

**UNIVERSITY EL BOSQUE**

**Colombia**

***EVALUATION REPORT***

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## **Contents**

Contents .....	2
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Governance and management .....	6
3. Teaching .....	9
4. Research .....	10
5. Service to Society .....	12
6. Internationalisation .....	12
7. Quality culture and quality assurance .....	14
8. Summaries of the Key Recommendations .....	16
9. Conclusion / Envoi .....	17

## **1. Introduction**

This report is the result of an evaluation of the University El Bosque, Bogotá, Colombia, by the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) of the European University Association. The evaluation took place in 2010 following an invitation by the then Rector, Dr. Jaime Escobar Triana. As the evaluation team understood it, this evaluation process – constituting both in extensive self-evaluation and of the external evaluation carried out by the IEP team – is part of the University's long-term development project aimed at preparing for a national high quality institutional accreditation (evaluación institucional de alta calidad).

### **1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme**

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture.

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

The evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a 'fitness for (and of) purpose' approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does the institution know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

### **1.2 University El Bosque and the national context**

The University El Bosque is situated in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. It has its roots in the establishment of the Clínica el Bosque (1978) and Colombian School of Medicine in 1978. Although the institution started off as a medical school, it soon

moved to offer courses also in other areas of health: Dentistry, Psychiatry and Psychology and from the 1990's it has expanded to other disciplines, such as engineering, humanities and social sciences.

In 1997 the Colombian School of Medicine became a University. Currently it offers 19 undergraduate programmes, divided into five categories: Art and Design; Science and Health; Social and Human Sciences; Engineering and Administration. The 71 graduate programmes offered are either specialisations (65), Masters (5) or PhD (1). But the majority of the programmes is still in the fields of health sciences.

The number of students enrolling in the university has increased steadily in recent years as the University has expanded its activities, with a total of 8265 students enrolled in the first half of 2010. At the same time the number of teachers was 1019 composed of *Profesores Titulares* (45), *Profesores Asociados* (116), *Profesores Asistentes* (277), *Instructores Asociados* (383), *Instructores Asistentes* (101) and *Profesores Colegios / C. Básicos* (62). 32 percent of all teachers worked full-time. The support staff consisted of 373 persons.

The University El Bosque is a private non-for-profit university, the main source of funding being the tuition fees which comprise 87 percent of the total income. In Colombia, the state does not finance the private university sector. As a result, the universities are extremely autonomous in deciding on their governance structures and strategic orientation.

As mentioned above, the University El Bosque is preparing for a national institutional high quality accreditation process. Currently, five programmes have been nationally accredited (psychology, medicine, dentistry, environmental engineering and finally nursing which was going through the accreditation process during the IEP evaluation) as programmes of high quality by the national quality assurance agency (*Consejo Nacional de Acreditación (CNA)*).

The University El Bosque's mission and an Institutional Educational Project have been approved by the Senate and define its strategic priorities: the mission consists of a bio-psycho-social and cultural approach to study programme contents and orientation and the key characteristics of the Educational Project are integral education, educational community, interdisciplinarity, teaching, research and social service. These will be discussed later in the report in further detail.

### **1.3 The Self Evaluation Process**

The self-evaluation process was launched a year before the evaluation team's first site visit took place. The self-evaluation was undertaken by two separate groups who worked in close co-operation: *Comité Directivo* and *Comité Operativo*, the latter being a smaller working group which, as was the first one, consisted of university and faculty level decision makers.

The results of the self-evaluation process were two-fold: firstly, the working groups delivered a self-evaluation report, which the IEP team (later Team) found very informative and analytical. The report provided an excellent basis for discussions during the site visits and identified the key issues in a very mature manner. Secondly, the self-evaluation phase resulted in concrete action plans for the University (*Plan de Consolidación y Mejoramiento*). The Team learnt during its first site visit that the University had started working on many of the topics identified – such as human resources. Moreover, before the second site visit the University provided the Team with a full account of developments between the visits and the interviews during the visit confirmed the impression in this regard.

Thus, it is safe to say that the Team was genuinely impressed by the University's willingness and strong ability to mobilise the academic community to a thorough self-reflection on how to improve the University and work together towards the defined goals.

