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REPORT

**of the foreign evaluator for the
Romanian-American University of Bucharest**

Date: 26th May 2015

ETS – FOREIGN EVALUATOR EXPERT

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SUMMARY

Accreditation context for RAU

RAU accreditation process was implemented in a Central European quality development context, involving the ARACIS. In Central Europe a large private, but with small enrolment capacity higher education sector has arrived to paradigmatic change.

1. There are new trends in the private sector consolidation:
 - Elite/semi-elite universities (EU/SEU), like CEU transformed themselves into embedded and competitive universities in global higher education industry.
 - Demand absorbing/non elite (DALU) universities partly are on the edge of bankruptcy.
 - Serious demand absorbing universities (SDAU): are on a halfway to become semi-elite ones.
2. Romanian HE needs private universities to meet EU targets in 2020.
3. The number of private HEIs made reasonable to give more attention for private sector quality models. They not adequate in recent competitive environment in the case of ENQA not having different standards for advanced research, research, applied research and education oriented HEIs. The EU was engaged with profiling universities, with developing a more diverse system, to step out the new HE landscape and make for universities their own identity. The ENQA practice with avoiding the clear role type indicators is giving place to different rankings without responsibility. In this environment private universities, the elites and semi elites, the SDAU type ones need a new quality development model matching to its mission.
4. There is a changing landscape for business schools, challenges for the embedded program models and student profile.
5. Private HEIs are facing new governance challenges, and quality models that can fit into new emotional management culture.
6. HEIs are on the track becoming more service science approach demanding than the academic approach based on a disciplinarily model of modernity and needs a co-creation approach.
7. Accreditation processes needs a new approach to a private HEI model, and they can give innovation to the private HEIs governance. SDAU type universities need a more dynamic approach in evaluation and less static.

In the case of RAU accreditation the monitoring and evaluation process has some research questions:

- How do the new challenges affect the RAU strategic position?
- What type of category does the RAU belong to?
- How the self-evaluation can help to adapt to the new environment?
- Using a dynamic approach in evaluation can serve as a pilot model?
- How can the QS models help this adaptation?

Facts

- RAU has reached a substantial level of self-evaluation culture.
- Site visit behaviour of RAU leaders and managers was cooperative.
- Interactions during the site visit could help in information collecting activity.
- Data and information collecting from the internet and social media needed prolonged time.

- Arranging facts into information had some difficulties because of descriptive and not analytic knowledge management culture.
- RAU has demonstrated deep information concerning institutional responsibility.
- RAU has demonstrated large documentation system proving management by strategy orientation.
- RAU documentation has demonstrated system-wide documentation concerning teaching, learning, and research activities.
- RAU demonstrated documentation on having a quality culture based on facts.

Statements

- RAU self-evaluation culture has reached a substantial level, but needs analytical approach and experience.
- Site visit behaviour of RAU leaders and managers behave as a role model for private universities: they behaved as leaders in a learning organization. The functional level managers were inexperienced in demonstrating operative culture, processes and performance orientation.
- Interactions during the site visit were given added value to the institution development process.
- Data and information collecting needs reengineering, because it does not serve strategic goals.
- Arranging facts into information had barriers in absence higher education analytics.
- RAU has demonstrated deep SDAU type commitment to institutional responsibility, and academic quality.
- RAU has a good and trustworthy reputation in higher education management practice and style.
- RAU has demonstrated high quality culture, close to recognized for excellence in case of education and started to maintain the level of research orientation.
- RAU demonstrated substantial level in its quality system and quality improvement practices.

	Insufficient	Partial dev.	Substantial level of development	Very-advanced dev.
Institutional responsibility, core values				X
Mission			X	
Autonomy identity management			X	
System perspective in processes		X		
Quality system			X	
Accreditation process			X	

- RAU is a private university with very-advanced level of institutional responsibility and core values.
- RAU has reached substantial level in leadership based on mission and vision, on strategic focus, in unique identity and autonomy, in quality system development.
- RAU has demonstrated partial level in system perspective of working processes.

Overall performance of RAU demonstrated substantial level of development in institutional performance and quality culture. In the case of quality system there are tasks for improvement in a year deadline concerning system development.

Suggestions for improvement

- University leaders need to be engaged more deeply in self-evaluation training, gaining more deep knowledge, information reporting and visualizing culture,
- The accreditation process needs to collect raw data, presentation on site visits unstructured and structured data and internet data and making monitoring process more effective on data.
- It is suggested developing a comprehensive communication system with consumer user approach.
- It is worth building a university wide knowledge management system.
- It is evident for adapting to new global and European changes. RAU leaders and managers have to develop their value system.
- It is suggested profiling university in U-Map dimensions.
- It is suggested developing leaders capability.
- It is suggested making more flat organization with integration of fragmented academic and functional units.
- It is suggested to renew the quality management system, making it more mission oriented.

Results of accreditation processes evaluating research questions

- The RAU is deeply affected by new global, European, Central European and Romanian national changes: it needs to renew its mission, values, business education culture, strategic planning and implementing processes making it into agile organization.
- RAU is on the way becoming SDAU type, emerging to semi elite universities. It can be helped by renewing leadership competencies and governance model, by renewing quality system focused on dynamic quality.
- The RAU has to make a new self-evaluation connected to new plans development using given improvement tools.
- ARACIS, RAU and external foreign evaluator can develop a pilot model for consolidating emerging into elite type model universities with dynamic quality approach.
- Using a new evaluation model – used here for quality system evaluation – can help develop new mission and strategy oriented models.
- ARACIS can help develop more consolidated basis for emerging semi elite institutions.



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The European and global higher education environment as a context for RAU accreditation

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1. Pre-accreditation situation

New Qualitas project made possible the participation of foreign experts in the accreditation process, which was aimed to maintain the level of the quality culture in Romanian higher education. Accreditation of the RAU is contributing to the strengthening of the evaluation practices in the case of ARACIS, because it is focusing on the **development of an organizational culture** centred on continuous quality improvement within the RAU, investigating managerial skills training at institutional and system level, fundamental premises for the quality improvement of the study programs and their relevance to labour market integration and to a society centred on knowledge.

