IEP

EUA-Institutional Evaluation Programme

Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University

Ukraine

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT

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Evaluation team:
Ferdinand Devinsky, chair
Christos Nikolaou
Urs Brudermann
Christina Rozsnyai, team coordinator

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of a follow-up evaluation of the Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University (LTSNU) of Ukraine. EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) originally evaluated the University after two site visits, in April and June 2006. The evaluation report was submitted to the University in September of that year. The University subsequently requested that the IEP carry out a follow-up evaluation in 2011.

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme and follow-up evaluation process

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service from 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.

In line with the EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme as a whole, the follow-up process is a supportive one. There is no prescribed procedure and the agenda is set by the institution, taking into account its experiences since the original evaluation. The institution is expected to submit its own self-evaluation report, which describes the progress made, possibly indicating barriers to change. A single site visit by the evaluation team, whose members include one or two persons from the original team as well as new members to provide a fresh look at the University, examine the conclusions drawn by the institution in its report and make recommendations for further development.

The rationale is that the follow-up evaluation can assist the institution in evaluating the changes that have been made since the original evaluation: What was the impact of the original evaluation? What use has the institution made of the original evaluation report? How far has it been able to address the issues raised in the report? The follow-up evaluation is also an opportunity for the institution to take stock of its strategies for managing change in the context of internal and external constraints and opportunities.

As for the original evaluation, the follow-up process is guided by four key questions, which are based on a 'fit for (and of) purpose' approach:
- What is the institution trying to achieve?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2 LTSNU and the national context

Since 2008, LTSNU was awarded the status of a classical University by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, which means that it is recognized with the highest level of accreditation as a

multi-faculty University that teaches a variety of disciplines. LTSNU has dropped 'Pedagogical' from its name with the intention to convey its all-round scope. This adds to its earlier rank as a 'National University', which indicates recognition for research and scientific activity and which attracts awards for additional rights regarding its facilities and financial bonuses. LTSNU notes in its self-evaluation report (p. 1) that it has also gained in status in national and international ratings.

Internally, LTSNU has elaborated development plans in order to put into practice IEP recommendations, at the same time implementing Bologna structures, such as ECTS-compatible study programmes. New units have been set up, and some structural units have been reorganised resulting in four new institutes. LTSNU comprises seven faculties, seven schools or institutes, in addition to branches of the national Academy of Sciences, colleges, vocational schools and other structural units. Away from the main campus, there are three faculties and ten colleges and vocational schools. In total LTSNU has 21 scientific, research and educational units. The number of programmes and specialties rises steadily. The number of students enrolled in 2010 was 21 977 (up from 20 818 in 2006), of which 13 143 were full-time, 7 691 part-time, and 1 143 were graduate students.

LTSNU, which celebrated its 90th anniversary on March 1, 2011, has clearly made advancements since 2006 and continues to play a key role in education and culture in the Donbas region.

1.3   The Self Evaluation Process

LTSNU initiated the self-evaluation process through a University-level decision, which designated the self-evaluation working group. The 14-member group represented a range of departments, administrative and management units, and included the head of the 2006 self-evaluation group. The IEP evaluation team (later team) was pleased to note that compared to the 2006 process, also three students (one a doctoral student) were part of the self-evaluation group, as the team had recommended. The group reported that information from various parts of the University was readily provided on request. The 2011 self-evaluation report of 12 densely typed pages and with a 79 page appendix focused on changes at LTSNU since the team's previous visit, in accordance with IEP guidelines. The report overall was comprehensive and informative, and the detailed SWOT analysis was frank and open, even if it focused only on strengths and weaknesses and omitted an analysis of the external positive and negative factors: opportunities and threats. An internal discussion of the external constraints a University may face is useful in identifying possible openings for advancement for the future, which LTSNU may consider when it refines its strategy in the wake of the IEP follow-up process.

Following a SWOT analysis, the group discussed the strengths and weaknesses they had identified with academics, administrators, service providers and students, whose feedback was incorporated into the self-evaluation report. Information was conveyed via the University website (English) and newspaper.

2. The evaluation team

The self-evaluation report of LTSNU along with the appendixes was sent to the evaluation team in early March 2011. The site visit of the evaluation team took place 5-8 April 2011.

