



THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR VISITING ADVISORS REPORT

YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY YEREVAN, REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

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Introduction and Overview

The team thanks Rector Radik Martirosyan for the hospitality and the open doors and open discussions that took place at Yerevan State University (YSU) with members of the Rectorate and also deans and faculty in a number of departments and also with students. We had many stimulating and productive meetings covering a broad range of topics.

We recognized the historic importance of YSU to the intellectual and cultural history of Armenia, its centrality, and the justification for its reputation as the “mother” university or alma mater for higher education in Armenia.

We commended the Rector on his implementation of new reforms and in particular for his recent election, the first occasion for a Rector to be elected at this University. We also commended him on his vision for YSU that resulted in his participating in the Universities Project in Salzburg and in persuading the leadership at Salzburg to send a team of advisors to this campus. This initiative indicated to us that he was not satisfied with the current status even with the recognized high excellence in so many areas and did not wish to have YSU rest on its laurels and look only to the past and to its distinguished history. YSU is looking to the future and to the possibility of change.

The self-study identified three topics for discussion for us:

- (1) Academic Structure and Governance within the University;
- (2) Student Needs and the Role of Students in Institutional Affairs; and
- (3) The Impact of Technology on the Curriculum

These are important and timely topics. During our discussions other topics also arose including: (1) the status of faculty, (2) the concern for brain drain, (3) the difficulty of keeping faculty current in their fields given the still limited Internet access and also the limited availability of the most current textbooks and other materials in their fields that would enrich their lectures. Still other topics came forward when we met with a group of students including student leaders. Others occurred to our team as we reviewed our experiences each day.

We took the liberty of expanding the scope of our report to address the other issues as well as the initial three that were presented to us. Yerevan's challenge is how best to preserve and sustain the historic high quality of education and research while at the same time planning ahead to enhance this quality through making the best use of new ideas, new technologies, and new policies and techniques in governance as in teaching and research.

We observed a number of strengths, some challenges that are areas for concern, and have proposed strategies to build on the strengths and overcome the challenges.

Strengths

YSU's greatest strength is its recognized status as the alma mater, the jewel in the crown, the institution that has educated the leadership of Armenia including large numbers of the diaspora community. YSU is identified with quality, and Armenians everywhere will expect it to continue to provide quality and should support it in that endeavor.

Next, YSU graduates throughout the world are a great strength, a resource that we believe has not been adequately utilized. Universities in North America have long recognized that their most loyal and generous supporters, more even than foundations or governments, are their alumni. Universities in Western Europe have only recently begun to appreciate this resource. Yerevan State University should follow their example.

Another great strength is the existing quality of YSU's professors. We were impressed with the strong research commitment both in the humanities—in particular in history and languages—and in the sciences.

Another significant strength is the powerful love of country that we encountered both in professors and in students. There is a continuing brain drain in Armenia resulting from economic and societal problems. Many young people seek opportunities abroad. But in spite of the problems, in spite of the obvious temptation to leave, when we spoke with some professors and graduate students in physics, and also with a group of about twenty undergraduate and graduate students from various programs, none of them wished to leave the country to seek better opportunities. The students were naturally interested in opportunities to study overseas, but declared their intention to live and work in Armenia. Several expressed as their highest ambition to become professors at Yerevan State University. The challenge will

be to increase the number of the best students in the future who share this loyalty and to decrease the numbers who yield to the temptation to leave.

Another strength is the entrepreneurship, the proactive nature of deans and professors who seek out opportunities through grants, through exchanges, through international linkages and partnerships. Scientific research depends on current information, on the latest technologies, on the latest and expensive scientific equipment. Recognizing that YSU's official budget cannot provide these items, which are not luxuries but necessities for scientists, they have sought out alternative sources to provide pieces of equipment. We commend their resourcefulness.

This is only a partial listing of YSU's considerable strengths. We also identified challenges or areas for concern.

Challenges

Not surprisingly, the challenges are sometimes the reverse side of the strengths. YSU's high reputation, its strong history of excellence, its long established procedures make it harder to change or adopt new ways, create new traditions, develop new policies.

We found that the loyalty to the past and the nostalgia for the past, including the Soviet era in spite of its authoritarian nature, resulted in anxiety about change, at worst a genuine resistance or reluctance to change, at best a willingness to consider change, but only very slow and gradual change. While this is understandable, it can prevent the University from sustaining the very excellence of which it is so proud. A university is dynamic; it's a living organism that has to evolve or perish; it cannot stand still; to stand still is to move backwards if everyone else continues to move.