The Team heard several testimonies on how the self-evaluation process has brought along a true change of mentality with a realisation that developing the University is a joint effort, a change which has wisely been supported by the current leadership. Some results of this work can already be seen, but naturally most of the work – implementation of the new plans – still remains to be done. And it is in this context that the Team wishes that this report can be of support to the University El Bosque. While, following the discussions and examination of the received reports, the Team recognises that the University – and in particular some of the working groups currently working on the '*líneas estratégicas*' – is well aware of most of themes covered in this report, it hopes that by bringing them up in this report it can further support the University in its efforts to tackle these topics. As mentioned above the University had already considered several of the following observations and started to implement recommendations after the first site visit.

#### **1.4 The evaluation team**

The self-evaluation report of the University El Bosque along with the appendices was sent to the evaluation team in January 2010. In addition, the team members were provided with access to the University's intranet where they could find further documentation. The visits of the evaluation team took place on 10-12 February and 25-28 July 2010 respectively. In between the visits the University provided the Team with some additional documentation as requested by the Team as well as an interim report covering the activities and changes within the University in between the visits.

The evaluation team consisted of:

- Dr Virgilio Meira Soares (chair), Professor, Former Rector, University of Lisbon, Portugal

- Dr Winfried Müller, Professor, Former Rector, University of Klagenfurt
- Dr Maria Teresa Alfonso Roca, Medical Educator, University of Fribourg, Switzerland
- Mr Lukas Bischof, student, Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg, Germany
- Ms Tia Loukkola (team coordinator), Head of Unit, European University Association

The Team wishes to express its gratitude to the University and all the people it met during the visit for the very warm welcome and openness and sincerity which it encountered throughout the visits. Although it is not possible to thank all the people who would merit a mention here, special thanks go to the former rector, Jaime Escobar Triana, for the invitation to undertake the evaluation and naturally to the current rector, Carlos Felipe Escobar Roa, for the hospitality during the visits and for all the support and information he and the vice-rector for academic affairs, Miguel Ruiz Rubiano, – and their team – provided us with. The Team also wants to thank all participants of meetings and interviews for their very useful discussions and their patience with our never-ending questions. And finally a special mention of our great appreciation goes to Sra Clemencia de González who, with her colleagues, master-minded the logistic arrangements of our visits.

## **2. Governance and management**

After a period of rapid growth the University El Bosque is taking the time now to reflect on its current state of play and on its future priorities. As understood by the Team, this is the first time that the University has carried out a thorough self-evaluation process at institutional level. And rather than focussing merely on the evaluation, it has moved forward by launching an institution-wide process of plan for improvement. Thus, the Team felt that it has been witnessing an important period of change in the institutional mentality of the University.

While the Team commends the University of this forward-looking attitude, it also urges the University now **to take full advantage of the moment**. The Team heard numerous testimonies on how the level and nature of participation in the institutional activities and the sense of belonging has increased through the self-evaluation process. The motivation of the community – both staff and students – is the biggest driver for achieving results and carrying out the planned activities and thus **great attention should be paid to fostering and maintaining this motivation**.

In this respect it is important that the new leadership, which has facilitated the participation, should ensure that concrete results will flow from the improvement plans. If the reflections do not lead to action, the whole process may be counter-productive and constitute a real risk for the University.

When planning the implementation of the initiatives that have arisen out of the process of self-evaluation and that are processed in the working groups, it is essential to prioritise them. As it is clear that not everything can be done at the same time, it is necessary to define a clear calendar to implement the planned activities. While stating this, the Team recognises that this prioritisation will be a real challenge and, in order to do this, the University leadership should **develop a clear and transparent strategy that is communicated to the community.**

This process should be guided by the overall strategic priorities of the University. Without a clear profile of this, the future development may encounter serious difficulties. Only a clear view of its future, which takes regional, national and global challenges into account, will form a solid basis for a qualified development. In this connection the Team thinks that the meaning of the desired bio-psycho-social, humanistic and bioethics focus should be more explicit within the different parts of the University. Besides the strategic priorities of the University, what should be taken into account and **carefully calculated, are the costs of each of the initiatives** that are being discussed.