The evaluation team consisted of:

- Ferdinand Devinsky, Professor in Medicinal Chemistry and former rector of Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, team chair
- Christos Nikolaou, Professor in Computer Sciences and former rector of the University of Crete, Greece
- Urs Brudermann, graduate student with a BSc in business administration, University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland
- Christina Rozsnyai, team coordinator, Programme Officer, Hungarian Accreditation Committee.

During the two and a half-day follow-up visit, the team interviewed a total of 114 persons including the President and the Rector of LTSNU; the self-evaluation group; central office staff; quality assurance staff; vice-rectors, deans; departmental heads; academic council members; outside partners of LTSNU from state and regional administration and business; international researchers; students and post-graduates students; as well as a group of alumni students from 2006.

The team thanks President Kurylo and Rector Savchenko, its LTSNU contact person Vice-Rector Uzhchenko and their colleagues, including the excellent interpreters, for inviting IEP to conduct the follow-up evaluation, for the efficient organisation and the very kind hospitality afforded the team during the visit. It also wishes to thank all those University members it interviewed for their openness and readiness to supply the team with the information it needed to obtain a thorough picture of LTSNU at this point in its development.

3. Mission and vision

The IEP methodology uses the fitness for purpose approach that looks at a University's mission and vision as the starting points for reviewing what the University is trying to accomplish. The self-evaluation report (p. 8 and Appendix p. 2) states the mission of LTSNU, stating that it "*consists in a diverse influence on society and science, a leading role of the University in the translation of national and European cultural values, the scientific and pedagogical staff work in the training of a new generation of professionals, elite specialists who are ready for self-education during their lives, able to work successfully in dynamic conditions of the modern market.*"

The mission statement implies that LTSNU aims to be a University offering high quality education, research and culture, and that it would like to be a respected member of the European Higher Education Area.

As a renowned University in Ukraine endowed with a sense of responsibility for the future of the region and country, LTSNU not only has the opportunity but also the obligation to originate and pursue high quality research, teaching and managerial processes for the benefit of the region and the country. The team's recommendation in 2006 was to prepare a more elaborate, stand-alone mission statement, which would certainly help the University to steer a steady course during turbulent times of change.

The team would like to make clear at this point that it is often difficult to draw a distinction between mission and vision; closely linked concepts taken from business management models. Applied to LTSNU, the mission stated in the self-evaluation report could be regarded as its vision, because it focuses on the values of the University as profiled to the public. The strategic goals with their more specific aims can be considered as the mission, as they are tangible targets for the internal University community. A combination of the two in which the more widely used mission statement declares the institution's consensual values together with its general aims may serve the purpose perfectly well for LTSNU. In any case, the strategic plan(s) must always uphold the mission (and vision) as their motto, from which practical actions are derived.

With the University upgraded to the status of "national", its mission (and vision) will also, no doubt, change. The team therefore, recommends once more that LTSNU think about the preparation of an amended mission statement (and possibly a separate vision) of the University, which would reflect also its policy concerning the adoption of the Bologna process. Individual faculties and institutes should prepare their own mission statements, which, while reflecting the specific character of the individual unit, should be consistent with the general mission of the University with a combined classical and national status.

4. Strategic management and strategic plan

Commonly, an organisation can try to achieve its mission and vision by taking four strategic steps,

- identifying a series of objectives or goals

- putting in place a plan to achieve these objectives or goals

- putting in place structures and processes to facilitate these activities, and

- creating activities that fulfil the identified objectives.

The translation of a modern University's mission and vision into activities such as teaching and research programmes is commonly articulated in a strategic development plan. LTSNU presented to the team such a specific document in Appendix A of its self-evaluation report. This 35 page document entitled Development Strategy of the University consists of a general strategic plan for 2009-2015, and specific plans for focus areas: a management reform programme analyzing current strengths and weaknesses; plans for educational activities;

distance-learning education; scientific development; programme organisation, professional training and scientific work of students; the strategic development of international activity; and for infrastructure development. Timelines, implementation stages and responsibilities are assigned. This very useful document illustrates that the University has identified exactly where the problems lie. However, the material lacks a detailed financial plan, which must be an inseparable part of a strategic development chiefly because implementation of the staked-out actions requires earmarked resources and because financial planning is in itself a strategy. Moreover, it makes clear to the University community that resources are spent on worthwhile and agreed upon endeavours.

