

**FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS**

***EUA FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT***

***February 2005***

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	paragraphs	pages
<b>FOREWORD</b>	1	3
<b>THE EUA FOLLOW-UP EVALUATIONS</b>	2	4
<b>THE FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION PROCESS IN UCY</b>		
<b>1. Introduction</b>	3	5
<b>2. The new environment in Cyprus</b>	4	6
<b>3. Major internal changes in UCY since 2001</b>		
3.1 Changes concerning facts	5	7
3.2 Changes concerning policies	6	8
<b>4. Recalling the primary recommendations of the 2001 evaluation</b>	7	9
<b>5. The findings of the follow-up evaluation</b>		
5.1 Introductory remarks	8	10
5.2 Strategic and developmental issues	9-12	10
5.3 Leadership, decision-making and management issues	13-14	13
5.4 The University and the State	15	14
5.5 The University and Society	16	15
5.6 Issues concerning students and studies	17	16
5.7 Issues concerning research	18	17
5.8 Issues concerning quality culture	19	17
5.9 Issues concerning the relations between academic and administrative staff	20	18
<b>CONCLUDING REMARKS</b>	21	19

## **FOREWORD**

### *§ 1*

During 2001, the University of Cyprus (abbreviated as “UCY”) requested an institutional evaluation by the then CRE. The preliminary visit and the main visit to UCY took place in February and June 2001 respectively. The evaluation report was presented in September 2001.

Almost three years later, the UCY requested from CRE (now EUA) a follow-up evaluation. The request was made by the Rector of the University, Professor Stavros Zenios, who was not the Rector during the original evaluation.

The follow-up visit took place from 24 to 26 November 2004. The follow-up team (referred to as “Team”) consisted of:

- Professor Inge Jonsson (chairman), Stockholm University (Sweden);
- Professor Emeritus Bertrand Weil, Université Paris 12 (France);
- Professor Dionyssi Kladis (secretary), University of the Peloponnese (Greece).

Professors Inge Jonsson and Dionyssi Kladis were also members of the original evaluation team, as chairman and secretary respectively.

## **THE EUA FOLLOW-UP EVALUATIONS**

### **§ 2**

Since 1998, CRE (now EUA) has offered, as an extension to its Institutional Evaluation Programme, the possibility of a follow-up evaluation, combined with a follow-up visit. The rationale is that the follow-up evaluation can assist the university in evaluating the progress it has made since the original evaluation. What was the impact of the original evaluation? What use has the university 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 university to take stock of its strategies for managing change in the context of internal and external constraints and opportunities.

In line with the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme as a whole, the follow-up process is a supportive one. There is no prescribed procedure, and it is for the university itself to set the agenda in the light of its experiences since the original evaluation. The university is expected to submit a self-evaluation report, in which it will describe the progress made, possibly indicating barriers to change. The university's report will also indicate the issues it wishes to discuss with the follow-up team.

Monitoring the impact of the recommendations presented in the original report is one of the primary aims of the follow-up process. However, and since the overall evaluation process is a dynamic and not a static one, the follow-up evaluation should take into account new developments and reforms, both within the institution and within its wider environment, and adapt its recommendations accordingly. Furthermore, the follow-up process could also review and give feedback on the problems that may have occurred in the implementation of the recommendations.

Finally, for EUA, the follow-up evaluations provide in fact valuable information on the relevance and the adequacy of the Institutional Evaluation Programme itself, indicating areas of consolidation and improvement that would benefit all EUA's members.

# **THE FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION PROCESS IN UCY**

## **1. Introduction**

### **§ 3**

The preparation of the follow-up evaluation and the organisation of the visit were supervised by the Rector, Professor Stavros Zenios. The UCY provided the members of the EUA Team with an informative Self-Evaluation Report (SER) that contained valuable information and documentation material. The preparation of the SER and related material and the overall steering of the follow-up work in UCY were carried out by Mr. Andreas Christofides, Director of Administration and Finance, who served as liaison person between UCY and the Team, and by Ms. Marina Petridou, University Officer, who served as the contact person between the UCY and the Team.

