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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
H.Q.A.
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCHOOL OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY
ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI



European Union
European Social Fund



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, CULTURE & SPORTS
MANAGING AUTHORITY

Co-financed by Greece and the European Union



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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the School of History and Archaeology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Jack Davis, Professor, University of Cincinnati, USA (Coordinator)
2. Antoni Mironowicz, Professor, Uniwersytet w Białymstoku, Poland
3. Catherine Morgan, Professor, King's College and BSA Director, UK
4. Vassiliki Panoussi, Associate Professor, College of William and Mary, USA
5. Andreas Nicolaides, Assistant Professor, Université de Provence, France

N.B. *The structure of the "Template" proposed for the External Evaluation Report mirrors the requirements of Law 3374/2005 and corresponds overall to the structure of the Internal Evaluation Report submitted by the Department.*

The length of text in each box is free. Questions included in each box are not exclusive nor should they always be answered separately; they are meant to provide a general outline of matters that should be addressed by the Committee when formulating its comments.

INTRODUCTION

The Committee visited the Department of History and Archaeology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki on Monday, February 3rd Wednesday, February 5th, 2014. Members of the Administration and Faculty briefed us on the various aspects of their program (details follow in the sections below). The members of the committee had the opportunity to meet with the Vice-Rector for academic affairs, the Dean, the President of the Department, members of the Faculty, administrative staff, undergraduate students, and postgraduate Master's (M.A.) and Ph.D. students.

For the purposes of this document, the committee refers to **Τμήμα Ιστορίας και Αρχαιολογίας** as Department and to the **Τομείς** as Divisions.

LIST OF THE REPORTS, DOCUMENTS, AND OTHER DATA EXAMINED BY THE COMMITTEE.

Reports and presentations given to the committee by:

1. the Vice-Rector (**αντιπρύτανης**) for Academic Affairs, Prof. Lialiou;
2. the secretary of the University's Special Account for Research Funds, Georgia Petridou, on research activities at University level;
3. the Dean (**κοσμήτωρ**) of the School of Philosophy, Prof. Papanikolaou;
4. the President of the Department, Prof. Kotsakis, on organization, committees, objectives;
5. the Director of the Division of Archaeology, Prof. Semoglou;

6. the Director of the Division of History of Art, Prof. Kotidis;
7. the Director of the Division of Ancient Greek, Byzantine, and Medieval History, Prof. Nigdelis;
8. the Director of the Division of Modern and Contemporary History, Folklore Studies, and Social Anthropology, Prof. Sfikas;
9. Profs. Paisidou and Valamoti on the program of undergraduate studies, Archaeology and History of Art;
10. Profs. Goutzioukostas and Manta on the program of undergraduate studies, History;
11. the Director of the program of postgraduate studies, Prof. Mourellos;
12. Prof. Stefanidou-Tiveriou on the postgraduate program in Archaeology and History of Art;
13. Prof. Kotzageorgis on the postgraduate program in History;
14. Profs. Andreou and Hasiotis on research activity;
15. Prof. Schmidt-Douna on practicums, and student and faculty mobility;
16. Head secretary, Dr. Chachopoulou, on the Department Secretariat;
17. Prof. Manakidou on academic and public outreach;
18. Prof. Gounaris on the Quality Assurance Unit;
19. the president, Dr. Kotsakis, on conclusions, prospects, and strategies;
20. Prof. Stefanidou-Tiveriou on the Museum of Casts;
21. a presentation on the Libraries was prepared, but the Committee was not able to attend it, due to obstruction from a group of students. Nevertheless, the PowerPoint presentation was made available to the committee by the Department;
22. documents on the Department Profile with Addenda and Corrections;
23. list of publications by the Faculty members;
24. Internal Evaluation Report;
25. Curricula Vitae of all Faculty members;
26. videos on the Department's excavations;

27. audio and visual materials from the outreach project
Μιλούν τα Μνημεία, Μνήμη και ζωή στην πόλη;
28. copies of graded examinations and samples of student papers from a variety of courses and levels of study;
29. tables with the titles of M.A. theses produced in the Department from 2005-2013;
30. tables with the titles of Ph.D. theses produced in the Department from 2005-2013;
31. list of Ph.D. theses in progress.
32. a written statement by the student group
AN.OM.I.A.: «Η εκπαίδευση και η αξιολογητική 'Πανούκλα'»;

The Committee was greeted warmly by the Vice-Rector and the Dean, and was able to meet with all members of the Department and discuss formally and informally every aspect of the curriculum, research program, administration, and student life. We were free to ask any questions we had and we were always given detailed and frank answers and assessments. We also met with a group of postgraduate (M.A.) students attending a seminar on Social Anthropology and asked them questions about their background and experiences. We visited the offices of the Secretariat and met with the head secretary and other staff members. At the end of our site visit, there was a closing reception, where we were able to discuss matters pertaining to the evaluation with all the members of the Department in a more informal setting.

While visiting the facilities on campus, a particular group of students refused to let the External Evaluation Committee or the Department members perform our work on site. On the second day of our visit, Tuesday, February 4th, they blocked the Committee from entering the Departmental facilities. The President of the Department arranged for us to meet at the Archaeological Museum meeting room, where the Department members attended enthusiastically and in great numbers, showing their warm support for this process. The atmosphere of collegiality and cooperation was impressive. Unfortunately, in the middle of Prof. Nigdelis' presentation, the same group of students that had blocked our entry to the campus building interrupted the proceedings in a manner that was brazen and disrespectful toward both their professors and the evaluation committee members. They forced the President of the Department to seek an alternative venue for the presentations, which caused him considerable difficulty and anxiety. President Kotsakis was able to

secure another meeting venue, at the offices of ELKE, where we were able to attend the remaining presentations scheduled for that day. On the third day of our visit, Wednesday, February 5th, President Kotsakis arranged for us to meet at yet another venue in order for the presentations to continue without interruptions.