Concerning finances of the University, the Team noted the strong dependence on tuition fees as a source of income. Whilst this is understandable, the Team would still encourage the University **to seek alternative sources of funding, in particular, for research activities and internationalisation** as will be discussed later in this report. The Team also discussed at length whether new types of fund-raising activities could be considered.

When reflecting on institutional management and organisation, the Team wants to stress two points: the time that the leadership has to implement its plans and the existence of organisational structures should be reflected in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

At the University El Bosque the length of rector's term is two years. The term of the Directive Board (*Consejo Directivo*) is one year. Whilst the Team understands that these have a long tradition and there have been good reasons for the decision made at the time of the creation of the University, it still feels that the University should **extend the terms of the Rector and Directive Board (*Consejo Directivo*) to enable them to carry out missions assigned to them.** As the University has grown and strategic management of universities has in general become more important, it is also necessary to reinforce continuity in the university management. To give an example, nowadays in many countries the term of rector is four years with an option of being re-elected once. But many more models also exist and the Team suggests that the University seriously considers them all.

The Team would like to discuss the organisational structure of the University. Having studied this as outsiders the Team came to the conclusion that it is not very easy to

interpret. First of all, it is essential **to define clearly the roles, responsibilities and relationships of various actors and units within the university structure** and keep this in mind when new ones are created. Secondly, the Team recommends that the University **reviews the number of faculties** as the current high number and their composition does not seem the most efficient solution to the Team.

Further, the Team noted that there is no one from outside the University taking part in the decision-making bodies or in the preparation of the decisions of *claustra*. The Team would invite the University to consider **including representatives of key stakeholders in some institutional decision-making processes** as it would be one means to strengthen relations with the environment of the University.

It is important to underline that, with the change of leadership and through the self-evaluation process, the students seem to have a more interactive relationship with the rector and the deans. And while the students seem to have a tradition of co-operating actively with the staff at programme level, the Team noted that, at the institutional level, no formal student structure exists. However, it would be important for the students to organise themselves also in a manner recognised by the statutes of the University so to be able to strengthen their involvement in the development of the University and support continuity in their activities. Thus, the Team encourages the University to **look into the options that would allow institutionalising the student participation in statutes and resources**.

And as a sensitive point regarding the University's governance structures, the Team wants to raise a question which only the University can answer: **Is the current composition of *El Claustro* adequate for a multidisciplinary university and if not, could and should the composition or the way of functioning be changed somehow to better reflect the diversity of the university as it is today?**

Finally, the Team would like to make one more recommendation that is closely related to the governance and management of the University: the Team recommends that the University **pays particular attention to improving means for internal communication**. Internal communication is a challenge to all universities, but in this case, as the University is undergoing major changes, the Team feels that it is particularly important to ensure open lines of communication about the changes taking place. Further, communication can be of big support to fostering participation, which is one of the key values of the University El Bosque. Without being informed about results, consequences and improvements issuing from the different working groups some critical University members might see only the additional bureaucratic load.

### 3. Teaching

With regard to the teaching, the Team noted a high degree of satisfaction among both students and the employers it met during the site visits.

In general the education processes of the University are well defined. In various discussions throughout the visits, the need to address the change of paradigm that is taking place in teaching world-wide was addressed: the change from teaching to learning, from teacher centred teaching to more student centred learning. The Team understood that the academic staff is well aware of the need for this change and that the academic vice-rector supports this change. Thus, the University is recommended to **continue the work towards a paradigm shift from teaching to learning and increase self learning parts and autonomous student work into study programmes. For this, the staff should be trained and incentives should be set.**

At this point the Team's main concern is that such a change involves profound changes in curriculum; because it is more demanding, it requires greater effort from teachers, a greater degree of discipline and high level of co-ordination in all study programmes, both at undergraduate and graduate levels. Furthermore, implementing such a change is usually also quite heavy on resources and this increases the costs. The Team therefore suggests that the process of change should be carefully planned, implemented by a step-by-step approach and using the knowledge accumulated by the best international practices. One option could be that the change begins within the Faculty of Medicine. This Faculty boasts the longest tradition within the University and the field of medicine has been one of the pioneers of this change globally and can thus offer many benchmarking opportunities.