We also felt that communication between and among the many constituencies that make up the university community is uneven and inadequate. Communication is always a challenge for a large institution. Modern technologies like email can facilitate it, but we recognize that computers are still scarce throughout the University and that not everyone has access to email. Publications like campus newspapers are expensive and take time to prepare. Still, we feel that communication is essential when one is attempting to move a large organization through a transitional period. Everyone needs to know where their institution is heading, where its leadership would like to lead them. Everyone needs to become involved and committed.

Funding is a major challenge. We learned that YSU's leadership enjoys excellent relations with the government; a number of former ministers are on YSU's staff; its leaders have personal friendships with ministers, with the president. And even with these relationships the state can only provide 27% of the University's budget, and this only for partial support for salaries, and none of the other expenses of the University. We also learned that the state order for student support only covers about one third of YSU's students and that this number, even if the demand increases, will be decreasing each year.

To summarize, briefly, the three challenges or areas for concern we have noted include (1) a resistance to change, (2) a lack of effective lines of communication, and (3) budgetary constraints. These challenges are not unique to Yerevan State University, but common to many institutions including many in Western Europe and also in the United States and Canada.

I. Governance

The first of the three specific topics identified for us dealt with governance, with the recent and projected reforms in YSU's administrative structure and procedures, including the role of students in the governance bodies.

The self-study stated that "the Republic of Armenia is taking its first steps toward becoming a free and open society, and the role of the university has become even more significant," thus putting YSU's reforms into the larger societal context. We agree that the university often serves as the driver for openness and democratic behaviors in a society, that its commitment to academic freedom can be a model for freedom of thought, conscience, and expression in the larger society.

Like the Republic, YSU has taken first steps toward an open system of governance. The Rector has been freely elected and we congratulate him again on the enthusiastic results of this vote, a 90% majority, a tribute to the respect and affection in which he is held by his colleagues.

Of YSU's two governance bodies, one has long been in existence, the "scientific" council consisting of 80 members, that deals primarily with scientific and academic issues. This scientific council is concerned mainly with scientific, educational, and organizational matters (university reforms, restructuring, opening or closing new departments or chairs) and competitive elections of faculties, as well as ratification of international cooperation projects, and ratification of honorary doctors of YSU. The General or "Big" Council consists of 250 members. The main priorities or duties of this Council are ratification of the Rector's annual reports on scientific, academic and financial issues, changes in the YSU Constitution, and election of the Rector. Both councils consist of 25% student members, at least 50% elected members, with the balance made up of the rectorate, the deans and chairs including ex officio members.

What matters in the implementation of this governance structure depends in large measure on the openness or transparency of YSU's procedures, and on the issue we raised earlier of communication, on how well-informed all the members including the student representatives will be on the issues they are asked to help decide.

We were told that the principal items of business of the general or "big" council are to review and approve the Rector's annual report which includes that year's financial statements, to approve the budget for the coming year, and to consider any proposals for new programs, although these are few in

number, also, any other business that is brought forward. These are all major issues outside the usual purview of a professor who is not also an administrator, certainly outside the purview of students.

If professors and students are to participate actively and responsibly in governance, the Rector will have to develop a process of education and information working through much smaller groups.

A body as large as the general council and one that meets only once per year, should have more frequent meetings of subcommittees of that body to prepare members for the issues they will be asked to vote on in the one official meeting. A new governance structure that aspires to be democratic, to represent and also respond to the voices of different constituencies, should also have an executive group that includes the elected faculty and student leaders in the Council. This executive group should meet frequently with the Rector or his designee throughout the year. People who are not used to having a role in governance need to be educated to make good use of that role. The members of that executive group should in turn meet with their constituent groups so that they will also be well informed, so that they will become what we would call educated citizens in this university society.

We would also recommend that ways be sought to involve yet another constituency in the University's governance, at least in an advisory capacity, and this would be YSU's external constituency, representatives from the larger community in Yerevan and also from the alumni both here and abroad. At the very least, the "big" council should be restructured (probably expanded somewhat to protect the 50% elected, 25% of students requirements) in order to allow the Rector to fill all twelve of the positions available to him with such "external" members.