As regards the concrete actions foreseen in the plans, the team believes that in total they are extremely ambitious, with dozens of targets and without priorities. It seems to the team that the University is attempting to do too much in too many areas. With the existing resources, surely only a fraction of these actions can be implemented, and without priorities the synergy will not be there to boost any of the areas. Fortunately, the top University management is aware of this problem and it understands that the operational plan should be tightly connected to the financial planning of LTSNU. The team encourages LTSNU to turn this awareness into action.

In 2006, the team recommended that discussion should start across the University and agreement should be reached on a few basic priorities for the future of LTSNU. A definition of its ambitions when discussing its mission would help LTSNU to set the basis for its strategic plan with carefully chosen priorities and attainable goals. It will then be necessary to set down a detailed and realistic financial plan with concrete and approved sums allocated to each project. Similarly, the faculties should create their own individual strategic plans in concert with the University one.

In another 2006 recommendation, for the cohesion of the University, it would be essential to have one or two cross-university projects in which all the faculties and institutions are involved. It is up to LTSNU to select and decide about such projects. One of them could be, for example, the systematic introduction of curricula that are comparable and compatible with those in the European Higher Education Area. As the Strategic Development Plan shows, this target is foreseen for 2014-2015 (Appendix p. 13). To be competitive in European higher education it is key for LTSNU to introduce the ECTS system for the whole University, and the earlier the better. The ECTS Users' Guide, published by the European Communities[1], could serve as a useful tool for all the staff if LTSNU could translate it into Ukrainian, which is in line with its Strategic Development Plan (Appendix p.12). The team recommends the introduction of ECTS by setting it as a strategic goal marked as high priority.

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

5. The role of students in University governance

All the decisions, of any kind at University level, affect its students in some shape or form. Therefore, their participation in all the decision-making must be ensured. The role of students in University governance is, in the team's view, consistent with the aims of the Bologna process: students and staff should act as full partners in the higher education process. Thanks to Ukraine's new higher education act, the role of students in the decision-making process at LTSNU has been expanded. The team was pleased with the degree of progress in this area, and notably that LTSNU is making good use of this provision in the law. The team encourages the University to continue with this strong recommendation, as it is pivotal in the Bologna process, and to have a strong participation of students in the University decision-making bodies and processes at all levels, if possible with voting rights. In order to achieve this, the culture of student participation should continue to be enhanced at LTSNU. The current support of the University is important for the students' union and is exemplary.

6. Financing and revenue streams

The self-evaluation report (Appendix G, p. 71) provided some data on the financial situation at the University, which showed that, given the fact that the income is generated by different sources, the budget income is diversified and no donor can attain a major influence. This is good for the autonomy of the University. According to the data provided in the University's self-evaluation report, which notes that "the financial situation of the University has considerably improved over the last 5 years" (Appendix p. 74), LTSNU, unlike most of the other universities in the area, appears to be in a stable financial position. On the other hand, the financial constraints were sometimes mentioned as a concern in the interviews. It is clear that despite the recent improvements, owing in part to the University's rise in rank, the system, overall, requires better financing. This is a severe external constraint which can be solved only at the state level.

The team believes, nevertheless, that LTSNU has the potential to optimize the use of the funds available and recommends that LTSNU develop a comprehensive plan supporting the increase of research incomes from external contracts and international grants. The team would like to stress, however, that the overall University priorities set in the strategic plan should influence the yearly distribution of funds.

7. Research

In the context of limited resources, considering research in light of the trends of globalisation and the Lisbon agenda, which aims "to make Europe more dynamic and competitive"[2], the evaluation team considered, in 2006, that it is necessary for the LTSNU to have a University-wide research policy. This is especially valid now that LTSNU has the status of a classical University. The research objectives should be included in the University Strategic Plan and

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[2] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/ict_and_lisbon/index_en.htm

should define the research areas in which efforts should be concentrated. Such a University policy should indicate clear sustainable priorities concerning the development of research at LTSNU. The policy and priorities should also show how the research is related to the education process in order to ensure that research activity results in research-based education and teaching.

In analyzing the self-evaluation report, the team was pleased to note that the University adopted this recommendation, and set as its priorities in research psychology, education, philology, natural and technical sciences, respectively. The team observed that the University has injected more funding into research from its special funds and believes that this is a considerable step in the right direction.

The LTSNU research strategy should also foster the collaboration between different departments to attempt to generate critical mass in research and, if possible, should promote the targeted recruitment of new research staff in identified prioritised areas. In this regard, the team encourages the University to conduct interdisciplinary research. Not only is science evolving and opening up new pathways that embrace multiple existing disciplines, but collaboration among departments – and other Universities – would be fruitful for the University's development.