As mentioned above, experience shows that the change of paradigm will be demanding on academic staff. Therefore, the Team wishes to point out again that training should be actively offered to the teachers so that they will be able to fully embrace new teaching methods resulting from the paradigm shift. As the interim report given to the Team before the second site visit indicated, the plans to set up an **institutional learning centre** (*centro de aprendizaje*) – that will respond to the increased demand for training – were at the final stages during the time that the evaluation took place. With respect to this centre, the Team recommends that it **should be directly dependent on the Rectorate, and its functions and responsibilities are to be clearly defined.**

As mentioned in the introduction, the University has experienced a period of very rapid growth over the last decades. This growth has meant not only growth in terms of staff or students, but also in disciplines and study programmes. What strikes us as noteworthy in the statistics the Team received was the number of study programmes with very few students. Considering the fact that the tuition fees constitute the basis of the University's finances, the Team questions whether the

University can continue growing the way it has so far. If the Team has understood correctly, the new programmes have been launched usually following proposals from staff members and practically all proposals have been approved. Hence, the Team urges the University to **define transparent criteria and processes for prioritising proposals for new study programmes** (in relation to the institutional strategy and within the desired profile of the University).

Further, the decision to start a new programme should always be preceded by a thorough examination of the sustainability of the programme taking into account the demand from students as well as the labour market thus trying to optimise the successful implementation of the programmes. To ensure the labour market relevance of the programmes, a strengthened dialogue with and involvement of the external stakeholders, in particular with the employers, is to be encouraged.

The question of teaching and learning does not only concern the students. It is a continuous learning process involving the whole community. The Team found that the number of teachers with a doctoral degree is insufficient and not compatible with a student training to postgraduate level (MSc and PhD) that a university should offer. Thus, **the Team strongly recommends the University pay particular attention to the continuous training of teachers, especially at the doctoral level.**

We understand that this issue is not an easy one and requires great investment and careful planning. It is not realistic for the University to decide that all teachers should aim for a higher degree at the same time, but it is possible to define concrete targets for the number of new PhDs in a certain period following the priorities defined for research. To reach the targets set, one possibility is to offer internal incentives and to use collaborative processes with other universities such as jointly offered programmes.

Finally, we should not forget the support staff. The Team is aware that plans for training already exist, but is concerned that the needs for more developed use of information technology is perhaps not sufficiently considered in this context. Support mechanisms for staff resulting from quality assurance procedures should be considered. We suggest that the University reflects on this matter.

#### **4. Research**

In order to tackle the question of research and how to develop it further within the University El Bosque, the Team feels that it is important to explain first what it understands by the term in the context of this report.

Internationally, the word "research" usually refers to a scientific activity, in which one is working near the frontiers of knowledge, creating new knowledge that is shared with the scientific community through publications or, if that knowledge is produced in terms of intellectual/industrial property, through prototypes of new

products or patent registration. Hence, in this report the word "research" is used in a strict sense when it refers to the creation of new knowledge.

The Team also wishes to make clear that in the development of scientific research at master's level it is this understanding of the word "research" that must prevail and that, at doctoral level, independent scientific research should be the core of student activity on which to build the final thesis. This does not mean that services to the community or applied projects where already existing knowledge is used are not also very valuable and important tasks for universities.

Globally, in many countries a distinction is made between research universities and teaching universities depending on the emphasis given to the scientific research activity within the institution. If the Team was to define the University El Bosque on these terms, as it is right now, it would be among the teaching universities. But, through the process of this evaluation, it has become apparent that the University – as well as many members of staff – has clear ambitions to advance and improve its research performance.

In this context, the Team's first recommendation is that the University develops a **plan to increase the number of staff members holding a doctoral degree**. As we have mentioned before, it is the Team's belief that the University should define the number of doctors it wants to have in a certain period, decide the areas it wants to develop more in terms of research and organise a realistic calendar to send teachers somewhere else (or develop joint projects) so that, at the end of the abovementioned period, it has a comfortable number of trained people to develop research centres of good quality.