During the follow-up visit, the Team had separate meetings with the Rector and the Vice-Rectors, Council members, Planning and Development Committee members, Heads of Departments, Heads of the Central Administration and student representatives. These meetings were followed by the follow-up forum during the last morning, where the chairman of the evaluation team, Professor Inge Jonsson, presented the thoughts of the Team on the diverse issues raised during the visit, giving ground to a debate with the various key players in the University concerning the necessary future steps.

The Team wishes to express its cordial thanks to the Rector of UCY, Professor Stavros Zenios, to the Vice-Rectors, Professors Elpida Keravnou-Papailiou and Christos Schizas, and the Director of Administration and Finance, Mr. Andreas Christofides, for the preparation of the report and material, but also for preparing and organising the follow-up visit in the most effective way. The help that the Team received in terms of the adequate information and documentation and the overall organisation of all meetings and interviews was invaluable. In particular, the Team wishes to express its very special thanks to Ms Marina Petridou, who played a key role in the overall process as the contact person between UCY and the Team. Finally, the Team thanks the people of UCY for their generous hospitality, which once again made its visit as challenging and delightful as the two visits during the original evaluation.

## **2. The new environment in Cyprus**

### **§ 4**

The present follow-up evaluation takes place in a period characterised by significant changes, which occurred since the original evaluation and which affect the surrounding environment and, thus, the overall situation of UCY and its long-term strategic planning as well.

Major change in the national context is of course the accession of Cyprus to the European Union in 2003. At the same time, the intensive debate on a potential solution of the Cyprus problem has now moved higher on the political agenda. Although the future cannot be foreseen, the alternative parameters of this solution have now to be taken into account for any strategic planning of UCY.

Major changes occurred also during these three years in the area of Cyprus higher education, with the establishment of two new state Universities, the Technological University and the Open University. Furthermore, the expected upgrading of some of the existing private institutions and their transformation into private universities is another development in this field. And, of course, the implementation of the objectives set by the Bologna Process (joined by Cyprus in 2001 in Prague) is another important parameter to be taken into account.

It is in this new environment that UCY has prepared its Strategic Plan for the period 2004-2020, which has already been submitted to the Senate and the Council for discussion and approval.

It is obvious, therefore, that this follow-up evaluation takes place in an extremely crucial period for the further development of UCY and that the overall environment is in many cases different than the one existing during the original evaluation in 2001.

### **3. Major changes in UCY since 2001**

#### **3.1 Changes concerning facts**

##### **§ 5**

Much has been done in UCY since 2001. There are changes concerning facts, but there are also changes concerning policies as well.

Significant developments in the UCY have to be mentioned with regards to facts:

- Increase of the student population. Students enrolment increased by almost 40 per cent at the undergraduate level (from 2750 to 3780) and by almost 235 per cent at the graduate level (from 290 to 970).
- Increase in the number of academic and administrative staff, but at lower rates. The increase in the number of academic staff was almost 10 per cent (from 196 to 216), while the increase in the number of administrative staff was almost 17 per cent (from 171 to 209). This resulted in an improvement of the ratio between administrative and academic staff from 1:1.15 to 1:1.03. However, it is clear that the ratio between academic staff and students (especially the undergraduate ones) has deteriorated from 1:14 to 1:17.5.
- A new Faculty of Engineering has started its operation with its first three Departments from the academic year 2003-04 and a fourth one from the academic year 2004-05. At the same time, the restructuring of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has resulted in the creation of two new Faculties, the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, which replaced the previous one. In that way, the number of Faculties under operation has been increased from four (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Management, Faculty of Letters) to six (Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Management, Faculty of Letters). At the same time, the number of Departments offering undergraduate study programmes was increased from 13 to 18.
- The new University Campus has started to operate. There is one Faculty, the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, which has already moved to the modern facilities of the new Campus, and the first Student Residence is operating there as well.

