



THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR VISITING ADVISORS' REPORT

FAR EASTERN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (FENU) VLADIVOSTOK, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

September 9-15, 2001

Team Members

Dr. Andris Barblan (team leader), Secretary General, European Association of Universities (EUA)

Dr. Hans Brinckmann, former President, University of Kassel, Germany

Dr. Helene Kamensky, Russian Program Coordinator, Universities Project, Salzburg Seminar

Dr. Istvan Teplan, Executive Vice-President, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

A. Introduction

This report is based on a series of meetings that took place at the Far Eastern National University (FENU), Vladivostok, Primorsky Krai, Russian Federation, from September 9 – 15, 2001. The team members met with the rector, vice rectors, deans, professors, and students of FENU to discuss a variety of issues of interest and concern to the University leadership. In addition to these discussions with the University community, the team members met with Dr. Leonid L. Afremov, the Head of the Department of Professional Education of the Primorsky Krai Administration, and gained from him an outside perspective on the FENU social and civic activities.

Our team members appreciate the privilege of visiting the Far Eastern National University, and are grateful to the Rector, Professor Dr. Kurilov Vladimir Ivanovich and his colleagues for the candor in the discussions and their exceptional hospitality. FENU administration and staff were gracious 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 convey our warm thanks for the helpfulness of all with whom we met.

B. Goals and Process of the Visit

This visit took place at the invitation of Professor Dr. Kurilov Vladimir Ivanovich, the Rector of the Far Eastern National University, responding to the increasing awareness on the part of Russian universities of the Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project, and the thirty one 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 steps of the visit consist of:

- A *self study* in which the Russian university provides not only relevant descriptive data about its history, mission, and current academic programs, but also the perception of the Rector and other top administrators of its problems, and its plans. These plans generally address not only the identified problems (which, for all Russian universities, are overwhelmingly financial), but longer-range priorities for growth, capital investment, new academic programs, and new ways of relating to the business and civic needs of the society.
- A site visit of several days during which the team meets with the Rector and other top administrators, generally some of the deans, students, and other offices within the University, and other higher educational entities in the region and the regional government.
- A preliminary report, drafted during the visit and delivered orally by the team leader to the Rector and his/her colleagues.
- A written report, drafted by the team leader with input from all of the team, shared first in draft form with the Rector before being issued in a final form.

The purpose of the visit is to share observations and offer recommendations based on the issues and information presented to us. 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, in this particular case primarily European perspective, in order to call attention to those aspects of the visited university that seem strongest, as well as those practices or strategic directions that seem most different from those one might find in similar universities in Europe and North America. Today, as universities in Russia redefine their relationships with government and try to become more integrated into the global intellectual community, international dialogue as well as exchange of information and expertise are of vital importance for the institutions. Thus, we share our understanding of the issues chosen for discussion and propose possible solutions in the hope that they will be of assistance to the senior administrators of FENU.

C. General Impressions

The institution’s name says it all: Far Eastern, National and University. East of the Urals, as far as Vladivostok, the perspective remains firmly European. To FENU members, Primorsky Kraj, the maritime province of Russia on the Pacific Ocean, is a part of Europe situated in Asia, although it is far from the European heartland, Vladivostok being located beyond China. The institution also considers itself to be “national,” a representative of Russia on the Pacific Rim. As such, it is a full actor in the Russian academic community, a system with its own traditions, competences and difficulties—a system which is close to models prevailing in continental Europe, i.e., state-supported

institutions whose services are considered of public interest throughout the nation. Russian in its identity, Asian in its location, FENU suffers indeed from the same contradictions as its sister institutions around the Federation; thus, it defines itself in relation to those establishments, all the more so as it taps a similar pool of resources, be it in terms of staff, students or finances.

Over the last ten years, characterized by dwindling government support, FENU chose to play on its difference in identity, turning into a comparative advantage its position in the Far East by building on its proximity with China, Korea and Japan—thus, keeping true to its original function when, in 1899, the institution was set up as an institute of oriental studies in order to develop the knowledge of the people, languages and cultures of surrounding countries. Hence, internationalization has been and remains a key mission of the University.

Also loyal to its recent history, the development of natural sciences, the University decided to retain full capacity in its academic offerings, even if this meant freezing resources in domains no longer in fashion, although basic to the understanding of man's place in nature and society. As a result, FENU remained faithful to its traditional intellectual role, avoiding the temptations of easy money that too often imply development choices imposed from outside.

1. Since Professor Kurilov assumed the leadership of the University in 1991, FENU emphasized its basic mission: training the citizens and decision-makers of the Russian Far East so that they can take full advantage of their unique location at the crossroad of Asian and European civilizations. This meant instilling a sense of confidence vis-à-vis the globalization process and taking a positive view of its impact on institutional development, thus reinforcing FENU's position among the top institutions of Russian higher education.

