Department's readiness and capability to change/improve**
- **The Department's quality assurance.**

This evaluation took place at a time of great economic uncertainty for the country as a whole. Funding to all academic institutions of higher learning has been drastically reduced or eliminated; decisions regarding, e.g., staff appointments, have been frozen or rejected and there is little room for implementing future plans. Nevertheless, the EEC is making its final conclusions and recommendations keeping in mind the continuously revised cumbersome and controversial legislative directives, the imposition of higher workloads with decreasing resources and the slow moving and ineffective bureaucratic processes.

The EEC found that overall the Department is doing a very good job in terms of its core tasks. The faculty is composed of highly qualified academic professionals who, in spite of the ever decreasing resource availability are going beyond the call of duty, even sacrificing their privilege of sabbatical leaves to keep up with the work load and serve an overcrowded student body. The Department enjoys a good reputation and esteem not only in Greece but in other parts of the world and qualified students make it their choice institution of learning.

The administrative staff was observed to be motivated and very cognisant of its mission to support faculty and students.

Compared to other national institutions of higher learning, the Department has a student body of interested, motivated and relatively disciplined students that allows smooth operations at all levels and in particular the academic one. The impact of the endemic student unrest in the educational institutions in Greece (student strikes and "occupations") is luckily lesser at UniPi.

The students, both undergraduate and graduate participated with interest in the EEC valuation process. The graduate student body in particular has a professional conduct, an optimistic attitude and seems to be very well motivated. The academic performance in the graduate program is very high.

The EEC report contains recommendations in corresponding sections above. All are not repeated here, except for the ones that the EEC felt were the most important ones (keeping their original numbering):

Recommendation F.1:
In addition to the recommendations that have been made by the EEC in the preceding sections of this report, the EEC recommends that the Department makes the Internal Evaluation that has just been completed a continuous, living process and an integral part of its strategic planning for quality assessment and improvements in the future.