Good research knows no borders. The LTSNU has already proven that it is producing high quality research in some selected fields. The team encourages LTSNU and all departments involved in research, to expand international connections and seek cooperation in international research projects, especially those that can be supported by international research grants. Performance-based rewarding for involvement in international projects should be a priority.

The team was pleased to see the first steps towards the creation of a research culture in the University, and believes that the project of performance-based rewarding (not only in research) should be implemented across the University in order to strengthen this culture among the academic staff.

The team continues to believe, however, that 1.1% of the University's total budget allocated to research and development is not satisfactory. It is convinced that there is substantial room for strategic growth in this area. It recommended, in 2006, that the University should take a more active role in acquiring research funds from abroad. The participation in European programmes, such as the 7th Framework Programme[3], could be a possibility. According to the self-evaluation report, the number of research grants rose, however an average of 5600 euros per year in the last five years (p. 73) is a very low figure, even if, according to the report (p. 73), it constitutes one fifth of the general state financing provided for research. Seen from this viewpoint, it is a good result.

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[3] http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/understand_en.html

The team also recommends that the leadership of LTSNU should maintain a sustainable Centre for International Projects, with staff experienced in international project technicalities and management. The Centre would assist researchers with the preparation of their projects, coordination, reporting and accounting, especially with EU ventures, and thereby release researchers from time spent on administrative duties (but not from their accountability for project funds). This would help to reduce the burden of tasks that otherwise each participating department has to perform on its own.

The 2006 report recommended that the University introduce a support scheme for young researchers. The self-evaluation report (p. 5 and elsewhere) states that such a scheme exists and a high number of students participate in research projects. The team congratulates LTSNU for this achievement and encourages it to accelerate its efforts in this direction. Out of a total of 21 977 students only 447 are PhD students, and 2.1% of the student body is not a critical mass. The team recommends that the University take measures to increase the number of quality PhD students such as through using its own grants and stipend schemes as a funding source for young researchers.

Five years ago, the evaluation team recommended increasing the University's export of scientific publications, to develop the international exchange of journals and to edit more than 50% of its research publications in international languages. It also supported the idea of have external reviewers for all publications. The LTSNU states that it wants to be a partner for higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area. Thus, regardless of its criteria for professional promotion, its research should produce publications registered in internationally recognised databases.

8. Study programmes and the Bologna process

An objective of the University development plan should be to effectively transform the existing study courses and to introduce a portfolio of academic programmes that are in line with the law, current education trends and the Bologna recommendations. The team was pleased to note that LTSNU has made great progress in this respect. The University also introduced eight new programmes in addition to five new doctoral programmes (self-evaluation report p. 10), which is clearly in accordance with the needs of the market.

The University has made advances also in developing distance education. The team recommendation was to establish a Service Centre for Continuing Education and Distance Learning. According to the self-evaluation report (Appendix p. 17 ff.), a Distance Education Quality Control System should be developed (2009-2011) and established (2012-2013) in the near future.

The team especially commends LTSNU for its remarkable efforts in developing programmes for disabled students. Building on its strength and its history as a teacher training institution, the staff – and rector – are justifiably proud of the achievements in providing teaching programmes, research and support services such as housing, parental counseling, etc. The

team believes that there is a niche in the market on which LTSNU can build up its reputation as a place of excellence and on which international cooperation can be built.

It is stated in the self-evaluation report (p. 7) and was also reported to the team that the teaching load is generally too high. That is a continuing problem. The team recommends that the University undertake a detailed review of teachers' workload, and in some specializations lower the number of teaching contact hours to an acceptable level. This will also reduce the student workload and will create some space for teaching staff to engage in other activities, such as research.

To fulfill its aim of being a competitive higher education institution in the European Higher Education Area, a change in LTSNU philosophy regarding education is needed. The team recommends that LTSNU increase its focus on learning and reduce *ex cathedra* teaching. The self-evaluation report remarks that the high workload is a national regulation, however, the redesigning of programmes to balance contact hours and students' independent study may not infringe on the course output of teachers (even if in the design and trial phase this may require additional staff time) when rearranging their face-to-face time with students. Moreover, – and this was emphasized by the students interviewed by the team – an increase in elective subjects within the student course load would give students more freedom to pursue special interest areas and allow them to become more creative members of society, while increasing their dedication to study.