The Salzburg team was greatly impressed by the convergence of opinions coming from the some forty program leaders met during the three-day visit: they all showed pride in belonging to an institution exploring new commitments to society, a university ready to take risks, thus requiring from its members full commitment to high quality, innovation and flexibility in order to take advantage of existing opportunities while facing potential threats.

The team understood that, supporting the unity of purpose embodied by a highly motivated and active leadership, there is at FENU a culture of growth favoring personal initiatives and new ideas—whether in terms of courses, technical adjustment or external contacts. Indeed, when initiatives contribute to realizing the objectives of the institution, they are encouraged at the highest level—a policy whose institutionalization has been reflected by the appointment of a Vice-President responsible for innovation.

The team also understood that the University is focusing on its core competence, the preparation of conscious citizens, the workforce of tomorrow's Russian Far East. Since 1991, FENU's basic strategy has been the development of the student body both in quantitative and qualitative terms; this meant tripling the number of students from 7500 to 21,000 and, correspondingly, tripling the course offer and the size of the facilities, a kind of miracle considering that state support decreased during the decade from 100% to some 30% only, which today cover essentially student grants and staff salaries.

Betting on the students also meant entering the open and distance learning market, i.e., meeting student demand outside of the institution, in the region or beyond, in other countries of the Far East. It all led to the recruitment of students ready to contribute to the

real costs of their training by paying fees, thus making institutional growth possible: indeed, in 2001, the funds coming from paying students covers more than half of the budget.

Betting on the students, moreover, encouraged the University to position itself in new fields and emerging areas of concern. The Salzburg team admired the opportunity taken of developing *interdisciplinary programs*—for instance in so-called “Human Science” and in “Social Work”—at a time of financial restrictions. Another way to reinforce the quality and prestige of FENU consisted in expanding the post-graduate program and in the placement of many doctoral students in institutes of the Far Eastern branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, thus taking advantage of high-level facilities in a congenial research atmosphere.

Over the last ten years, finally, the bet on students was clearly expressed in the development of joint degrees in business administration with the University of Maryland, a program that graduated more than 200 students receiving BA qualifications from the USA: FENU offers in this area a unique, high prestige product to Far Eastern students and builds up Primorsky Krai’s potential for cross border, international cooperation in the Pacific Rim area of tomorrow. The team welcomes the extension of such a model to Australia and hopes that it can be realized soon.

In brief, *FENU’s strengths* consist in a strong sense of purpose, a clear commitment to its core competence, a pride in its academic achievements and a deep vitality in terms of innovation and development.

2. This is all the more remarkable in that the areas of potential **weakness** are numerous:

- *insufficient financial support* – in particular in terms of staff salaries if the internal brain drain to more lucrative positions or the multiplication of salaried jobs are to be avoided;
- *fiscal status* which wipes out through taxation the equivalent support of the State, the university being considered like a firm rather than a “charity,” with tax exemption, to mention the British model;
- *distance* between Russia’s administrative centers and Vladivostok on the Federation’s periphery, travel and time costs representing a disadvantage compared to competing institutions in the heart of the country.

Another type of global constraints exists: they are the internal regulations applied to all higher education institutions in Russia, such as the need to ensure *28 contact hours* a week per student. Such a rule, if strictly enforced, can only impede pedagogical change and prevent moves to new types of learning, for instance in terms of open and distance teaching. Similarly, the *structure of staff commitments* (teaching hours, administrative duties, etc.) and its relative importance represent a control mechanism rather than an incentive to change and flexibility. These are all constraints on which little influence can be exerted—unless there is a common policy endorsed by the Rectors’ Union to fight for changed rules at the Parliament and at the government level in Moscow. But can concerted lobbying be arranged in a context where each institution fights for its own survival?

Other areas of potential weakness are perhaps more within the range of FENU’s responsibilities. The recruitment of new students able to support institutional development financially could lead to *over-enrollment* in departments that do not have the facilities needed to ensure high quality teaching. Numerous new activities launched

to attract more students could result in a *dispersion of efforts*, especially when the critical mass in new lines of action has not been yet reached: the university has then to subsidize areas of potential growth at the risk of weakening other interests. The Salzburg team accepts that these deferred results correspond to an investment in the future. The question is, however: can FENU afford all the innovative projects the University is launching? In terms of investment, can the institution really stimulate the market for its own services in areas where the social needs exist but are not perceived as of academic interest by the local community? Persuasion is a costly investment, even if only indirectly, in terms of personnel time taken away from teaching and research.