II. *Student Needs and the Role of Students in Institutional Affairs*

The general subject of student affairs was the second thematic area identified by our YSU hosts for examination with us. Among the topics scheduled for discussion within this area were "introduction of interdisciplinary courses", "systems of academic credit and the transfer of credit between universities", "student evaluations of faculty members", and "tuition fees and related issues". The flow of our deliberations, however, was such that not all of these matters received focused attention from a student-oriented perspective and the only scheduled session in which we were able to achieve this exclusively was the one on "student evaluation of faculty members". On discovering this, we asked that an additional session be arranged at which we could have an opportunity to talk directly with a group of student representatives; we were pleased by the promptness with which this request was accommodated and, as a result, we enjoyed an hour of frank and pleasant discussion with a group of about twenty undergraduate and graduate students (including the president of the YSU students' council). The comments that follow indicate the main observations that we drew from these various conversations about student-related matters, along with a few questions and suggestions that we wish to raise in light of these observations.

First, it is clear that the YSU leadership has the students' best interests in mind. The University's constitution calls for a quarter of the membership on its major governance bodies to be comprised of student representatives, and the students expressed to us their satisfaction with this arrangement; although this proportion is high in comparison with North American universities, we see no particular reason to consider reducing it. We also noted a strong sensitivity to the social and economic circumstances of students as reflected, for example, in efforts to reduce the cost of tuition, textbooks, meals and accommodations for various less advantaged categories among those who must pay fees (now the majority at YSU). Concern for students' interests is reflected as well in the renewed approach to student evaluation of teaching to be fully implemented next September, especially in the efforts made to involve students in designing the form to be used for this purpose.

Reciprocally, the students we met with seem to appreciate their University. They indicated satisfaction with the academic quality of their instruction (especially its theoretical elements) and were particularly pleased with the opportunities available in some disciplines to supplement their on-campus studies with various forms of practical experience; indeed, they would like more such opportunities—both in the form of off-campus practica and through greater access to outside experts who visit the University. Other improvements they would welcome include an increase in library holdings (especially in western languages), better access to computing and other technology (e.g., translation equipment) and to the Internet, greater opportunity to choose their courses and professors, and more variation from the lecturing mode in instructional approaches.

They also expressed some unhappiness with the governmental system of state orders, wherein some students are provided with free higher education on the basis of state administered exams (regardless of how well they subsequently perform at university) and others must pay. Their concerns about this system include the basis on which the differentiation is made (a combination of examination results and discipline choices, whereas those who spoke of this would prefer the criteria to include financial need) and the proposition that one's motivation to study hard may be reduced if one's education is provided for free.

While we have no major change to propose in this system (especially since we understand that student applicants can now indicate four alternative disciplines [or universities] to enhance their chances of admission with a state order subsidy, we learned that the University has significant input to the government's decisions in compiling the state order, and we know that there is no difference between the programs offered to state order and fee-paying students), we would prefer an arrangement in which the renewal of a subsidy is contingent upon the student's meeting a minimum standard of performance each year. A subsidy forfeited by a poorly performing student could then be transferred to the highest-achieving fee-paying student at the same stage of study in that academic discipline.

Our discussions of various matters related to student affairs led us to two further sets of comments, one specific in nature and the other more general. First, as mentioned above, we are pleased that the University is now pilot-testing the re-introduction of student evaluations of teaching. We had an opportunity to consider in some detail both the form to be used and the procedure to be followed, and we have some suggestions about each for possible consideration by the YSU leadership. The form as currently designed enables a student to rate (on a five-part scale) the performance of up to thirteen different teachers on twenty particular aspects of instructional performance. While we believe the selected behaviors are appropriate and have no objection to the rating scale, we think the form could be improved by adding an open-ended item that invites the student to comment on any characteristic of the teacher concerned that the student considers relevant but that is not included among the specific items listed on the form. A corollary of this suggestion is that each form should pertain to only one teacher and, thus, that a student should complete a separate form for each teacher at the end of a semester. Consideration should also be given to developing this instrument in machine-readable format in order to facilitate automation and accuracy of analysis.