In the afternoon, we were finally able to visit the Department's facilities. We visited a classroom, the Museum of Folklore, the Library of Folklore Studies, the Museum of Casts, and Prof. Kotsakis' laboratory, where we also talked to postgraduate students working on research projects for their Ph.D. theses. While we were at the Museum of Casts, the same group of disruptive students once again tried very hard to obstruct our work. Prof. Stefanidou-Tiveriou gave her presentation of the Museum and its use for teaching and research over a cacophony of shouts from this student group and the occasional banging on the museum walls and doors. The group eventually entered the museum and proclaimed their opposition to the evaluation process. We should note that the Department had prepared a presentation about its libraries, which we were never able to attend because of this group of students' obstructionist tactics. There were also three post-graduate seminars taking place, one in History, one in Anthropology, and one in Archaeology where we would have had the opportunity to meet with students but we were able, as mentioned above, to meet only with the Anthropology seminar students, again due to the difficulties presented by this student group. It is a shame that other students were denied an opportunity to share with us their point of view regarding their education in the Department.

The Department has provided the Committee with a plethora of data, statistics, and narratives that helped us understand and evaluate every aspect of their curriculum, research, administration, excavations, and other activities pertaining to their academic mission. The documents were of very high quality: carefully prepared, very detailed, and most useful to our work. The members of the Department encouraged us to ask questions, assured us that we could contact them any time with further questions and clarifications, and were sincere in their answers and assessments. There is no doubt that they have embraced the process whole-heartedly in a spirit of constructive self-criticism and are convinced of its value and importance for the success of their academic mission. The internal report showcased the Department's strengths but also pointed out weaknesses, and proposed steps for action. We believe that the Department has

fully met the objectives of the internal evaluation as a tool for assessment, self-reflection, and opportunity for strategic planning and further action.

A. CURRICULUM

APPROACH

The **Undergraduate** curriculum aims to deliver a broad range of fundamental knowledge (including that acquired via practice), emphasizing the training of practitioners in archaeology, art history, and history. Accordingly, it is weighted towards compulsory courses, initially introductory in nature across a broad spectrum, progressing to specialised seminars separating History from Archaeology and History of Art (AHA), and then with optional courses allowing a degree of specialization in the final stages of the program. The breadth of teaching (chronological, theoretical and methodological) is notable by international standards, as is the fact that staff members teach solely within their primary field of expertise. Recognising that archaeology is inherently multidisciplinary, students are exposed to a wide range of subjects, materials and approaches, from bio-archaeology to art history. Exposure to primary material and the acquisition of practical experience are encouraged. Accordingly, the School has made long-term investment in archaeological fieldwork, archaeological and historical collections, and in the creation of a network of primarily local partnerships, creating research resources of international importance which are exploited in the delivery of the curriculum.

The **taught postgraduate (M.A.)** programs in AHA and History have a common aim to produce independent and critically aware researchers, capable of progressing to doctoral research in history, archaeology, or art history. They combine roles in providing training in research methods, serving as conversion courses for graduates in cognate disciplines, and developing specialist research interests. Accordingly, the curriculum focuses initially on taught courses selected to balance research methods with subject and period interests. The dissertation forms the second half of the program. Emphasis is placed on the development of technical skills and the use of primary materials, with pervasive use of the collections and research projects of the university and its partners (archaeological dissertations are conventionally based on unpublished excavation material). Pathways through the two programs allow period and subject specialization. While the history program has particular strengths in

regional history (broadly conceived, hence specialisation in Balkan and Ottoman history), it is open to world history (notably via modern colonial and diaspora history).

The **doctoral** program trains researchers of the highest promise to produce original research of international excellence. The program aims to connect research with contemporary social challenges: thus in archaeology, emphasis was placed on the multivariate role of heritage in Greek society. While focused on the individual, supervised research thesis, the program also allows doctoral candidates to attend M.A. taught courses as needed, to study abroad, and to pursue internships and other practical placements. Archaeology Ph.D.s are often developed in relation to the Department's major excavation projects, thus maximising the return on investment in research infrastructure.

Objectives for **all three levels** are formally defined by decision of the General Staff meeting after deliberation by the Boards of Undergraduate Studies and Postgraduate Studies respectively. Decisions are minuted and widely publicised and the process appears transparent. Objectives are informed principally by the collective professional judgement of the academic staff, in turn informed by exposure to best practice and a range of national and international standards through individual and collective Departmental activities (e.g., participation in international research and training networks), and by the harmonization needed to facilitate student mobility. Furthermore, the large number of Departmental graduates in leading professional positions in the Ministry of Culture and related organizations both regionally and nationally, yields a ready community of stakeholders in regular formal and informal contact with Department members. The evaluators observed a process of ongoing critique informed by close awareness of the contemporary research and professional landscapes. However, this approach is effective because of the academic excellence of the ΔΕΠ and the strength and depth of their national and international research and teaching: this is a vicious circle which could easily be broken by the appointment of less active staff or curtailment of their international activities (e.g. by inadequate funding).

The current **undergraduate** curriculum is consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and social requirements. Nonetheless, the Department has identified several areas for improvement, which were set out in detail to

satisfaction of the evaluators. These principally concern program structure rather than content, as the Department has demonstrated innovation in the scope and content of individual courses over many years, notably with the addition of new scientific subjects in archaeology and the development of social anthropology. The latest addition to the AHA curriculum is a course that combines archaeological illustration with fieldwork in excavations. Structural problems include limited access to specialist subjects, limited communication between AHA and History, and poor integration of Latin and Ancient Greek (or other key languages) into the relevant parts of the curriculum. The last also reflects pressures upon the Philology Department - an example of the current difficulty experienced in relying upon course provision from other Departments. The adverse impact of inadequate infrastructure upon the viability of seminars critical to the current curriculum structure is noted below. The Department has seized the opportunity to make a wholesale review of the curriculum and presented a new, simpler scheme to the evaluators, which effectively addressed these issues.