The Salzburg team had sometimes the impression that the *interface with the local and regional community* in terms of inventing the long-term future of the Russian Far East was not institutionalized yet, thus risking to jeopardize individual initiatives, even if they are supported by the Rector and the Academic Board. It seems that the University is more pro-active in these linkages than its public partners; as a result, the institution could consider to be *insufficiently supported* by the local and regional authorities even if the University represents not only a central link in the educational chain of the region (expressed in joint ventures with secondary school establishments) but also a key employer in Primorie, bringing indispensable cash and know-how to the maritime districts.

Another area of potential weakness—in an institution, which prides itself on its growing prestige and reinforced “brand” name—is the apparent *lack of quality assessment procedures* inside the University. Ranking is usually based on the evaluation of outcomes, in this case the quality of the graduates: FENU’s results are highly appreciated indeed. The Salzburg team, however, would be more interested, for institutional development purposes, in structured discussions of the process and efficiency leading to such results. If quality is to be more than a rhetoric, it should be “given precision in articulate statements of institutional self-definition, in specifiable plans and programs, in assessable goals and benchmarks of progress, and in a meaningful allocation of resources: then the commitment to quality can become the basis for common ground”¹. The team, for instance, understands that until three years ago, students were asked their opinion about the teaching process but that the exercise was abandoned as little was made out of the replies received from the “customers.” Indeed, if student evaluations are the only tool of quality assessment, there is a strong risk of bias; however, if such procedures are part of a wider self-assessment process, FENU could prove not only that it is doing the right thing in terms of *outcome* but also in terms of *process*, in other words that it is fully accountable for the efficient use of its scarce resources to its customers and its stakeholders, present or potential. Quality assurance gives credibility to the ranking process that recognizes FENU as an elite institution of the Russian Federation.

Quality assurance could also be used more widely in order to prevent the institution from developing into a “*two-speed*” university —innovative areas in terms of learning and delivery moving away from more traditional fields of knowledge where innovation rarely blossoms due to the overload of teachers and staff, within and outside the institution. Quality assessment could help secure a *reward system*, which would keep the University as an integrated whole, one of its present strengths.

¹ MORRIL Richard, *Academic Planning : Values and Decision-Making*, Richmond, Virginia

In other words, FENU runs specific risks in terms of resources, be they funds or people. Although the problem is general in Russia, FENU has tended to move its own way when betting on the students, contrary to several other institutions in the country that preferred servicing industrial and commercial needs. As for procedures contributing to change, like academic planning for instance, the Salzburg team had the impression that emphasis was put on discussions made *a posteriori* of the implementation of innovation rather than on *a priori* feasibility studies of the cost, viability and long-term advantages of the changes envisaged. Such an approach evokes a *culture of control* rather than of incentive. The focus on outcome makes sense in a vital and vibrant institution, ready to live up to its basic purposes—which appears to be the case at FENU—but it should soon give place to more structured decision-making processes in which the pros and cons are carefully weighted in function of the desired long-term development of the institution, of the costs, potential and side-effects of each suggested project.

3. A rearranged policy does, of course, take account of the **opportunities** for change that can advance the development of the institution. At FENU, they encompass mainly *international* cooperation, *interdisciplinary* commitments and social *presence in the region*. The internationalization process has been based for a long time on the Eurasian identity of the institution, a unique specificity for transborder cooperation. Opportunities for further work in the field exist not only with countries around the Japan Sea but also with other nations of the Pacific Rim where the presence of Russia is a key concern in terms of cooperation *and* competition. The models experimented on a bilateral basis with Japan, Korea, China and the USA could be extended to other parts of the Pacific region and given a multi-lateral dimension, one collaboration agreement reinforcing the others. This could also raise the question of the *lingua franca* in the region, where communication seems to depend on mastering the various languages spoken in the Far East. By strengthening cooperation with other countries of Asia, not to mention the USA or Australia and New Zealand, could not English become the *lingua franca*, a choice that would have repercussions in the organization of studies at FENU, especially if the Open University program is to become the window of Russian expertise for the whole region? Could core courses be taught in English, for instance, and can the staff be prepared for such a task, for instance, so that their contribution is made available outside Primorie?

As for *interdisciplinarity*, the Salzburg team can only recommend further development in the field—in so far as it can help solve local and regional problems in a coherent and congruent way. Interdisciplinarity is one of the ways to social cohesion, particularly when, as at FENU, so many of its graduates staff government offices, media studios and press rooms in the province. This represents an important pool of potential support, both in terms of political influence as much as in financial terms.

4. The **threat** to FENU's future development is the *competition* from other universities, from private rogue providers and other for-profit institutions. This competition could be exacerbated by the possible further decline of state support, thus increasing the risk of brain drain from staff and students. This could become a major difficulty considering the financial and structural deficiencies considered above.

D. FENU's specific concerns

In this context, the Salzburg team was asked to consider three areas of specific concern to the visited university: the role of the institution in **social development**, the **financing**

of the institution and the role of **information and communication technologies** (ICT) in its growth.

