ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

Α.ΔΙ.Π.

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ & ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H.Q.A.

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF PYSCHOLOGY

PANTEION UNIVERSITY

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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Psychology of the University of Panteion consisted of the following three (3) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Professor Andrew Papanicolaou (Coordinator)
    University of Tennessee

2. Professor Fofi Constantinidou
    University of Cyprus

3. Professor Gonia Jarema-Arvanitakis
    Université de Montréal

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

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

We, the members of the Evaluation Committee met with the representatives of the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency and later on, in the morning of the first day, with the Department Chair, Professor Robert Mellon. Subsequently, we met with the entire faculty of the Department. Representatives from the faculty presented curricular, research, and clinical practicum activities of the Department. On the second day of the evaluation, we met again with the faculty, clarifying with them several issues. Subsequently, we had a very fruitful discussion with representatives of the student body and then visited the Department facilities. On the third day we met again with the Chairman of the Department, an incredibly accommodating individual and devoted scientist-educator, and with the Rector and vice Rector.

We examined the report of the Internal Evaluation Committee, the Self- Assessment report, as well as information provided during the three-day site visit with faculty, students, staff. We also toured the Department and University facilities.

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

We found the documentation highly informative and complete. The presentations by the Department were well organized and provided additional clarifications. The faculty, student and staff were informative and most accommodating.

A. Curriculum
To be filled separately for each undergraduate, graduate and doctoral
programme.

The overall goal of the Department as described in the Internal Evaluation document is summarized in the following excerpt from the internal evaluation report: " the research and theoretical training of scientists who are able to contribute to the development of psychological knowledge and practice and to the management of complex psychological problems that develop between the individual and the environment. This goal was specified on the inauguration of the program and was published in the government newspaper (Τεύχος Πρώτο/αρ. φύλλου 166/Κεφ. Δ/ἀρθρ.14/16-6-1989) [Η ερευνητική και θεωρητική κατάρτιση επιστημόνων ικανών να συμβάλουν στην ανάπτυξη της ψυχολογικής γνώσης και πρακτικής, καθώς και στην αντιμετώπιση των πολυσύνθετων ψυχολογικών προβλημάτων που αναπτύσσονται ανάμεσα στο άτομο και στο περιβάλλον]

APPROACH

Based on the information provided to us, the curriculum was developed in order to meet the goals mentioned above, taking into consideration the overall objective of the University, which is the study of social sciences and societal issues in general, Specifically, the curriculum was designed in order to meet the following particular objectives:

a. Development of high level knowledge and abilities relating to various psychological theories.
b. Development of critical and theoretical thinking.
c. High level research during the undergraduate and graduate programs via laboratory courses, undergraduate research, graduate research, and doctoral dissertations.
d. Sensitization and clinical training through the practicum experience at one of the collaborating clinical/field sites.
e. Promoting psychology as a profession via mass media and collaborations with other organizations.
f. Connecting the Department's work with the local and scientific community by disseminating work at conferences, workshops and fostering research.

The curriculum has a heavy social and organizational psychology component, which fits the larger University mission. However, given the demographic and sociocultural changes transpiring today, the curriculum ought to be partially revised in order to include aging, dementia, adult psychopathology, and neurodevelopmental disorders. Moreover, the set of core (required) courses ought to be redesigned so as to include more courses in sub-disciplines other than that of Social Psychology and Applied Behavioral Analyses, in order for a more balanced program to emerge. This is desirable in view of the fact that graduates of this Department are allowed by law to

practice as professional psychologists and provide services in all subdomains of the field. Furthermore, practical training in clinical issues such as differential diagnosis, school psychology, and developmental disorders should be incorporated in the curriculum.

IMPLEMENTATION

The curriculum is divided into the following four domains:
- Social Psychology
- Cognitive and Educational Psychology
- Clinical Psychology
- Social Theory and Research

According to the faculty, the distribution of coursework across domains is adequate. However, the neuroscience/neuropsychology courses are taught by unpaid volunteers from other universities. This creates concerns about potential lack of cohesiveness, quality control and reliable availability of the visiting professors. The faculty also mentioned their difficulty in recruiting volunteers to teach the educational/school psychology coursework for which, currently, there is no coverage.