One procedural implication of the above is that all the forms completed by students of a particular teacher could then be given to that teacher so that professional development and instructional improvement may be stimulated by this kind of direct and explicit feedback, especially in the form of responses to the proposed open-ended item. Also procedurally, we have some concerns about the timing arrangements proposed for conducting these student evaluations of teaching. As we understand it, the current plan is for students to complete the forms after learning the results of their examinations in the courses concerned. We don't believe this is wise in the light of studies that have demonstrated significant direct correlations between a student's grade in a course and that student's rating of the course's teacher. Rather, we would suggest that students complete the evaluation forms for a course's teacher after writing the examination but before being informed of their grades for that course, and likewise that the results of the student evaluations not be shared with a teacher until after the students' grades in his/her course have been decided. These changes will not eliminate but can significantly reduce the subjective elements in both the student evaluation and the teacher's grading.

Finally, we strongly endorse the YSU leadership's recognition that student evaluations of teaching should not be the only approach to assessing the instructional performance of faculty members. They are valuable but insufficient, and need to be supplemented by other methods such as observation and appraisal by department heads and peers, review of the contents in "teaching portfolios" (lecture notes, curricular innovations, instructional media and materials, notes from present and former students, etc.), success of graduate students supervised, and other means.

In a more general vein, we were struck by an apparently systemic attitude toward students that perceives them as rather immature. This is a matter of

mentality that is reflected in University practices and is rooted in historical custom and government policy. In our view it detracts from the quality of education available to students at YSU (and, let us stress, at many universities which still operate according to old Soviet norms), and it risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Among the indicators of this mentality are such features as: mandatory attendance in class (which must be extremely difficult to enforce—and we commend the leadership of the University's law faculty for involving parents in efforts to reduce delinquency prior to expelling students for this infraction); annual and weekly classroom hours for students that seem excessive to us because they virtually double the time that North American students spend in class while pursuing comparable degrees (this leaves almost no time for students [many of whom must maintain part-time jobs for financial survival] to develop the individual study and lifelong learning skills that will be essential to them once they leave university); the relatively high proportion of prescribed studies, with a corresponding lack of opportunity for students to choose their courses and shape their programs in some relationship to their own interests and aspirations; and the reportedly high reliance on lecturing as an instructional approach (this, again, limits the students' engagement in their own education)—which we heard justified on the grounds that a lack of adequate textbooks required that virtually all the necessary information be transmitted to students through teachers' lectures. We find this reason unconvincing given the inexpensive ways now available to provide students with course packs, lecture notes, desktop publications, etc. which they could study on their own or in small groups and which would enable teachers to stimulate learning through supplementary alternative instructional approaches.

These observations lead us to raise an admittedly simplistic and basically arithmetical question: Why would it not be possible to restructure curricular designs and instructional approaches so that the amount of classroom time required of students could be reduced by half while maintaining the same teaching loads for faculty members (which are generally equivalent to those in North America)? The advantages of doing so would include: halving the number of teachers and, thus, being able to double the salaries of those who remain (thereby diminishing their need to find additional employment elsewhere and, hence, increasing their availability to work more individually with YSU students); decreasing the length of academic terms (which are several weeks longer than in North America), which would improve the prospects for introducing a transferable credit system and facilitating international student exchanges; and providing meaningful opportunities for students to develop individual study habits and lifelong learning skills that may be the most important outcome of their University experience.

The usual answer we heard to the above question is that personal attitudes and economic conditions are currently such that the proposed kind of change is simply inconceivable in Armenia and YSU at present. It was opined that a generational change was required before the attitudes could be altered and that considerably more national prosperity was necessary before the economic constraints could be overcome. While we understand the validity of this proposition, it scares us because the globalization of higher education

has introduced a degree of competition among universities (in all regions) that will inevitably distinguish between “winners” and “losers”—largely on the basis of perceived academic quality—long before a full generational turnover or a dramatic economic turnaround can occur. Indeed, a healthily reformed YSU should be a major driver in advancing Armenia’s prosperity. We believe that, with the University’s rich history and enviable talent, it can be just this—but we don’t think its leadership should wait much longer to launch the kind of fundamental strategic examination of questions such as the one we raised above, which arose within the context of our consideration of student affairs.

Finally, with respect to student issues of maturity, of absenteeism, also with respect to the many societal and personal issues that may confront some of them and conflict with their performance as students, we recommend the creation of a Student Affairs Office to provide tutors as needed, but, more importantly, to provide personal counselling including advice on financial aid and financial strategies for paying students struggling to provide themselves the cost of their education.