### **3.2 Changes concerning policies**

#### **§ 6**

Significant changes can also be identified concerning policies, which may be summarised as follows:

- The development of a new funding mechanism, leading to the negotiation and mutual approval of a “Social Contract” between the Government and the University, is perhaps one of the most important changes, which is expected to rationalise state funding and increase UCY’s accountability.
- A New Research Policy is already implemented, aimed at a balanced support of both basic and applied research on the one hand and humanities, sciences and technology on the other. The New Research Policy aims also at supporting both project-type and individual research work, with special emphasis on new staff members who are supported with start-up funds.
- Significant changes can be identified in the field of teaching. Many of them are closely related to the implementation of the objectives of the Bologna Process (namely, the introduction of the ECTS to all study programmes – including doctoral programmes – both as a transfer and as an accumulation system, the issue of the Diploma Supplement and the approval of rules governing joint programmes). Other significant changes are the possibility at UCY to offer all its postgraduate courses in an international language apart from the Greek language, the establishment of a Centre for Teaching and Learning, aimed at improving the teaching and pedagogical abilities of teaching staff, and the establishment of a Language Centre, aimed at promoting the policy “Your language plus two”.
- The emphasis given to the relations of UCY with Society at large and its communication with potential stakeholders can be considered as another significant policy change. It has been implemented through a cluster of measures, namely the establishment of a Communications Office, the preparation of a Public Relations Strategic Plan, the launch of a fundraising campaign under the title “University of Cyprus 2010: Towards European Excellence” with the aim of enhancing the University’s role in Society by attracting potential benefactors, the establishment of the Centre for Scientific, Continuing Education, Evaluation and Development, aimed at broadening the University’s social intervention in the context of lifelong learning, the establishment of Diogenes Business Incubator focused on high technology, the establishment of an Alumni Office and the preparation of the UCY Broadcasting Station.
- The establishment of the European Collaboration Office, based in Brussels, is another important development concerning policies, aimed at strengthening the position of UCY in the European (international) landscape, with regards to both its participation in European programmes and information on future European policies.



## **4. Recalling the primary recommendations of the 2001 evaluation**

### **§ 7**

One of the major concerns of the Team was to review the primary recommendations set in the 2001 evaluation report and try to identify whether there was a response from UCY to these recommendations. In this context, the following issues were considered by the Team:

- In which way has UCY considered the major reservations in the 2001 evaluation report, concerning the development and the implementation of the concept of the “complete” university, corresponding to the traditional idea of “pan-epistimio” and to the Humboldt model?
- How has UCY dealt with the existing dual structure in decision-making and leadership, comprising the Senate and the Council, which was one of the primary reservations in the 2001 evaluation report?
- How has UCY dealt with the issue of the internal distribution of power among the various levels (Institution – Faculty – Departments) and how has the necessity of decentralisation of power been faced?
- Whether the relationship between UCY and Society at large has been improved?
- How has UCY faced the recommendations of the 2001 evaluation report which dealt with issues related to students and studies, as for example the issues concerning counselling, assessment of teaching and courses by the students, pedagogical training of teaching staff, shift from teaching-oriented to learning-oriented approach?
- How has UCY dealt with issues concerning the teaching staff, and especially the lack of critical mass in every scientific field and the necessity for efficient policies regarding staff development and staff recruitment?
- How has the problem of the administrative staff been approached by UCY, especially with regards the tensions between the academic and administrative staff and the necessity for motivating administrative staff through/for active involvement in the university’s affairs?
- Has UCY found the equilibrium, which had been recommended in the 2001 evaluation report, between programme-type and project-type research and between research on group basis and on individual basis?
- How has UCY improved its internationalisation policies? Has the language issue been considered in the various decision-making levels?

## **5. The findings of the follow-up evaluation**

### **5.1 Introductory remarks**

#### **§ 8**

The Team understands that the EUA original evaluation in 2001 had been a catalyst for UCY in the years that followed. After the EUA evaluation report and under the new leadership of the University, an ad hoc Committee consisting mostly of Council and Senate members examined the report in detail and suggested actions based on the report recommendations. Most of these actions have been implemented during the last three years, while others are on their way.

