



**THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR  
VISITING ADVISORS' REPORT**

**YAKUTSK STATE UNIVERSITY, SAKHA REPUBLIC  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**August 11-17, 2001**

***Team members***

**Dr. Jaak Aaviksoo**, Rector, Tartu University, Estonia; former Minister of Education of Estonia

**Dr. Anthony Morgan**, Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy, University of Utah; Co-director, Utah Education Policy Center

**Dr. George Pedersen**, Chancellor, University of Northern British Columbia

**Dr. Helene Kamensky**, Russian Program Coordinator, Salzburg Seminar

**1. *Introduction***

This report is based on a series of meetings, which took place at the Yakutsk State University (YSU), the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Russian Federation, from August 11– 17, 2001. The team members met with the rector, vice rectors, deans, professors, and students of YSU to discuss a variety of issues of concern to the University leadership. In addition to these discussions with the university community, the team members met with the Director of the Department for Personnel Planning and Training for the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), and gained from him an outside perspective with respect to how YSU could partner with local government and serve as a catalyst for economic development.

**2. *Yakutsk State University***

Yakutsk State University is the major scientific, educational and cultural center of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and one of the leading higher educational institutions in North-East Siberia. YSU traces its beginning to 1956 with the founding of the Yakutsk Teachers' Training Institute. Nowadays YSU comprises fifteen colleges and faculties as well as the new Information Technology Center, Continuing Professional and Management Education Center, Cultural Center, Linguistic Center, and the Sakha American Business Center. YSU enrolls more than 20,000 students. The academic staff numbers 1217 engaged in teaching and research.

YSU works closely together with the Russian universities in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tomsk, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, and several others. The University maintains regular contacts with universities in USA, Canada, Germany, France,

Poland, Japan, and Korea. YSU conducts a variety of international projects and exchange programs, including internship for international students. Every year YSU offers courses on ethnography, culture and history of indigenous peoples of the north, ecology, and geology for foreign students. In the summer YSU runs an intensive Russian language program for international students.

The team was very favorably impressed with the university and its leadership role in the region. Specifically, we found:

- A university of high quality—the leading educational institution in the region.
- A university that seems to be coping effectively with the severe financial difficulties that burden all Russian universities.
- A university that is well led by a rector (Professor Anatoly Nikolayevich Alekseev) who has a firm vision, and who seems to enjoy the great confidence and support of his administrative team and of the regional government.
- A university that is integrating successfully into the community, with effective ties to the Sakha government.

The team members appreciate the privilege of visiting the Yakutsk State University, and are grateful to the rector, Professor Anatoly Nikolayevich Alekseev and his colleagues for the candor in the discussions and their exceptional hospitality. YSU administration and staff were perfect hosts and did their best to make our visit as pleasant and productive as possible. We were offered delicious meals, a very impressive cultural program, and computer facilities. We appreciate the engagement and vigor that characterized every phase of the discussions and commend the Rector and his colleagues for the comprehensive preparation for the visit.

### **3. *Background of the Visit***

This visit took place at the invitation of the rector of Yakutsk State University, responding to the increasing awareness on the part of Russian universities of the Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project, and the 30 successful visits carried out under the Salzburg Seminar's Visiting Advisors Program. The Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project is a multi-year series of symposia convening senior representatives of higher education from Central and East Europe and Russia, with their counterparts from North America and West Europe. The Visiting Advisors Program is an extension of the Universities Project. The Visiting Advisors, who are selected by the Salzburg Seminar, are credentialed and well-experienced members of the higher education profession, who volunteer their services to visit a host institution to share their knowledge and expertise with the university leadership.

The purpose of this visit was to assist the leadership of YSU who requested the team visit. The process is in no way "evaluative." It does not dwell on perceived shortcomings or attempt to impose a "Team" or "Salzburg Seminar Universities Project" agenda. The purpose, rather, is to bring an outside perspective in order to call attention to those aspects of YSU that seem strongest, as well as those aspects or practices or strategic directions that seem most different from those one might find in similar universities in Europe and North America.

The sessions involved seminar-type discussions, focused largely on four main issues: student needs and the role of students in institutional affairs, social and civic

responsibilities of the university, university administration and finance, and academic structure and governance within the university. The concentration of efforts on four main areas of interest enabled the consultant team to focus on the careful analysis of the topics which are considered by the University leadership to be most important for institutional development at the present time. The report below is based on our observations and recommendations in accordance with the four main topics of discussion.

#### **4. *General issues***

The team was greatly pleased to learn about the progress that has been made by YSU in reforming its institution. Growth of the number of students and staff, broadening of the scope of the programs offered, development of the infrastructure (both premises and equipment) and substantial increases of the number of academic staff with the Dr. Sci. and Cand. Sci. degrees is remarkable and impressive. These developments support the view that YSU is well prepared to be not only the leading higher educational institution of Yakutia but can contribute meaningfully to regional development and the advancement of science on a much broader scale.