The curriculum was revised in 2010 in order to be consistent with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The number of courses was reduced from 66 to 48. To retain quality of instruction, however, course reduction was accompanied by increasing the number of lecture hours from 2 to 3. Most courses are assigned 4 ECTS credits. Exceptions are the Diploma Thesis (30 ECTS credits) and the Clinical Practicum (15 ECTS credits). Students are required to take four elective courses in each of the sub-disciplines or domains specified above in addition to the required courses.

The Department's strength is in social psychology and social psychology research methods as well as in behavioral analysis. This is reflected in the number of faculty with specialty in social psychology and in the breadth of courses in social psychology and behavioral analysis. Developmental, clinical, and cognitive psychology are also represented, albeit not as prominently. In contrast, the Department relies on external (unpaid) staff members for the teaching of courses relating to the biological basis of human behavior (neuroscience, neuropsychology, psychophysiology). School/educational psychology is not represented at all in the Department. We share the Department's concerns about the over-reliance on volunteers from other universities to cover these needs. We also noted that there is no basic course in psychophysics or perception. According to the faculty, some of these materials are covered in introductory cognitive psychology courses.

RESULTS

Together with the Department faculty we agree that the 4-year basic degree cannot prepare students as professional psychologists. However, in order to provide some degree of clinical or other professional preparation, the program should make some adjustments in order to improve the current curriculum.

IMPROVEMENT

The faculty feels that the basic program is fairly well developed and balanced. Other than the staffing difficulties described above, they do not feel that the program requires any major changes. They also feel strongly that the graduate program, inoperative for a few years, needs to become operational again. They will submit a revised proposal to that effect to the Ministry of Education and apply for funding to support their graduate program as soon as our (external) evaluation is completed. Various ideas were discussed by the faculty regarding the structure of the graduate program, but there are no finalized plans at this point in time. Faculty presented ideas relating to alternative structures of the projected program and its different components, such as a two-year research track (120 ECTS) and a one-year applied track (90 ECTS).

They believe (and we concur) that the graduate program will help meet some deficiencies in clinical, research, and theoretical training of their students. This program would also serve to satisfy the basic prerequisite in the pursuit of a doctoral degree. Furthermore, the availability of the program will result in the retention of many well-trained graduates in the Department who will continue working on research projects with their mentors.

The faculty understands that the creation of a graduate program would increase their teaching load. However, they feel that teaching graduate students would advance the departmental research agenda and also support doctoral research activity.

We had the opportunity to meet with a large number of current students and graduates of the program. We were also able to review some sample undergraduate theses they had written which we found of uniformly high quality. The students were uniformly positive in their assessment of their study program and emphatic in their appreciation of their professors' efforts to maximize the effectiveness of their teaching by volunteering extra time for that purpose. They find the curriculum quite satisfactory although they would wish for some improvement in the following areas. It is worth noting that both we and the faculty agree with the students' assessments and recognized the need for the same improvements:

    1. The 180 hours of practical experience are not sufficient. In view of the fact that the undergraduate curriculum is already loaded, we propose to remedy this problem by extending the 180 hours beyond the three-month span.

Moreover, the quality of the clinical practicum should be enhanced. According to the students, some clinical supervisors do not permit students to be present and observe therapy sessions.

2. In addition to the creation of Masters programs that would provide advanced research and theoretical training, the Department should consider the creation of an applied, clinical Masters degree. This applied program should include more advanced clinical practicum placement. This is a well-identified need within the Greek society and also a need expressed by several of the students during our meeting with them.

3. Scheduling of courses during the week seems to be problematic and required courses are not evenly distributed. Course scheduling should be revisited and modified whenever possible.

4. Students are extremely appreciative of the secretarial support of the Department. However, they pointed out that not all instructors place on the university website (PANDEMOS) the materials of their courses in a timely fashion; we agreed with them that this minor irregularity could be easily remedied in consultation with the instructors and the Department Chair. In fact, the Chair also agreed that this is a readily addressable issue. We also believe that he is correct.

