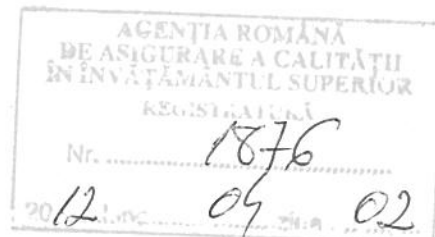


**EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT
FOR ARACIS OF ROMANIAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS**

**"Gheorghe Cristea",
Bucharest, 2012**



Introduction

I was appointed as a Foreign External Evaluator for the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) and was consequently invited to join the evaluation team for the institutional accreditation process of "Gheorghe Cristea" University in Bucharest. The audit took place between Wednesday 29 February and Friday 2 March 2012.

The evaluation team consisted of the following members, in addition to myself:

Prof. Adrian LUNGU – Mission Director

Prof. Nicolae TODEA – Coordinator of the Experts Evaluator Team

Prof. Mihaela GHEORGHE – Advisory Commission Expert

Prof. Calin Ioan ROSCA – Institutional Commission Expert

Prof. Marius Sorin DINCA – Program Expert (Finance)

Prof. Daniel GHITA – Program Expert (Public Administration)

Prof. Ilie ROTARIU – Program Expert (European Economic Integration, MA)

Carmen MIRIAN – Technical Secretary

Ruxandra PRICOP – Student Evaluator

Mirela BILC – Student Evaluator

The evaluation process began on Wednesday the 29th of February at 9 a.m. in Rector's office. The Rector of URSAGC welcomed the evaluation team. Prof. univ. dr. Adrian Lungu presented the introductory statements of the mission. This was followed by a tour at the university to see the infrastructure of the institution which was quite short.

Between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. the team of experts was working on different aspects of the evaluation. In my role as Foreign Expert Evaluator, I was responsible for establishing an overview of the whole university and was allowed to move freely,

talking to members of staff. I would have talked to the students of the university if there were some. I was informed that the students come to URSAGC at certain days of the week in the afternoon. At 5 p.m. we had an appointment with a group of 12 undergraduate students of URSAGC. At 6 p.m. we had another meeting with 7 graduate students. The first day ended with a meeting of the evaluators.

The team continued the evaluation process on Thursday the 1st of March starting at 9 a.m. and lasted until 6 p.m. At 6 p.m. there was one hour appointment with a group of 3 graduates' employers.

The evaluation process was finished on Friday, 2nd of March when the team of experts prepared the final report. The evaluation process was conducted in open and collegial manner.

General Statements

URSAGC seems to operate according to the Constitution and the laws that govern the higher education system in Romania.

URSAGC is a private higher education and research institution, established and approved by Law no. 482/11.07.2002 published in Official Gazette no. 518/17.07.2002, organizes in the educational system up to date, study programs in areas of authorized licensed and accredited according to H.G. no. 966/2011 and no. 749/24.06.2009, H.G. 631/2010 and master degree programs accredited by Order no. 5394/30.09.2009. (Annex I.1.)

URSAGC has only two faculties: the Faculty of Economics, Legal and Administrative Sciences and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Teaching, scientific and administrative staff activity from the two faculties is conducted in three departments: Department of Law and Administrative Sciences, Department of Economics and Department of Communication and Arts; since September 2011 have been only two departments: Department of Science and Arts and Department of Research.

URSAGC licensed to offer five accredited BA programs: Law; Public Administration; Economics and International Affairs; Finance and Banking; Performing Art

(Choreography). Five approved BA programs: Economical Cybernetics; Environmental Economics; English/French Language and Literature; Political Sciences; Communication and Public Relation. Also three MA programs are accredited: European Economic Integration; Criminology; Contemporary Choreographers Show. (Annex I.2.)

The University has 529 (472+57 BA/MA) enrolled students in the academic year of 2011/2012.

I did not have the possibility to visit all locations of URSAGC but the material infrastructure at the main building of the university is much more under the optimal requirements.

The quality of human resources and the scientific potential and research should be strengthened at URSAGC.

Managerial Structure

The management of the university is organised in accordance with its legal obligations, which are stated in the university's charter.

Within URSAGC the managing activity functions on different decision levels. The structure of URSAGC is ill-proportioned. The academic management of URSAGC is huge for its size. There are numberless different departments and other units (Centres). The administrative structure of URSAGC is well planned.

The Senate is the main decision making body of the university which consists of a mixture of appointed and elected representatives. There are 13 persons in the Senate at URSAGC at the moment (9 teaching staff and 4 students) which were reduced this academic year. (The last academic year URSAGC Senate was composed 26 members.)

The coordination and management activity of each faculty of URSAGC is provided by the Board of the Faculty which consists of professors and students. The management bodies of the URSAGC are chosen in accordance with the Charter of the University with other regulations in force.

The management system is not based on the integrated information system that provides automated data records, functional departments of the University by communicating through the intranet system.

Comment: There can't be enough human resource of URSAGC who could complete all the tasks which are attached to this structure. In my opinion the academic managerial structure of URSAGC should be reduced.