The **taught postgraduate (M.A.)** and **doctoral** curricula are both consistent with the objectives of the curriculum and social requirements. No change is necessary: both evidently attract excellent candidates from outside the Department and university.

An important qualification to this response concerns the definition of 'social requirements.' Historically, legislation on the recognition of degrees for public sector employment has had a strong impact on the nature and content of degree programs such as those taught in the Department. The Department's success in meeting public sector requirements is evident in the high rate of employment of its graduates in the Ministry of Culture. We hope that the strong co-operation between the AUTH and the Ministry continues to be a profitable resource for both. However, especially in the fields of archaeology and art history, the Department is eager and well-equipped to extend its undergraduate and postgraduate programs to match more exactly emerging needs in the wider heritage sector. This is sound strategic planning to tap the capacity of wider resources in Thessaloniki, keep the university at the forefront internationally, and attract income from postgraduate fees. We therefore conclude that at present, legal constraints inhibit the Department's desire to develop forward looking and attractive enhancements to the current curricula which would provide for future national employments needs, meet

the aspirations of a significant group of Greek students currently forced to study abroad, and attract international applications.

The curricula for **all three levels** are formally decided upon by the General Staff meeting after deliberation by the Boards of Undergraduate Studies and Postgraduate Studies, respectively. Revision of the undergraduate curriculum has been taken forward by a special working group drawn from across the Department. Responses to the online student survey conducted via MOΔIII has informed the work of that group.

IMPLEMENTATION

The **undergraduate, taught postgraduate (M.A.)** and **doctoral** curricula already deliver the Department's goal of academic excellence, and will do so even more effectively with the proposed reform of the undergraduate curriculum. The Department has an ambitious vision to remain at the forefront of research and methodological innovation in Greece and internationally, to exploit to the full the possibilities for collaborations within Thessaloniki, and to embed its broad regional expertise within wider international frameworks. Courses recently developed in all Divisions further these aims: highly innovative undergraduate and M.A. teaching in Modern Greek, Balkan and Ottoman history is indicative, as is a new proposal to develop Jewish history. The desired innovations in cultural heritage noted above are important to the long-term aims of the divisions of Archaeology and History of Art. The Department is aware that there is currently no mechanism for tracing the subsequent careers of its graduates, but this is a desideratum at university level to enhance currently well-informed but subjective assessments of the job market and ensure continuing good fit between the market and curriculum structure and content - it would not be an effective step to take in isolation.

The **undergraduate, taught postgraduate (M.A.)**, and **doctoral** curricula compare favourably with universally accepted standards. In the context of a program with a primarily southeast European focus, the breadth and depth of the curricula are distinctive by international standards and the intellectual resources available to students (i.e., staff expertise, range of practical opportunities, access to research collections, and network of partner institutions) outstanding. All curricula are rationally structured and clearly

articulated. The Department has taken the view that the structure of the undergraduate curriculum could be improved for greater coherence and more effective functioning, and has acted upon this with a series of robust new proposals.

Courses at undergraduate and M.A. level in both AHA and History were presented to the evaluators with examples of the source material set, the timetable, and student essays and dissertations. The material was well chosen in terms of its scope, range of materials and media, the conceptual challenges presented, and its accessibility (noting extensive use of rich local collections and online resources to supplement libraries under financial threat and with limited seating capacity). The time offered is sufficient in each case.

The entire academic staff is expertly qualified to deliver the curricula at all levels (**undergraduate, taught postgraduate and doctoral**). A cause for concern is the skewed age profile (largely created by placements during the previous decades), and the resulting impact of impending retirements upon the viability of particular subject areas in which there is clear evidence of strong student demand at all levels. Classical Archaeology and History of Art are affected: with normal retirements there will be no art historian on the academic staff by 2016. The Department sees these challenges as an opportunity to rethink the coverage and delivery of certain subjects (it is, for example, likely that an expert on modern art could also strengthen the teaching of art theory across the Divisions). However, it is hampered by the current severe restrictions on hiring and a lack of the flexibility required to strategically distribute new positions according to overall needs as retirements occur.

The situation with support staff is unsatisfactory. There is a lack of trained technical personnel to support practical classes, and only one IT support officer to service the needs of the eight Departments in the **Φιλοσοφική Σχολή**. A further resource issue impacting on the design and delivery of the undergraduate curriculum in particular concerns teaching space, especially for seminars. Compulsory seminar teaching at the higher introductory level, where class sizes are capped, creates a bottleneck in the program and makes it difficult for students to progress in a timely manner. Space was among the largest single concerns expressed to us: in so far as we were able to judge, having been prevented from inspecting the entire Department by student protest, it

is indeed a pressing concern. The point was forcibly made that rather than disrupting the evaluation, the more effective student protest would be for all active students to attempt to attend the classes for which they were registered.

Of all the Department's programs, the **taught postgraduate (M.A.)** has been most severely hit by budget cuts (no allocation was made in 2012, and a notional € 3764 in 2013). This program requires independent resources: it has continued to function well chiefly through the commitment of academic staff. Discussion with M.A. students (including new arrivals in the Department) revealed satisfaction with the program, intellectual stimulation, and strong personal appreciation of the academic staff, but recognition that staff were thinly spread.

Doctoral research: the current legal limitation of the number of doctoral candidates to five per supervisor was presented as a brake upon Departmental delivery. While the purpose of a global restriction is clear, flexibility to set a transparent policy at institutional level would allow full use of the capacity of individual Departments while preserving the good intent of the current law. The longer average duration of a Ph.D. in archaeology and history in comparison with the hard sciences, and the greater variation in the nature and intensity of supervision required at different stages of research, can make it possible to manage a slightly larger load effectively.