5. The students also commented that occasionally the placement of information on the website regarding the examination schedule, as well as cancellation of classes and other matters is delayed. We agree with the need and the feasibility of announcing the examination schedule well in advance. We doubt, however, if last minute class cancellations could always be announced in a timely fashion.

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

The Department reportedly developed its teaching approach in collaboration with all four Greek departments of Psychology. It thus covers the major areas of the field with particular emphasis on Social Psychology, in keeping with the overall mission of Panteion University. Characteristically, both faculty and students expressed their great satisfaction in collaborating on various projects together, both while acquiring skills within the curriculum (such as applying statistical methods to concrete sample experiments), and while implementing the knowledge acquired during the development of the undergraduate thesis.

We noted that, despite the inadequacy of means and resources (see under implementation below) there appears to be a collegial atmosphere amongst all members of the Department, faculty, students and secretarial staff alike. The overall sense is that there exists a general feeling of solidarity and a will to make things work to achieve the highest possible standards, despite limited teaching, technical and secretarial staff and poor infrastructure.

IMPLEMENTATION

The greatest complaint of both students and the faculty was about the extremely insufficient classroom space (70 seats for 140 students) and the lack of basic infrastructure (such as projectors and screens). The 23 faculty of the Department share two projectors and screens that they carry with them from classroom to classroom. (See Section F of this evaluation report for our recommendation for a permanent solution to this problem).

Most contemporary universities have implemented on-line classroom management systems such as Blackboard and others. Currently, no such system exists at Panteion. We were informed, however, that e-class will implemented by the end of 2013.

Teaching and research in the Department of Psychology is greatly enhanced through its involvement in the ERASMUS Program. The University's Center with its staff of three, organizes and oversees both faculty and student exchanges between several European countries. The Department of Psychology participates intensively in the program with several faculty and students spending time abroad and furthering

their education each year. Likewise, the Department also hosts students and faculty from abroad.

Panteion University ranks fourth among all Greek (22) Universities in their number of Erasmus exchanges. In order to promote student participation from abroad, Panteion University offers free room and board, and as well as Greek language courses at the University of Athens Language Center.

Although the Erasmus website posts some information in English, it requires further development in order to be easily accessible to students and staff abroad.

RESULTS

The Department of Psychology at Panteion University recruits top high school graduates for Psychology from all over Greece. We noted that about 50% of the students do not graduate after four years of study. Even though this percentage seems high, it is consistent with other public universities in Greece.

IMPROVEMENT

Based on information provided by the Faculty, recent changes in the University regulations will remedy the aforementioned problem (discrepancy in graduating). Students will be required to complete their studies within a specified period of time (6 years).

C. Research

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

APPROACH

There are four laboratories in the Department, the main purpose of which is purely didactic: the Laboratory of Social and Experimental Psychology, the Laboratory of Criminology and Clinical Psychology, the Laboratory of Behavioural Analysis and the Laboratory of Virtual Reality and Electronic Education. Much of the educational work on the applications of statistics and experimental design is accomplished in the context of these laboratories. Original research on the part of the faculty and participating graduate and undergraduate students is carried out in the three research centers: the Center of Social Psychology and Public Opinion Research, the Center of Cultural Development and Social Isolation and the Center of Psychosocial Research and of Management of Virtual Communities. Student participation in the first two laboratories is mandatory, while their participation in the other two is optional, as is their involvement in the research centers.

IMPLEMENTATION

Departmental support for research is very difficult given that there is no research infrastructure and no governmental funds available for conducting research. In fact, the procurement of extramural funds was until recently impossible and individual faculty members could only apply for research funding as co-investigators in projects that were initiated and managed by other institutions. Nevertheless, individual faculty members sought and obtained funding in that indirect manner for their research, allowing for some research activity in the Department.

Furthermore, they encouraged their students, both graduate and undergraduate, to actively participate in various research initiatives within the Department and to disseminate the results obtained in conferences at national and, occasionally, at international conferences. Another way in which research is encouraged in the Department is through participation in the Erasmus program, which allows both students and faculty to visit research institutions abroad (as commented above). Further interactions with researchers abroad were made possible through EU COST Action.