The Team wishes to emphasise that it has been impressed by the serious work that UCY has devoted to implementing many of the recommendations, and in that sense the Team feels definitely the need to commend the leadership and the staff, academic and administrative, for this. Furthermore, the Team notes with great appreciation that UCY has interpreted the original report exactly as it had to be intended, as an attempt to assist the University in its efforts to promote the quality of all the activities which are expected from a European university in the 21st century. Similarly, the Team does hope that UCY will read this follow-up report in the same spirit, even those parts which may be critical in various respects. The follow-up report should be considered as an account of the Team's impressions from reading the SER and other documents and from the very open and frank discussions during the follow-up visit at UCY.

### **5.2 Strategic and developmental issues**

#### **§ 9**

In the original report some reservations had been raised about the mission statement of UCY as an expression of the traditional Humboldt model of a complete university, a “pan-epistimio” in the full sense of the word. These reservations arose from the extended discussions during the two visits of the original evaluation, but also from the content of the mission statement included in the then Self-Evaluation Report, setting the aim for UCY to become a leading research and teaching institution in the region, the “region” being specified to include not only Cyprus but also the Middle East and the Mediterranean region. According to this SER, the expansion of UCY, to enable it to become a “complete” university comprising all traditional study fields, had been set as a consequence of the realisation of this vision.

In the revised version of the SER for the original evaluation, the breadth of the vision was connected to the fact that UCY was the first and, at that time, the only university in the country. But, it was further mentioned that this need will continue to exist even when a second university is created, because this new university will have a vocational character and

a more practical orientation. Now, it is not clear whether the characteristics of the already established second University in Cyprus will be similar to those that were expected in the past. Since it is a Technological University, an overlapping to some extent with UCY should be expected, at least regarding the activities of the Faculty of Engineering. Of course, there is no room for overlapping with the third University, since it has quite different characteristics and objectives, being an Open University.

It could be argued, therefore, that, regarding the vision of UCY, the external conditions have been changed at least slightly after the establishment of the two new Universities in Cyprus. And it is not clear whether they will change even more after the upgrading of some of the existing private tertiary institutions and their transformation into private universities. The UCY community believes that there will be no significant changes. And this explains why the new wording for the vision of UCY, which has now been included in the proposal of the Strategic Plan 2004-2020, does not lead to considerable change. There is no doubt that the text for the vision of the UCY has now been rephrased in a more realistic direction, since it now defines the aims for the University to become a pioneering, distinguished, and competitive university in the European Higher Education and Research Area, both in education and research, which will be *“recognised internationally as a centre of excellence in the Eastern Mediterranean”*.

However, the Team understands that UCY has not changed its basic attitude of aiming at offering a great many programmes. No doubt that UCY is the pioneer in establishing higher education in the Republic of Cyprus, and it is only natural that it wants to be competitive also when it comes to the breadth of its curricula. But the situation is a little bit different from what it was in 2001 and this may motivate some second thoughts about the future. Irrespective of their specific characteristics, two other state universities have been already established and private universities are expected to emerge through the upgrading of the existing private tertiary institutions. And this reality cannot be ignored.

## **§ 10**

One of the major arguments presented to the Team during the various meetings is the strong demand from Society for further expansion of UCY to the highest number of Faculties, Departments and study programme provision. This is understandable since it seems that Society still considers UCY as the only real or typical university in Cyprus. And, according to Society’s approach, the concept of the university is combined with the idea of the “pan-epistimio” mentioned earlier. The Team can understand this approach of Society. And it was one of the major recommendations in the original evaluation report that UCY should strengthen its links to Society anyway and be responsive to the needs and the demands of Society. Accordingly, the pressure from Society cannot be ignored anyway. But, at the same time, this pressure cannot lead to strategic decisions which in the long run may trap the University in a dead end situation or may induce conditions not manageable.