Therefore, the University should very carefully analyze and discuss the intended learning outcomes for each course and programme; i.e. establishing what a student should know and how s/he can best utilize the knowledge at the bachelor, master and doctoral levels) and redesign the programme courses to reduce contact hours and increase the independent project and study work of students. For example, introducing ECTS will help to reach this target and the mentioned ECTS Users' Guide is a useful tool to explain the approach.

The team strongly recommends introducing the diploma supplement developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES[4]. It provides more information than a transcript of studies and as an internationally intelligible document; it enables graduates to study and work in Europe at any point in the future during the course of their careers.

9. Internationalisation

Internationalisation is an important dimension for the University. LTSNU has a number of bilateral agreements with foreign Universities; however, the mobility of students and staff

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[4] See the ECTS Users' Guide as well as the links on the European Commission website http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/ds_en.pdf (for a general explanation) and http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/dsen.pdf (for a specific example)

remains rather low. In 2006, the team stated that these activities were virtually a non-functioning item at the University. The team is now pleased to hear that their recommendation to offer some extra financial support for mobility was accepted.

In 2006, the team noted the language barrier as another obstacle to internationalisation. At that time, it encouraged the University to address this problem. In the past five years the situation has begun to change. Courses in English are offered and financial incentives for staff teaching in English have been introduced. LTSNU also has some foreign academic staff and has set up centres such as the Japanese Centre, Turkish Languages and Culture also known as the Confucius Centre to join the previously existing ones (like the Goethe Institute), which make the languages and culture of those countries available mainly from native speakers to students, as well as staff and the external community. These are excellent achievements.

An admirable decision to stimulate internationalisation was to set an annual quota for staff and student mobility in the Strategic Plan and to have signed mobility agreements with foreign Universities. As a result, the number of foreign students is steadily growing. The team noticed a strong orientation towards the People's Republic of China as a prospective higher education market that it believes is very viable.

The team recommends enhancing international exchanges by eliminating the possible barriers to mobility, such as the low flexibility of study programmes, and to ensure the transferability into LTSNU of ECTS credits that students may earn abroad.

It also recommends that LTSNU continue efforts to open pathways to attain foreign language knowledge in order to increase the possibility for students and staff to participate in international activities. It is important that all staff and students have access to information about internationalisation and specific projects or opportunities.

As in 2006, the team believes that many of the problems could be solved if the International Relations Department developed a strategic plan for the internationalisation of LTSNU, and would be under the authority of top University leadership and with its own reliable budget, which would be concurrent with most classical universities in Europe.

10. Quality assurance and development

In 2006, the team advised LTSNU to restructure the Quality Monitoring Department to a Quality Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Centre. Indeed, the University Department for Managing of Quality Learning Process Planning is a step in the right direction, but within the European Higher Education Area and for leading universities it seems to be too narrowly focused.

The team recommends developing a University-wide, comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement system. It should include human resources management and all aspects of quality in the daily life of the University and its units. It could be useful to investigate best

practices about quality assurance that have been introduced at some other universities and to adapt them for LTSNU.

One of the primary targets for LTSNU leadership in setting up a University-wide quality assurance system is the introduction of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, also referred to as European Standards and Guidelines or ESG[5]. They are an integral part of the Bologna process and quality culture in Europe. Part 1 is intended for higher education institutions and provides a general set of quality themes relating to teaching and learning (less to research or institutional management) that is easily adaptable to all units of a University while embedding a culture of quality among the members of the University:

- Policy and procedures for quality assurance

- Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

- Assessment of students

- Quality assurance of teaching staff

- Learning resources and student support

- Information systems

- Public information.

For each of these areas, standards, or goals are elaborated, and are followed by guidelines that explain the aim of each standard and what should be done to reach it.

As with internationalisation, the quality assurance process should be under the authority of the top University leadership in order to ensure coherence and acceptance by the whole community. For this it is crucial that any progress be actively communicated.

11. Institutional development

Another area where the 2006 evaluation team made recommendations to LTSNU was institutional development. It suggested initiating a regional University network in order to teach some programmes or courses jointly. In the 2011 self-evaluation report, LTSNU mentioned regarding regional changes, there is competition among the six universities in the region. Rather than viewing these universities as competition, LTSNU might consider establishing cooperation agreements for teaching some courses together and possibly setting up joint projects. Indeed, the team learned in an interview that such activities already exist on the department level. This is a good initiative because it complements teaching content that

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[5] http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20%282%29.pdf

may be missing at LTSNU, provides more choice for students, expands contacts for staff, and opens possibilities for interdisciplinary research by joining forces and resources.