RESULTS

Implementation of the curricula at all three levels already achieves the Department's predefined goals and objectives. Performance in this respect will be significantly improved by the reform of the undergraduate curriculum. The Department's history of innovation in course scope and content, and the way in which it has identified and moved to solve problems in the undergraduate curriculum structure, confirm that a strong, coherent, reflective and critical team is involved in designing and supporting the programs. The Department demonstrated a strong understanding of its achievements, weaknesses and the remedial action needed. It is also paying close attention to the results of the student survey, with a thorough and thoughtful analysis presented by the Departmental representative on MOΔIII. We would have welcomed the opportunity to hear more student views

on these issues, but were prevented from attending planned meetings by the intervention of a tiny minority.

In so far as it is within the power of the Department to address problems, it has taken action to do so. However, two further areas of concern, beyond its control, should be noted. The first is the threat to the implementation of curriculum reform posed by a minority of students resistant to any change. This is one area where the disproportionately powerful voice given to students in matters of governance and academic policy could prove extremely damaging in the long term. The Department is clearly working to convince students of their role in the process, via the student survey, in shaping teaching design and delivery, but the minority concerned is, on the evidence of the disruption encountered during the evaluation, liable to seize any opportunity to block reform.

A second problem repeatedly drawn to the attention of the evaluators is the negative impact of large numbers of transfer students attracted by Thessaloniki as a center in inflating program size. This is a major factor behind the number of non-participating students. The Department is working to motivate and retain all students and to acknowledge their achievements outside examination grades. There is, however, the larger question of the extreme difficulty of sensitive and effective curriculum design and constant self-appraisal when key factors such as recruitment are fast changing, fluid, and beyond the control of the Department.

The question of improvements has been fully addressed above.

B. TEACHING

The teaching program of the Department is exceptionally large, with a teaching staff of 44 professors offering a rich array of 46 courses for the undergraduate Πτυχίο (9 of which are optional courses). From the extended and rich postgraduate catalogue presented, only 2 courses and 20 ECTS are optional. It should be added that free textbooks - corresponding to each historical period - are offered to the students. By law, neither registration fees nor postgraduate fees are paid to the University.

The evaluators regret that the protest of a few students made it impossible to meet and have a proper dialogue with undergraduate and postgraduate students, except with

a small group of students (about 10) participating in a postgraduate social anthropology seminar. The small group of dissenting students violently protested and made demonstrations against the external evaluation of the Department, calling the process "illegal" and a "plague," paraphrasing Albert Camus (sic). This created a serious disturbance to the evaluation process and embarrassment to the teaching staff.

APPROACH

The pedagogic policy is clearly defined, with introductory courses followed by more specialized ones during the eight semesters of the preparation for the undergraduate degree. The main area where subject coverage could be improved is the enhancement of the teaching of methodological approaches. This was drawn to our attention by the President and it is being addressed.

Teaching methods: Main lecture courses and seminars are based on the use of very rich digital presentations with PowerPoint; educational visits to archaeological sites, monuments, field excavations and museums in Thessaloniki, and in the hinterland or in other regions in Greece.

Teaching staff / student ratio: A considerable amount of professors (44) of many specialties teaches lecture courses and seminars. It should be noted that an important percentage of teachers is scheduled to retire in the next 3 years. More dramatic appears to be the situation in the Division of the History of Art. Both remaining professors in this division will retire by 2016, with the result that there will be no staff to teach History of Art courses.

Teacher / student collaboration: In general the teaching staff team display obvious enthusiasm for sharing their knowledge with the student community. The statistics reveal a close and attentive collaboration between teachers and students.

Adequacy of means and resources: There are several rare, valuable, and very useful resources in the Department, such as a Museum of Casts, a Folklore Museum with an associated library, an Art Gallery, as well as a very small archaeological laboratory located in the basement of the historic building of the campus. This laboratory was created thanks to the efforts of the archaeology professors and with very little money from the institution. It is also noteworthy that the very low budget (€ 9123 for 2012) for the acquisition of library

books is inadequate for an EU University Library, while in the case of online resources, we mention as an example that access to the holdings of the major bibliographical database JSTOR is often limited to titles without full text access, while electronic subscriptions have been reduced by 20%. More data was not available because the two librarians responsible for periodicals were let go ten days ago. Similarly, library staff are limited to 1 specialized librarian and 2 others who lack such a specialist diploma.

Use of information technologies: A University system for student evaluation of course and teachers and a general statistic system QAU is quite well organized, constructed, and implemented, and it functions well. However, the technical staff consists of only one technician for the eight departments in the Φιλοσοφική Σχολή! Obviously this is an absurd and unacceptable situation. The same can be said regarding the lack of adequate technology to support the creation of specific teaching units, for instance on statistics or new technologies as applied to archaeology, art history, and history. The Blackboard system is used successfully by students, both those regularly attending class and those not regularly attending.

Examination system: The examination system tests the knowledge and skills of students in an adequate way so as to ensure a learning outcome of high quality.

IMPLEMENTATION

Quality of teaching procedures: The teaching procedures, the qualified teaching staff, the Department's resources (e.g., the Museum of Casts) and the cultural offerings of the city of Thessaloniki and its vicinity (archaeological and art history institutions and archaeological sites, monuments, and Byzantine churches) have the potential to make the Department exceptional in the Balkans and the greater geographical area. It is held back due to the lack of funding and diminishing financial support, the reduction of administrative staff, and the restrictions on hiring toward replacing the retired teaching staff members.

Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources: Despite the fact that the teaching staff is dynamic, passionate, and highly qualified, teaching materials and resources, due to the severe lack of funding described above, are aging (particularly classrooms, auditoriums,

and libraries), and need to be renovated and / or restructured. For instance:

- The numerous libraries could be unified as one central library or combined into two main libraries: one for undergraduate studies and another for research postgraduate and doctoral studies; new spaces for teaching could be then created from the space that would be freed up;
- The small archaeological research laboratory (see above) needs to be relocated into a more spacious facility, and one that is more secure than the present building. If that were done, it would become a more effective resource both for teaching and research and would be more nearly proportionate to the needs of the large number of students in the Department.

Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?:

The teaching staff of the Department uses effectively a digitized system of teaching and presentation of course materials. The Blackboard system is undoubtedly of value to the academic staff and to students. Although, what it is more problematic and not up-to-date are other rare resources controlled by, or allocated to the Department by the University: e.g., seriously outmoded library spaces with dramatically poor budgets for acquisitions.

Linking of research with teaching: All members of the teaching personnel are involved in archaeological, art historical, and historical research that obviously contributes to the quality of their teaching.

Mobility of academic staff and students: There is a rich network that may potentially promote mobility of academic staff and students. Within the framework of the Erasmus exchange program alone, there are 76 agreements, and in addition there exists Campus Europae and 45 bilateral agreements. One should also mention here possibilities that the students have to participate in practicums in archaeological and cultural institutions (Museums and Ephorates) in Thessaloniki and its vicinity. However, the very low budget contribution for the mobility for both academic staff and for students decreases the motivation for mobility. It is undeniable that mobility programs allow faculty to make their expertise more broadly known to the international and, particularly, the European academic community. Although the Department would like to take greater advantage of these mobility opportunities, we fully understand that serious financial constraints

prohibit them from engaging in such activities to the degree they would desire.

Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching (b) the course content and study material / resources: The procedure is effective through the QAU statistic system of AUTh, in spite of the fact that student participation is very low (less than 10%). The Department would certainly like to see this rate improve.

RESULTS

Efficacy of teaching: There is nothing substantial to note in this regard. As one component in the rich academic offerings of the Department, highly effective modern technology has been adopted, and students also have access to external practicums. Digitized courses supplemented by PowerPoint are also presented on the digital platform Blackboard. Opportunities to participate in archaeological fieldwork and in external cultural and archaeological institutions enrich the teaching program.

Discrepancies in the success / failure percentage between courses and how they are justified: The mechanisms for calculation of success are in place, but at this stage insufficient data have been collected to allow robust conclusions: a subjective assessment does not indicate the existence of any significant problem. What statistics currently exist were presented to the committee.

Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades. Does the Department understand the reasons of such positive or negative results?

See above.

IMPROVEMENT

Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?: The substantial efforts of the Department toward the improvement of teaching methods have to be emphasized here, since they have occurred in spite of dramatic cuts in the budget in all areas (e.g., library

acquisitions; information technology, and support for fieldwork).

What initiatives does the Department take in this direction?: One must applaud the heroic efforts made by the academic staff, as well as by the administrative staff, despite the dignity and modesty with which the Department offered its presentations to the evaluation committee. But we cannot see how spectacular results, even major improvements, can be either anticipated or obtained without substantial increases in funding.

C. RESEARCH

APPROACH.

What is the Department's policy and main objective in research?: The Department supports and encourages research to the best of its ability and in accordance with a desire to attain high standards comparable to expectations at peer international research universities. Members of the faculty are not only productive, but produce results that are significant, both at a regional and national level. In many instances these deserve higher recognition from international audiences than they currently are receiving. The Department of History and Archaeology at the Aristotle University is world-class, but this fact is not internationally so widely recognized as it deserves to be.

Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?: The Department has demonstrated its productivity statistically by calculating the number of books, papers, videos, and other public disseminations that its faculty has produced. These are numerically significant, but it is in the end their high quality that is most impressive.

IMPLEMENTATION.

How does the Department promote and support research?: The Department strongly encourages its members to organize research programs, and to take full advantage of opportunities to participate in collaborative research projects within frameworks established by the European Union and other international consortia. It recognizes that such projects not only contribute to the reputation of its members and more generally the university, but also benefit students by allowing them, both as

undergraduates and graduates, to participate in research projects. Thus, in many instances, they take first steps toward becoming researchers in their own right.

Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support?: Some resources available to the department in support of its research are truly amazing from the standpoint of scholars based outside of Greece, as most of us are. Among these are its access to a broad range of archaeological sites in Northern Greece, most of which have been associated for decades with the archaeology program of the Department; its special collections, such as its gallery of modern paintings; its cast collection; and its ethnographic, photographic, and historical archives. All of these resources are riches to be mined by faculty and by postgraduate students for research projects.

But in many other regards the research facilities available to the Department are disappointing. Perhaps in no area is this more obvious than in the field of Archaeology, where there is a lamentable need for more space dedicated to research. (This is also true in the case of History of Art, where no adequate facility for display of its art collections is at present available.) We were, for example, able to visit one laboratory devoted to archaeological excavations at Paliambela, where a dozen postgraduate and other researchers have necessarily been crammed into a crowded space along with archival records of the project.

The lack of any dedicated space for archaeological archives also is an obvious need in support of research. Nearly a century of archaeological research at the Aristotle University at dozens of archaeological sites demands that records of inactive projects be consolidated in a single facility and managed in a consistent manner. The lack of any such system will limit the value and research potential of past excavations for further research by scholars both inside and outside the University.

Expansion of archaeological facilities and steps toward unification of storage, both of paper records and artifacts, would also increase greatly the positive impact of research on the teaching program of the Department at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Ideally these would be adjacent to seminar rooms of adequate size.

Teaching and supervisory expectations of faculty members are substantial, especially for archaeologists who are currently managing field projects and who are in addition expected to publish the results of their research in a prompt manner. Archaeologists at present are teaching at least two three-hour courses per week; several teach more. Prehistorians, for example, teach 9-12 extra hours because of their participation in the Department's introductory course. Several members of the History program teach additional hours because of the need to offer additional seminars to students because of limits on class size. *Archaeologists who direct field projects do not receive any teaching credit for the instructional duties that they perform in summers.* In addition, Greek law requires that all faculty members spend at least 14 hours per week devoted to other academic or administrative matters spread over at least three days per week.

Such duties leave remarkably little time to publish the results of excavations, and until recently the Department has lacked any infrastructure in support of the preparation of excavation reports. Getting such books to the press is an uphill battle for researchers, and the unavailability of financial subsidies continues to limit their production.