1.1. Central European accreditation approaches in 2015 challenging private HEIs in post-crisis economic situation

Accreditation processes in Europe became more mature, and there are clear distinction among institutional, quality system and programme accreditations. In Europe the ENQA guidelines are commonly accepted standards. ARACIS accreditation activity is using this guidelines in its documentation.

There is not a distinct accepted accreditation for private HEIs, but the number of them and enrolment in every region of the world is growing. In 2010 Europe has the smallest rate with 43.7% private universities (followed by Asia – Pacific with 57.3%, US 61.3%, Latin-America 69%, and Sub-Saharan-Africa and Middle East with 68.3%). The enrolment varied from 18.4% in Europe, to 40.3% in Latin-America.

There are very important aspects concerning private higher education sector, and it is the not only the responsibility of governments to develop their quality, but it can have professional questions too. In Central Europe private HEIs fulfilled an important role in developing former communist countries to liberal democracies. During 1992-2010 private higher education institutions fulfilled a peripheral role, helping higher education to meet peripheral patterns of human capital development. In the case of countries, like Poland, and Romania the number of them, and enrolment played very strong roles, that it caused strong problems concerning the whole sector, pushing former state owned universities into peripheral model of development parallel to foreign direct investment processes.

Foundation of universities was different:

- **Elite/semi-elite universities (SEU)**, founded by business elites, aimed to be more recognized than second tier public institutions, and comparable with leading national public universities.
- **Demand absorbing/non elite universities (DALU)** are often perceived as universities with limited academic quality and as having profit making intentions. They are usually family owned and have limited capital and resources. Such fields of study (business administration, accounting, economics, IT and law) are present that require less investment and yield profits in return, and run their institutions in a secondary-school mode with limited investment in infrastructure, minimal or no research and development, dependency on part-time faculty.
- **Serious demand absorbing universities (SDAU)** are on half way to semi-elite ones, they gained some degree of national qualification, they feature academic excellence, effective management and governance, and pursuit legitimacy and internationalization. Their most important challenge is policy priority for improving quality, they strive for distinction from typical low-quality demand-absorbing universities.

1.2. EU HE targets and indicators in Romania

- Romania in 2012 has 21.8% indicators concerning enrolment into the higher education, it is less than the EU 28 average (35.7%), with 20.5 % for men and 23.5% for women. Romania's national target is 28%, which means that its position with tertiary workforce will be in a strategic underdevelopment situation after 2020, as well as. European targets needs a sound human development 9%, which cannot be met without strong involvement of the private sector investment in private higher education. It cannot be done without broadening access to higher education with attracting more students from disadvantageous socio-economic backgrounds or geographical locations. The EU targets are giving great emphasis on this fact for Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, and Romania.
- The most important tasks are removing financial barriers, bringing more flexibility into the routes by which people enter higher education, give guidance and counselling to help students, greater use of skill projections, involving stakeholders more in course design, systematic use of work-based placements, more flexible structure of studies, including interdisciplinary learning paths.

1.3. Private Higher Education in European Context

Regions

Regions	State maintained	Non-state universities	All	
North-Europe, Benelux and Baltics	263	59	322	From 2010 the Finnish universities belong to an independent category
Western-Europe	291	349	640	
South-Europe	327	236	563	
Central-Europe	268	448	716	From this 131+325 are in Poland
	1149	1092	2241	

Higher Education in Europe has new challenges: the resources for higher education are at a very low level: in the case of EU countries it is the 1.3% of GDP, in the case of USA 2.8%, in the case of Nordic countries it is 2.8%.

The basic problem in Europe is the weak involvement of private resources: which has different cause. The resources from private investments aren't well elaborated in different countries. There are no incentives in for of tax law reform, there is missing a sound financing system for research incentives, there are rigid legal forms for maintenance of institutions.

In Europe the state centred higher education is a European value, but it is often confused with the rigid form of state-treasury models. Higher education nowadays fell into a lessening sector because of demographic trends and there is a new turn to new industry policies. The egalitarian university system, the absence of real tuition fees cause more burden on public sphere and cannot resolve the knowledge gap behind the US and Japan in global education. It is clear, that free education didn't led to efficient university budgeting, low tuition fees didn't led to involvement of new social strata.

If we compare European challenges for HEIs in Asia, than we can state, that Asians put first accent on developing a high growth for Asian economics, especially particular attention paid to private higher education. There are new policies to support the development of national policies and regulations regarding the effective orientation of private higher education institutions;

support universities in their efforts strengthening quality assurance and accreditation procedures, especially for private higher education institutions; to strengthen the government assist in exploring alternative funding models for private HEIs, develop a support model (legal framework), that brokers international partnership opportunities for private higher educational colleges and universities.

2. Globalization & business school challenges

2.1. Global challenges for business schools

New higher education technologies, the delivery of online content for free, is disrupting the traditional lecture based model of education. The new model “freemium model”, which are different from premium parts, for which students are required to pay. In case of business schools the brand name and good product is important, but providers in different countries are more or less mimic the content. In case of business schools accreditation led to hiring professors from academic background, and not from business life. They need to hire star professors, while MBA demand is falling, the accent was placed on shop line managers, and middle manager level. In 2013, at Ducker Forum the business schools draw five recommendations:

- Renewed focus on purpose: business schools should be equipping graduates to be the leaders of 21st century organization that operates in complex environment where innovation and responsiveness to customers and society are the key.
- Updating the core curriculum: it is not enough to build core curriculum on shareholder value, it is more important that forward looking business schools should join together in generating textbooks and courses reflect on updated view of management.
- The ranking indicators have to be reflects on vitality, relevance and impact, as well as on society’s complex expectations of business schools.
- Putting business back into the business schools: it needs more practical knowledge and less accreditation prescriptions.
- Interdisciplinary approaches in research and teaching: the complexity of professionalism concerning knowledge the whole business service industry, knowledge and skills for managing organizations with different function and type, understanding the role of process and technology, understanding the importance of communication, interactions and interventions, behaviours of employers, employees and customers, suppliers needs a new disciplinary line in case of content.