The team encourages the University to monitor and analyze the labour market trends especially when it comes to present and future demand for its graduates. Stakeholder presence should be enhanced both at the curriculum-development level in different faculties and in the governance of the institution, and the University should strengthen its connections with the local community and regional business and industry. The team learned that, at present, graduates stand a good chance of finding employment, especially in teaching (certainly in the country, if not in the big cities).

Nevertheless, study programmes should be designed with a view to acquiring knowledge and skills needed in the future. For this reason, working together with representatives from business and industry as well as civic government to design study programmes would be mutually beneficial for the University and future graduates and employers. The meeting with stakeholders pointed to the underlying potential and their willingness to contribute to University development and its regional presence. Even if the self-evaluation report states that there is not too much interest among local entrepreneurs towards, for example, the research production of the University, LTSNU should nevertheless take all possible measures to address the local, regional and national-level stakeholders.

The evaluation team also recommends that LTSNU establish a freely accessible career centre fully funded by the University. Such a centre would provide advice and guidance on campus to students about career possibilities. It is also commonplace for such centre to accumulate data on graduate success and employment making them useful for quality assurance purposes.

Along these lines, the team encourages LTSNU to set up an Alumni centre. The team learned in an interview that departments often track alumni in order to arrange class get-togethers. The potential for tracking graduates is, however, much greater than that. The team encourages the University to start a country-wide campaign to address the general population and as many firms as possible. Specifically, this will also achieve the aim of LTSNU alumni maintaining a good relationship with their Alma Mater. This should result in securing donations for the University as well as cultivating contacts for students for practices and internships and possible employment and, importantly, foster a shared sense of LTSNU identity.

12. Conclusion

The IEP evaluation team heard in almost every meeting that the LTSNU aims to be a European University, which of course, is already the case geographically and because Ukraine has been a signatory to the Bologna process since 2005. In order to be competitive in the European Higher Education Area there are, in summary, some key areas the University should set as *priorities* in its strategy:

- to broaden foreign language proficiency among staff and students

- to concentrate intensively on research by creating a competitive environment, both within the University and with others in the region and towards international partners;

- to implement the ECTS system in its entirety (full workload credits, learning outcomes orientation, learning instead of teaching focus, Diploma Supplement)

- and to implement a University-wide quality assurance system (on the basis of the ESG Part 1 and by setting up a quality assurance plan with set milestones).

The evaluation team congratulates the University for producing such committed students. It met dozens of students and each of them showed great pride in being a member of LTSNU. Some stressed that they chose this University because of its recognized high quality. The team also met many dedicated staff. On this basis, the team believes, LTSNU has a promising future.

The IEP team hopes that its recommendations can help to contribute to making LTSNU a stronger classical University, for the sake and benefit of its staff and students and for the whole region and country. It advises that this report be translated to make it accessible to the broader University community, and through the LTSNU website to the external community. The English version is published on the IEP website.

For an easy overview the report summarises the team's recommendations below.

13. Summary of recommendations

Mission and vision

- Make SWOT analyses a regular part of strategic planning and include an internal discussion of the external factors (Opportunities and Threats) LTSNU may face to attain a useful tool for identifying possible openings for advancement for the future.

- Prepare an amended mission statement (and possibly a separate vision) of the University that reflects LTSNU policy concerning the adoption of the Bologna process. Individual faculties and institutes should prepare their own mission statements, which, while reflecting the specific character of the individual unit, should be consistent with the general mission (and vision) of the University as one with a classical and national status.

Strategic management and strategic plan

- Following agreement on all levels of the University regarding the ambitions and mission of LTSNU, begin a University-wide discussion to agree on a few basic, carefully chosen priorities and attainable goals, and approve a detailed and realistic financial plan with

concrete sums allocated to each project. Similarly, the faculties should create their own individual strategic plans in concert with that devised by the University.

- Have one or two cross-university projects where all the faculties and institutions are involved, for example the systematic introduction of curricula that are comparable and compatible with those in the European Higher Education Area.

- Introduce ECTS for all study programmes as soon as possible and, using the ECTS Users' Guide developed under the coordination of the European Commission, ensure that all staff understands the system.

