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External Evaluator's Report
for ARACIS of University „Constantin Brâncusi"
Targu Jiu, 2019

Introduction

I was appointed as a Foreign External Evaluator for the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) and was consequently invited to join the evaluation team for the institutional accreditation process of University „Constantin Brâncusi" in Targu Jiu (UCB). The audit took place between Wednesday 23rd October and Friday 25th October 2019.

The evaluation team consisted of the following members, in addition to myself:

Prof. univ. dr. Luca Iamandi — Mission Director (Danubius University of Galati)
Prof. univ. dr. Dumitru Miron — Coordinator of the Experts Evaluator Team (Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies)
Prof. univ. dr. Gheorghe Solomon — Advisory Commission Expert (Politehnica University of Bucharest)
Prof. univ. dr. Apahidean Alexandru-Silviu - Institutional Commission Expert (University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca)
Prof. univ. dr. loan Horga — Program Expert (University of Oradea)
Prof. univ. dr. lonel Eduard lonescu — Program Expert (Spiru Haret University)
Prof. univ. dr. Carmen Gheorghe — Program Expert (Transilvania University of BfaSOU)
Prof. univ. dr. Carmen Gabriela Sirbu — Program Expert (Danubius University of Galati)
Prof. univ. dr. Matei Tamasila — Program Expert (Politehnica University Timisoara)
Prof. univ. dr. Marius Stoica — Program Expert (National Physical Education and Sport University of Bucharest)
Mihaela Bajenaru — Technical Secretary
Ghizela Ana Maria Salagean — Student Evaluator (Babes-Bolyai University) ANOSR
Robert Alexandru Avram — Student Evaluator (West University of Timisoara) UNSR

The evaluation process began on Wednesday the 23rd of October at 9 a.m. The President of the University Senate welcomed the evaluation team and the Rector asked his colleagues (the management of UCB) and the representatives of the students to introduce themselves. Prof. univ. dr. Luca lamandi also asked the members of evaluation team to introduce themselves, then Prof. univ. dr. Dumitru Miron told the introductory statements of the mission.

From 9.30 a.m. the evaluation team discussed the most important aspects that should be considered during the audit.

Between 10.00 a.m. and 1 p.m. the group of experts was working on different aspects of the evaluation. In my role as Foreign Expert Evaluator, I was responsible for establishing an overview of the whole university and was allowed to move freely, talking to members of staff and students of the university. This morning I visited the Faculty of Medical and Behavioural Sciences, then the Department for International Relations and Community Programs and the ERASMUS+ Office.

Between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. we had a tour at the different campuses of UCB. The time for it was very limited.

At 4 p.m. we had an appointment with a group of circa 70 former students. At 5 p.m. we had another meeting with a group of about 35 graduates' employers. The first day ended with a meeting of the evaluators.

The team continued the evaluation process on Thursday the 24*^ of October. I had an appointment 9 a.m. at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Law, and Public Administration, 11 a.m. at the Department for Training of Teaching Staff. . At 2 p.m. we had a one hour meeting with a huge group of students (circa 100-120). The second day also ended with a meeting of the evaluators at 6 p.m.

The evaluation process was finished on Friday the 25*^ of October at 11 a.m. when the team of experts finalized the documents and met the management of UCB.

General Statements

UCB was founded as a higher education state-run institution in 1992 by reorganizing the Univ̸ersity Of Craiova sub-engineering branches that have been functioning in Targu Jiu since the academic year 1972-1973. At the beginning, UCB consisted of

two faculties: the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Sciences. The present structure of UCB includes four faculties (Faculty of Educational Sciences, Law and Public Administration; Faculty of Economics; Faculty of Engineering; Faculty of Medical and Behavioural Sciences) and the Department for Training and Development of the Teaching Staff. The implementation of the Bologna Process was introduced in the academic year 2005-2006. The didactic structure of UCB has been changed since the foundation many times.

Comment: UCB must develop **a stable academic structure** that is in line with the scientific classification. The combination of education sciences together with law and administration sciences is not very common.

UCB offered 13 accredited Bachelor Degree programmes, 8 Bachelor Degree programmes with provisional authorization, 15 Master Degree programmes in the academic year 2018/2019.

The University has 2903 enrolled students in the academic *year of* 2018/2019. About 60% of the students whose studies are financed by the state; the others are paying fees for their studies.

Managerial Structure

The organisational structures, decision-making processes and the inner regulations of UCB is transparent.

The organisational structure, decision-making and control system of the university is organised in accordance with its legal obligations.
UCB leadership is ensured by the following management bodies at university level: the University Senate; the Board of Directors; Standing Committees (The Committee for Strategic and Institutional Development, Financial Forecast and Control; The Committee for Monitoring and Control of Managerial Activity; The Committee for Jurisdictions, Incompatibilities, Validations and Conflicts of Interest; The Committee for Educational Activities, Curriculum and Scientific Research); University Ethics

Committee; Consultative Student Council. The Faculty Council at faculty level and the Department Council at departmental level taking part in decision-making.
The effective leadership of UCB is assured by the Board of Directors.

In 2008, the University implemented the Education Management Information System (UMS) that facilitates the collection, processing and analysis of relevant data and information.

Comment: UCB has a coherent, integrated, transparent leadership system but the organizational structure of the university is quite large (e.g. four vice-rectors etc.) for its size compared it to the number of students.
In my opinion the organizational structure might be **rationalized** in some aspects.