## **§ 11**

However, the Team has the impression that the concept of “expansion” is not solely related to the demands or pressure from Society. Another important reason may be the centrifugal forces which exist already in UCY. The split of the former Faculty Humanities and Social Sciences into two Faculties (Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Education and Social Sciences) is a characteristic example. And the centrifugal forces at work are even clearer in the fact that the new Faculty of Humanities exists in parallel to the Faculty of Letters. The rational tendency should be to merge Faculties to wider ones with increased specific weight in the distribution of power inside the University instead of dividing them into smaller and less powerful units.

The Team has to emphasise that there is a widespread tendency in other parts of Europe these days to demand universities to concentrate their efforts in specific areas, to select their particular profile, and, as the other side of the same coin, to co-operate. Aiming at excellence in all fields looks like a utopia nowadays. The Team is aware that the developmental objectives identified in the Strategic Plan 2004-2020 include the establishment of three new Faculties, which will for sure increase the specific weight of UCY both at the scientific and the societal levels. However, bearing in mind the specific characteristics and the size of these three Faculties (Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Fine Arts), it is easy to imagine the Herculean efforts needed for managing UCY and for retaining the strategic aim of the university to improve and reach excellence in all fields.

## § 12

The Team feels that, under these circumstances, UCY will also have to consider the side effects of its strategic choices as well. An example may be the size of the Faculties and the Departments in terms of both students and teaching staff. This is already a problem today. Most Faculties have a rather small number of students and academic staff. This is natural, given the size of the country and the tendency of young Cypriots to study abroad. Today, one of the major problems in UCY is the lack of critical mass of academic staff in most Faculties and Departments. But, most likely, this situation will continue in the future, especially under conditions of wide expansion of the disciplines in UCY. This lack of critical mass will contradict the ambitions of UCY to create excellent milieus, particularly for research. It is interesting to note here that the situation monitored during the original evaluation, and characterised by one or two academics per research field, has not changed today. Indeed, the slight increase in the number of academics since 2001 from 196 to 216, is accompanied by the increase in the number of Departments from 13 to 18.

Under these conditions, the Team can only recommend that UCY should handle with care and wisdom the sensitive issue of its long-term expansion to other study fields and especially to consider the interrelation and interdependence between this expansion and the strategic aim for excellence. This means that UCY has to develop a well-balanced long-term strategy concerning “expansion” and “excellence”, taking also due account of the crucial external parameters, such as available resources and the development of the new Campus.

### **5.3 Leadership, decision-making and management**

#### **§ 13**

In the original report, serious doubts were uttered about the rationality of the dual decision-making system that is represented by the two highest boards of UCY, the Council and the Senate. However, from what was learnt during the follow-up visit the Team is prepared to withdraw from its critical position. It should nevertheless be noted that the newly established universities have not been structured in the same way. What seems to be important here is that UCY has found ways to avoid overlapping or conflicts arising from a dual decision-making system and to take advantage of the positive aspects of this duality. The Team has appreciated that all the fundamental work for the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2004-2020 has been made by one single Committee, the Planning and Development Committee, which the Team had the opportunity to meet and interview during the follow-up visit. And this was one of the 2001 recommendations.

The Team has also appreciated that significant steps have been taken in the direction noted in the recommendations of the 2001 report. For example, a Rectorate Council and a second position of Vice-Rector have been established, while at the same time the Senate has transferred the responsibilities for some day-to-day affairs either to the Rectorate Council or to various Committees operating under the responsibility of the Senate. It is interesting to note here that there are 14 such Committees, where a large number of persons (academics, administrators, students) are involved. This practice has helped the university leadership to improve the active participation of the members of the university community in the discussion of crucial matters for the University, while at the same time, it has reserved for the Senate more time for discussing more important and future-oriented issues. These are very positive steps, in the view of the Team, which is convinced that the reservations heard in some interviews about such a distribution of power will disappear, when people realise that nobody will misuse the confidence shown by the Senate. Besides, it is always possible for the Senate to withdraw its mandates if an unlikely situation would occur that makes it necessary.