Nowadays a best program has accent for involvement of more experienced students, practising managers who attend classes episodically, forming student groups from full day and adult students, make accent on adult groups, to ensure more connection between what is taught and what is needed.

New trends are concerning interdisciplinarity: concerning legal, psychological, mental, technological, business problems.

New trends are focusing not only on learning contents, concepts and techniques, but on changing how people think about business issues, on philosophy that underlines many management perspectives and approaches, such as TQM, or innovation or creativity. New trends have a clinical or action component: learning is coupled with projects, real work problems, seeking solutions together with real business leaders.

2.2. Global challenges for higher education management

The 2010th year OECD conference stated, that residential model for young people is dominating, with teaching generally, and vocationally oriented education and open and distance learning is being under evaluated. Teaching is better recognised behind research, and the third, the role attending in regional and local development is mostly under evaluated. New managerialism in

HE means: finances with stronger managerial control, downsizing and decentralisation, and search for excellence. HE governance means: preparation for the labour market, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic society, personal development, maintenance and development of a broad and advanced knowledge base. Governance is a crucial element of the quality culture, it is not possible to achieve quality without good governance. The successful attainment of the agreed set of goals, transparency in procedures and tasks, effective accountability of those involved in governance, ability to reach, win acceptance and implement decisions, participation and the rule of law.

- Mission oriented acting and understanding the best interest of higher education system and institution for which they are responsible.
- Institutional autonomy provides adaptability of structures and flexibility of methods of governance.
- Harmonization between long term goals and implementing strategies, with professionalism in government bodies and administration.
- Avoiding undue micromanagement, and leaving reasonable scope for innovation, flexibility, elaboration and implementation of coherent institutional policies.

2.3. Service quality science and service challenges for higher education

Higher education institutions are increasingly realizing the importance of higher education as a service industry, placing greater emphasis on meeting the expectations and needs of students, to

Year 1			
Rank	Characteristic	Mean	Variance
1	The reputation of the university	8.75	0.93
2	Knowledge and experience of academic staff	8.67	0.97
3	Knowledge of administrative staff	8.58	0.99
4	Campus location and layout	8.42	1.17
5	Organisation and management of course	7.83	0.88
6	Ability to deal with queries promptly and efficiently	7.75	0.39
7	Provision of other facilities and services	7.50	2.09
8	Quality of academic facilities and learning resources	7.33	1.52
Year 2			
1	Course flexibility	8.08	0.63
2	The reputation of the university	8.08	0.63
3	Knowledge and experience of academic staff	8.00	0.91
4	Campus location and layout	7.92	0.45
5	Physical appearance of university	7.75	0.39
6	Careers service	7.50	0.64
7	Organisation and management of course	7.42	0.99
8	Quality of academic facilities and learning resources	7.33	0.79
Year 3			
1	Careers service	9.08	0.45
2	The reputation of the university	8.42	0.45
3	Knowledge and experience of academic staff	8.25	1.30
4	Course flexibility	8.17	0.70
5	Campus location and layout	8.00	1.09
6	Organisation and management of course	7.75	2.39
7	Quality of lectures	7.58	0.27
8	Relevance of course material	7.33	2.24

Table 5.2: Extract of Best Performing Characteristics Data in Each Academic Year Group
See Appendix G for Full Data Tables

deliver quality services and to achieve sustainability in competitive service environment. the best universities focus on understanding how student perceive the services offered, develop them in a way that stimulates a positive impact on students perceived quality.

Quality in HE is a complex, multifaceted concept: satisfy students in living successfully in a competitive service environment, meet expectations, performance, disconfirmation and satisfaction (gap between expectation and perceptions), to reach positive disconfirmation. These two tables make clear, that in the case of HEIs, the academic year has an important impact on service quality perceptions, but the reputation gained by institution, quality of teaching staff, campus location and organization and management of courses are crucial. The second table questions are concerning the perceived quality, emotional aspects of university culture.

Table 1. Results of factor analysis (factor loadings)

Variables	Factor 1: non-academic aspects	Factor 2: Academic Aspects	Factor 3: reliability	Factor 4: empathy
1. Promises kept			0.65	
2. Sympathetic and reassuring in solving problems	0.38		0.57	
3. Dependability			0.52	
4. On-time service provision			0.74	
5. Responding to request promptly				0.51
6. Trust	0.44			
7. Feeling secured with the transaction	0.47		0.31	
8. Politeness	0.45		0.32	
9. Individualized attention				0.68
10. Giving personalized attention				0.74
11. Knowing student needs				0.66
12. Keeping student interests at heart				0.55
13. Knowledge in course content	0.33	0.57		
14. Showing positive attitude		0.66		
15. Good communication		0.75		
16. Feedback on progress		0.68		
17. Sufficient and convenient consultation time		0.56	0.32	
18. Excellent quality programmes		0.62		
19. Variety of programmes/specializations		0.43		
20. Flexible syllabus and structure	0.31	0.60		
21. Reputable academic programmes	0.31	0.56		
22. Educated and experience academicians		0.50		
23. Efficient/prompt dealing with complaints	0.51			
24. Good communication	0.51		0.37	
25. Positive work attitude	0.53		0.36	
26. Knowledge of systems/procedures	0.50		0.36	
27. Providing service within reasonable time	0.51			
28. Equal treatment and respect	0.75			
29. Fair amount of freedom	0.56			
30. Confidentiality of information	0.65			
31. Easily contacted by telephone	0.57			
32. Counseling services	0.53		0.32	
33. Student's union			0.33	
34. Feedback to improve service performance	0.36	0.32	0.33	
35. Standardized and simple delivery procedures	0.42		0.35	
Eigenvalues	10.29	2.79	2.68	1.72
Percentage of variance	26.2	5.9	5.8	3.0
Cummulative percentage of variance	26.2	32.2	38.0	41.0

A high quality in HE institution, can be achieved by emphasis on service; anticipating and meeting the needs and expectations of students, recognizing and improving transformation processes and systems, implementing teamwork and collaboration, management based on leadership, knowledge based decisions, and involvement, solving problems by problems, facts, and feedback systems, genuine respect for and development of human resources – the people who work in colleges and universities. The first tiers of quality service management are: coordination tier: management support and leadership, understand the service game, how to win a competitive environment, improvement of processes and systems; The second tier: employee involvement and commitment, to build quality in processes; The third tier: student focus:

involvement of the students, dealing with customer complaints, anticipating and meeting student needs, and dealing with service quality gaps: dealing with expectation gap, dealing with standards gap, the performance gaps, and the communication gap.

