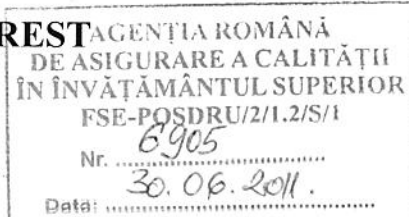


REPORT OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION

of “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST



Foreign expert:

Ph.D.Professor Engineer Peter KUCHAR

University of Applied Sciences, Konstanz, GERMANY

Visit timetable:

May 25th-27th, 2011

Visit scope:

The visit is dealing with institutional evaluation of academic management, through identification and certification of mandatory and normative requirements' fulfillment, concerning the quality of education and scientific research products.

1. Foreword

This herein report refers to activities carried out by the author, in the quality of international expert, in the framework of the process of institutional and external evaluation of “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST, in the period 25th-27th May, 2011, as result of an appeal of The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereof ARACIS).

The evaluation was accomplished at demand made by “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST.

2. Preliminary activities to evaluation mission

Since the date of May 12th, 2011, after officially being named as expert in this project, I was notified by Ms. Ph.D.Associate Professor Iuliana Predescu, in her quality of Scientific Secretary, about the following aspects:

- methodology of the evaluation process;
- composition of the evaluation experts team;
- programs attending upon evaluation;
- visit timetable;

- accessing mode of data from self-evaluation reports of “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST;
- list of contact persons, inclusive those that constitute management of University;
- unfolding plan of evaluation mission.

The author of this report took part, in his quality of international expert, in another six institutional evaluation visits in Romania, namely: Technical University, Cluj-Napoca, “Aurel Vlaicu” University, Arad, “Al.I. Cuza” University, Iași, “ARTIFEX” University, Bucharest, Romanian-American University, Bucharest and “Emanuel” University, Oradea. Also, the author took part, in quality of member of several evaluated institutions, in Germany at the Konstanz University of Applied Sciences and in Switzerland at St. Gallen University of Applied Sciences.

3. Unfolding of evaluation mission

The mission had two primary objectives: institutional evaluation and programs evaluation.

The evaluated programs were: Engineering and Management in Public Food Service, Law and Engineering and Management in Public Food Service and Agrotourism (in Alexandria), all of these being degree programs.

Unfolding of the mission was based on a working schedule prepared in advance, acknowledged by the parties involved in evaluation.

The visit began on May 25th 2011, 2011, around 10 A.M., in the Bureau of the Senate, during a meeting of ARACIS team with university’ management, superintendents of evaluated programs and students’ representatives.

The opening speech was addressed by Mr. Ph.D.Professor Ion Nicolae, President of University, and by Mrs. Ph.D.Professor Floarea Nicolae, Rector of “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST.

After addressing the welcome message, the President of University introduced vice-rectors, as well as the other members of Senate. Furthermore, the Director of institutional evaluation mission, Mrs. Ph.D.Professor Ariton Doinița from “Danubius” University, Galați, as well as Mr. Ph.D.Professor Mățiș Dumitru, mission coordinator, addressed the word. They proceeded to describe in short the evaluation mission and invited every member of ARACIS team to address the word.

After the meeting with University management took place a technical meeting, in which ARACIS team stated the organizational details concerning evaluation visit. Mission coordinator and Scientific Secretary, Ms. Ph.D.Associate Professor Iuliana Predescu, yielded the working materials to team members and put forth recommendations as to evaluation process and activity management. It was underlined the fact each evaluation expert must fill in a visit record and also must draw up a synthetic report.

After technical meeting, the experts left for the faculties the evaluated programs are part of. External institutional commission of ARACIS inspected fulfillment of mandatory normative requirements needed for external institutional evaluation of education quality regarding “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST.

The visit record was filled in on the basis of intelligence, data and documents furnished to Evaluation commission by the contact person at institutional level, Mr. Ph.D.Professor Mihail Mareş, Dean of Faculty of Agrotouristic Management.

The mandatory normative requirements that refer to:

- Judicial status;
- University charter and definite regulations specified through this;
- University management;
- Management structures;
- Didactic personnel;
- Material resources;
- Financial activity;
- Students’ status;
- Research activity.

were checked out through examination of Self-evaluation Report and its annexes, also being verified additional documents requested by evaluation team. Besides, direct conversations with the personnel adjacent to analyzed domains were carried out.

The external institutional commission of ARACIS visited the faculties of University and requested, by sample test, data from contact persons of “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST in order to shape their own independent opinion about material resources (laboratories, course and seminar rooms, reading rooms, libraries, fitness room, dormitories, canteen etc.).

In all cases the accomplished verifications confirmed the character of conformity with mandatory normative requirements.

Likewise in May 25th, 2011, at 5 P.M. the meeting of ARACIS team with students’ representatives of evaluated programs underwent, and at 6:30 P.M. took place the meeting with University graduates. At these meetings fellows of University were not present, so that no suspicion will arise about the freedom of expression granted to students and graduates. The discussions were led with professionalism by the mission’s director, Mrs. Ph.D.Professor Arition Doinița, and by the coordinator of evaluation mission, Mr. Ph.D.Professor Mătiş Dumitru, together with members of evaluating team.

From discussions with students some recommendations arose, regarding:

- Achieving partnerships with European universities, offering to students the possibility of learned foreign languages perfection;

- Possibility of increasing the number of social scholarships.