The team was especially pleased to learn of the commitment of YSU to the development of the republic on one hand and the support of the republic government to YSU on the other. We very much believe that the strengths of the university lie in its close relations with the region and its people and its future can be built on giving priority to the needs of the region.

We examined the background reports summarizing the strategic plan of YSU and heard from the management team about its implementation. The breadth and ambition of these plans are impressive but we are not fully convinced that they can be implemented in the near future, especially in view of the present severe financial limitations. We therefore suggest that a careful critical analysis of the strategic plan be made, followed by a decision to agree on a more limited number of priority projects. The priorities should have a strategic impact on the future of the university and should be elaborated in greater detail. Objectives should be defined, operational tasks clarified, deadlines set, as well as criteria established for evaluation. A financial analysis of costs and benefits of each of the undertakings is an important part of this planning process.

It would be useful to review and analyze the multitude of responsibilities YSU is discharging, taking into account the changed and changing socio-economic conditions. It was not clear to the team whether YSU (and other Russian universities) can cope with the magnitude of all responsibilities assigned to the university sector. The team strongly recommends the initiation of a regional and/or national debate about the responsibilities which belong to the university sector as well as a consideration of sharing the responsibilities of a non-academic nature with other government and corporate sector partners. The team is of the view that the scarce financial and other resources of the university must be used first and foremost to meet the academic objectives and directly related social matters. By this means the University serves best the society to which it is responsible.

## **5. Students**

Universities play an important and unique role in the overall educational system. They are charged with the creation of new knowledge as well as ensuring its dissemination. Consequently, universities are recognized for two things: the competence of the students they graduate and the quality of the research produced by their faculty members. Students are an essential part of the system, given that it is essential for society to have well educated citizens, a small proportion of whom eventually become part of the academic community.

The education of a university student is a complex process, but if done properly results in an individual who possesses a broad liberal and scientific education. The latter includes the development of verbal and quantitative skills, the ability to think creatively, and the capacity to deal analytically with complex problems. Ideally, a university education produces a person who provides community leadership while at the same time has a genuine concern for his/her fellow man—in short, a humanitarian.

Unfortunately, because the visit took place during vacation time, the team met with only a limited number of YSU students for a brief period. However, we did gain a number of insights into students and their activities.

One of our impressions is that YSU students play only a limited role in the day-to-day activities of the institution. In North American and other institutions of higher learning, students and their annually elected leaders provide strong leadership in such diverse areas as university governance, athletic programs, raising funds for student scholarships, lobbying politicians, engaging in volunteer work, and serving as major advocates on behalf of their student colleagues. In a sense, such students see themselves in a partnership role with the administration to ensure that a high quality education is provided. It is not possible for the Visiting Advisors to articulate in detail what YSU might do to enlist more student participation except to say that such active involvement in the day-to-day life of the University is important and needs to be explored thoroughly.

An important responsibility of most successful student governments is to encourage and assist the University to provide high quality and relevant student services. Such important aspects of university life as housing, food services, medical services, financial aid, leisure programs, volunteer activities, ombudsman roles, lobbying and instructional evaluation receive their attention. Students must be active participants in their education if loyalty to their institution is to be gained.

While the matter of tuition fees will be explored elsewhere in this report, it needs to be pointed out that the current tuition fee policy is unclear and inequitable in its intent. While it is not within the mandate of YSU to revise the existing policy, there appear to be some equity questions that should be explored. The matter of some qualified students having to pay fees or be sponsored while other students are fully supported by the federal government appears to be inequitable. The Advisors are of the view that the question of tuition fees should be reviewed at the national and republic level, with a view to producing a more equitable tuition policy.

YSU officials raised the matter of broadening the curriculum, specifically as it relates to interdisciplinary courses. This raises the question of whether undergraduate students should have greater course flexibility and choice, particularly in the early exploratory years of their programs. This brings to the forefront the long-time

academic argument about specialization versus a more liberal approach to higher education. The advisors are of the view that this question should be considered carefully, given a widely held international university view that one's undergraduate education should produce an individual prepared to enter and benefit from several career options. Employers want employees with a broad education, able to enter the employment market but also capable of participating in required life-long learning education. Today, an undergraduate degree is only the first step in a lifetime of learning.

Student conduct was raised as a concern. Such behavior as excessive addiction (alcohol, drugs,) criminal behavior and rowdiness were cited. Presumably, the more excessive conduct is handled through civic legal procedures. Less serious matters require the support of the student body to effect solutions. In the end, educational programs, preferably initiated and supported by the student body, have proven to be the only effective remedy.