So the main quality dimensions are from the student's point of view: the effectiveness of education (collaboration with businesses, course offered, teaching practices, international standards for comparisons, national cooperation), facilities (library, computers, labs), information, responsiveness and internal evaluation system of students; the service quality of administration.

3. Quality challenges for SDAU model higher education institutions

Higher education quality development is supported by regional/national quality awards. These awards are pushing institutions toward the business model of good management, because of weak performance of universities meeting demands on institutional sustainability, coordinated system management and innovative approaches. These values are comparative to ARACIS values, but focused on more dynamic than static self-evaluation and external evaluation.

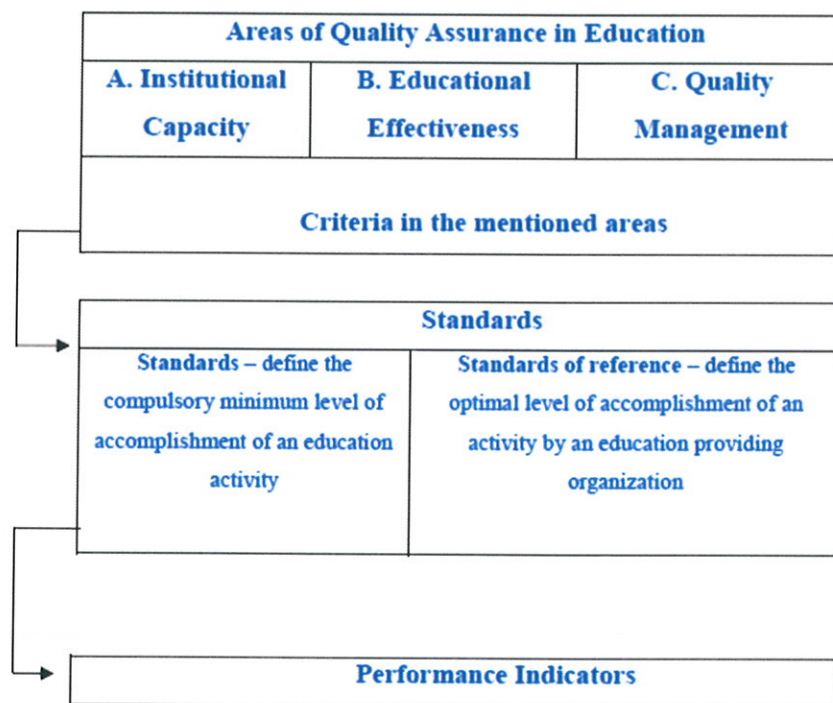
ARACIS values	CAF EDU values	Baldrige Values	EFQM values
European dimension: competitiveness at EU & international level			
Institutional responsibility, based on autonomy		Delivery value and results	
Institutional diversity: Diversity of mission and objectives is respected and encouraged by ARACIS		profiling universities	
Institutional identity, by academic autonomy			
Internal institutional self-evaluation quality			
Focus on results	results orientation	Systems perspectives Focus on Success	creating a sustainable organization Sustaining Outstanding results
improvement on quality and management			
	Citizen/customer focus	Student centred excellence	adding value for customers
	Leadership and constancy of purpose	Visionary leadership	Leading with Vision, inspiration and Integrity
	Management processes by facts	Managing for innovation and by fact	Developing organizational capability harnessing creativity and innovation
	People development and involvement	Valuing people	Succeeding through the talent of people
Continuous performance improvement	Continuous learning, innovation and improvement	organizational learning and agility	Managing with agility
	Partnership development		
	Social responsibility	societal responsibility	
	Ethics and transparency		

EFQM certification categories	Committed to sustainability 1-3 star 100-300 point
	Committed to excellence 3-4-5 star 400 point
	RE3 ability to lead changes some good management practices are in place 450
	R4 performs well in a number of areas, practices with success, results achieved 500
	R5 is a high performing organization, where changes are norms, improves, refines and simplifies the practices to achieve its goals has ongoing results, in line with strategy 550
	finalist/ award- role model in 1 fundamental value 600

4. The RAU evaluation context

The external evaluation of the RAU was implemented in a framework of Qualitas project, and was added an external foreign dimension to the national expert panel.

Figure 1. Hierarchical Relationships between Areas, Criteria, Standards and Indicators



The accent based on an integrated, holistic approach: as a minimum, the ARACIS standards, the role of a private institution in meeting Romanian EU 2020 indicators, mission as a private institution in Romanian and European context, adapting challenges to changes of business education models, meeting challenges from service quality aspects.

If we start to evaluate RAU as a university halfway on becoming a semi-elite university the ARACIS approach is very good and useful. If we think on developing an evaluation model for RAU we need to add some aspects of evaluation approach drawn from business models and making a hybrid approach: the basis are ARACIS standards, and we can add aspects concerning system perspectives, profiling universities, leading with vision and inspiration, nesting creativity and innovation, managing with agility.

Methodology:

- In external evaluation of the RAU first task is analyses of the self-evaluation document.
- Second is analysing the experiences during the site visit.
- The third task is collecting facts and data and trying to get more facts from social media.
- The fourth task is analysing task and arranging them into an information.
- The fifth task is to make an evaluation report.
- The sixth task is to make a Summary from the report.
- The seventh task is to make a policy brief for ARACIS.



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I. Internal institutional self-evaluation quality

The self-evaluation document was in time delivered. It was made as an inner document. There were no description concerning the self-evaluation process, who attended in it, who were responsible for data. The self-evaluation fulfilled one function: collecting data into a visible system. There were no description concerning methodology. It missed the rector signature, the data concerning the decision of the Senate, proving the self-evaluation level is based on agreed decision. The information provided by the RAU SER have a descriptive character: long and non-systemic description of the RAU history. It was very anecdotic in description of internal mechanism for developing the quality system, it explained briefly the system, the documents, but was strong in connecting the RAU organic structure and the way how it is connected to QAS. All areas prescribed by ARACIS were explained, by rarely in a reflective manner. SWOT analyses was focused on the university, and only in some cases were targeted on SWOT of quality system. The self-analyses missed identification for improvement of the institutional activities. The performance results of the quality system by self-evaluation was very difficult to understand.