Next, the Team notes that a university cannot be excellent in all fields of science. It is therefore important that the University **identifies existing lines of research with the potential to form the basis of the University's fields of strengths and prioritises them, e.g., when allocating funding, thus facilitating the development of research in these well defined areas. New teaching staff should be recruited not only to fill the needs in teaching but also to fill in gaps in identified research fields.**

For the Team it is clear that the University is not currently strong in research but we can conclude that the existing research is higher than reflected in various reports. The Team has noticed the University has already a few excellent research groups. Still, that's not enough for a university to become a research university. As mentioned previously, the Team considers the profile of the University El Bosque to be mainly that of education, and questions whether a profound change would be a positive development. For example, even though the Team has previously recommended the University aim at diversifying its income sources, it is most likely that the tuition fees will always form the main source of income and thus excellence

in teaching in general and in research in carefully selected areas appears to be a sound goal.

All this does not mean that the University should not continue to develop its research. On the contrary, the Team **encourages the University to look towards developing basic research in a few, well selected fields, but most of all, applied and action research through contracts with external partners.** According to the discussions with the researchers, this is where the University is starting to establish its nest and can continue to develop further.

## **5. Service to Society**

It is clear to the Team that within the academic community there is a strong commitment to service to society. On many occasions the ultimate mission of the University was defined as improving the quality of life in Colombia, Bogotá and in Usaquén, which is in line with the University's strategic goals. In fact, this particular **focus on the region of Usaquén seems to the Team to be something that is very characteristic to the University El Bosque and something that the University should cherish as a strategic choice** and one that should by no means be considered to be in contradiction with the aspirations for internationalisation.

Further, service to society in this University is very closely related to its research mission and it is clear that most of the current action research projects have been designed keeping in mind the institutional goal of enhancing the quality of life. To keep in mind what has been previously written on research, the University should consider defining its main types of 'basic', community based research (CBR) and other research activities to be aware of and to better be able to direct funding to the type of research it prioritises. This is an area where the University has potential to continue to grow and it should seek to continue to develop.

Nevertheless, the Team thinks that a stronger involvement of the private sector could be of use to improve cooperation with society, besides providing a higher number of opportunities to diversify the funding sources.

## **6. Internationalisation**

This chapter is fundamentally related both to the development of teaching and research which have been discussed above. In a globalised world a university cannot function in a vacuum, without being part of the international academic community. The internationalisation of a university is a condition for survival. Therefore, it must devote great efforts to develop it. In the Team's opinion, the internationalisation of the University El Bosque is perhaps the greatest of its challenges.

The Team finds that currently internationalisation is very much restricted to a few exchanges of students and teachers, participation in national and some

international conferences and signing co-operation agreements with some institutions. However, the Team's understanding of a policy of internationalisation includes much more: *inter alia* a comprehensive policy demonstrating a commitment to developing various action lines such as co-operation with strategically hand-picked institutions rather than as many institutions as possible, membership(s) of international networks, again in line with the priorities of the institution, and finally, looking for possibilities for co-operation with various organisations in the field of higher education.

During the evaluation process, the Team could already sense that the University has itself identified internationalisation as one of its key challenges and this was also confirmed in the interim report delivered just before the second visit which noted a change in the attitude towards internationalisation: the university community had come to the realisation that internationalisation starts at home.

Referring to the discussions on teaching and research and the challenges the University is facing in those areas, the Team urges the University to **use internationalisation to develop its research through research collaboration and to use all opportunities arising to internationalise the curricula.**

Defining how the institutional strategic priorities best translate into concrete action lines and appropriate partnerships at international level is not an easy nor quickly realised task. Further, it requires expertise, especially as developing internationalisation is often relatively expensive and thus closely related to fund-raising. There are various funding programmes for internationalisation available, but it takes time and effort to map them and examine how they could serve the needs and goals of the respective university. Therefore, the Team urges the University to **formalise the institutional unit dealing with the management and development of international relations.**

Developing and professionalising international relations should not undermine nor restrict the freedom of teachers in their contacts and relationships at international level in their respective academic fields, but rather provide the academic staff and students with more varied alternatives to further enhance their internationalisation. In this context, the main challenges for the unit for international relations would be to **establish a network of institutional contacts with strategically chosen partners** thus complementing the contacts of individual staff members. Another important challenge for the unit would be to **inform teachers and students effectively about the opportunities for international mobility and co-operation.**