The issue of student transfers and credit recognition from one institution to another was also drawn to our attention. Given the way in which undergraduate education is funded in Russia, and further that a vast majority of undergraduate students attend their closest regional university, it is difficult to suggest a solution. It was pointed out that a particular solution was worked out with Novosibirsk University and it might be possible to effect similar arrangements elsewhere. In many national jurisdictions, some form of national or regional accreditation operates and students are granted, within reason, full transfer credit. The Advisors are strongly supportive of providing greater flexibility for students who wish to attend an institution other than the one in which they initially enrolled. Similarly, the team soundly endorses the impressive efforts of the regional government to send Yakutia students to foreign universities.

In the meeting with students, concerns were raised about the quantity and the currency of various teaching and related materials (textbooks, library holdings, etc). In some cases, even textbooks in use in social sciences relate back to Soviet times. Obviously, such inadequacies have an overall effect on the quality of instruction. It is especially essential, by no means less essential than having modern buildings and laboratory facilities, to have a well-equipped and comprehensive set of library holdings. This should be a major priority.

Student evaluation of their instructors was the final student matter raised. In many universities, such assessments are mandatory for tenure, promotion and senior appointments. The Advisors support such evaluations, assuming they are properly administered, given their value in providing feedback to professors. Among important issues to evaluate are the administrative timing, the breadth of coverage (instruction, course content, etc) and the transparency of the process.

To summarize, the following are recommended:

- A program of determined affirmative action shall be undertaken with a view to enhancing significantly the involvement of students at YSU. Some form of joint committee involving administrators, faculty and students might be given this assignment.
- Associated with the above recommendation is the need to review carefully the range and quality of student services provided at YSU. Priorities need to be set for enhancing the mix of student services.

- The administrators of YSU should consider the appropriateness of initiating discussions at the federal and republic level concerning the current tuition fee policy. Such an initiative will require collective action on the part of the majority of Russian universities.
- Similarly, the administration at YSU shall entertain the viability of initiating appropriate discussions concerning a broadening of curricular offerings at the undergraduate level. Eventually, there is a need for much greater autonomy at the level of the individual university.
- On the matter of unsatisfactory student conduct, this matter should be made an agenda item for the suggested increase in student involvement in the daily life of YSU. Students must come to understand that they have a responsibility for educating their fellow students on proper conduct in the University.
- Greater flexibility should be considered in the matter of student transfer and transfer credit. Regional accreditation agencies should be considered as an attempt to resolving the eventual goal of national student transfers and credit recognition.
- Having reasonably up-to-date instruction materials at YSU is absolutely imperative if quality education is to be provided. Current textbooks, adequate library holdings, appropriate computers and software, etc. are essential. It is recommended that every effort be made to provide resources needed in this important area. Perhaps the regional government could be persuaded about the importance of providing support for this part of YSU operations.
- Student evaluations of instructors are seen by the Advisors to be of value. Much research has been done on this process and should be reviewed should the decision be taken to proceed on a university-wide basis. A joint committee of students and faculty is normally assigned the task of researching professorial evaluations and developing the appropriate instruments and procedures.

## **6. Social and Civic Responsibilities of the University**

The social context, structure, purpose, and financing of higher education have changed dramatically in most countries over the past few decades. Universities are confronted with challenges under the impact of globalization, internationalization, mass higher education, knowledge-based economic growth, as well as the information and communication revolution. Changes in technology, demographics, competition, and legislative expectations are all coming together to alter the way universities operate. As a result, one of the major trends in higher education across most countries is the movement from the self-contained institutions that operate in isolation from society, toward a model in which universities are more responsive to the society around them.

In response to this trend, YSU should reconsider its relationship to the local community with the aim of enhancing its social and civic mission. The University should accept responsibility for the community on which it is dependent, and become an instrument of direct social action. YSU should promote public services as a central responsibility with the aim of responding more effectively to the needs of individuals and their families. YSU should seek to support social and civic

organizations to ensure that University policies meet community needs. The University should strengthen policies that enhance participation of faculty, staff, and students in all spheres of social and civic activities. The challenge to YSU is to find the most effective way of civic and community engagement.

YSU has made considerable progress toward these objectives in order to respond to the emerging needs in the Yakutsk region, thus promoting democratic values in the society. The personnel at YSU should be complimented on different forms of their social activity to date. There is a student family program, which provides moral and financial support to student families. YSU has an active alumni association, which partially takes care of the social security and employment of its graduates. There is a special program for students who have no parents and for students who come from a disadvantaged social environment. YSU has established disciplines relevant to the social demands and the new market economy such as business education, market economics, and legal studies. However YSU will be more strongly integrated into the life of its local community if the university broadens the scope of its community-service tasks.

There are considerable differences among countries and universities with regard to community service activities. While European universities certainly make a variety of contributions to the communities in which they are situated, this is distinctively a mandate for North American institutions of higher education. However, there are a number of universal trends that are worth considering when any given institution is planning to increase its social effectiveness. We encourage YSU to reflect on these common trends by planning its community service strategy.