The Team stresses once more the need for the Senate to focus on more or less strategic and future-oriented issues. This requires availability of time, as was mentioned earlier, but at the same time it requires the possibility for the Senate to set priorities at the institutional level for the priorities already identified at the Faculty and Department levels. The latter is a delicate and sensitive issue, which seems extremely difficult with the existing structure of the Senate, not so much because of the large number of its members (30 members), but mainly because of the federal type of Faculty representation in the Senate (five persons from each Faculty, namely, the Dean plus three representatives of the teaching staff plus one student representative). It is interesting to mention here one eloquent phrase said during the meeting with the Council: *“It is not possible to prioritise (at institutional level) the priorities of the Faculties”*.

## **§ 14**

Apart from what has been mentioned earlier, the Team does not have the impression that the 2001 recommendation to make a thorough revision of the actual decision-making practice at UCY has been completely implemented yet. As an example, the Team is still uncertain whether the manner of distributing money and posts is sufficiently transparent. Some remarks by the Heads of Departments are the cause of this uncertainty. The Team understands that there are two paths through which the internal distribution of power is exercised. One path includes the Senate, the Rectorate Council and the various Committees of the Senate. The other path includes the three levels: the institutional, the Faculty and the Department levels. It is indeed a complicated issue to find the balance within each path but also between the two paths. And this is one of the most important tasks of the University's leadership, and at the same time a real challenge.

As a matter of fact, there were contradictory views concerning the internal distribution of power, especially regarding the Faculty and Department levels. On the one hand, the Deans of Faculties complain that the real power lies with the Heads of Departments. This seems indeed to be the case according to the legislation. But, on the other hand, the Heads of Departments complain that the Deans of the Faculties have the power of affecting the decisions of the Senate in which they participate. The Team has the impression that this situation leads to internal conflicts which must be avoided. One recommendation could be that the UCY leadership should foster even further the already existing participatory procedures, with the aim of stimulating the active involvement of the key actors at all levels of the university's organisation.

### **5.4 The University and the State**

## **§ 15**

Since the overall higher education environment in Cyprus has already changed and has become more complex (and inclusive), the relations of UCY to the State are also changing in order to adapt to the new reality. National structures are being created for the first time in order to include all higher education institutions. The National Council of Higher Education is operating already, while the establishment of a National Agency for Quality Assurance is under consideration. The establishment of the Rectors' Conference of Cyprus Universities, which is operating too, is another result of this new environment, although at first sight it is an internal affair of the higher education institutions. However, in almost all European countries, the Rectors' Conferences act as the link between the higher education institutions and the State at national level and in most cases play a consultative role to the Government. Accordingly, UCY will have to organise its future relations with the State on two levels, one direct and one indirect, the second applied through the various national structures. What is new under these new circumstances, with relation to the recommendations of the 2001 evaluation report, is in fact the role of the Ministry of Education, which now has to become more visible and supportive of higher education institutions. The Team believes that, as the pioneer University, UCY will continue to play its leading role in the higher education system

in Cyprus, either inside or outside the national structures. In that direction, UCY has to continue to take initiatives, like the ones concerning its proposals for the establishment of the national system for quality assurance and for the establishment of a National Agency of Culture.

A significant improvement in that direction since 2001 was the establishment of a new budgeting mechanism through the system of the “Social Contracts” which are conducted between each University and the Ministry of Finance. These “Social Contracts” relate state financing with the goals set by institutions and gives them significant freedom in order to implement their plans with the allocated resources for a given period of time. This is indeed an improvement that is in step with current trends in many European countries.

The Team also believes that the ambitions of UCY to recruit highly qualified faculty and administrators are hampered by some rather old-fashioned legal constraints. Of course, the University is obliged to abide the law, but since it has already succeeded in changing the law in other aspects, the Team wants to give its support to continue to put pressure on the political authorities for further improvement. Another example is the already achieved change of the law providing now the right for UCY to give courses in English at the graduate level, which was also one of the 2001 recommendations, and for which the Team commends the University.