And finally, it appears to the Team that the question of the language competencies of staff and students should be addressed as part of the University's internationalisation strategy. The fact remains that today English is the *lingua franca* of the scientific community and therefore the Team recommends that the

University **develops a language policy, and activities supporting it, which will enable and encourage both staff and students towards internationalisation. In addition the University should think about offering a certain number of courses taught in English.**

## 7. Quality culture and quality assurance

According to the University's self-evaluation report, one of the main reasons for the University's decision to take part in EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme was the desire to continue to consolidate the institutional quality culture. In addressing this topic – the state of play of quality culture of the University – the Team has opted to use the recommendations and key success factors defined by EUA's Quality Culture project<sup>1</sup> as the reference as well as the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education<sup>2</sup>.

The research and experience shows that the first prerequisite for the creation of quality culture is *the commitment of and example shown by the leadership*. Based on the discussions with the institutional leadership and various other people (staff as well as students) during the visits, the Team is convinced that the leadership of the University El Bosque is clearly committed to the development of a genuine quality culture and the current change processes serve as an example of this commitment.

The concept of quality culture and the nature of a university as an expert organisation, require that in addition to top-down approach, there is *room for bottom-up initiatives and participation*. As mentioned already previously, in particular during the second visit, the Team learnt that this is an aspect in which the University has invested a lot and is one of the strongest aspects of the University.

In the current change process taking place within the University, there is an explicit *link between the University's strategic planning – through the work of the various working groups (líneas estratégicas) – and promotion of quality culture*. Nevertheless, this link should also be maintained in the future as processes for both quality assurance and strategic management are consolidated (as the Team believes that they will). The commitment to quality culture includes the idea that members of the community are aware of the University's strategic choices and definition of

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<sup>1</sup> European University Association (EUA), 2006, *Quality culture in European universities: a bottom-up approach. Report on the three rounds of the Quality Culture project 2002 – 2006* (Brussels, EUA), <http://www.eua.be/publications>

<sup>2</sup> European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), 2005, *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, [http://www.eqar.eu/uploads/media/050221\\_ENQA\\_report\\_01.pdf](http://www.eqar.eu/uploads/media/050221_ENQA_report_01.pdf)

quality and committed to these in their daily work. Furthermore, formal assurance processes should be designed to monitor and enhance the attainment of the University's strategic goals and their results need to impact future strategic decisions.

It is also of great importance that there is *a follow-up to all quality assurance processes*. The information collected – whether through student questionnaires, the information system on quality (SIQ), or by other means – needs to be used for further improvement. Our experience shows that in many universities the collection of information and writing reports and plans for improvement function very well, but all too often the follow-up and implementation are forgotten. And even if there is follow-up, the people concerned (students, teachers) are not always aware of the changes made based on their feedback or initiatives and they get discouraged thus losing their motivation to continue the work. Here the Team would like to underline, again, the importance of internal communication as discussed previously and **the need to ensure communication about the follow-up activities to those involved**.

And finally, last but by no means least, a university should have *an appropriate support structure to support the quality assurance processes*. This usually means an institutional level unit that offers support and assistance to the academic units as well as participates in the preparation of institutional level policies and supervises their implementation. The challenge is to ensure that the quality assurance processes do not become too bureaucratic and suffocate innovation and creativity – so crucial to a university – of academic units, and thus that an appropriate balance is found between the two dimension of quality assurance: the control or monitoring aspects and the enhancement.

The University El Bosque does have most of these necessary characteristics for a well-functioning quality culture and is actually quite strong in many of these. Hence, the Team concluded that there is no doubt that a quality culture shared by the academic community is in fact a real important achievement fully assumed by the majority of its members. Furthermore, in the last couple of years, the University has developed an information system on quality (*'un sistema de información de calidad'* (SIQ)) that includes an impressive amount of data on the institution's priorities, resources, activities etc. For the first time the institutional leadership has collected this data in one place and it available to be used as a basis for decision-making.