Community service can mean several different things in addition to educating the community's youth. Probably one of the most visible forms of community service in the United States and Canada is the provision of adult education programs. Partly because education has always been tied to a vision of social mobility in the United States and Canada, demand for provision of practically oriented programs has been large. Society and its market increasingly demand that employees engage in life-long learning. Thus universities must provide mid-career education through a variety of ways, such as short-term courses, Internet, satellite, etc. Many of the programs focus on specific career skills; others offer seminars aimed at cultural enrichment and self-help. Age is no barrier at all to higher education in North America.

In recent years, the prominence of life-long education and programs oriented to the practical concerns of local communities has helped to facilitate the development of more for-profit higher education programs. Many programs are developments from what were once service programs. A number of schools go into the potentially lucrative business of providing short-term, evening, and weekend courses for adults. Colleges and universities still structured as non-profit organizations found that they could make money responding to markets for seminars, extensive courses, professional certificates, and distance learning. However the majority of these offerings are done on the same fee basis as regular offerings.

Beyond this, universities have taken on other community-service tasks. Universities operate small business development centers and programs to educate and advise newly elected legislators. Similarly, University faculty members provide consulting services to local companies, organize conferences for top-level professionals in the area, or conduct contractual work for companies. Colleges and universities also lend

their space to a variety of autonomous community organizations—one more way to create linkages with outside organizations .

While for centuries universities took great pride in total autonomy in terms of intellectual thought, self-governance and allocation of resources, today most countries demand a more open system in which the universities work closely with outside institutions. To be effective, many universities form loosely coupled networks to work jointly on a number of social, political, and economic ventures. In today's more complex world, universities, businesses and governmental agencies are learning ways in which to form partnerships in order to reach their own goals and society's goals. Universities are often engaged in developing these types of partnerships.

North American universities also make partnerships with students who are viewed as partners in higher education process. In North American universities students are treated as equal partners whose opinion is appreciated and respected. North American students are engaged in university policy-making and decision making process. For instance, the University of Utah has a Student Advisory Committee in every department.

In North American universities students are closely involved with community services. In many North American universities there is some type of community service center that organizes the community activity of students. It is a project initiated by students who volunteer their time in order to serve their community. For instance, each year at the University of Utah 5,000 students volunteer their time to community service. This center has a staff primarily composed of students.

There are about 150 student organizations on the Utah campus and there are different forms of their partnerships with the community. The University of Utah offers service-learning courses, which have a community component associated with the course. A recent evaluation of this service program shows that volunteer service inspires students. Students believe that a reflection period gives them an opportunity to analyze issues of citizenship, social responsibility, and personal responsibility to their community.

What all this means is that successful colleges and universities must be closely integrated into the life of local communities. YSU, therefore, needs a concentrated effort to bridge any gaps that might exist between the University and society and engage faculty, alumni, staff, and students in all kinds of community service activities.

To summarize, the following are recommended:

- YSU is challenged to retain the best of its traditions and yet at some time be willing to change in order to fit the demands of the emerging civil society and market economy. YSU might find it useful to form a community service strategy based on an agreement among relevant business companies, industries, and governmental agencies.
- Determined by the global economy and by demands and constraints on the Yakutsk region, the new socio-economic context requires a new type of strategic thinking and this should be the training focus of future leaders. One of the strategic targets of YSU should be the cultivation of a new generation of

students who will be willing to volunteer their energy and time to serve for the community.

- The rector and his team should identify a series of new social initiatives relevant to the demands of the local community. The initiatives should be chosen on the basis of three main factors:
  - a. the degree to which the initiative addresses the important needs in the emerging civil society and market economy
  - b. the degree to which the initiative takes advantage of the existing strengths of the institution
  - c. the potential for the initiative to make a return to the long-term well being of YSU (i.e., added value).
- YSU should reconsider its role and effectiveness in terms of a broad spectrum of social and civil responsibilities in order to achieve a balanced contribution to the local community. The social and democratic values should be moved into the core of academic life from their present position at the margins.
- Across the world, the role of women is changing. The rector should give serious consideration to the recruitment of more women as faculty and (senior) administrators.
- YSU needs to broaden its linkages with the government and corporate organizations. It is important to broaden the depth and breadth of the outreach activities. YSU needs to involve faculty and students in working with the outside organizations. Professional school faculty members need to work directly with their counterparts in the community.
- The development of a network of alumni might be considered to advise the YSU administration on changing conditions in the market place and to promote continuing loyalty to the University. Alumni can be useful in making contacts with the organization at which they work to establish field internships, entrepreneurial contacts, research contracts, job placement, etc.
- In order to satisfy the needs of the local community, further changes need to be implemented in teaching and evaluation methods. Courses need to be evaluated by both students and outside reviewers from other higher educational institutions and practitioners (businessmen, lawyers, managers, etc.). The feedback from the outside professionals provides a dialogue that links theory and practice.
- YSU should provide adult education programs oriented to the practical concerns of the local community. By responding to markets for seminars, extensive courses or professional certificates, it might be possible for YSU to generate a new source of income.
- It is essential for the success of the YSU community service to engage students in this activity. YSU might find it useful to reflect upon the relevant experience in North America and student establish community service programs. The programs should focus on a clear community need that is not being met.