1. Considering that some 60% of the secondary school graduates enter higher education in Primorsky Krai, and that at university level, some 40% enter FENU—an institution that enjoys some kind of monopoly in the training for various professions (law, communication, administration, in particular), the **social development** of the Far Eastern National University is of particular importance for the area, quantitatively and qualitatively. This position is reinforced by the fact that in education for research, FENU leads a large group of the disciplinary centers set up in conjunction with the Academy of Sciences. If one remembers also the many partnerships existing with secondary schools (schools “26” and “40”, in particular) in order to prepare better potential university candidates, it becomes obvious that the University plays a key role on the training stage of the Far Eastern maritime provinces of Russia.

However, the key to development remains essentially in Moscow, even if there is a tendency to devolve some responsibilities—in particular for quality control—to regional authorities and universities of Primorsky Krai. Indeed, the Vladivostok Council of Rectors can offer advice on the real need for new programs offered by various institutions and the Ministry usually takes heed of the suggestions made to avoid duplicating efforts. This trend towards enlarged competences, although weak, deserves to be reinforced, so that, with trust building between Moscow and Vladivostok, decentralization becomes part of the daily life in Primorie. Indeed, the frontier spirit and border location of the province give an international specificity to its possible development which would benefit from the innovation potential available in the region, a potential present in particular at FENU. The University’s active and deepening links with organizations in other countries on the Pacific Rim, from the USA to China and Australia, are emblematic of the advantages of cooperation for the area. Thus, FENU’s attractiveness to foreign capital (for the building of the Korea and Japan centers, for instance) is highly commendable as it brought millions of dollars for institutional modernization. This pro-active and successful search for new ventures however, needs to be supported in the long run and turned into a *strategy* involving the university leaders, on one hand, and the local and regional decision-makers, on the other.

Indeed, although taken for granted, the role of FENU does not appear to be obvious to all. Thus, for the moment, the Salzburg team has the impression that the University tries to carve itself a social role in areas that the staff deems of importance rather than to question the local decision-makers about their expectations of the university’s contribution to community development. It appears that the University has to take the lead, in innovation as in many other fields. The team, therefore, was happy to hear that after only a few years of activities, it was the outside partners who were approaching the interdisciplinary Institute for Social Work with the wish for collaboration. It is hoped that such developments will continue as they prove that FENU can become a partner in community development rather than a simple seller of those services considered to be of interest by the staff. *Partnership* means being autonomous (in its offer) and accountable (in its service.)

To reinforce the institution’s capacity for partnership, two suggestions could be made. Firstly, the setting up of a *university think tank*, which could sort out the various suggestions for action made by the staff, giving priority to projects in function of the investment required while taking into account the relative fragility of FENU’s financial

situation. Indeed, in creating various interdisciplinary institutes, the demarcation between activities seemed rather fuzzy—perhaps a function of interdisciplinarity itself. For the Salzburg team, however, it was not very obvious why the links between law enforcement and criminality in the region would be dealt with as a priority by the Institute of Human Science rather than the Institute for Social Work. Does the allocation of tasks depend on expected synergies or on a historical basis? Should not the institution, rather than entering many new fields, define priorities in order to consolidate its patterns of growth? The University now appears to be strong enough—despite political and social turbulences in the country—to develop a mid-term strategy institutionalizing longer-term perspectives. Rather than thinking of rigid planning, the team thinks rather of a strategic management based on an accepted framework of development; in this context, a think tank would contribute to the negotiation, inside the institution, of the support that members of the staff can offer to their institution, a discussion process that would reinforce the motivation of FENU as an institution which is a conscious partner in regional growth.

Secondly, in many institutions, academic or otherwise, the dialogue with stakeholders is a pro-active commitment, on both sides. In Primorsky Krai, however, the outsiders seem to have too weak an interest in academic matters and are too scattered in their ambitions to enter such a commitment. A first step has been taken towards stronger and more responsible partnerships by turning Primorie into a single educational district. Such a global regional approach could also touch fields other than training so that education could become a part of a general concept of development for the province as a whole. The University would then no longer stumble on a kind of polite presence with little real backing of its activities—even if the regional authorities consider that some 70% of their academic budget should go to FENU, an assertion that the University would gladly see confirmed.

To correct this imbalance in partnership, the Salzburg team was wondering if, despite earlier disappointments, FENU could not envisage setting up also an *interface* with governmental, media, industrial and business stakeholders, perhaps on an *advisory* basis at first: all should find common interest in the work of such a body if its remit were both general and precise. This advisory council could define the social priorities of development in the region, imagine the tools of Primorie's presence in the world and determine their coordination, reflect on the role of academic training and research in community enhancement, and propose ways to reward the University for its social involvement. At a later stage, such a council could be turned into a Board of Trustees, i.e., a group of persons committed to FENU's development rather than to Primorie's growth and FENU's responsibility in the process. Support should also be gained from the many *alumni* of the University, should the institution encourage their grouping into an association that could back up and disseminate FENU's interests by committing to the university's activities.