It should also be obvious that today's international research universities demand access to electronic research facilities comparable to those available to their colleagues at peer universities. This is sadly no longer the case at AUTH. Access to JSTOR has been reduced to the extent that faculty in the department may no longer download full-text articles from leading journals such as *Antiquity*, the number one ranked archaeological journal in the world in terms of its circulation. More generally access to electronic publications has recently decreased.

Finally we mention the absence in Greece of any national funding body to which researchers may turn for the long-term and consistent support required to finance long-term research projects. Private foundations within Greece often lack objective criteria for funding, and are in the current crisis operating with greatly reduced budgets.

Scientific publications, research collaborations

Despite all of the impediments to research that we have mentioned, the results of the research program of the Department are genuinely impressive. In the five-year

period embraced by its internal review, the Department has been involved in 134 Competitively Funded Research Projects. It maintains 13 field excavations and its researchers exploit historical archives throughout Europe and North America. The Department has enjoyed collaborative research projects with some sixty institutions in some twenty countries in Europe, the Near East, North America, and in Australia. And we need hardly mention the dozens of other collaborations that it has initiated with both private and public institutions in Greece itself. All of these collaborations have contributed to an impressive research profile for the department and its high reputation outside of Thessaloniki and Greece. Furthermore, as one might expect in a faculty so diverse in its interests as this one, topics of research are sweeping both in chronological range and in their particular focus – ranging from earliest prehistory to recent history, and from more conventional political history to social and economic history, art history, and anthropology.

RESULTS

How successful were the Department's research objectives implemented?: The research programs of the department are of intrinsic value to scholars of Greece, but also have considerable relevance to modern Greece, indeed modern European society. In short, this is valuable research, the results of which deserve to be broadly disseminated.

Scientific publications, research collaborations

See above under IMPLEMENTATION.

Efficacy of research work. Applied results. Patents, etc.: The Department realizes the need for its research to be of significance, not only to scholars, but to broader audiences, hence its focus on developing programs such as Public Archaeology or ones that explore relationships between ancient and modern art. Efforts such as these help to break down the walls of the academy and, ultimately, to demonstrate to taxpayers of the country the value of what is being accomplished in the University and its impact in their own lives. In all of these efforts we applaud the Department for a continued commitment to innovation that has established it as a recognized international center of excellence in research.

Is the Department's research acknowledged and visible outside the Department?: Certainly the research of the Department is highly visible within Greece. Publications

of the Department such as *Egnatia* and *AEMTH* have a good circulation within this country, and also reach major research libraries outside Greece. These publications have long established the Department's role as a leader not only in research in Northern Greece, but more generally in the Balkans, and they deserve to be made more broadly available to international researchers. *AEMTH* is, in fact, the source of record for archaeological fieldwork in Northern Greece.

IMPROVEMENTS.

Improvements in research proposed by the Department, if necessary: One obvious means to improve the research profile of the Department is through digitization and dissemination of its publications to a wider audience. A related matter is the extent to which much of the published research of faculty in the department has been, and continues to be, published only in Greek. However understandable this may be, the fact is that publication only in Greek limits greatly the visibility of the important research being published by members of the Department.

Initiatives in this direction: The department understands that one solution to this problem may be to think more about presenting the results of its research to multiple audiences in different languages and venues. For example, shorter review articles in a western European peer-reviewed journal can be used as a "front end" to lead readers and researchers to more detailed reports published in Greek, or even only on deposit in archives at the university or hung as .pdf files on web sites.

A further area that may help to improve visibility of the research program of the Department involves the departmental web site. The site is now relatively easy to navigate and one can find there without much effort a list of faculty and a cv for each. There is room for further development of the web site, since the nature of the cv varies considerably from that of one member of the department to another, and it would be useful to include in all instances full lists of publications and (if not precluded by copyright issues) downloadable .pdf files of published articles (since many are extremely hard to find outside of Greece).

D. ALL OTHER SERVICES for each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate levels, if necessary

APPROACH

How does the Department view the various services provided to the members of the academic community (teaching staff, students)?: The administrative infrastructure provides adequate services to students and faculty. Communication between the Departmental secretary, staff and students appears excellent. Support offered to the Department by the University administrative units could be improved.

At the graduate level, and, most importantly, at Ph.D. level, students are in regular contact with their advisors. This facilitates and expedites focused academic activities and promotes an atmosphere of collaboration as evidenced by the excellent dissertation work shown to the evaluators, as well as awards, attendance at scientific conferences, publications, and other similar academic activities and indicators of esteem.

Does the Department have a policy to simplify administrative procedures? Are most procedures processed electronically?: The Department has taken significant and pioneering initiatives to maintain and improve its online infrastructure in support of administrative services. From a position of having almost no online records five years ago, it was able to generate an impressive range of reports and statistics from fundamental student and staff data to support the evaluation. This indicates fast, substantive progress. The Department and its leadership are striving to simplify and optimize administrative procedures in order to facilitate and promote student and faculty/staff participation in the Department and in general Campus academic and cultural activities. There is adequate provision for internet access, Library databases, and other electronic resources, student counseling to undergraduates, and other cultural activities: technical support is, however inadequate (as indicated at several other points in this report).

Does the Department have a policy to increase student presence on Campus?: Attendance of classes is formally obligatory. However, the shortage of teaching rooms of adequate size means that it is impossible to seat all students actively taking courses or to timetable repeat classes. If the University could allocate more classrooms in the main campus, that would remove an important obstacle to attendance and draw more students onto campus. In the meantime, the Department is making constructive use of Blackboard to ensure that students keep up with

their courses and remain in contact with professors. The Department issues a Diploma Supplement to acknowledge skills acquired by students beyond examination grades: this too may be an incentive for students to participate. Further, we note the detailed analysis of data from the recently implemented online student survey presented to us as evidence of Departmental concern to exploit all sources of data to understand patterns of student behavior.

