

**EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT
FOR ARACIS OF DIMITRIE CANTEMIR CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY,
BUCHAREST, 2010**



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 re-accreditation process of "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University in Bucharest. The audit took place between Wednesday 30 June and Friday 2 July 2010.

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

Prof. univ. dr. Popescu Mihai Octavian – Mission Director

Prof. univ. dr. Munteanu Victor – Coordinator of the Experts Evaluator Team

Prof. univ. dr. Onofrei Mihaela – Program Expert (Finance)

Prof. univ. dr. Zahariuc Petronel – Program Expert (History)

Prof. univ. dr. Chelaru Eugen – Program Expert (Law)

Mirian Carmen– Technical Secretary

Nicula Daniela– Student Evaluator

Badoiu Oana Cristina – Student Evaluator

Prof. univ.dr. Gheorghe Dana Mihaela – Advisory Commission Expert (for Cluj-Napoca)

Prof. univ. dr. Rosca Ioan Calin – Institutional Commission Expert (for Cluj-Napoca)

Prof. univ. dr. Rotariu Ilie – Program Expert (for Cluj-Napoca)

Marcu Mihai – Technical Secretary (for Cluj-Napoca)

Ciprian Orhei – Student Evaluator (for Cluj-Napoca)

Prof. univ.dr. Rostas Zoltan – Advisory Commission Expert (for Timisoara)

Prof. univ. dr. Ilias Nicolae – Institutional Commission Expert (for Timisoara)

Prof. univ. dr. Duguleana Liliana – Program Expert (for Timisoara)

Dumitrascu Livia – Technical Secretary (for Timisoara)

Zeru Florin – Student Evaluator (for Timisoara)

The evaluation process began on Wednesday the 30th of June at 9 a.m. in the Senate Room. The president of UCDC welcomed the evaluation team then the Rector talked about the history of the university and its present situation. There were online connections with all the branches, so they could pay attention to the introductory statements of the mission which was presented by Prof. univ. dr. Victor Munteanu. This was followed by a tour at the university to see the infrastructure of the institution.

Between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. the group 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, students of the university. At 17 p.m. we had an appointment with a group of about 60 students of "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University.

The team continued the evaluation process on Thursday the 1st of July starting at 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. At 5 p.m. there was a one hour meeting with a group of about 40 graduates' employers.

The evaluation process was finished on Friday the 2nd of July together with the reunited expert's team when we prepared the final report and met the management of UCDC. The evaluation process was conducted in open and collegial manner. The colleagues of UCDC let us have all the materials we need for the evaluation.

General Statements

"Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University operates according to the Constitution and the laws that govern the higher education system in Romania.

UCDC is an accredited private higher education institute and has been functioning since 1990. It is operating on the basis of Law no. 238/2002.

UCDC functions according to the Bologna process, organising 15 faculties in Bucharest, Timisoara, Cluj, Brasov, Sibiu and Constanta, with licence programmes in the following fields: Business administration, Economics and Foreign Affaires,

Economics and International Business, Finances, Law, History, Geography, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Political Sciences and Administrative Sciences.

The University has several BA and MA programs. Most of the master programs are still undergoing the authorisation procedure of ARACIS. The duration of the BA programs are six or eight semesters with a total of 180-240 ECTS credit points. The duration of the Master programs are three or four semesters with a total of 90-120 ECTS credit points.

The University has 22562 enrolled students. There are 9318 full time students, 8994 part time students and 4250 full time master students.

The scientific potential and quality of human resources at "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University is on a good level.

Managerial Structure

The management of the university is organised in accordance with its legal obligations, which are stated in the university's charter. In terms of structure, the university is led by a Rector, who is supported by four Pro Rectors (educational matters and academic field; research; international relations; branches). The Rector's duties include the strategic leadership of the university and representing the university at judicial and public bodies.

The Senate is the main decision making body of the university which consists of a mixture of appointed and elected representatives. There are 43 persons in the Senate at UCDC (only 3 students).

The university is divided into fifteen faculties, which are further subdivided into departments. Each faculty is led by a Dean and also has a professorial council.