III. Technology

The third topic for discussion was “The Impact of Technology on the Curriculum.” With our apologies, we did not receive enough information to respond adequately to this topic. We observed the good uses of technology where appropriate equipment was available in several scientific laboratories; we were delighted to learn that a generous donor has made possible the process of automating library holdings, but we do not have an overview either of the University’s existing resources for information technology systems or of the plans in this regard. We were told that a team has been given the charge to address this urgent need and we would be delighted to read any report they might prepare, but we cannot ourselves address this important issue with our limited information. We do agree that it is essential for a university—indeed, for any competitive organization at this time—to possess and be fully capable of using up-to-date information technology systems.

The global impact of rapid technological innovation has fundamentally altered the social landscape within which universities must function. Radically new computer and information systems have transformed the ways in which economic, political, financial and banking institutions work around the world. In order to be fully interactive with those institutions, and thereby competitive within the modern world, universities today are compelled to be literate and creative in their use of their new computer technologies. Universities cannot stand on the sidelines in this process. The price of falling behind would be very high.

Such computer and data information capabilities are therefore critical both for the administration and the academic research needs of Yerevan State University. Certainly they are key to the kind of free flow of information and effective and strategic communication we have stressed in our report.

Communication

YSU's leadership has already made a commitment to improving the information, communications and outreach functions of the University, and these efforts are to be applauded and encouraged. We were pleased to meet with the director of public relations and to know that this effort has been begun to reach out to the media and to tell the story of the University to the external community. We have noted several areas of interrelated importance including communication with students, with professors, and to the external community. We feel that all these areas can be improved to the benefit of the University and that improved communication will facilitate the larger goal of bringing about productive and progressive change throughout the University.

Information to Students

As one small example of the lack of information to the student body, we noted that none of the students with whom we met was aware that starting in September all students in all disciplines will have the opportunity (and the responsibility) of evaluating their professors in each course. We understand that a pilot is already launched in journalism and that before this some students were consulted with respect to the questions contained in the evaluation form. Nonetheless, given the significance for transparency, democratic procedures, and the inclusion of students in the governance of the University, we feel that an opportunity has been neglected here to make all students aware and proud of this plan for September. Even the student council president had no knowledge of this. If an executive committee were created for the general council, as we suggested above under "governance," and if upcoming plans were presented for information and discussions in this small group, the student leadership and also the elected leaders of the professoriate would be empowered by having this information which they in turn could share with the student body and with the other professors.

Students also lack timely information concerning scholarships and funding for international study and research opportunities abroad. This information should be made available in a way that is easily accessed by students. We were told that if students come to the appropriate office and request information, it will be supplied, but we feel the University should be more proactive and set out this information in advance of any request. There are numerous international exchange organizations from both Europe and North America with offices and local staff in Yerevan. These exchange organizations have extensive materials and websites describing the availability of substantial funding for study abroad. These grants provide new support for the University's mission as well as opportunities for faculty, students, and administrators. We observed one department chair posting notices off the Internet on the walls and applaud this simple technique in the absence of more sophisticated technologies. In many universities we are accustomed to seeing bulletin boards crowded with notices for conferences, for concerts, for sports events, for part time jobs for students, also for grants and foreign study opportunities. It's a relatively simple matter—a job that can in fact be given to a student working in a career office or the international office or the office of student

affairs—to post all such notices and then, perhaps every two weeks, to remove notices of events that are past.

Furthermore, both the office for student affairs as well as the international relations department can develop more active and frequent contacts with such international organizations in order to strengthen their cooperation on an ongoing personal and professional basis.

Information to Professors

We observed a good flow of information within individual faculties, but little to none between faculties or across the University generally. Again, this lack of communication is not unique to Yerevan State University but frequent in universities where there is a strong loyalty to and cohesion within a faculty, where under the past state-driven budget processes, funding would often come not centrally to the Rector but directly to the dean of a faculty. The autonomy of faculties can work to the disadvantage of communication and also of the centralized governance and leadership of a university. YSU is in a state of transition in this as in many things and we recommend that the Rector and his team utilize strategies to reach across the borders of faculties to create a greater sense of collegiality, of loyalty to the whole and as more than its individual parts. The same strategy suggested above with respect to the information flow to students, subcommittees of the general council, an executive committee of the general council, can serve this secondary purpose on enhancing the free flow of information and linking together separate academic programs through shared institutional goals.