## **5.5 The University and Society**

### **§ 16**

The Team has appreciated that UCY has made admirable efforts to improve its relations to Society, as was recommended in the 2001 report. As a matter of fact, the important thing is not the measures taken but the strategic decision of the University to open itself to Society, following one of the 2001 recommendations. It is interesting to note here that one of the supportive arguments heard during the follow-up evaluation for the necessity of the existence of the Council as a separate body in the decision-making structure was that the Council “*sends signals from Society to the University*”. And this is a serious approach of course.

The major measures in that direction have already been mentioned earlier in paragraph 6 and are simply repeated here: It is the establishment of a Communications Office, the preparation of a Public Relations Strategic Plan, the launch of a fundraising campaign under the title “University of Cyprus 2010: Towards European Excellence” with the aim of enhancing its role in Society by attracting potential benefactors, the establishment of the Centre for Scientific, Continuing Education, Evaluation and Development, aimed at broadening the University’s social intervention in the context of lifelong learning, the establishment of an Alumni Office and the preparation of the UCY Broadcasting Station.

The establishment of Diogenes Business Incubator focused on high technology could also be mentioned in this section of the report, since it should be considered as an effort of UCY to adapt to the new policy for the technological and industrial development in Cyprus. The Team has been informed also of other similar initiatives in this direction, like the establishment of science parks, research institutes etc.

## **5.6 Issues concerning students and studies**

### **§ 17**

The Team was a little surprised that the SER has passed the students in almost complete silence, and even more surprised that the students whom the Team met did not seem bothered about it. The surprise arises from the fact that the 2001 recommendations mentioned at least three important issues concerning students and studies, namely the issues concerning counselling, assessment of teaching and courses by the students and pedagogical training of teaching staff, together with the major issue of the required shift from teaching-oriented to learning-oriented approaches.

Of course, there were significant changes since 2001, mostly related to the implementation of the objectives of the Bologna Process. These changes were the introduction of the ECTS to all study programmes of UCY – including doctoral programmes – both as a transfer and an accumulation system, the issue of the Diploma Supplement and the approval of rules governing joint programmes. Furthermore, the Team has observed with satisfaction that a Teaching and Learning Support Centre has already been created, responding to the 2001 recommendation stressing the need for pedagogical training of the UCY teaching staff, as well as a Language Centre. The Team wishes also to mention the increased students' participation in the decision-making structures of UCY which took place two years ago. However, it was not clear to the Team whether this increased participation was followed by a more active involvement of students in UCY's affairs. Finally, the Team understands that most issues concerning students and studies constitute part of the Regulations for Studies and Student Affairs, which was waiting for the approval by the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus.

As mentioned already, the SER does not mention the shift from teaching-oriented to learning-oriented processes. However, it seems that this major issue is already under consideration in UCY, in the context of the introduction of the ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, and in close relation to the concepts of student workload as the unit measuring the number of credits, and the learning outcomes (following the analyses of the Tuning Project), as one of the instruments defining the profile of the graduates in the Diploma Supplement. The above information mostly derives from the analysis presented in an article by Vice-Rector Professor Elpida Keravnou-Papailiou concerning the implementation of the Bologna Process in UCY, and the Team recommends that UCY should deal with these issues more intensively and in depth in the months to come.

The last word in this section is for the assessment of teaching and courses by the students. The SER does not mention it, while the generalised feeling of students (as it was expressed in their meeting with the Team) is that the assessment processes of teaching and courses by the students are now downgraded, mainly because they feel that their remarks do not have any impact at all. The Team feels therefore the need to recommend that UCY should consider the issue of teaching and course evaluations once again and in a way that will convince students of the value of the process and the importance of their role. Of course, the establishment of the National Agency for Quality Assurance will give the opportunity for discussing this



sensitive and delicate issue at the national level. But, UCY, as the leading higher education institution in the country, has to be proactive on that issue too.

### **5.7 Issues concerning research**

#### **§ 18**

In paragraph 6, the basic characteristics of the New Research Policy of UCY have been outlined. It could be said that this New Research Policy aims at a generalised balance between the various types and kinds of research. The Team has to especially commend UCY for the generous support given to faculty for their individual research activities (ranging from 2500 to 5500 euros for the year 2004), as well as for the support given to new staff members through the start-up funds (up to 83000 euros for the first two years). However, the Team would like to recall the arguments of the 2001 report for more project- or programme-oriented research, which are still valid.