Facts

- RAU has made its self-evaluation according to ARACIS standards.
- It makes a yearly self-evaluation report.
- The self-evaluation is based on transparent data research and collection.
- The data system is based on ARACIS accreditation framework.
- There are evidences for planning, there are some evidences for implementing, there are no presented facts for monitoring and improvement activities.
- There are anecdotic statements for using data on teacher performance evaluation from student satisfaction measurement.
- There are no analyses concerning satisfaction data.
- There are very poorly formed questioners, and not good for making valid evaluation, there are no clear methodology for data mining, data research, and there are no any signs of making them electronically.

Statements

- The RAU self-evaluation practice is on elementary but not at experienced level, it is missing strategic orientation on using data for helping management decision making processes. There are frequent reports on performance in different cases at Senate level.
- Quality culture measuring student satisfaction with teachers, employee's satisfaction with leaders at elementary level, they needs professionalism, and are missing for stakeholder level.
- Quality of data collection is oriented narrowly on quantitative methods, and missing qualitative ones.

Suggestions for improvement

- It would be optimal to rethink the whole information collecting system strategically: there have to be professionals who are teaching students for introduction to business research. They could rethink and remake the data management system into a professional one, and connect it with electronic tools.
- There is low the added value without information analysing and presenting, visualization for different purposes: for presenting students, for presenting senate.
- There is little added value measuring student perceptions on teachers in every semester. There could be done more information on student's perception of education, measuring the satisfaction in the case of all subject at the end of the first and second year, and

making a whole study measurement at 3rd year during the graduation exams, when students have greater level of focus on the whole education.

- The measurement systems can be developed with competencies and outcomes of incoming and graduating students measuring the added value by the university.
- It is suggested for using for self-evaluation embedded evaluation templates common in quality award for understanding the performance of the university:

Function	Traditional	Planned	Implemented	Monitored	Improved
point	1	2	3	4	5
Profiling	x				
Leadership			x		
Strategic and operative management			x partly		
People management			x		
Resource management					x
Data and knowledge management	x				
Student involvement			x		
Partnership			x		
Operational processes: education				x	
Operational processes: research					x
Operational processes 3 rd mission	x				
Results	x				
Summary 37/60	4	4	15	4	10

If we use this method, for self-evaluation, it could be more reflective and more informative for the organization themselves. If we evaluate the performance of the university concerning self-evaluation, 0,61 % without using different weighting of activities in case of quality models.

If we want converting points into Baldrige: the leadership is around 30/120 point, weighting strategic planning 30/85 point, costumer focus 30/85 point, measurement system 20/90 point. Workforce development 30/85 point, operation 60/85 point, results on student learning and process outcomes 80/120, costumer focus results 50/90, workforce focus outcomes 30/80, leadership and governance outcomes 30/80, budgetary, financial and market outcomes 50/80. It means probably 440 point can be close to recognized for excellent.

Because of conventional measurement, Analyses, and Knowledge Management the site visit in the case of accreditation process, needed more detailed investigation. The accent was made on education data, the functional departments were not ready with process and data presentation, and except of research office they show low level proficiencies. It is coming the narrowly accepted quality culture, focused on academic questions and leaving in quality shadow the functional departments. It is suggested using research office practice as a good practice for every offices, including disciplinary schools and departments.

1. Experiences the during the site visit

The site visit was organized in a manner, that all external evaluators could collect facts for checking the information explained in the self-evaluation document.

Facts

- The RAU leadership was present from the first to the last moment.
- All representatives from faculties and functional offices were present.
- The site visit was organized in Qualitas project framework.
- The different tasks – institution accreditation programme accreditation were organized in integrated manner.

- The international external expert made interviews: with the rector, with all the vice-rectors, with managers and employees of International office, Economic Office, Office of informatics services, made visit and interview with quality office, LLL department, Library, Asian study department, Japanese department, Career centre, visited all facilities.
- The university leaders and managers accepted the international expert in collegial style, their behaviour reflected a learning culture, and they had not made any barrier for monitoring documents and evidences.
- Emotional climate of the site visit was official, efficient and filled with valuable discussions.
- The rector's personal role and the organizational role of vice rector for accreditation can be described as a role model for the whole community.

Statements

- The site visit could help and adding new information to the self-evaluation report, but it needed an experienced experts, because the RAU community didn't use for displaying the PDCA model: documents concerning planning, implementing, monitoring and improving activities.
- The functional office leaders didn't know how to explain their activity, processes and results.
- The official translators from the foreign language department could help to gain deep information concerning experiences as employees in case of missing information.
- The senior leaders were also inexperienced to give explanation about their approaches, management philosophy, understanding the main questions of university leadership. They are only at first steps for starting a new original pathway and step out from the founder's person shadow.

Suggestions for improvement

- The accreditation process is a well elaborated "game", and all actors have to be experienced in it. If the RAU leadership starts applying for different awards or quality certification, people can socialize to external audits. They can learn the quality language.
- The site visit in functional offices needs good elaboration.
- No university can let the university webpage, homepage with numerous pages under construction.

2. Collecting data and trying to get more facts from social media

Facts

- The university has its own homepage, and has policy on social media
- The RAU homepage is made by a programmer and not a user's perspective.
- The homepage "information" title, about us gives a short introduction.
- The "information" home page is partly using those in data "about us" information.
- There is admission page.
- There are icons leading to social media.

Statements

- The homepage is boring and not well designed, a lot of information are long down need rolling the page.
- From the homepage we can see an institution without system thinking.
- Data of faculties, offices are minimal.

- Data concerning education are hectic, from information page there are no information concerning bachelor degrees, number of master programs on information page 22, on admission page 6.
- There are no up to date information, 2/3rd of links is under construction.
- Quality information are static and not at a good place.