By betting on the students over the last ten years, the University has enlarged its popular basis, as many of its graduates have gained positions of importance in the region. The bet on students could now lead to a new bet on the side of FENU, a *bet on the region* that these young people will serve as academic professionals. Such a growing *intelligentsia* calls for an academic investment in the Primorsky Krai as the economic, political and social area of development for FENU students. The University is indeed the think tank where the conditions for the region's sustainable development can be put together, tested and explained. This requires a strong sense of purpose and clear

institutional arrangements to mediate such discussions. The team considers that, with its strong leadership and its clear motivation for innovation, FENU has the capacity to reinforce its social presence in the Russian Far East by committing to the future of the region and its development.

2. Ten years of expansion were successfully met in a difficult **financial environment** by keeping the number of federally funded students constant while increasing the group of the fee-paying ones, now representing two-thirds of the student body. At FENU, 30% of the operating budget is still covered by federal and regional contributions, other revenues coming not only from fees but also from grants and international partnerships. The institution considers, however, that State taxation is repatriating to Moscow most governmental funding, which is no real encouragement to develop new programs in response to the challenges of a changing economic and social environment. Efforts have been made particularly in the fields of management, business studies, law, languages and professional development—areas that can attract candidates ready to pay the costs incurred for their education, the amounts varying from 500 to 3500 dollars per year, depending on the program. As a result, 60% of total revenues currently come from fee-paying students.

For the Salzburg team, the pricing of these courses seems realistic considering the compromise needed to balance institutional cost and market demand. The rule established of a 60% contribution out of all general income going to a *central fund* was also considered as a strong tool for *harmonized development* throughout the institution, such a fund covering overhead cost and providing resources for those areas where income generation is not possible. This high proportion indicates a sense of belonging to a common institution that is rarely found in state organizations in the West. The fund could then represent a temptation for some kind of authoritarian rule but FENU's budgeting procedure appears not only transparent but linked to a *bottom-up approach* allowing departments and faculties to express their needs.

However, together with that rapid development, some undesired effects have tended to occur, a normal evolution considering a changed revenue structure going from full state support in 1991 to two thirds of FENU's income coming from non-governmental sources ten years later. Entering many new areas resulted perhaps in "spreading too thin" so that the institution would now need to consolidate its offer of services by focusing on its areas of comparative advantage. Selecting the right action and pursuing it the right way could be facilitated by the rigorous use of international benchmarks which could be developed with FENU's partner institutions around the world: how do they make their own choices, and can lessons be drawn from their experiences?

In the "elite" fields, the most profitable areas, the 1 to 3 recommended ratio of paying vis-à-vis "budget" students has often been turned around, sometimes resulting in 80% of the students paying tuition. This puts a heavy burden on the teaching staff (or on facilities) and substantiates claims for extra compensation. This is all the more serious that the prescribed rule of 28 contact hours a week per student represents a serious problem for teachers trying to meet the demand of an enlarged student body with a staff which does not grow correspondingly. For the University, that real restriction of means is reinforced by no less a real fiscal burden that takes up to 30% of the revenues generated outside of the governmental support. The Salzburg team could understand that, considering that such rules are decided at federal level, any change would need a

concerted action from the universities of Russia at national level—not an easy task in such a large country.

Aggregating the expenses (as in the enclosed appendix) shows that only 25% of the total is allocated to salaries, a percentage which cannot be maintained in the long run. FENU would need to increase that ratio to capitalize on its academic potential. The team is well aware that this is a general problem in transition economies but recognizes also that this situation means a *de facto devaluation* of the institution's *intellectual and human capital*—not the most appropriate background to attract the best brains in academic service.

Another cause of distortion in the financial management of the institution is the calculation based on real terms for the fees of paying students compared to the flat contribution of the federal authorities which does not cover the overhead expenses incurred by FENU apart from salaries and student grants. This implies accumulating *differed maintenance costs*, which could have a boomerang effect in the long run, a normal risk when the fees collected from the students do not cover even 50% of the maintenance and repair costs of dormitories. This is a special problem for the upkeep of the residences reserved for foreign students—or foreign teachers—who could be attracted to Vladivostok by quality accommodation.