The Department strives to improve student presence on campus through a series of academic and cultural activities, such as practical classes and volunteer participation in outreach programs (e.g., Sundays on Campus). It also promotes and encourages cordial and collegial relationships between student groups and between students and faculty members.

IMPLEMENTATION

Organization and infrastructure of the Department's administration (e.g., Secretariat of the Department): The Department's administration comprises the Departmental Secretariat, Secretaries of Divisions, and specialist support staff in the libraries, collections, and museums. The Office of the Secretary includes the Chief Secretary and five staff members, and serves 2249 undergraduate students, 185 postgraduate (M.A.) students, 172 Ph.D. candidates and the teaching staff. The Office performs the following services:

- undertaking legal responsibility for administrative transactions according to Greek law;
- communication with other Schools, university administrative services, state and other public bodies;
- management of the Department budget;
- processing of incoming correspondence and documents, and assigning Protocol numbers;
- enrollment of incoming and transfer students at all levels (including Erasmus students);
- tracking of student enrollment, progress, and completion of requirements for graduation;
- recording of class enrollments and examination grades;
- coordination of the issuing of student IDs;
- providing certification of completion of studies (with ECTS credits) and Supplementary Diplomas;
- issue of Student Transcripts;

- oversight of textbook ordering through the EVDOXOS system;
- assistance to the central administration in recognition of foreign degrees;
- production of the Departmental *Study Guide*;
- scheduling of courses and examinations;
- management of scholarship awards and student housing subsidies;
- provision of data to the Statistical Service of the State.

Despite this heavy workload, the academic staff and students praised the quality of service provided by the Secretariat to the evaluators. At our meeting with the Chief Secretary, we were impressed by the quality of personal service she was committed to deliver. Scheduled contact hours with the public (one hour daily) are very limited, but in reality the Office makes an effort to serve those who come at other times and responds throughout the day to telephone calls and emails.

Form and function of academic services and infrastructure for students (e.g. library, PCs and free internet access, student counseling, athletic and cultural activity, etc.): The operation of the Departmental services and the working hours of the Library are satisfactory.

The four libraries solely within the control of the Department are served by one trained librarian and three other staff members. All of these libraries give access to interlibrary loans within and outside Greece. The libraries serve the intermittent needs of students in regular semester courses as well as meeting the intensive resource demands of seniors required to prepare larger seminar papers. A reduction in electronic resources from 2010 onwards has deprived these research libraries of assets of incalculable value (which both add to the body of accessible material and enable the limited number of reader spaces in the libraries to be used effectively for those who need to conduct intensive research *in situ*). Similarly, the great reduction in funds allocated for the purchase of books undermines the long-term prospects for the library facilities of the Department.

The Department has made successful and creative use of Blackboard to support students both attending and not attending classes in person. The Department does not have a computer laboratory: there is a 40-computer unit common to the Philosophical School which is mostly used for

teaching, plus provision in the university library and within the library of the Philosophy Department where the students may work individually. These facilities alone are insufficient to meet the needs of all students in the Department.

Counseling and student support at Departmental level consists largely of practical advice from the secretaries, although there is a system of academic advisors drawn from the academic staff in place. The Departmental website contains much practical information for students. The personal commitment of academic and administrative staff to supporting students was noteworthy.

RESULTS

Are administrative and other services adequate and functional? How does the Department view the particular results?: Administrative services are functional but under severe pressure. Department members showed strong support for their administrative colleagues, and the extent of their reliance upon them was plain to the evaluators. The Chief Secretary and at least one other staff member acted swiftly and effectively to procure several alternative meeting venues for the committee at very short notice, when access to the prepared venues was blocked by student protesters. We should, however, reiterate that this workload is not sustainable by such a small group of people.

IMPROVEMENTS

Has the Department identified ways and methods to improve the services provided?: In order to improve and enhance administrative services the Department must be supported by the University's Administration. Administrative staff development, appraisals, and feedback mechanisms could be considered for the improvement of staff morale and productivity. Creating a central university registry may help ease some of the workload, especially in matters such as enrollment, graduation requirements, and the issuing of degrees and student transcripts. Digitization of the recording of grades is absolutely necessary and will help ease some of the Departmental office workload. There is a pressing need for a larger and stable administrative staff and, ideally, increased e-governing. We draw attention to the risk of loss of specialist knowledge with the departure of staff, and the expenditure of time needed for training when staff are moved around the university.

Initiatives undertaken in this direction: Some steps that have been taken include the exploration for acquiring new funds, the implementation of the unit for quality assurance, and the establishment of e-protocols. The Department seems very interested in assessing and expanding these services. However, it is faced with a serious shortage of resources.

Collaboration with social, cultural, and production organizations: The Department collaborates extensively with both private and public sector organizations in the community, and with government agencies. A significant number of students are engaged in such activities, and the facility for recording their work on the Supplementary Diploma is important.

Several Department members are active in organizing exhibits and other museum- and excavation-related outreach activities (films of which were available to the evaluators), lectures for the Open University of the municipality of Thessaloniki, and other cultural events that touch on the Department's research activities and are of interest to the public. We mention in particular a children's program that the Department has initiated via the Museum of Casts and various cultural events in the city of Thessaloniki available to the general public. Overall, the Department seems to have very good relations with local organizations, cultural institutions, etc., and is actively involved in the cultural life of the city of Thessaloniki and its vicinity.

Please, comment on quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives: The Department participates in, or organizes, cultural events for the general public in collaboration with cultural institutions of the city. Examples include lecture series in collaboration with the Centre for Byzantine Research, the Vafopouleio Cultural Center, the Open University of Thessaloniki, the city's museums, but also with educational institutions, such as public and private schools. Also, the Department participates in such central university events as AUTh Sunday 2012.

As indicated above, there is considerable and sizeable effort by the Department to be involved, and to collaborate, with social, cultural, and productive organizations in the community, the country as a whole, and internationally. The Department might be still more proactive in promoting and advertising its activities without unnecessary modesty.