The mission of the university is supported by three strategic plan (short, medium and long-term).

Comment: The formal regulations of UCDC provide the student's participation in different decision-making bodies but in the practice it does not work properly as I studied the reports and talked to a few students. I warmly recommend raising the number of the student's representatives in the decision-making bodies and involving them into the management.

Teaching Staff

There are several annexes which are dealing with the human resources of UDCU. Most of the academic staff is employed full-time (379) by the university. Most of the academic staff members at UCDC are PhD holders (54,6%) or PhD in progress (28,2%) in science but there are only 26,3% professors and associate professors out of the total holders. Although the rates of the PhD holders are more than half of the teaching staff, the University should force the experienced lectures to become associate professors or professors in order to increase the academic quality.

There are 47 persons who pensioners or who are over the limit of retirement age.

Comment: While the academic staff quality is on good level, *the quantity is not sufficient* compared to the high number of students. Even the average of the PhD holders is over 50%, the differences among the faculties should be balanced.

The transparency of the personal records should be improved. There are some overlaps among the data.

I was really pleased that the Department for the Training of the Teaching Staff in the "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University has been established.

Facilities

UCDC is housed in a building which was originally planned for a shopping-centre in Bucharest. Considering that the building was not designed for its current purpose, the university makes extraordinarily good use of its facilities.

The University Campus in Bucharest operates in very nice well equipped building.

Following educational spaces are available: lecture halls with 2672 seats (the total surface is 2723 square metres), seminar halls with 1242 seats (the total surface is 1325,02 square metres), laboratories with 370 seats (the total surface is 681,39 square metres) and a sport hall (the total surface is 470,62 square metres).

All the educational spaces fulfil every requirement of the European standards (conference whiteboards, air conditioning, smoke sensors, modern quality furniture, projecting systems, internet access etc.).

The library of the University in Bucharest owns more than 70000 volumes on the fields of law, economics, geography, politics, foreign languages etc. The library is equipped with a complex system of catalogues where publications found in collections can easily be identified, according to search criteria or bibliographic description.

The structure of the book fund collections at UCDC provides complex information through its diversity: monographies, academic course works, periodicals, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, collections of legal documents, both in traditional and digital formats.

UCDC has libraries and reading halls for all the faculties in the respective centres.

UCDC has not its own student hostel. They have a contract with a modern student hostel where they can provide appropriate rooms for the students.

Comment: Facilities are well used and it is clear that both staff and students feel a sense of ownership of the facilities. The whole building is supervised 24h with cameras which assures a good security standard.

Students

There is the following number of students at each faculty:

- Faculty of Tourism and Commercial Management 4897 (3509 BA / 1388 MA)
- Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences 2882 (2462 BA / 420 MA)
- The Faculty of Finance, Banking and Accountancy 2734 (2173 BA / 561 MA)
- Faculty of International Business and Economics 1772 (1385 BA / 387 MA)
- Faculty of History 242 (206 BA / 36 MA)
- Faculty of Political Sciences 872 (635 BA / 237 MA)
- Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures 662
- Faculty of Law (Cluj-Napoca) 1346 (1090 BA / 256 MA)
- Faculty of Economic Sciences (Cluj-Napoca) 1275 (875 BA / 400 MA)
- Faculty of Tourism and Commercial Management

(Timisoara)	2396 (1947 BA / 449 MA)
• Faculty of Geography and Tourism (Sibiu)	649 (533 BA / 116 MA)
• Faculty of International Business and Economics (Brasov)	663
• The Faculty of Finance, Banking and Accountancy (Brasov)	1045
• Faculty of Tourism and Commercial Management (Constantza)	1130

Comment: According to the complete Bologna process it would be useful to provide for students the *access to take part in doctoral programs*. The human resource (academic staff) should be developed.

At the appointment with the students and during my discussions with them, I found them very open minded, energetic and intelligent. They seem to be very loyal to their university and they seemed pleased with the members of the academic staff.

I could not get too much information about the Students Union. I am afraid that the student's organization operates very formally.