The Salzburg team would like to draw attention to the impact of a major investment which could be made with the help of *strategic partners*, regional and international, willing to take advantage of the unique location of FENU from an international perspective, being at the crossroads of East and West in the Pacific area. Would it not be worth to consider the “Warwick model” and create a modern *conference center* with residential facilities that could become a scientific nodal point for the Northern Pacific area, similar to Durban, in South Africa, or Warwick and Aarhus, in Europe? That facility could be used for further education and retraining, for Russian summer schools or other scientific meetings and conferences. Eventually, it could become a revenue-generating division of the institution in line with the main mission of the University, since the project would express the bet on the region that should further the bet made earlier on the students. From another perspective, if FENU wanted to use its academic prestige, such a facility could also become the window of the higher education sector of Primorie as a whole, considering that all institutions in the area can take advantage of the crossroad specificity of the region. Under FENU's leadership, the conference center could thus become a tool for inter-institutional cooperation, thus contributing to the necessary convergence of a highly divided system of training. A *joint effort* of the academic establishment could also evoke regional support more easily than dispersed requests for funding to a scattered group of potential contributors - as the latter would contribute more easily to a highly visible enterprise which could prove of great interest to the non-academic world.

A similar quest for strategic partners would be important to reinforce the promising and successful development of the *Open University system* of FENU aiming at offering distance learning courses to Primorie, Pacific Rim countries or Russia as a whole. Relevance and academic excellence should be the motivation for stakeholders' financial support, another way of recommending the setting up of an *advisory council* aiming at the global understanding of the advantages and opportunities available for the concerted action of Primorie leaders, be they political, economic and academic.

In other words, the University should develop a *fund-raising strategy* to increase non-tuition revenue since the reliance on the further expansion of the number of fee-paying students could prove risky, if not insufficient in the long run. FENU already has experience in the matter considering the funds and donations received from foundations both in Russia and abroad. With the possible help of an outside consultant, the lessons of the past could be drawn into a *feasibility study* about fund raising policies and potential donors—including alumni—a reflection that should be coupled with the long term strategic plan of the University.

We have the impression that, after capitalizing on the good will of its people and on the opportunities present in the region, FENU will soon reach the *limits of extensive development*; thus, if it is to *consolidate* the impetuous evolution it has experienced since 1991, the University should be invited to focus on an *intensive growth* based on well selected priority areas allowing the institution to strengthen its leading position in the Far East, and in Russia in general. Such a *strategic plan* would be based on a readjusted definition of FENU's mission for the future, i.e., on a clear vision of what it wants to become. It would mean defining a range of complementary goals expressed by well-defined objectives. The latter's' implementation would depend on priorities and on benchmarks allowing for an assessment of policy success – efficiency making clear the results obtained in function of the revenue streams and the accountability for their use. This all means institutionalizing and strengthening FENU's present success.

3. The use of ***information and communication technologies*** translates into action on the aims and goals of an organization, with the choices, explicit or implicit, made by an academic institution. That is perhaps why, in the mission statement, “informatization” has been considered to be one of the four keys of FENU's potential success in Primorie; indeed, by supporting openness and borderless communication, new technologies allow not only for the access of a wide group of “local” students, people now scattered in a large and under-populated province, but also of other trainees in Russia and countries of Asia and the Pacific Rim. ICT still remains more of a tool for action than an objective; it allows for growth but does not determine the orientation of action. As ICT requires large investments, however, their use can be perceived sometimes as a goal in itself. The distinction should be kept clear in the strategic leadership debate.

In terms of capacity for the use of new technologies, FENU has got the know-how and the enthusiasm of some of its staff, which is needed to turn ambitions into reality. The University has managed in recent years to upgrade computer equipment, to set up local computer networks as well as external communication channels. Yet, in such an area, large investments are still needed to *reinforce capacity*: more hardware, broader internal and external bandwidth as well as improved computer literacy within the academic staff. Thus, FENU could enlarge its comparative strength in teaching innovation, while using its prestige to “brand” dual modes of learning, e.g. virtual and real services proposed simultaneously inside and outside Vladivostok, in branches set up in the province or abroad, like the college based in Hokkaido, a very innovative venture.

To achieve this objective, FENU has also moved from means to content and developed a large number of electronic manuals, translating into a virtual process most of its fields of traditional interest. The Salzburg team understood that this effort resulted in innovative didactics not always integrated in the courses given on campus, thus creating a risk of distortion between virtual and on-site learning experiences. The danger is all the more

apparent that, compared with other universities, for instance in Europe, FENU's policy has led to the creation of an astonishingly wide spectrum of teaching material. Therefore, would it not be wise to select programs in order to position FENU as a key quality provider in specific fields chosen to structure the *unique profile* of the University's teaching offerings? Reduced offerings would also allow for a better integration of pedagogical innovation in the University's various programs. Moreover, only a small share of the budget is now allotted to the development of virtual courses: with the growing competition from other distant learning providers, no single university will, in the long run, be able to afford multimedia and interactive learning without sharing costs and expertise with competitors who become collaborators. Future partners should be other institutions in the educational sector: university networks, private or public producers of software and/or service providers, telecommunication companies, publishers or firms from the media world. Such an evolution will require an original contribution from the various partners in order to complement each other's offerings so that the needs of a fast moving and expensive world of communication are met. The Salzburg team is confident that FENU can tailor its offerings on the basis of its specific strong points, thus using its originality in order to form *partnerships in e-learning*, as it has acquired considerable experience with the University of Maryland University College (USA), with Waseda University (Japan) or with Kyung Hee University (Republic of Korea).