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

The committee believes that the Department has taken very seriously the process of strategic planning and the setting of short-, medium-, and long-term goals. Preparing their internal evaluation had already confirmed the importance of self-reflection and planning for the future. The recent financial crisis, however, which has resulted in a dramatic collapse of funding in all aspects of the academic operation, seriously endangers the Department at all levels. We are impressed by the enterprise and creativity shown by the Department. However, we list only a few examples of the long list of inhibiting factors they are facing. The number of the teaching staff has been greatly reduced from 56 in 2008 to 44 in 2013. The Division of History of Art has only two members, both soon to retire by 2016, while no replacement is expected for the near future. In 2013 the Department did not receive any funding for their post-graduate program. The Libraries' budget has been reduced to the point that they can no longer afford electronic journal subscriptions beyond a minimal level, not to mention their inability to buy new books. Their buildings and facilities continue to receive no maintenance. Financial support for research and travel for faculty or students is nonexistent. Their information technology support, with one person responsible for 8 Departments, is not able to meet their teaching, research, and administrative needs.

While the State as a source of financial support to the University is a great strength, it also plays an inhibiting role to a large degree. For example, the serious restrictions on hiring do not allow the Department to serve the large number of students, plan strategically to hire, and deploy reduced staff numbers effectively, while the many changes in the legal framework present additional challenges to the administrative staff, who needs to navigate through and adapt to rapid changes in legislation in order to serve students and teaching staff.

The Department has shown great self-reflection in setting objectives. They recognize that strategic planning is a new process for them, and they have already done some thinking about short-term matters, such as the nature of their curriculum and the needs of their students in terms

of the job market. Additionally, they have long-term plans regarding their role in the national and international academic community.

In terms of their curriculum, they recognize that they could do more to serve their students' needs and modernize some aspects of their curriculum to align it better with the fields of Archaeology and History internationally. For example, they would like to offer more courses on specialized topics or courses on topics with a less rigid chronological organization. They would also like to offer courses that promote more interdisciplinary contact between the various existing specialties within their Department. Deeply concerned about the fact that their graduates cannot all be absorbed by the public sector, they are seeking to implement courses that will equip them with skills that they can use in jobs in the private sector, such as management and development of cultural heritage issues.

In a similar vein, the Department would like to re-examine the overall structure and goals of their program in view of impending retirements, and to use the opportunity for new hires as a means to make their program stronger and more responsive to the needs of their students in the current economic and social climate. Obviously, the present state-imposed severe restrictions on hiring do not help them in this regard. In addition, the Department is very much interested in enhancing their current areas of research in Ottoman, Arabic, and Slavic studies and to expand further with specializations in Diaspora Studies and World History.

In light of the above, the Department also wishes to promote more collaboration between the Divisions of History and Archaeology, Social Anthropology, and Folklore studies in undertaking research projects for themselves and providing research opportunities for their students. They also would like to encourage more their faculty members to apply for international research programs, although the lack of a national funding agency for such projects is a great impediment toward that goal.

Long-term, the Department would like to launch a post-graduate program in English so that they can attract students from nearby countries. The Committee encourages them in this and believes that the rich offerings of their Department would attract students from other European countries as well. It is important to note that the current structure of student governance, which allows a disproportionate voice to a minority, may inhibit the

Departments' efforts toward achieving curricular innovations.

F. Final conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:

- *the development of the Department to this date and its present situation, including explicit comments on good practices and weaknesses identified through the External Evaluation process and recommendations for improvement*

The Department has been making the best of a very bad situation, one that has been deteriorating since 2008 and has at present been permitted to worsen still further through the loss of faculty positions and a considerable reduction in funding support both of teaching and research. The Department has already thought a great deal about how to structure its programs in a period of diminishing support from the State, and has intelligent plans in place for the short, middle, and long term. Any weaknesses in its program are owing to decisions that are almost entirely outside its control, either legal frameworks that are externally imposed as a result of decisions in Athens or budgetary decisions over which it has little influence.

Strengths

1. As a significant part of one of the oldest universities in the country, the Department enjoys a very strong reputation and a successful record that has earned it prestige and respect in the community.
2. The Department includes very talented faculty members, who are highly regarded for their accomplishments nationally and internationally.
3. The Department is well-networked within the international scholarly community, and maintains many bilateral and multilateral agreements that facilitate collaborations and exchanges of students and faculty.
4. The quality of the various graduate programs within the Department is high.

Weaknesses

1. The number of students enrolled in the Department is enormous.
2. There is a lack of adequate infrastructure of all sorts.

3. There have been no new hires in the faculty for more than four years. This lack of renewal in the faculty cannot help but have a negative impact on the Department's programs.

4. The general lack of resources in Greece, a result of the current financial crisis, endangers the Department seriously in all of its operations.

Opportunities

1. Electronic media provide an opportunity for more effective promotion of the Department's accomplishments and achievements.

2. The large numbers of talented and successful graduates of the Department can be a resource of support for it, especially in establishing even more research collaborations.

3. The Department plans to seek additional resources from the program "Horizon 2020" of the European Union.

- *the Department's readiness and capability to change/improve*

The faculty of the Department are ready to change, in the sense that they are clearly prepared to adapt to ongoing changes in the Greek society and economy. Even within a plethora of negative constraints they have continued to innovate in their teaching and research programs. At this point, it is highly important that the Department be protected from further losses, particularly as many significant senior members are forced to retire as they arrive at the mandatory retirement age over the next few years.

- the Department's quality assurance.

The Department, through its Quality Assurance Committee, is doing an excellent job of collecting statistics relevant both to assessment of teaching and research. Clearly, the faculty and staff are all committed to this enterprise, and it has been a pleasure for us to collaborate with them in the course of our external evaluation.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1. Jack Davis	
2. Antoni Mironowicz	
3. Catherine Morgan	
4. Vassiliki Panoussi	
5. Andreas Nicolaides	