Teaching Staff

The number of full-time academic staff at the UCB on the 31st of December 2018 was 126, although there were 206 teaching positions at the university. The number of the associated teaching staff is relatively high at UCB and it was increasing in the last years. The non-permanent teachers of UCB, if they are leading practitioners in their field, might be very beneficial for the students but the numbers of them are too many.

At the level of all the full-time teaching personnel carrying out activities at UCB doctors in science represent 97.61% (123 /126) but in some cases the field of the teaching staff's scientific degree (Education Science) is not in line with the programme (e.g. Pedagogy of Primary and Pre-School Education).

The ratio of teaching staff to the number of students is sufficient. Between 2014-2018 (circa 1/22) it is constant.

Comment: The quality of human resources and the scientific potential at UCB is on a good level and they try to recruit competitive teachers but UCB has to pay more attention of the **composition of the teaching staff** (e.g. proportion of full-time and part-time teaching staff; relevant scientific degree to the field of education etc.).

Facilities

UCB has not got a unified campus. Some of the faculties are situated relatively far from each other in the city. I had the possibility to visit two of them and Department for Training and Development of the Teaching Staff. The Faculty of Medical and Behavioural Sciences is situated in the new campus at the edge of the city (Str. Tineretului, Nr. 4) and the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Law and Public Administration can be found in the downtown (Str. Victoriei, Nr. 24).

The educational and research spaces are on very different level. In the new campus the equipment of the educational spaces are almost fulfil the requirement of the European standards on the ground floor and the 1-2 floors but the 3-4 floors are poorly equipped, except the huge auditorium. There are also huge differences among the furniture used by the students in the lecture rooms.

The sport activities are very limited (relatively small sport field and a small gym) for the physical education programme.

The University Library is organized in different locations (Central Library and Faculty Libraries). Each library has a programme (Softlink Liberty 3) of bibliographic description with OPAC online. The equipment of the libraries is at very different level.

UCB must pay more attention to it's homepage (e.g. update it more often, develop an English website etc.)

Comment: It can be seen that UCB invested in its physical infrastructure in the past few years. It is important to continue this procedure and renovate the old buildings too. UBC should continue **investing in physical infrastructure** when funds allow.

Students

Although the number of students were decreasing from the academic year 2013/14 UCB were able to increase a bit the number of students in the academic year 2018/19.

During the discussion with the **former students** they seemed satisfied with the AUO. The need for more critical and reflective approach to knowledge acquisition and analysis was mentioned. UCB has good reputation in the region.

At the meeting with **representatives of the employers,** they seemed very pleased with those students who graduated from UCB. There were representatives both of the private and public sector. The cooperation is operating very well between UCB and the employers. Internships were established for the students.

Although the number of participants was high at the appointment of the **undergraduate students** only a few were active. They mentioned that the members of the academic staff are very helpful and administrative employees also. It was surprising that nobody has heard about the Career Counseling and Career Guidance Centre at UCB. Only few students participate in research and conferences. Most of the students do not know how to apply for licenced software.

Currently UCB has 66 Erasmus Agreements and 18 bilateral international agreements with different universities. There were 96 outgoing and 27 incoming students in the academic year 2018/19 within the Erasmus programme. The number of outgoing students participating in Erasmus Program is good for the size of the university and the number of agreements.
The offered courses for the incoming Erasmus students should be conducted in foreign languages (English, French) even if they have a four-week Romanian language preparatory course.

Comment: I appreciate the efforts made in the field of internationalization at UCB but **further actions** are needed.

Research

The strategic coordination of the scientific research is ensured by the Vice-Rector of education and scientific research. The coordination of the research activity is done through the Directorate for Research, Development and Management Projects.

Research activity is performed and organized through research centres. Scientific research is continuously monitored and evaluated annually Research Development Department.

The teaching staff publishes scientific papers every year, both in the volumes of national and international conferences, as well as in national and international journals classified CNCSIS, ISI or indexed in international databases.

Research is promoted through the journals which is published at UBC. Eight BDI- rated journals are published in "Academica Brancuyi" Publishing House of UBC.

Comment: I strongly suggest developing more international links and collaborations to **support international research** activities

Quality Management

UCB has structures, strategies, policies and procedures for quality assurance of the teaching and research processes. There is the Commission for Quality Assessment and Assurance at institutional level, the Quality Commission at faculty level and the Quality Committees at the level of study programmes at UBC.

UCB has implemented a quality management system in compliance with the model ISO 9001.

Internal audits are carried out in accordance with the internal procedures internal evaluation of study programmes. A continuous assessment of the quality of teaching activities is carried out within UCB through student assessment of teachers, peer review of teaching and evaluation by the management.

Comment: European Standards and Guidelines are the overall basis for the organization of Quality Assurance procedures and institutions. There is also internal and external control of quality assurance at UCB.

Conclusion

My report is based on what I have experienced, seen, red and heard. I hope that some of the **comments** which I made will help the UCB Management in the process of continual improvement. I also would like to stress that all comments offered in this report are intended to contribute to further improvements of UCB as it strives towards the achievement of its mission.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to the Rector, the Vice-Rectors, the Deans and all the University staff for the pleasant atmosphere and the support during my stay in Targu Jiu. Also much gratitude to my colleagues from the evaluation team for the professional, open and gentle way in which the audit was conducted.
At least but not last special thanks to ARACIS for giving me the opportunity to participate in this evaluation process in Romania.

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