- YSU should involve students into the decision-making process to promote democratic values in the society. Democratic values are demonstrated by the manner in which students are regarded. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that the university faculty and staff treat students as equals and involve them in university policy-making and decision making process.

## **7. Financial Issues**

Some Russian university leaders have expressed a "wait for the return of the good old times" attitude with respect to the priority given to university funding in the past. We were pleased to see that YSU leaders are realistic about such prospects and are considering ways to cope with current realities. New policies need to be developed to deal with these new circumstances.

### *National Constraints*

The Advisors recognize that YSU cannot control nor by itself influence important national issues that impose fundamental constraints regarding financial management. Nevertheless, the Advisors feel compelled to comment on selected issues that we believe have particular import for financial issues at YSU.

First, government constraints in the form of advance central approval on transfers between categories of expenditures limit timely decision-making at the local level. Needs invariably change during the course of a year and a more effective and efficient financial management system would allow locally determined transfers, accompanied with a reporting and post-audit system to ensure accountability. North American governments long ago gave up such controls and commonly instituted post audit controls. Such a system would additionally signal a greater sense of local responsibility for financial management and self-government.

Second, the nationally imposed single standard for curricular and degree requirements is detrimental to financial efficiencies at the institutional level by greatly constraining opportunities to experiment with operating and capital investment alternatives. For example, the high number of hours that students are required to attend classes, coupled with the low student-to-faculty ratios, result in high proportions of expenditures on academic staff by international standards. Reduced classroom hours would allow experimentation with different uses of academic staff including increased research activities and supervision of independent study. These same requirements drive space needs, which in turn raise the level of operation and maintenance costs of buildings. Another example of national constraints is the arbitrary limit placed on the number of tuition-paying students. Greater autonomy at the individual university level should be seriously considered.

### *Regional Role in Funding*

Relative to many regions of Russia, the Sakha Republic has supported YSU to a significant degree by providing about 60% of the universities recurrent budget and a major capital investment over the past few years. Indeed, the capital plant of YSU is very impressive.

Education policies and programs of the Sakha Republic appear to represent a high priority given to investment in education. Government leaders articulated a forward thinking education investment policy as a central strategy for further development of

the region and indicated their intent to increase these levels of investment. We found these policies and programs encouraging and enlightened.

### *Expanded Non-governmental Funds*

While Russian universities have experienced unusually severe reductions in government funding over the past decade, the general trend of reduced governmental funding as a proportion of all university funds is clearly a worldwide phenomenon. Universities around the world are increasing their activity levels to raise non-governmental resources.

YSU has been actively exploring, pursuing, and planning increased levels of extra-budgetary funds. These endeavors have been given significant administrative support as evidenced by the establishment three years ago of a Department of Extra-Budgetary Funds that has in part enabled YSU to develop over 33 million rubles of revenue in the year 2000. The principal areas of development here are educational services (primarily tuition paying students which constitute almost 85 percent of such funds,) contract research and other related sources.

Financial staff at YSU have proposed three priority areas for future emphasis and expansion of extra-budgetary funds: (1) increasing the volume of retraining courses to 20-25 percent of total non-governmental funds; (2) expanding research activity (related to regional development) from companies and government agencies; and (3) expanding sponsorship from regional industries and other sources.

The Advisors believe that these areas of emphasis represent sound strategic thinking and should be pursued. In addition, we suggest that YSU explore the following possibilities:

1) Housing, Food Services and other Potentially Self-supporting Operations. While we recognize both the Russian tradition and the limited ability of students to pay, we believe it is sound policy to gradually phase in greater cost recovery in such services. Perhaps the regional government or other sources of financial aid could accompany phased cost recovery to ensure that student access to a university education is not endangered. International standards are certainly moving in these directions.

2) Private Funding. The Advisors recognize the very limited short-term potential here and also acknowledge the very progressive step that YSU has taken in establishing an alumni association with some private fund raising responsibilities. We believe this is a wise long-term investment for the University. An example of a shorter-term strategy is to approach possible donors for their participation in the construction of new buildings. Completion of the new engineering building, for example, may be attractive to a large regional industry and the building could be named in honor of a significant contribution.

3) Limited Special Student Fees. Some universities have worked closely with students to assess where small, special fees might benefit students collectively. One prominent example in many Western universities is a "computing fee" where small fees are used to provide student access to personal computers. Students often approve these fees and students participate significantly in allocating these funds to ensure that they are used for computing needs of students. This is the only way that many students gain sufficient access to computers.