Information to the external community or general public

Information leads to involvement and eventually to significant support, to commitments of time and also funds on the part of many different potential constituencies. These include, of course, the corporate and small business leadership in Yerevan and throughout Armenia, politicians, NGOs, all of YSU's alumni whether they live in Armenia, in Europe, on the American continent, or, indeed, anywhere on the face of the planet, and also prominent and committed leaders of the Armenian diaspora who may not have personally attended Yerevan State University. In the current age of information, distance has little significance. Once YSU has the information technology it needs to tell its story, to reach out to these many different audiences and constituencies, distance should prove no obstacle.

Fund Raising Strategies

It would be extremely useful for the University to combine a number of functions currently dispersed among several offices within the University into a central development office. Such an office would be charged with centralizing information about the overall development needs and potential opportunities for fundraising for the University, and developing outreach strategies to seek new diversified support. Critical information about development needs as well as about potential developmental strategies can

be concentrated in such a development office. This would permit the University to design a more active and aggressive search for diversified support with broader public and private communities.

We observed excellent efforts by individual professors and departments to attract funds for specific needs of that unit. We did not observe a unified approach to seeking such funding from either the public or private sectors with respect to the needs of the University as a whole. A centralized development office to coordinate approaches to private individuals, to foundations and corporations, and to public sector agencies could benefit the University without detracting from the efforts of the individual units.

This office would administer grants and contracts as well as annual fund solicitations and should include an office of alumni affairs to keep alumni more closely informed on the achievements, developmental needs, and strategic directions of the University as it continues to grow and enhance its mission. In North America, and more recently in Western Europe, alumni have become the backbone of continuing community support and substantial fundraising approaches for their respective alma maters. Affluent and influential alumni from the corporate world, as well as the worlds of law, scholarship, banking, finance, and the media, have become indispensable supporters of the universities that nurtured them, and often make substantial personal financial contributions as well.

The information given to us indicates that since 1946 YSU has enrolled over 6000 international students of whom almost 2600 were from the Armenia diaspora. Not all of them received degrees, but they were enrolled as students, and they are now alumni of YSU even without being graduates. Many of them will have strong loyalties to YSU and might well respond to a request for support.

Building an Endowment. In order to diversify its funding beyond the current governmental and tuition-based sources, we would suggest that the University strongly consider establishing a formal endowment campaign. Such an endowment can be built carefully over time, and the interest secured from the basic capital funds of the endowment can become a major annual ongoing source of new support for the University's expenses. North American universities depend heavily on the funds accumulated and grown in such endowments and, again, whatever the complexities of the current social and financial situation in Armenia, this can be an important and feasible model for Yerevan State University. It is essential to prepare for such a function and need, rather than defer its implementation while waiting for ideal circumstances.

At some point, the University may well wish to consider the establishment of a Board of Trustees that would include not only leading representatives from the University and scientific community, but affluent and influential figures from the corporate, banking, media, and cultural communities, as well as supportive former and potential future government figures. These representatives would be identified for their known support and enthusiasm

for the mission and purposes of the University, and could be enormously helpful in strengthening its image, reputation, and fundraising potential within the country. Such boards of trustees are a standard feature at North American universities, and have proven to be a powerful tool in building the endowment and fundraising base of their institutions.

Prominent members of the board of trustees can help the University mobilize the opinion and support of the broader Armenian community in approaching the Parliament and relevant government committees for stronger budgetary funding. As new educational legislation is considered, the board can serve as a powerful intermediary mechanism on behalf of the University in making the case for support and expansion of its mission. New legislation may also be required to provide tax incentives for potential private, corporate, and banking donors to make tax-free and also tax-deductible contributions to the University's endowment. The lack of such enabling legislation has been an obstacle to such contributions in other post-soviet successor states, and the University and its eventual board should be prepared to make a strong push for such a tax law.

These innovative outreach approaches that build on the mechanisms of alumni associations, endowment campaigns, and board of trustees assume that the University is prepared to play its natural leading role in the construction of a strong civil society. As the leading University within Armenia, Yerevan State must take an active and creative role in reaching out to social and cultural groups within the broader society. The University should seek to build interactive alliances with civil society groups in pursuit of common educational and cultural purposes. The modern university will increasingly depend on very active interplay with other prominent institutions outside the walls of the university proper. The board of trustees, the alumni association, an expanded public relations effort, and other innovative institutional approaches will serve this necessary function of outreach to civil society.