Nevertheless, having concluded that a quality culture and an information system exist at the University El Bosque, the Team did find that a **quality assurance system** is still missing. In this context, "quality assurance system" should be understood as an entity constituted by the quality assurance organisation, the division of responsibilities, procedures, processes and resources in place in the University which all aim at both assuring the quality of institutional activities and continuously enhancing it.

Even though there are some elements in this regard – such as student questionnaires, SIQ – and, at faculty level, well functioning examples were provided during the discussions, the Team still feels that there is work to be done, above all at institutional level. The documentation provided to the Team indicates that the University is planning to **institutionalise and systemise the institutional level self-evaluation process**. In addition, the University has begun to **develop institutional level policies and centralise some activities**. The Team fully supports the University in these plans and underlines the importance of centralising some processes that it finds to be crucial to the quality: student admission, recruitment and promotion of teachers, etc.

To support the running of a quality assurance system, the Team further **recommends that the University sets up an institutional quality unit**, with the task of coordinating all activities in this regard, co-operating with other related units, and facilitating the promotion of good practices within the academic units and from outside the University as well as offering support to the academic units in implementing their internal quality enhancement initiatives.

## 8. Summaries of the Key Recommendations

Before ending this report we summarise the key recommendations included in the chapters above:

- The University has started a change process that it should now take full advantage of. The motivation of the community is the biggest driver for achieving results in this regard.
- Prioritise the various initiatives on the basis of the selected strategies.
- Calculate the actual costs of each of the various initiatives.
- Seek alternative sources of funding for research activities and internationalisation, etc.
- Review and clarify the organisational structure of the University, including the new structures being created as well as the various interdependencies and the tasks performed.
- Extend the term of office of the Rector and Directive Board (*Consejo Directivo*) to enable them to carry out the missions assigned to them.
- Institutionalise student participation.
- Improve means for internal (horizontally and vertically) communication.
- Strengthen relations with the outside world, if possible, for instance, by including their representatives in some institutional decision-making processes.

- Define transparent criteria and processes for prioritisation of new study programmes (in relation to the corporate strategy).
- Continue the work towards a paradigm shift from teaching to learning. In this context, the existing study programmes must be adapted accordingly and the staff should be trained to be able to embrace fully new teaching methods resulting from the paradigm shift.
- The future learning centre (*centro de aprendizaje*) should be directly responsible to the rectorate and its functions and responsibilities are to be clearly defined.
- Increase the number of academic staff holding doctoral degrees through a variety of measures.
- Develop partnerships with other universities – both nationally and internationally – to promote the research mission.
- Define strategic lines of research to be focused on with clearly defined goals.
- Create research groups in line with the defined strategic research lines of the University.
- Define an institutional language policy which will enable and encourage both staff and students towards internationalisation.
- Establish a network of institutional contacts with strategically chosen partners.
- Use internationalisation to develop research (research collaboration).
- Communicate effectively to teachers and students about the opportunities for international mobility.
- Use all opportunities arising to internationalise the curricula.
- Establish a centralised quality unit with well defined responsibilities.
- Centralise certain processes: student admission, recruitment and promotion of teachers, etc.
- Utilise SIQ for strategic decision-making at both the university and the different faculties.
- Communicate to the community about the results of all development and enhancement work to ensure the continued motivation of staff and students.

## 9. Conclusion / Envoi

To conclude the Team would like to note that during this process it has had the pleasure to get to know a small, young and active institution that clearly has big ambitions and is very committed to the change process it has embarked upon, thus demonstrating its capacity for change. **The big advantage for the University EI**

**Bosque is its human resources: enthusiastic and highly motivated leadership, staff and students.**

It is in this context, having heard testimonies of all parties concerned – members of *El Claustro*, the institutional leadership, the academic and support staff as well as the students – that the Team members shared a strong sentiment of having witnessed a moment in which the University El Bosque is facing a unique opportunity that it just cannot let slip: an opportunity to develop into a university with a strong organisation culture shared by all concerned that, in the long run, will allow it to become well-recognised in line with its own strategic priorities.

Hence, the Team wishes the University leadership as well as the staff and students, as they continue their work in developing the University, patience, strength as well as luck for the years to come.