4) Tuition. Since by far the most significant source of extra-budgetary funds comes from tuition and since there has been, as we understand it, no increase in tuition levels for the past three years, we suggest that serious consideration be given to increasing tuition levels regularly to cover increases in costs and/or inflation. It is difficult in most societies to accurately determine accurately the ability to pay but small increases coupled with concurrent increases in various forms of student financial aid seem reasonable.

### *Efficiencies*

One of the most important drivers of efficiencies in universities is the existence of reasonable incentives to seek alternative sources of funding. Another enabling driver is the flexibility to experiment and to make changes without undue external constraints. In terms of incentives to seek additional non-governmental funds, a fundamental principle is that the additional effort to raise these funds is “rewarded” rather than “punished.” By this it is meant that if universities raise extra funds only to see these funds substituted for previous government funding, then the incentive to continue or expand these efforts is substantially reduced. Some governments even provide positive incentives by matching to some degree certain categories of such fund-raising.

One additional efficiency suggestion is that as new buildings are planned or major renovations undertaken, serious consideration should be given to developing some large classrooms. Russian universities are typically configured with smaller classrooms, which places physical limits on developing some larger more efficient classes.

### *Financial Analyses and Reporting*

The Advisors found the financial reports at YSU unusually good and were pleased to learn the extent to which financial, including cost data, were used in decision-making. The team recommends greater transparency and sharing of financial information, which seems to be a common concern in all Russian universities. It seems to be the nature of most organizations to withhold financial information. But if the University is to cultivate greater confidence of stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, it is very important that financial information be widely shared as well as presented and explained in terms that are easily understood. This practice should be applied to both external and internal constituents.

To summarize, the following are recommended:

- YSU should actively pursue collective efforts to change national policies that constrain financial management, such as prior approval on funding transfers between budget categories; and the national single standard of a highly prescribed curricula, and the high number of hours that students are required to attend classes.
- In addition to the priorities that YSU has identified for expansion of extra-budgetary funds, we recommend serious consideration be given to greater cost recovery of services such as housing and food; selected efforts at private fund raising for facilities; limited special student fees such as computing if there is student support; and regular but small increases in tuition levels to cover inflation and/or costs.

- In addition to the large, nationally driven efficiency issues, we believe it is important that the regional government understand the importance of providing incentives for YSU to seek extra-budgetary funding. In addition, as YSU considers new or remodeled facilities, we urge consideration of building some large classroom space in order to realize economies of scale in teaching some classes.
- YSU's fine financial accounting and reporting should be shared widely with all university stakeholders in order for these groups to understand and have confidence in the financial management of the university and to understand better its funding needs.

## **8. University Structure and Management**

At the request of the rector, the Advisors looked at the YSU structure and management problems. We were informed about the changes in the legal framework, which largely determines the internal structure of the University and defines the functions of various administrative bodies of the University. There has been a clear tendency toward decentralization, thus increasing University autonomy. However, most western universities still have much more freedom to define their internal organization in order to cope with local needs and to follow their own historical tradition. The Advisors sees as a highly positive development the inclusion of students into the governing bodies of the University but would encourage their deeper and more active involvement into the day-to-day activities of the university.

The Advisors also noted the inclusion of external representatives (6 of the total of 58) into the University senate (scientific council) with an aim to opening the university to the outside world. It may be advisable, in addition, to establish bodies at various levels within the University in order to provide greater involvement and interest on the part of the external stakeholders. Universities should get advice wherever they can.

The Advisors discussed the two-fold faculty structure of YSU (9 faculties and 8 institutes in their own rights) and found it confusing. It might be worth considering a revision of this organization and follow a uniform organization scheme in order to increase transparency, improve manageability and enhance efficiency of the system. This is advisable, given that these units share essentially the same infrastructure and fulfill similar functions in the University.

The Advisors also addressed the issue of a number of different disciplines being taught by independent higher educational institutions other than universities in Yakutia and Russia in general. We learned about intentions to separate some of the faculties from the University. This practice has been supported by the argument that there will be a better response to the needs of the society and the labor market. In this respect we note that there is a general (if not global) trend to teach different professional schools such as medicine, education, agriculture etc., in universities even if there has been a tradition to do so separately. In countries with dual higher education systems (university and non-university types) the division line between them is gradually disappearing (notably in the UK.) This disappearance is primarily caused by the need to provide students with a broader interdisciplinary educational background for life-long learning and notable efficiency gains. The latter have both

financial and academic implications involving the joint use of existing teaching and research staff.