Suggestions for improvement

- There is need for a new strategy for communication of the RAU.
- Strategy of communication has to be connected to deployment of operative tasks to vice-rectors, to quality and communication office.
- This is important to attend homepage quality contests.
- To introduce system thinking to homepage information helps deploying data reporting culture.
- The absence of inner electronic student work pages, library electronic access, etc. leads to lessening of brand by RAU by homepage.
- In the case of accreditation in a lot of countries the external auditors can get access for a limited time to inner costumer solution platforms and databases.

3. Arranging facts into information

Facts

- The descriptive character of RAU SER made critical arrangement of data into information and knowledge.
- There are data and information in SER and in depth of homepage.
- There are some sign of data and information arrangement into knowledge.

Statement

- The data system only in some cases organized into data groups.
- Only the science publication was arranged into searchable system.
- The information presentation is only partly contextualized, and only in some cases were subjected to analytical processes.
- The higher education analytical system is missing.

Suggestions for improvement

- RAU has to develop its own information management policy.
- There are good Enterprise Information Management Architectures, it worth consolidating data management system.
- The faculty of informatics have to develop a research group on higher education information services, consumer solutions, information and data management and develop a university scale knowledge management platform.
- In the case of a good university these information services are printing actual reports for the accreditation.



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Agencia Română de
Asigurare a Calității în
Învățământul Superior

The RAU Evaluation Report

PARTENER



CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN
NETWORK OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

I. Institutional responsibility, core values and concepts, beliefs and behaviour in case of RAU

Facts

- 1.1.1. RAU has a valid and renewed foundation document, “University Charta”, and it means it is a legal body of private law and public utility, part of the national system, founded in 1991, accredited in 2002.
- 1.1.2. RAU “The Romanian-American University is a distinct academic community working according to the provisions of the Romanian Constitution of the education legislation of the university Charta, and of other regulations, norms, methodologies, acts, and so on, approved by the Senate of the University and acts autonomously and freely within its own university space, with a budget resulted from its own sources and other sources of income obtained according to the law.” During the sight visit there were no any sign of not respecting the autonomous rights of the university, nor from the part of the president of the foundation, nor from the part of any special persons. Those persons who were present as founding leaders and teachers, didn’t behave unethically. There were no any signs of clientele, and any unhealthy personalization from the owners/stakeholders.
- 1.1.3. RAU value system was connected to liberal values of the higher education in the US, values of private operations: based on efficient organization of activities, tenacious sense of duties, cultivation of labour, self-respect and respects for others, fair competition throughout the entire life, competition with others, and mostly with oneself.
- 1.1.4. The RAU value system are connected as well as to “the rich traditions of the Romanian education which are internationally recognized, and didn’t seek any more easy processes to have get accreditation and validation abroad.
- 1.1.5. Within the context of the university reform and of Romania’s integration process in the European Union, the introduction of the European dimension, matching of the curricula, the compliance with the European standards, promotion of the academic performance criteria internationally recognized, the interuniversity cooperation, academic mobility and the recognition of the studies and diplomas are among the strategic objectives of the Romanian-American University. A very improvement of this Europeanized commitment to attend with high energies in “Qualitas” project.
- 1.1.6. During the sight visit, the deep interview with senior leaders gave facts concerning recent beliefs and behaviour of the leaders:
 - The “American tradition” is strong in management education, and served as the best in global business schools philosophy, so they think of it as a good practice.
 - The “American enterprise tradition” is served well the USA interest, and led to economic and human development, that can be adopted in Europe, too.
 - “The American tradition in education”, based on pragmatic values “Most arguments, false ideas, and logical fallacies can be avoided by following Peirce's three rules: (1) desire to learn); (2) don't be satisfied with what you already believe; and (3) do not block the way of inquiry” were and are very important in post-communist countries. The RAU university leaders are committed to cooperative models of education because it gives students tools for mature (life-long) learning than scholasticism with more subjects prolonging the intellectual childhood.
- 1.1.7. Behaviour of leaders in the case of the RAU senior leaders approved the next facts:
 - They practice, what they preach, they serve as example for managerial community.
 - They had integrity: were acting with honour and truthfulness.
 - They behaved with responsibility, but they have not clear vision of distinguishing the good from the great.

- They worked together with their colleagues.
- They capitalize the strengths of those, who are around them.

Statement

- The RAU is a private university in a non-conventional term, the owner is functioning as a public foundation, and the owners didn't draw any wealth and share from the university assets for personal wealth.
- The RAU is a valuable and responsible institution of Romanian higher education, of the EHEA, and trustworthy mediator in case of representing values of American liberal higher education traditions.

Suggestions for improvement

- The American values are changing – while traditional ones seem to be constant –; so it would be important for the RAU – to discuss new trends in American and global management education, new models and methods of American and European enterprise management and development benchmarking them (may be together with Asian models), and renew this pragmatist education philosophy with new emphasis on understanding standards for global education.¹
- Senior leaders of RAU have to rethink the self-evaluation documentation and making a new inner evaluation system for helping to understand for themselves and for university community what is excellent, what is good in university operation and results. They have to learn to apply different benchmarking models and techniques, and avoid the kind of anecdotic statements like “We are the best private” university, because, the evaluation have to be benchmarked against those standards which they choose for themselves.
- They have to develop strengths of their capacity, rating competencies of leaders as conventional, leaders with strong visions, or leaders with visions and creative capacities.

II. Institutional diversity: Mission, Vision, academic integrity Diversity of mission and objectives is respected and encouraged by ARACIS, profiling universities in EU

Facts

- RAU Mission: “as mission education, learning, scientific research and innovation, promoting the value of science and universal culture in general, and economic and legal sciences particular. (SED p.5.)
- Vision: The University offers education and research at a high level of quality in a stimulating and intellectual environment both for students and faculties.
- The academic integrity is approved by the Code of ethics and professional conduct document, Professional Ethics and Deontology Committee, yearly reports.
- Differentiation: The RAU defined themselves in two disciplines, with 6 bachelor and master programs.
- Profiling the university: Institutional differentiation: RAU is a university with a small range of programs. Because of the changing business school landscape this type of

¹ Mansilla, V. B.–Jackson, A. (2011): Education for Global Competence: Preparing our Youth to Engage the World. Council of State School Offices. Asia society. <http://asiasociety.org/files/book-globalcompetence.pdf>
Bennett, C.–Cornwell, G. H.–Lail, H. J.–Schenk, C. (2014): An Education for the Twenty-First Century: Stewardship of the Global Commons. Trends & Insight for International Education Leaders. http://www.nafsa.org/File/ti_ed_21.pdf

function seems to be narrowing, and causing risks for the university place in global business school industry.