There are 11 bilateral agreements within the framework of Socrates programme: Higher Education (Erasmus). The number of the contracts and the students participating in Erasmus program are very few for the size of the University. There were only 25 outgoing and 5 incoming students in the last three academic years.

Comment: It is recommended to enter into more bilateral contracts and increase the number of students taking part in mobility activities. It will help the students to gain some experience abroad and it is also suits to the EU recommendations which *inspire the students to study one semester abroad*.

At the meeting with employers, they seemed very pleased with those students who graduated from UCDC. I was delighted because there were representatives both of the private and public sector e.g. Banks, Companies, Governmental Organizations, Museums, Courts, and Municipalities etc.

They also mentioned that there are good practices at UCDC which can be useful for the student. For example there is a modern hall where trials are simulated.

Research

Research activity within the university is led by one of the Pro Rectors and is mainly organised through the Multidisciplinary Scientific Research Institute. Within the Institute the university's teaching staff and students are working on the basis of long, short and medium-term scientific research strategies.

At the moment research activities are very much centralized. There is not always enough scientific research performance at the faculties' level.

The scientific research appears mainly in articles published in ISI journals (104 – 2008/2009), papers presented and published in the volumes of scientific sessions, in university annals, in journals internationally acknowledged or journals accredited at a national level (557 – 2008/2009).

UCDC is permanently concerned with publishing periodical scientific publications in general: „Annals of University”, with series of Tourist and Commercial Management, Law, History, International Economic Relations and Finance - Banks – Accounting, Philology and volumes which comprise the majority of presentations held at the annual Scientific Sessions, both at each faculty and at the university level.

There are a number scientific journals (Cogito Magazine, Knowledge Horizons Magazine, Euromentor Magazine, Strategic Universe Magazine, Master's Journal UCDC Magazine and Geo-Carpathia Magazine) written in Romanian and English.

Since 1997 fourteen scientific seminars were organized at UCDC either university or faculty level.

UCDC participates in international research collaborations by actions stipulated in Bilateral Agreements (e.g. Istanbul Aydin University, Turkey ; Universita degli del Piemonte Orientale, Italy etc.)

Comment: The ambition of UCDC in research activity is quite clear. They are settled in 4 objectives. I recommend to UCDC to accelerate reaching the appointed aims. I also suggest decentralizing research activity to the faculties. It would be more in accordance with the EU principle of subsidiarity, which has an important role in education and scientific research.

I would encourage the university to develop its international collaborative links.

Quality Management

UCDC pays a special attention to the quality assurance. UCDC has structures, strategies, policies and procedures for quality assurance of the teaching and research process. A central committee of quality assurance (Evaluation and Quality Assurance Commission) supervises all activities at the University level. At the level of the faculties there are committees (Evaluation and Quality Assurance Subcommittee for each faculty) for the study programmes.

Periodically, these committees meet and analyze the compliance of institution's policy in quality domain at their levels, as shown in the strategies and the operational plans. The results of these analyses are noted down in the reports, and then they are submitted to the University Senate and faculties' Councils.

A Quality Manual has been setup at the University level.

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

I am happy to declare my full and complete confidence in the quality assurance processes at UCDC, as well as the quality of its programmes.

Conclusion

I recommend the institutional reaccreditation of “Dimitrie Cantemir” Christian University based on what I have experienced; seen, red and heard. I hope that some of the comments which I made will help the University Management in the process of continual improvement.

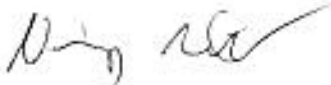
I emphasize the following:

- To continue to develop training and mentoring programme for those who are teaching in Higher Education. A system like that allowed staff to develop their teaching skills and gain the support of more experienced teachers would be welcomed.
- Raising the number of the student’s representatives in the decision-making bodies and involving them into management.
- I strongly suggest developing international links and collaborations to support international research activities and encourage students and academic staff taking part in exchange and mobility programmes.
- I encourage continuing good practices which I experienced at UCDC.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to the Rector, Vice Rectors, Deans 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, 09-07-2010


Péter Várnagy dr. jur., PhD
Associate Professor
University of Pécs
Hungary