Laboratory infrastructure
There is no technical laboratory staff. Their presence is important in order to maintain the laboratories and also for the programming of experiments.

RESULTS

The publication record of the Faculty over the five years of the evaluation period includes:
- 132 original research papers in peer-reviewed journals;
- 25 textbooks and monographs
- 62 chapters in edited volumes

It is clear that the profile of productivity is rather atypical because of the disproportionally greater volume of books as opposed to original research reports. However, we realize the need for such books in Greek and appreciate the effort of the Faculty in fulfilling it. Clearly, this trend should be reversed in the near future, given that the critical mass of psychology textbooks in Greek is about to be reached. Thus the proportion of original research publications should be gradually increased.

One of the main impediments in research activity in the Department is the lack of extramural funding on which we have commented above. Some members of the faculty attributed this fact to the poor logistic support within the Department and the University and the perceived lack of interest of the funding agencies in supporting research in the area of Social Psychology and Cognition. We recognize that these are indeed important hindrances but they are operative across all psychology departments in Greek universities, as well as in European and North American universities. Therefore, we recommend perseverance in seeking funding in order to advance the Department's research agenda.

D. All Other Services
For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

APPROACH

The Department has three full-time administrative assistants who manage all of its secretarial and administrative matters. The Faculty and students are very satisfied with the services rendered by the office staff. The office staff appears to work well together and share responsibilities.

The Department lacks technical support for information technology, audiovisual devices, computers, and other devices used for teaching and for the conduct of research. Furthermore, there is no webmaster available and the burden for developing and updating the Department's website falls upon the office staff.

IMPLEMENTATION

The University has a well-organized and developed library system and services. The library spaces are adequate and conducive to studying and well attended by the Department's students. However, library hours are limited; they do not extend into late evenings or the weekend.

The Panteion Library is staffed with highly qualified librarians who offer introductory and advanced seminars to new and upper-level students and provide regular library support to students and faculty. The library holdings consist of hard copies and electronic journals, books, and databases. These are judged to be satisfactory for the needs of the Department. The students were very satisfied with the remote access system of the library holdings. This allows them to work effectively from home and is consistent with general practice at other universities internationally.

Reportedly, Psychology students have a higher presence on campus in comparison to other departments at Panteion University. Indeed we observed a large number of students attending class during the day of our visit. Furthermore, many students participated in the scheduled meeting with us and were very forthcoming in the discussions.

RESULTS

The office support (three secretaries) seems to be adequate for the current needs of the Department. However, technical support is lacking and should be provided. This is very important as it relates to all computing and laboratory activities.

IMPROVEMENTS

One important recommendation for improving services relates to interruptions in the timely renewal of the online journal access, in particular, psycINFO. Delays hamper student and faculty access to the desired literature and interfere with learning and research.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

The Department has developed several important collaborations with the greater community. Specifically, the Department has established collaborations with approximately 100 clinical practicum sites that include hospitals, day centers, schools, and clinics. Furthermore, it routinely offers lectures to increase public awareness of psychological processes, conditions and management of disorders to municipalities, private and public schools, social clubs, public organizations, and non-governmental organizations. In addition, the Faculty reaches large numbers of citizens through media presentations and the press.

One of Department's latest initiatives is the creation of a Student Counseling Service Center in collaboration with Student Affairs. This social involvement contributes to improving the well being of the broader society and to the University's visibility to stakeholders.

On an academic level, faculty in the Department of Psychology collaborate with colleagues at a number of Greek Universities.

E. Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential Inhibiting Factors
For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

All long term planning is contingent upon governmental support (see Section F below).

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC
For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate
level, if necessary.