Investment has also to be made in staff computer literacy. Here too, the full coverage of needs could prove terribly expensive in terms of the time and money needed to adjust teaching competence and academic psychology to the new modes of learning. Some of the staff will certainly remain closed to computer-aided means of reading and writing; they should not be forced to master new technologies but rather encouraged to see their use and benefit for the visibility and quality of FENU's services. A "*contamination*" strategy based on incentives could be more useful and cheaper than a strategy of change forced on all staff. Indeed, reluctance could even become an advantage to cool down the enthusiasms of a "computer generation" fascinated by the outcomes of information technologies while it remains blind to their social or scientific impact. In any case, ICT has its limits. There will always be low technology modalities allowing for efficient work—text processing, e-mail, electronic testing or video transfer—that can be used to lower defensive attitudes. In a more sober context, enthusiasm could become infectious if ICT supporters are given key roles in the development strategy of the institution as its leaders bet on modern communication to make the difference in their offering of a unique service to the community.

The Salzburg team was made aware of the emphasis laid by FENU on the processing of geographical and meteorological data, despite the high cost of software and hardware for climatology. The University seemed able to give students and scientists the necessary *access to international databanks*—an access to information being facilitated in order to allow FENU to forecast floods and to prevent catastrophes and unwanted damages—an aid to the community. Would not such previsions also represent a service to agriculture and fish industry and could they not be sold to farmers and fishermen? Could at least their calculation be used as a teaching device to help students experiment with the needs of possible future jobs? Access is also determined by the availability of communication lines and channels: what FENU has already achieved is a great success, but the users' expectations are growing and the costs of meeting the demand could easily exceed any prospective budget. This applies in Russia, as in many other countries, where the cost of Internet connections could be passed on to the users

so that the State supports the launching of the system rather than its long-term growth. To be ready for such a risk, FENU could start to introduce fees for the use of the Internet, on an incremental basis, as there is not yet the need to cover the full cost of interconnection.

Closely linked with the costs of Internet lines are the expenses linked to information, printed or electronic. FENU has taken the initiative to produce e-textbooks to be used on the net or via CD-ROM. This material certainly uses electronic data that needs to be stored for retrieval, a function similar to that of a library, for which a new building is now being planned. Could a more extensive use of electronic data and archives mean that the library—in bricks and mortar—should be re-defined in function of the virtual access to world data banks and global resources made available by ICT? Would it not be cheaper to go electronic, in part or fully, considering the cost of scientific reviews? And what would this mean in terms of didactics as far as students or staff are concerned? The Salzburg team considers that the investment in data resources and the choice of support represent a key to the further growth of FENU and that the construction of the library represents an opportunity to redefine the institution's information and communication strategy.

Indeed, a broader Internet access to all kinds of knowledge could help change the negative attitude to distance learning which seems to prevail in the region—if not in the institution. The prestige of the FENU “brand” in higher education could be strengthened by an excellent and customized access to worldwide information. As a result, on the basis of the informatization process already achieved, could not the University serve as a *portal of knowledge* not only for its own academic population but also for economy and society? Such an effort could become a source of revenue for FENU and, at the same time, turn into an instrument for the marketing of its expertise in chosen fields of further education. It was mentioned, however, that the state of integration of different data bases was not yet very developed. This is a problem common to many universities that face privacy problems, low system compatibility, data migration difficulties and diverse attitudes vis-à-vis electronic data banks. Forcing integration could be terribly costly in terms of goodwill and finances. The Salzburg team would prefer, also in this field, a soft approach that would *allow differences* to exist in order to motivate staff—those ready to test their own ideas as well as the reluctant users of the capacity of the system to answer their specific needs. At the end, the cost of such an institutionalized learning process, incremental and persuasive, could be less formidable than a unifying norms and practices which reduces the willingness of academics to embrace necessary change.

In other words, in the field of ICT, the team considers that FENU faces similar problems as in its relations with the community or the development of its service. Not all innovative ideas can be pursued, choices will have to be made so that the University can design a unique profile in its teaching, research and services, thus justifying the use of new technologies as part of the specificity of FENU's offer to the community, Primorie and Russia.