One of the university's most obvious and prominent functions in the building of a strong civil society will be in the training of its students and future citizens. A well educated, sophisticated, and socially active citizenry is the backbone of a healthy civil society and a stable state. In this regard, the University may well wish to reincorporate within its mission the major responsibility for the training of teachers that had earlier been broken off into the pedagogical institute. Training highly qualified teachers who then go on to train and educate students throughout the entire educational system of Armenia would seem to be a critical component of the University's strategic purposes. The University leadership should reexamine this question within its overall plan.

As indicated above, we suggest that the search for fresh, alternative sources of funding and support will require a modest investment of time and energy in the mechanisms and approaches described. All of the components are important: a) active information distribution to students and faculty; b) a central development office; c) an alumni relations office and effort; d) an aggressive endowment campaign; and e) the careful establishment of a supportive Board of Trustees.

Strategic Plan

To accomplish all of the above, it will be extremely useful for the University to construct a comprehensive Strategic Plan for its overall goals, priorities, and major directions. This would clarify and centralize the functions concerned, and provide a major planning platform from which to implement these critical initiatives.

Our analysis noted three underlying major challenges: a lack of communication, a resistance to change, and insufficient resources. A well conceived strategic planning process immediately addresses the first two issues as it draws representatives of all sectors of the University including its alumni and community leaders into the process. Even those individuals most anxious about the benefits of change and innovation will be persuaded as they are invited to share their anxieties within the larger groups in the task forces. To impose change without changing attitudes cannot be successful and such imposed changes never last. With the broad-based inclusive planning process we recommend, change will permeate the entire University and will be on-going.

The desired outcomes may be very specific: for example, new and improved teaching strategies that supplement or replace standard lecturing with more dynamic and interactive teaching; and, of course, significant new sources of external funding as potential donors recognize YSU's ambitious plan for its excellence in the 21st century and wish to support its goal of significant and continuous improvement. But in addition to achieving these specific goals, other more subjective or intangible benefits will also arise from this strategic planning process. Its inclusiveness will lead to more transparency and shared goals at the same time as the University leadership's new and more democratic governance structures are seeking these same goals; it will lead to more positive engagement on the part of professors and researchers whose primary loyalty may until now have been to their own disciplines and their own individual research projects; the involvement of students in this process can lead to improved student performance in class and out, including a significant decline in absenteeism or disaffection. The benefits are incalculable; the commitment of time is also heavy, but well worth it.

As YSU incorporates such innovative pedagogical and administrative approaches, it is worth noting that universities around the world face a common developmental challenge at the beginning of the twenty-first century. With the rapid deployment of new technologies in society, new competitive centers of information and "wisdom" have sprung up. These centers offer easily available alternate sources of data and impressions of the world that have begun to have a powerful influence on the values and behaviors not only of young people and students, but of the citizenry at large. These alternate "centers of wisdom" constitute a serious challenge to the primacy of the university as the major dispenser of knowledge in society. The impact of the

news media, global TV, the Internet, the world of film, music, popular culture, corporate training centers, and commercial schools has been dramatic.

Universities must not only be alert to the seriousness of the impact of such alternate sources of information and values, they must seek to understand, harness, utilize, and incorporate these outside sources for their own pedagogical purposes. This task will not be a simple one, as the University will have to shape creative forms of external interplay that serve the mission of true education. While preserving the best of past traditions and culture, the University must guarantee the balanced use of new technologies, new communication and information systems, and comparative educational approaches in order to strengthen its own guiding role and position within society. Constant comparative work with reputable international educational partners should be an indispensable part of that process.

YSU presented us with only three areas or topics; we have tried to address these, but urge the leadership now to expand its own vision to take a sustained look at all aspects of University life and in doing so, to involve all participants in the University, students, professors, staff (including non teaching staff), administrators, alumni, and prominent community leaders. A number of distinct task forces should be created, like the committee already looking at technology, but larger, including representatives of all these groups, and also with broader mandates.

We stand ready to consult further with the Rector and his colleagues on effective ways of engaging in such a planning process. In conclusion, we wish once again to thank the Rector and his team for inviting us, for providing us with the self-study materials that guided our review, and we wish Yerevan State University great success in pursuing its ambitious goals for its future.