Statements

- The mission & vision explained in self-evaluation document is simpler than on at the homepage.
- The vision is too general and cannot give impulse to students and professor community, and has no information for projected services.
- The university is committed to academic integrity.
- The RAU differentiation is adequate to private institutions in Europe. It has a small range of programs and is not lost in the diversity of programs.
- The university differentiation isn't well elaborated. Profiling universities is a great challenge for national authorities too.

Suggestions for improvement

- For the university leaders it is suggested they rethink their mission: as a private university – called Romanian-American – it may be an orientation to educate for the global community; or as a private university it can have a national mission: lessen the Romanian HE gap contrasting other countries and to the European Community goals; or as an university in the capital, the mission may be serving the local community with helping Bucharest to more globally engaged into the global economy of cities, network of global cities with strong and adapting higher education presence and internationally oriented workforce; with more precise decisions on offered programs according to vision.
- For the university leaders it is suggested they rethink their university vision with more precise determination of the quality of outcomes of programs they award to students, concerning the service quality level and concerning the experiences of students.
- For a better differentiation of the university programs, it may be possible to deal with risks by placing emphasis:
 - on global issues: inclusive economics, sustainability, business quality and innovation or
 - developing new education programs for the most needed skills at a national level, or
 - developing new education programs in new creative industries strongly embedded in business culture.
- Profiling university in European U-Map dimensions:
 - teaching and learning profile: enlarge degree levels with PhD programs, diversify with new programme life-cycle management, with new orientation of teaching, introducing new delivery models, professionalized for firms programs
 - student profile: involving mature, part time and distant learning, LLL students
 - research profile: making accent on practice based and applied research, involving new sources for financing
 - knowledge exchange: developing cooperation for helping start up activities, forming an innovation culture in taught programs, involving the business conference industry, income from knowledge exchange
 - profiling in internationalization orientation,
 - regional engagement: developing new potential student strata, developing work-places in the region, strengthening income sources from the region.

III. The RAU identity by academic autonomy

Facts

- The RAU autonomy provides a good framework decentralized management culture. The authority delegated with accountability to the Senate, to the Board of directors, the School Council, the Department Council.
- The RAU has clear rules for electing governing bodies.
- The student representation is present according the HE Act.
- The Board of Directors is consisting of the rector and vice-rectors, deans, the general administration manager, the student manager.
- There are valid university strategic programs: strategy for 2012-2016, research strategy, quality strategy, internationalization strategy.
- The RAU leader's leadership style is equal to the accepted academic model, but not so rigid. It can be described by walking among the people. It is open and transparent, it is far from timely so highly criticized entrepreneurship ethics said as for common for Romanian private HEIs.
- There are clear evidences of culture of student's involvement.
- There are clear evidences of culture of stakeholder's involvement, and developed good relationship with business communities and potential employers.
- In the case of the RAU management there are clear sign of recruiting employees from the best students. The administrative personal is capable of excellent work by having PhD degrees. There were no clear data concerning developing and mentoring future leaders, except of research project capability development.

Statements

- Senior managers are on the pathway becoming visionary leaders. They developed a good strategic orientation for the university. The strategic program is oriented on midterm programs and combined with yearly level operative plans. The strategic program needs the future orientation, it oriented to keep recent positions in a framework they can handle, but less formed to goals for adapting to new global/European/national environment.
- The Strategy direction: differentiation of the educational offer compared to the main competitors, and creation of poles of excellence is mainly in heads, there are no clear signs of innovation process implementation. 2nd and 3rd points are on the good track, but the 4-8th directions are in weak preparedness. There is a missing strategy for sustainability, risk management and library development, and there are confused conceptions for IT service development.
- The conventional thinking concerning leadership & management, the absence of deep experiences in operationalization of strategic actions, are the main reasons behind the slow agility of the organization, and weak presence of learning culture (letting best and most workable management methods and tools to the seminar rooms is a common illness in case of business schools).
- The leadership style in the case of the RAU leaders is adequate to a private university, it served trust from colleagues, from students and stakeholders.
- Culture of student's involvement is impressive, based on cooperative organizational culture.
- Culture of stakeholder's involvement is well organized but it misses quality culture.
- The functional offices are adequate to the higher education needs. The research office is deployed well the functional strategic tasks, the operationalization is excellent. In the case of the quality office, international office, and economic office the operationalization is formal and conventional, or it is missing as in the case of LLL office and Informatics

Service Office. There are no signs of the integration of different offices activities by any process development, any standard for them, or development some kind of standards for their services instead of formal regulations.