From debates with graduates emerged the fact they are content with their studies' unfolding, which allowed them to integrate fast in the economic environment.

Evaluation continued in May 26th, 2011, experts completing visit records. Members of external institutional evaluation commission focused on finalizing the checkout of mandatory normative requirements through analysis of *Visit record* and of *Justificatory Annexes*, adjacent to the Visit record (list of didactic personnel working at evaluated institution, Description in detail of didactic framework, Students – listed *per year of study*), content.

From scientific research point of view the following are worthy to be noted:

- Scientific research activity is reflected in publications contained in ANNALS OF “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY, vol. 1-9, publication rated by C.N.C.S.I.S. at D grade, encompassing 1444 pages;
- There are six international scientific conferences organized by “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY or at which teachers participated, with a grand total of fourteen between 1999 and 2010;
- On June 8th, 2010 a contract for services was signed with S.C. ORIGAMI Consulting SRL, its objective being consulting and implementation concerning accession of Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development (POSDRU) – PRIORITY AXIS 1 *Education and professional training in support of economic growth and development of knowledge society DMI 1.2 “Quality in higher education”*;
- Also on June 8th, 2010 a contract for services was signed with S.C. ORIGAMI Consulting SRL, its objective being consulting and implementation concerning accession of Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development (POSDRU) – PRIORITY AXIS 1 *Education and professional training in support of economic growth and development of knowledge society DMI 1.3 “Development of human resources from education and professional training”*;
- Accomplishment of a partnership, on March 23rd, 2011 between “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST and S.C. EURO CAMPUS SRL regarding the following research topic: *“Formation of an infrastructure for the study of innovative methods for conservation, improving and valorization of genetic vegetable patrimony and assessment of agricultural technologies for technical and horticultural plants in the context of climate change”*.

During the second day took place the meeting of evaluation team of ARACIS with employees. They declared, in a large majority, to be satisfied with graduates training, however demanding longer internships.

As in the first day, the discussions were led with skill by the coordinator of evaluation mission, Ph.D.Professor Mătiș Dumitru, together with the other members of the team, including the undersigned, in his quality of foreign expert.

Furthermore, the external institutional commission of ARACIS undertook completion of the second part of the Visit record, regarding performance standards and indexes.

During the third day of the visit, Mission director, Mrs. Ph.D.Professor Arion Doinița led the ARACIS experts' reunion, in which the three experts, evaluators of programs presented how activity took place until then, eventual arisen problems and the manner in which to solve them out.

All materials of programs' evaluation were verified and delivered to the Scientific Secretary of the mission (Visit record with annexes, synthetic report of program evaluation with grade and expert proposed recommendations and also synthetic report of the meeting with graduates).

The external institutional commission of ARACIS analyzed all these materials and finalized completion of the second part of the Visit record, regarding performance standards and indexes.

Mission director coordinated, then, final discussions of R.A.Q.A.H.E. team, from which emerged the conclusion of adequate accomplishment of the evaluation mission' objectives; recommendations were drawn to be addressed to the management of "BIOTERRA" UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST, without mentioning a grade.

4. Assessment

Firstly we say positively "BIOTERRA" UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST, although a young university, is positively reputed amidst the companies its graduates work into. In the same respect the graduates themselves consider they were thoroughly trained for the economic activities they practice.

"BIOTERRA" UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST benefits from material resources (administrative buildings, laboratories efficiently equipped, course and seminar rooms, dormitories, canteen, gymnasium, rented playing fields) of good quality and from a body of highly qualified, both academically and professionally, didactic, research and administrative personnel.

It is worthy of appreciation the use of the most modern means in the process of teaching and learning, such as: multimedia systems, a reading room fitted with four modern computers connected to the Web. Also, students benefit from paid Web access and a reading room with thirty seats.

Besides, this modernity shows itself even if we speak about University's site, www.bioterra.ro, a 'powerful' site fitted with complex and exhaustive data.

Universitatea a încheiat acorduri și înțelegeri cu următoarele universități: Universita degli Studi di Firenze - Italia, Higher Institute For Specific Studies from CAIRO - Egipt .

The University signed agreements and understandings with the following universities: Universita degli Studi di Firenze – Italia and Higher Institute for Specific Studies din CAIRO – Egipt.

And, because university environment is anything but perfect, perfectible, to be more precise, I will point out some recommendations focused on improving activities.

5. Recommendations arisen as a result of evaluation visit

I propose existing relationships with foreign universities to be transformed, as much as possible, into partnerships, by means of firm programs which should contain both students exchange programs and didactic staff exchange programs and, in the same time, to initiate new partnerships with European universities for drafting agreements usable for teaching exchange programs and, moreover, in order to give to students the possibility of experiencing a full-time semester at a partner University to help them improve their use of foreign languages they learned until that point.

Evaluation of the activity of didactic personnel by students can be improved if it ends with a plan of measures intended for rise in quality level of didactic activities, effect projected to be scrutinized by students in the semester that follows – in time – the respective evaluation.

To put an end to my arguments, I want to thank the management of “BIOTERRA” UNIVERSITY, BUCHAREST for its collaboration and openness shown while we worked feverishly at achieving an evaluation in the best circumstances.

Konstanz,

June 6th, 2011

Ph.D.Professor Engineer Peter KUCHAR
University of Applied Sciences, Konstanz, GERMANY