E. Conclusions

Over the last ten years, the University has managed to thrive in difficult and restricted conditions thanks to the motivation and skill of its leaders, the dedication and sense of pride of its members, and the growing number of students ready to invest in their own future, i.e., to compete and pay for the unique range of courses offered at FENU. To

keep the academic community on the move, the institution has opened new departments, created new specializations, built up new institutes, thus offering unique training possibilities in Russia, especially in conjunction with international partners, both in the vicinity as with China, Korea and Japan but also further away, in the USA or in Australia. Betting on the students first, national and international, FENU has also bet on the region, the focus of its specificity as a crossroad of European and Asian cultural contacts, intellectual and academic.

Externally, the University needs reinforced partners if it is to pursue its growth. To help them to take account of the academic contribution to community development, the Salzburg team suggests setting up an *Advisory Council* that would discuss and propose a *global understanding* of Primorie's future and the ways to achieve it. The success of such an interface would depend on the remit of the group, making it largely responsible for the welfare of the region through the University – considering in particular the role and action of FENU's *alumni* in reinforcing the regional texture.

Internally, the many innovations tried at the *periphery* of the institution—often with success in special departments and institutes—should move *to the core* of the activities. This means bringing together areas of change and places of resistance, for instance to negotiate quality procedures which could become general references accepted all over the institution, a process involving not only professors but also students and technical staff. The various arenas for discussion inside FENU could be coordinated by a *think tank* supporting the University leadership's long term thinking. This group could prepare position papers and development scenarios for the yearly residential seminar of the Academic Board in February.

By giving itself the tools of partnership (free initiative and accountability), FENU should be able to develop further its *fund-raising strategy* and its *international ventures*, in particular through distance and e-learning services. But this will involve clear choices as it is impossible to be present on all fronts. Thus, moving from extensive development to intensive growth, FENU will not only consolidate the achievements of the last decade but also enter into a *new stage of development*, the challenge of which being the need for changed approaches in terms of business culture, strategy and priority setting. Most of the tools are in hand, and university members are willing and students motivated. The University can certainly meet the challenge and reaffirm its unique place in the Russian academic landscape, on the higher rungs of the prestige ladder in terms of recognized quality and innovation.

Finally, we record once more our sincere thanks to the Rector Kurilov and his colleagues—academic, administrative, interpreters—for their many kindnesses to us. This has been a most enriching experience professionally, socially and culturally, and we look forward to continuing our cooperation. We wish the leadership, faculty, staff, and students of the Far Eastern National University the very best for the future development of their comprehensive University. And we convey again our most favorable impressions about the University and its present directions.

The Visiting Advisors Program of the Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project, particularly the visit to the Far Eastern National University, has been made possible by a generous grant from the Kellogg Foundation.

Visiting Advisors

Dr. Andris Barblan (team leader) is the Secretary General of the European University Association (EUA), the successor of the CRE, the Association of European Universities, since 1976. The EUA, located in Geneva and Brussels is the coordinating body of some 600 Universities and 30 National Rectors' Conferences from forty-five European countries. The association organizes international conferences for university leaders on the management and development of university institutions in Europe and acts as a representative of the higher education community in Brussels (European Commission), Paris (UNESCO) and is a key partner of the so-called "Bologna process", a political effort of 32 European governments leading to a European Higher Education Area. The Association runs various programs on quality assessment or international cooperation on behalf of members or of public authorities. Dr. Barblan is a member of the administrative board of the European Center for the Strategic Management of Universities in Brussels. He received a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Geneva, and currently serves as a member of the Universities Project Advisory Committee.

Dr. Hans Brinckmann is former president of the University of Kassel, Germany (1989 – 1999). Prof. Dr. Brinckmann joined the University of Kassel in 1972 as a professor of public law and public administration and is back to his chair 1999. He has studied law (Ph.D., University of Bonn) and applied mathematics/communication engineering (Dipl. Ing. Technical University of Darmstadt). He combines these two subjects in the research field of computer science of law and administration. Prof. Dr. Brinckmann's scientific studies focus on the modernization of the public sector and of higher education and on the changes of structures, processes and products in public services, administration and politics, teaching and learning by means of new information and communication technologies.

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.

Dr. Istvan Teplan is executive vice president, Central European University, Budapest. From 1992 to 1992 he was that institution's director of budget and planning. Dr. Teplan has served as a research fellow, Center for East and Central European Studies, Budapest University of Economics; visiting professor, Seoul National University; advisor and program coordinator for the mayor of the City of Budapest, and program coordinator, Budapest Center, at the University of California and University of Wisconsin. Dr. Teplan was educated at Eötvös Lóránd University, the State University of New York at Binghamton, where he received an M.A. in sociology, and the Budapest University of Economics, where he earned a Ph.D. in sociology.

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