The Psychology Department grew over the years in the context of the premier Social and Political Science Institution in the Country. It is therefore not surprising that its major focus is Social Psychology. Nevertheless other sub-disciplines of Psychology are also cultivated in it. This enables its graduates to receive a well-rounded basic education in Psychology and prepare them for post-graduate studies here and abroad. There are of course some deficiencies in the structure of the curriculum. These deficiencies have also been pointed out to us by the faculty and attempts have been made to correct them principally with invited faculty from other universities. But this issue cannot be solved efficiently and permanently without the intervention of the Government. Furthermore, we recommend the restructuring of the required courses to reflect a more balanced curriculum as indicated above. Additionally, clinical practicum sites should be carefully selected so as to maximize student exposure and active involvement in the practice of psychology.

Long-term research planning in the Department is also hampered by the lack of funds for creating the requisite infrastructure that would attract substantial extra-mural funds to support research activity. Some faculty are successful in obtaining funds by entering collaborative agreements as co-investigators with colleagues from other Universities. However, more effort on the part of the faculty as a whole is required, as it is the only realistic way to obtain sufficient research support under the conditions prevailing in the country today.

The University Administration should recognize the need for functional research laboratories in Psychology research. Psychology is an experimental science with greater needs for research related instrumentation and resources as compared to more theoretical social sciences such as Political Science or Sociology. Therefore, the University should allocate funds accordingly.

The University, with a negligible expenditure of effort and funds, could enhance its international visibility by carefully editing the current website and, most importantly, by creating an English version of the site.

However, the basic problem of the lack of infrastructure for research, and also for proper instruction noted by the students the faculty and by us, could only be solved permanently through increase in funding of the University (therefore the Department) by the Ministry of Education.

The lack of teaching staff in particular sub-disciplines such as in School Psychology or in Psychophysics is a structural problem whose ultimate solution may be achieved eventually by the Ministry of Education. An intermediate solution however may be

possible by sharing of expertise across universities in a more consistent manner and on a more stable basis than is currently attempted, if this is possible in the context of current regulations. For example, the Panteion Department of Psychology could supply expertise in Social Psychology to other university departments lacking in that area and receive expertise in teaching Psychophysiology from the University of Crete-Rethymnon or some other Institution. This exchange in expertise could also be accomplished through e-learning teaching and classroom systems and videoconferencing.

The Department of Psychology of Panteion University consists of 23 full time faculty. All faculty are in senior ranks with the exception of one assistant professor. The University has recently lost four faculty members due to retirement, and another five faculty members are expected to retire in the next 5 years. The last addition to the faculty was in 2007 and, according to the testimony of the faculty, there are no possibilities for any new additions in the future. We are seriously concerned about the "aging" faculty and the lack of faculty renewal. The Ministry needs to consider this problem and deal with it strategically.

In view of the fact all graduates from departments of psychology in Greece have the right to practice the profession, this Psychology Department (as all others) is saddled with the impossible task of training professional psychologists within the span of eight semesters. The task is impossible for two reasons: First, because besides the academic specialties (e.g. Experimental, Cognitive, Psychophysiological, etc.) there are many professional Psychology specialties (e.g. Clinical, School, Industrial/ Human factors, Neuropsychology) each of which requires several hundreds of supervised hours of practical training, in psychiatric hospitals, schools, the industry, rehabilitation clinics respectively. However, each student can now receive only a total 180 hours of supervised practice in only one of the above settings (therefore become familiar with only one specialization). Yet, the student is legally enabled to provide professional services in any of the above named specialties although he or she does not have any training in most except one and adequate training in none. This situation may be rectified by restricting the right to practice only to those graduates of the four-year program who have completed additional professional training in a particular specialty. As to what constitutes adequate training, it should be decided by all academic psychologists of all universities in the country that award degrees in Psychology, taking into account the special needs of the Greek society. Definitely, however, the practical training students now receive is inadequate.

The second reason the task of this and of all psychology departments is impossible, is that the number of students accepted is not determined by the existing potential of the Department, in terms of infrastructure and personnel, to educate and train professional psychologists, but by other factors that influence the decrees of the Ministry of Education, which specify every year the number of students each university department must admit and train.

Both of these issues can be addressed only by the Government and neither can be addressed by the faculty of the psychology departments or the university rectors.

The Members of the Committee

     Name and Surname   Signature

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____