Suggestions for improvement

- There is a high risk of missing special for higher education planning mix culture (long term (15 year), midterm (e.g. 2014-2020), and sort term 3-4 year planning) and dealing with only conventional institutional development one. If the RAU wants to avoid risks coming from pure planning culture, it has to develop a wide range of planning documents for different use: one for accreditation purposes, one for attracting the most possible grants from EU projects, one for adapting to new higher education environment, with different depth of communication for different stakeholder groups.
- The senior leaders are in a different phase of their carrier cycle: making them capable of strategic working culture they need deep knowledge of higher education functional management questions of their responsibility.
 - The rector has to engage well into the HE planning models and techniques, networking and exploring new opportunities.
 - The vice-rector who is responsible for education has to have deep knowledge concerning international program standards, trends in practice model development, new innovation and creative solutions in programme development, programme delivery, brand building.
 - The vice rector for research have to have visions concerning HE research, as a new industry, industry development trends in knowledge economy.
 - The vice rector for costumer services needs a new vision for students engagement and developing them into working services and excellent student perceptions.
- Recent trends in service science models concerning consumer engagements can offer university leaders new understanding of consumers. New models of co-creation & co-productions are important for involvement student's knowledge into education processes. There are high risks with only residential student profile, the new knowledge produced by firms and mediated by mature students is missing, and can push the professor body into too theoretical direction. Service science approach for inventing students social, cultural and physical operant and operand resources may help forming a new identity for the university.
- Culture of stakeholder's involvement can be more mature, if it is combined with quality culture. An excellent organization can treat partners with respect, involving them into planning, cooperating in implementation, measuring satisfaction and do corrections. Culture of stakeholder's involvement can be developed into a new level by making outer faculties and practice programs in key business industries.
- While the RAU leaders all have formal management education, the senior management cannot miss developing future leaders and mentoring them. It is a common practice in HE institutions to develop a research centre on higher education management: to form a group for researching institutional development models, for program competencies and outcomes, a discipline based instruction culture, and so on, combining with attending international higher education management congresses.
- The world of higher education leadership is a closed, historically originated, often autocratic and far from business world's culture. If the RAU leadership is thinking of deepening its commitment to quality culture, it is necessary to be present in national or global leadership experiences in knowledge transfers. They have to be present in different clubs (Roman Business associations, Joint Venture Clubs, Prince of Wales, HRH Princess Margareta, and so on).

- Leadership style of the RAU leaders can be developed by common for excellent organization: leadership by personal examples. The excellent culture needs more theory informed practice culture and knowledge in quality methods and tools, innovation management and emotional leadership matters, using data produced by management processes for better aligning decision making processes.
- In the case of state maintained universities the HE ministry takes responsibility on long term and middle range planning. The private HEIs needs a senior leadership with deep and professional knowledge. It is suggested that the Romanian higher education governance make exceptions from 4-8 yearly limited leadership cycle in the case of private institutions because of the nature of higher education.
- It is suggested that the functional offices develop quality standards for their services by using embedded functional models and solutions and concerning service science approaches for co-creation and student self-service possibilities. The LLL and Informatics need a total reengineering, the former cannot produce added value, the latter can risky and led to great harm without an integrated service vision and poorly designed customer solutions, and can lead to strategic losses.
- In summary, university autonomy and identity is shifting between highly important and less important questions: it would be useful introducing for measuring strategic and operative goals, the so called balanced score card (BSC) system. Strategic culture can be role model oriented, better stewarding resources, green technologies, and contribute to the well-being of the university community with deeper level partnering with stakeholders and students.

IV. Systems perspectives, focus on success creating a sustainable organization

Facts

- The RAU has developed its education programs on traditional academic culture. They are adequate to the national standards.
- The RAU education model is typical to HEIs faculty/school/department model.
- Research at the RAU belongs to traditional fragmented units, to departments.
- Information concerning the RAU research activity is missing facts on the homepage, for results and projects.
- The RAU work system is organized around 5 schools and 6 departments. While schools and departments has participative decision making bodies, the work system seems too be fragmented.
- There are functional offices to help student learning: Department of Quality assurance, Academic research Office, Centre for Career Guidance and counselling, Communication and PR department, Department of Continuous Education and Part time learning, IT&C Department, Research department. Any of them didn't give at homepage any structured information, or miss any information! There is no library access from the homepage to library electronic services!!!
- Church service: Romanian Orthodox Church.

Statements

- RAU programs explained at the homepage presented in a less attractive manner on the homepage, the curricula cannot be read, the mini files only can be open very rarely.
- The presentation of curricula didn't give good visualization for understanding the system.
- Messages are suggesting a good graduation level, but they cannot be read well.

- Work system by homepage presentation didn't align the incorporation of input from students and stakeholders.
- The work-system in the case of all programs is too specialized, there are no systematic thinking in program planning and designing.
- The research system except of deploying strategic aims, and developing new projects is not clearly elaborated. There is no information concerning the Centre for European Studies, there are no people behind Murray Rothbard Centre for Political Economy and Business; the Department of Asian Studies seems more an intercultural club and language centre, than an attractive serious professional network making familiar with business life centre.
- The education and research work system is too fragmented, and only partly can be matched with large master programs.
- The functional offices are working with 1 or maximum 2 persons (international office with 3 persons). Quality office had no professional employees. There is no system when a department, when an office, when a centre is used for representing a functional area.
- Religious services are common at universities, with respect to religious equity, with strict respect of values the religious diversity of its students, staff and community. Single religious orientation are rarely accepted in a liberal education environment, the most common are multi-religious services.

Suggestions for improvement

- The university system is traditional and similar to embedded higher education models. If the RAU wants to become more attractive for students it has to make its programme and research programme system more clear. There is a good practice in the case of Finnish Laurea University of Applied Sciences, or Modul University in Vienna.²
- The university education and programs need more coordinated focus: there are needs research informed education. IT is similar at RAU than in the Copenhagen Business School model, where research and education programs are more coordinated.³ The research side of business schools is mostly weak, nowadays there are new ranking for business schools special performance. As the RAU financial resources are weaker than state sponsored universities, it would be realistic to improve its performance with concentrating on those themes which are present for making a strategic quality for starting with success.
- It is suggested that the university rethink work system based on schools and departments and research centres: While committee system attracts huge administration tasks, it is suggested thinking on reengineering work system into Economics, Law, Informatics faculties: the faculties can cover departments, research centres, or only in case of extended laboratories open or closed, special practice oriented programs as IT or Tourism can be developed into practice oriented schools.

It is suggested the university rethink the functional system concerning different services: Under the Academic Administration office can be inserted the Dep. of Con. ed., IATA Authorized Training Centre, Summer schools. The Quality management department, the Research Office, Communication and PR, International professors???, Microsoft Innovation Centre, can be drawn together as Development Office. Student Service Centre: can be built services of campus facilities, for concentration of HR resources. The inter-

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<https://www.laurea.fi/en/document/Documents/Master%20Programme%20Service%20innovation%20and%20design%20curriculum%20HYA215SJ.pdf>

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<https://www.modul.ac.at/study-programs/bachelor-in-tourism-and-hospitality-management/>

3 <https://www.modul.ac.at/study-programs/bachelor-in-tourism-and-hospitality-management/>