The role of students in University governance

- Continue enhancing a student-centred culture by ensuring a strong participation of students in the University decision-making bodies and processes at all levels, if possible with voting rights.

Financing and revenue streams

- To optimize available resources, overall University priorities set in the strategic plan should influence the yearly distribution of funds within the University. In addition, design a comprehensive plan supporting the increase of research incomes from external contracts and international grants.

Research

- Building on the existing research plan, develop the research strategy to foster collaboration between different departments to achieve critical mass in research, and expand into interdisciplinary research. If possible, promote the targeted recruitment of new research staff in identified prioritised research areas.

- Implement performance-based rewards (not only in research) across the University in order to strengthen a research (and innovate teaching) culture among the academic staff.

- Encourage participation in international research by expanding staff contacts and performance-based rewards particularly for this type of activity.

- Raise the proportion, currently at 1.1%, of the University budget for research.

- Raise the number of applications for research grants from Ukrainian research funding agency/ies and from abroad. The participation in European programmes, such as the 7th Framework Programme, could be a possibility.

- Set up a technical division, a Centre for International Projects, with staff trained in project writing and management to relieve researchers from some administrative duties and reduce redundancy over the departments.

- Increase the number of quality PhD students, by using in-house grant and stipend schemes as a funding source for young researchers, but also by using other means.

- Aim to produce research publications registered in internationally recognized databases by increasing the University's export of scientific publications, by developing the international exchange of journals, and aiming to edit more than 50% of research publications in international languages. Utilising external reviewers for all publications would raise the quality of research and its publications.

Study programmes and the Bologna process

- Continue developing new programmes, including distance-learning education. Build on the University's existing strengths of establishing areas of excellence, such as the programme for disabled students, where teaching, research and services can be focused to create synergy, also for international cooperation.

- Carefully analyze and discuss the intended learning outcomes for each course and programme and redesign the programme courses to reduce contact hours and increase the independent project and study work of students. The ECTS Users' Guide is a useful tool to explain the approach.

- Increase elective subjects within the student course load to give students more freedom to pursue special, individual interest areas.

- Introduce the diploma supplement developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES to ensure student mobility now and in the future.

- Analyze and discuss the intended learning outcomes for each course and programme, i.e. establishing what a student should know and how s/he can best utilize the knowledge obtained at the bachelor, master and doctoral levels) and redesign the programme courses to reduce contact hours and increase the independent project and study work of students.

Internationalisation

- The team recommends enhancing international exchanges by eliminating the possible barriers to mobility, such as the low flexibility of study programmes, and to ensure the transferability into LTSNU of ECTS credits that students may earn abroad.

- It also recommends that LTSNU continue efforts to provide opportunities to acquire foreign language skills in order to increase the possibility for students and staff to take part in international activities.

- Ensure that all staff and students have access to information about internationalisation and specific projects or opportunities in international activities.

- Strengthen the International Relations Department with a strategic plan for internationalisation at LTSNU, and by placing it under the authority of senior University leadership assigning its own reliable budget.

Quality assurance and development

- The team recommends introducing a University-wide, comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement system. It should include human resources management and all aspects of quality in the daily life of the University and its units.

- Implement the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (European Standards and Guidelines, ESG), Part 1, which is intended for higher education institutions and provides a general set of quality themes relating to teaching and learning that is easily adaptable to all units of a University while instilling a culture of quality among all its members.

Institutional development

- Instead of regarding the six universities in the region as competition, LTSNU could consider establishing cooperation agreements for teaching some courses together and possibly setting up joint projects. This would provide synergies in teaching and research and provide a wider range of choices for students.

- The team encourages the University to monitor and analyze the labour market trends especially when it comes to the present and future demand for its graduates. Stakeholder presence should be enhanced both at the curriculum-development level in different faculties and in the governance of the institution.

- The evaluation team also recommends that LTSNU establish a freely accessible career centre fully funded by the University. Such a centre would provide on campus advice and guidance on career opportunities to students as well as accumulate data on graduate success and employment that is useful for quality assurance purposes.

- The team encourages LTSNU to set up an Alumni centre. It could introduce a country-wide campaign that addresses the general population and targets as many firms as possible. Specifically, this will also achieve the aim of LTSNU alumni maintaining a good relationship with their Alma Mater. This should result in securing donations for the University, as well as contacts for students for practices and internships and possible employment and, importantly, foster a shared sense of LTSNU identity.