The Advisors were asked to advise on the forthcoming higher education reform, under which the one-tier diploma specialist degree will be replaced with a two-tier bachelor (4 years) and master (2 years) degree structure, an issue on which there is no consensus in Russia. While the degree system in the US, Canada and the UK has long been of the two-tier type, many European countries still have varied but one-tier degree structures following the continental (German) model. Some countries, notably France, have their own unique systems. In 1998, 29 European ministers of education agreed to move toward a two-tier system by the year 2010, thus creating a "European Higher Education Space". Moving toward a two-tier system seems to be a general trend; however, it must be seen as a gradual process carried out by national governments in consultation with the overall university system, not individual universities. It is of fundamental importance to note that it is the labor market relevance of the new degrees that determines the success of this reform, not administrative or purely academic considerations. In any case we recommend an active discussion of these issues in the University and throughout society. The latter should involve all stakeholders, especially employers and professional unions. A parallel use of the one-tier and two-tier systems seems to be extremely confusing for all partners and is seen as dysfunctional.

A strategic and crucial issue is that of quality assurance. The Advisors share the view that the high quality of university programs is the major factor that determines its reputation and competitiveness. Thus the University is encouraged to elaborate and introduce a measure of comprehensive quality assurance that best corresponds to university's needs. In this process, it is important to involve students, alumni and other stakeholders. The main aim of such a system is to ensure that the quality of all programs is regularly evaluated and improved.

YSU, as other Russian universities, is subject to three different national quality assurance efforts, namely licensing, attestation and accreditation. The Advisors share the concern of the University management about the bureaucratic nature of these exercises, their duplication and excessiveness as well as their obscurity, which unnecessarily overload and disadvantage the university. The Advisors suggest a joint undertaking with other universities to try to rationalize this system. Also recommended is relying more on the introduction of institutional quality assurance systems and limiting the external interference to accreditation of programs by state (or non-state) agencies.

The Advisors have noticed that top university administrators at YSU still have demanding teaching loads (reduced by only 50 and 33% for vice-rectors and deans respectively.) With the increasing autonomy of the universities the administrative load of the managers (and corresponding bureaucracy) within the university is inevitably growing. This development elsewhere has brought about two consequences. First, the academic loads of the top administrators are further reduced or even abolished and, second, full-time (professional) administrators are increasingly employed in important positions. Training courses are offered to new managers as a measure to assist academics that serve as managers. In Europe, teams of colleagues from other universities often provide such courses. Directors of faculties acting as deputy deans may also be appointed in order to reduce some of the administrative load from the deans.

To summarize, the following are recommended:

- YSU should engage more external stakeholders in university administration at various levels of organization. This contributes to the openness of the University and increases the credibility of the institution in its efforts towards more autonomy and decentralized decision-making mechanisms. The latter shall be undertaken together with other universities on the national level.
- The two-fold faculty-institute structure of the university needs to be reconsidered and simplified in order to increase transparency, improve manageability and enhance the efficiency of the system.
- The introduction of institutional quality assurance mechanisms, which shall be based on broadly agreed criteria and procedures, is advisable both to increase the overall performance of the university as well as to help eliminate with the excessive centralized procedures aimed at quality improvement.
- To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the administration systematic training of the (new) academic administrators, reduction of their academic workloads as well as recruitment of professional managers on different levels of administration might be advisable.

## **9. Summary and Conclusions**

The Advisors expressed once more their great satisfaction with the visit to the Yakutsk State University—the numerous mutually enriching encounters with colleagues, members of the university administration and students, as well as with the officials of the local administration. We were impressed by the progress made by YSU and the visionary thrust for further improvement. Taking into account the severe financial, economic and social circumstances along with the turmoil of change of the last decade, it is hard to imagine a more successful outcome. The Advisors believe that YSU is well prepared to not only be the leading higher educational institution of Yakutia, but can contribute meaningfully to regional development and the advancement of science on a much broader scale.

The Advisors wish to encourage the rector and his team to continue along the lines they have set forth. It is advisable, however, that the efforts be more concentrated around a smaller number of key issues and that these priorities be made widely known both inside and outside of the University. A wider and deeper involvement of students into university management is also advisable as it strengthens the university and its status in the society on one hand, and contributes to the advancement of democratic culture and civic society on the other. In view of the academic and institutional potential of YSU and the scarcity of both academic and material resources, it is advisable that the University and the authorities of the republic consider deeper cooperation, and where necessary integration, with other higher education and research institutions of the republic. The streamlining of the internal structure of the YSU might also be considered.

The Visiting Advisors are grateful for the hospitality they were offered by Rector Professor Anatoly Nikolayevitch Alekseev, his colleagues as well as all the friendly

and helpful individuals they met in Yakutia who made the visit to this beautiful country so memorable. We also wish to thank the Salzburg Seminar for this opportunity to visit this far-away but well-known university. We also gratefully acknowledge the generous grant of the Kellogg Foundation which made the Visiting Advisors Program possible.

### Visiting Advisors

**Dr. Jaak Aaviksoo** (team leader) is the rector of Tartu University and was minister of education of Estonia from 1995 to 1996. The former vice-rector at the University of Tartu from 1992 to 1995, he remains a professor of optics and spectroscopy. He was a guest professor at University Paris VI in 1991 and 1993, and research professor at Osaka University in 1993. Dr. Aaviksoo received a Ph.D. in physics in 1981 from the Estonian Academy of Sciences and currently serves on the Universities Project Advisory Committee.