### **5.8 Issues concerning quality culture**

#### **§ 19**

The Team wants to commend UCY for its initiative to present to the authorities a complete proposal for the establishment of the national system for quality assurance in higher education in Cyprus. However, the Team wants to draw the attention of UCY to the need for developing a permanent internal process for quality assurance irrespective of the external structures, in order to create the appropriate quality culture. The necessity for a modern university to build its own quality culture is a sine qua non for improving its self-knowledge and its self-respect, and, finally, for its overall progress. It is needless to mention that the processes of teaching and courses assessment by the students will be integrated into the overall internal structures and processes for quality assurance.

## **5.9 Issues concerning the relations between academic and administrative staff**

### **§ 20**

The 2001 report emphasised the observation that there were signs of a severe tension between academics and administrators at UCY. This tension seems to continue today. The impression of the Team is that the tension now is primarily between central administration and academic management at the levels of Faculties and Departments. The members of the Team are of course familiar with conflicts between these two groups, but this seemed to be something more serious than the normal complaints. The Team regrets to be in the obligation of reporting its impression that matters do not seem to have improved, in spite of the commendable efforts of which the Team has been informed. The review of the organisational structure of the administrative services is undoubtedly a significant development, together with the development of a motivation policy for administrative staff, but it seems that something more is needed for UCY, and this may be a change in attitudes.

The Team has the impression from listening to the Heads of Central Administration that they are a group of ambitious and competent people who are very dissatisfied with their working conditions and who have the feeling that they are not utilised according to their competences. The Team is aware of the efforts put by the UCY leadership, and its recommendation is that the UCY leadership should take the appropriate initiatives which will help in easing the tension between academic and administrative staff and which will raise the self-confidence of the administrative staff through the upgrading of their role.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

### **§ 21**

At the beginning of the follow-up visit, the UCY leadership put some questions to the Team. This report has tried to answer most of them. However, the Team wishes to conclude the report by giving an unequivocal answer to the first question on the list: “Has UCY been able to assimilate the findings of the EUA initial report?” The answer is yes it has. And, in some cases, it has gone even further than these initial recommendations.

The follow-up evaluation gave the Team the opportunity to reaffirm its initial belief that UCY is moving in the right direction in the new overall landscape in Cyprus and in the emerging European Higher Education Area.

If the most important recommendations have to be summarised here, these would refer to the following five key issues:

- UCY should handle with care and wisdom the sensitive issue of its long-term expansion to other study fields and especially to consider the interrelation and interdependence between this expansion and its strategic aim for excellence. This means that UCY has to develop a well-balanced long-term strategy concerning “expansion” and “excellence”, taking also due account of the crucial external parameters, such as the available resources and the development of the new Campus.
- UCY has to consider the issue of the internal distribution of power, especially at the levels of Faculties and Departments, together with the issue of the federal structure of the Senate with regards to the Faculties.
- UCY should deal more intensively and in depth in the months to come with the crucial issue of the shift from teaching- to learning-oriented approaches. At the same time, UCY should consider the issue of teaching and course evaluations once again, and in a way that will convince the students of the value of the process and of the importance of their role.
- UCY should develop a permanent internal process for quality assurance irrespective of the external structures, in order to create the appropriate quality culture.
- The UCY leadership should take the appropriate initiatives which will help ease the tension between academic and administrative staff and which will raise the self-confidence of the administrative staff through the upgrading of their role.

Once again, the Team hopes that this follow-up report will be handled by UCY in a similar way as the initial one of 2001, i.e. as a contribution to a process of making a really vital and good university even better, to help it take best advantage of the opportunities and cope with the threats encountered en route toward the future.

As its last word, the Team wants to thank once again the people of UCY for their friendly hospitality and for the frank and open discussions during these very intense days.