Teaching Staff

The number of academic staff at the URSAGC in the academic year 2010/2011 is 72. There are 54 employees in the academic staff who is employed full-time by the university and 24 (44,44%) of them are professors and associate professors. Most of the academic staff members at URSAGC are PhD holders (75,93%) or they are working to achieve PhD degree (12,96%).

This academic year the number of students per member of the teaching staff is 9,79 (529/54) which is a very good rate. (The number of students has decreased very fast in the last years!)

Comment: The academic staff quality seems to be on good level, *the quantity is sufficient* compared to number of students. Even the average of the PhD holders is quite high at URSAGC; the differences between the two faculties should be balanced within the academic positions.

Facilities

It stated in the self-evaluation report: "Currently URSAGC holds three buildings of its own property and land in Bucharest ..., as follows: 11 classrooms, 85 seminar rooms, 7 computer laboratories, 2 language laboratories, two forensic labs, two gyms ..."

I stayed in the main building of URSAGC. As I was informed by the staff of URSAGC it is rented building which used to operate as a workers' hostel in the formerly time. Unfortunately I did not have the possibility to visit the other properties of URSAGC.

I did not see that modern educational spaces which was mentioned in the self-evaluation report. There were qualitative and the quantitative difference what I have read in the report and what I have seen at URSAGC. The equipment of the educational spaces is much more under the requirement of the European standards (e.g. lack of permanent internet access, projecting systems, whiteboards etc.). Also the laboratories need new and modern equipment. Most of the PCs which can be used by the students are out of date.

The library of URSAGC has a total of 61,756 volumes books. Some of them are signed by well-known authors but the others should be updated.

There is no students' hostel and sports facilities at the campus. Disabled people can't move in the building of URSAGC.

Comment: It is very important for the university *to invest* in its physical infrastructure. The lack of material base is the weakest point of URSAGC.

Students

In the academic year of 2011/2012 there are about 472 students in the BA programs and 57 students in the MA programs at URSAGC. (I was informed that there was a great decrease in the number students recently.)

Unfortunately I didn't meet any students during my stay except the organized appointments. At the appointment with the students, I found them a little bit inactive. They were very pleased with the education but at the end they recognized that URSAGC should improve its physical infrastructure.

At the meeting of the graduate students one of them mentioned after a question that he didn't feel much difference between a private or a state university as he had finished at URSAGC and he was going to a state university.

URSAGC is taking part in very few multilateral projects (GRUNDTVIG) with different Universities but I was surprised that there is no Erasmus contract.

Comment: It is recommended to enter into different European Higher Education Programs (CEEPUS, ERASMUS, TEMPUS etc.) and increase the number of students taking part in mobility activities.

At the meeting with the representatives of the employers, they seemed very pleased with those students who graduated from URSAGC.

Comment: As a part of the evaluation process I participated in several organised meetings with students and employers and I don't believe that this method can give real impression about the opinions of this group. It would be much better to choose this group somehow accidentally.

Research

Research activity is performed by the didactic staff and students. It is mainly organised through research centres.

I could not find out how much the students are involved scientific activity.

The scientific research appears mainly presented in papers at conferences and in articles. URSAGC publishes a series of reviews in which scientific papers are presented. The scientific research appears in presented papers at conferences, in articles published in journals and books mainly at national level. The publication activity of the academic staff is very unbalanced.

The research strategy of URSAGC is not clear enough as research topics are much diversified.

Comment: I would also encourage URSAGC to develop its international collaborative links, as there is much to be learned from the experience of colleagues across Europe and elsewhere.

Quality Management

URSAGC has important academic regulations for all activities and creates their specific procedures for quality management system for all teaching, learning and research.

URSAGC has structures, strategies, policies and procedures for quality assurance of the teaching and research process.

Involving students in assessment and quality assurance has become a common practice in URSAGC. They are present in all the evaluation and quality assurance departments.

Comment: In my opinion the structure and the procedures of quality assurance at URSAGC are well organized. There is also *internal and external control of quality assurance*.

Conclusion

URSAGC is in a very difficult situation probably because of the worldwide economic crisis. The number of students has decreased very fast in the last few years.

I am inclined not to offer institutional re-accreditation of URSAGC based on what I have experienced and seen, but I hope that some of the comments which I made will help the University Management in the process of improvement.

I emphasize the following:

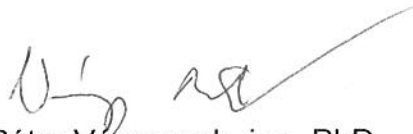
- URSAGC should invest in physical infrastructure and facilities.
- I strongly suggest developing international links and collaborations to support international research activities and encourage professors and students taking part in exchange and mobility programmes.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to the Rector and all the University staff for the pleasant atmosphere and the support during my stay in Bucharest. Also much

gratitude to my colleagues from the evaluation team for the professional, open and gentle way in which the audit was conducted.

At least but not last special thanks to ARACIS for giving me the opportunity to participate in this evaluation process in Romania.

Pécs, 19-03-2012

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Várnagy', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Péter Várnagy dr. jur., PhD

Associate Professor

University of Pécs

Hungary