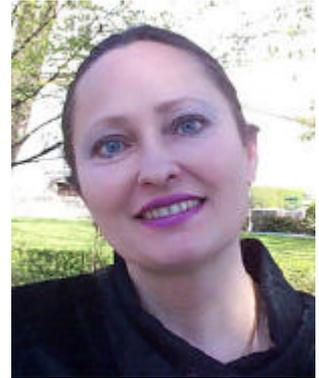
**Dr. Anthony Morgan** is professor of educational leadership and policy, co-director of the Utah Education Policy Center and special assistant to the president at the University of Utah. For 14 years, he was vice president for budget and planning. His international experience includes consultant work for the World Bank in Eastern Europe, principal investigator for a Mellon Foundation grant in Hungary, teaching for the Open Society Institute as well as work in the UK and the Middle East. Dr. Morgan received a B.S. in political science from the University of Utah; an M.A. from UCLA and a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. He is a member of the Universities Project Advisory Committee.



**Dr. K. George Pedersen** is chancellor of the University of Northern British Columbia and former president of the University of Western Ontario. Prior to these appointments, Dr. Pedersen was president of the University of British Columbia and of Simon Fraser University, and held teaching and administrative posts at the University of Toronto, the University of Chicago, and the University of Victoria. Dr. Pedersen is author of many books and articles on educational finance, administration and research, including, "The Itinerant Schoolmaster," a socioeconomic analysis of teacher turnover. Dr. Pedersen has a B.A. in history and geography from the University of British Columbia, an M.A. in geography and administration from the University of Washington, and a Ph.D. in the economics of education from the University of Chicago.



**Dr. Helene Kamensky** is Russian program coordinator for the Universities Project, based in Salzburg. In addition to her work with the Universities Project, she is a lecturer in philosophy and Russian Studies at the Institutes of Philosophy of the Universities of Salzburg and Vienna. Previously, she was a research fellow at the Institute of Scientific Theory, Salzburg International Research Center. From 1985 through 1989 Dr. Kamensky was dean of the faculty of foreign languages, Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University, Novosibirsk, Russia. Earlier, she served that same institution as associate professor and senior lecturer in the department of Philosophy. She earned a Ph.D. from the Department of Logic and Epistemology at the Russian Academy of Sciences.



## **THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR**

Universities throughout the world are undergoing systemic changes in their governance, academic design, structure, and mission. The Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project focuses on higher education reform in Central and East Europe, Russia, and the Newly Independent States as universities in these regions redefine their relationships with governments and try to become more integrated into the global intellectual community.

The Universities Project is a multi-year series of conferences and symposia convening senior representatives of higher education from the designated regions with their counterparts from North America and West Europe. Discussion in the Project's programs focuses on the following themes:

- University Administration and Finance
- Academic Structure and Governance within the University
- Meeting Students' Needs, and the Role of Students in Institutional Affairs
- Technology in Higher Education
- The University and Civil Society

### **OBJECTIVES**

Universities and other institutions of higher learning are seeking to reshape themselves in ways that will prepare them more fully for the twenty-first century. Even as these institutions are considering extensive systemic changes in their academic design, structure, and mission, all desire autonomy in governance and in their intellectual life. Accordingly, the Universities Project aims to promote the higher education reform process by inviting senior administrators to participate in conferences and symposia concerning issues of university management, administration, finance, and governance.

### **THE VISITING ADVISORS PROGRAM (VAP)**

The Salzburg Seminar launched this enhanced aspect of the Universities Project in the autumn of 1998. Under this program, teams of university presidents and higher education experts visit universities in Central and East Europe and Russia at the host institutions' request to assist in the process of institutional self-assessment and change. By the end of 2001, more than thirty VAP visits will have taken place to universities in East and Central Europe and Russia. A full schedule of visits is planned for 2002 and beyond. The addition of the Visiting Advisors Program brings to the Universities Project an applied aspect and serves to enhance institutional and personal relationships begun in Salzburg.

The Salzburg Seminar acknowledges with gratitude the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which are funding the Universities Project and the Visiting Advisors Program respectively.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information regarding the Salzburg Seminar's Visiting Advisors Program, the Universities Project, and Salzburg Seminar programs, please contact one of the Seminar's offices below.

Salzburg Seminar  
Schloss Leopoldskron  
Box 129  
A-5010 Salzburg, Austria

Telephone: +43 662 83983  
Fax: +43 662 839837

Salzburg Seminar  
The Marble Works  
P.O. Box 886  
Middlebury, VT 05753 USA

Telephone: +1 802 388 0007  
Fax: +1 802 388 1030

Salzburg Seminar website: [www.salzburgseminar.org](http://www.salzburgseminar.org)