A g e n d a

Salzburg Seminar Universities Project Visiting Advisors Program
Schedule of Visit to Yerevan State University (YSU)
Yerevan, Republic of Armenia

May 1 – May 6, 2002

DRAFT

Wednesday, May 1	Salzburg Seminars Team	YSU Participants	Event/Topic	Location
Convenient time for the Team			<u>Breakfast</u>	Hotel
			<u>Free Time</u>	
13:30-14:15			<i>Lunch</i>	Hotel
14:45-15:30	All the Team	Members of the YSU Rectorate	Wellcome Reception YSU General Presentation	Rector's Office
15:30-16:00		Ara Avetisyan Haik Avetisyan	Tour through the Administrative Building	YSU
16:00-17:30	All the team	Ashot Karapetyan Mariana Khachatryan	Tour around Yerevan	
18:00-19:00			<u>Dinner</u>	Hotel
19:00-21:00		Karen Gevorkian Ashot Karapetyan	Cultural Program	Concert Hall

Thursday, May 2	Salzburg Seminars' Team	YSU Participants	Event/Topic	Location
8:00-9:00			<i>Breakfast</i>	Hotel
10:00-11:30	All the Team	Radik Martirosyan Edvard Chubarian Ara Avetisyan Aram Simonyan Haik Avetisyan Gagik Ghazinyan Ludmila Haroutunyan Albert Stepanyan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Authority of Rector • University Autonomy and Academic Freedom Issues 	YSU Rector's Office
11:30-12:00			<i>Coffee/Tea</i>	Rector's Office
12:00-13:15	All the Team	Edvard Chubarian Edward Ghazaryan Aram Simonyan Ara Avetisyan Alexandr Grigoryan Aida Avetisyan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Governing and Advisory Boards • General Management Issues Faced by University Administrators 	Vice-rector's Office

		Samvel Karabekyan Gagik Ghazinyan Gegham Grigoryan		
13:30-14:30			<i>Lunch</i>	Hotel
14:30-15:00	All the Team	Ara Avetisyan Samvel Haroutunyan Samvel Shoukouryan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of Technology on the Curriculum 	Department of Physics, Department of Informatics and Applied Mathematics, YSU
15:15-16:00	All the Team	Aram Simonyan Ara Avetisyan Haik Avetisyan Babken Haroutunyan Levon Chougazyan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of Technology to Improve Administration and General Services 	Department of History, YSU
16:00-16:15			<i>Coffee/Tea</i>	Department of History, YSU
16:15-17:45		Ashot Karapetyan Marianna Khachatryan	Visit to Museum	
18:30-21:30	All the Team	Radik MArtirosyan	Official Dinner of the YSU Rector	Restaurant

Friday, May 3	Salzburg Seminars Team	YSU Participants	Event/Topic	Location
8:00-9:00			<i>Breakfast</i>	Hotel
10:00-11:30	All the Team	Edward Ghazaryan Ara Avetisyan Aram Simonyan Alexandr Grigoryan Vahram Dumanyan Albert Kirakosyan Emil Gevorkyan Ara Gabuzyan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems of Academic Credit and the Transfer of Credit Between Universities Introduction of Interdisciplinary courses 	Rector Advisor's Office
11:30-12:00			<i>Coffee/Tea</i>	YSU
12:00-13:15	All the Team	Edward Ghazaryan Semion Hakhumyan Ara Avetisyan Alexandr Grigoryan Haroutun Khachikyan Haik Sargsyan Samvel Haroutounyan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Tuition Fees and Related Issues</u> <u>Role of the market place in teaching and research priorities</u> 	YSU Academic Affairs' Office

VAP Report—Yerevan, Armenia, May, 2002

13:30-14:30			<i>Lunch</i>	Hotel
15:00-15:45	All the team	Ara Avetisyan Rouben Harutiunyan Samvel Haroutunyan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact Technology on the Curriculum 	Department of Biology, YSU
15:45-16:00			<i>Coffee/Tea</i>	Department of Biology, YSU
16:00-17:30		Ara Avetisyan Marianna Khachatryan	Cultural Program	
17:30-18:30			<i>Dinner</i>	Hotel
19:00-21:00		Ara Avetisyan Naira Mnatsakanyan	Visit to Museum	National Art Gallery

Saturday, May 4	Salzburg Seminars Team	YSU Participants	Event/Topic	Location
8:00-9:00			<i>Breakfast</i>	Hotel
10:00-12:00		Marianna Khachatryan Ashot Karaprtyan	Cultural Program	
12:00-13:00	All the team	Edvard Chubarian Ara Avetisyan Aram Simonyan Karo Karapetyan Ludmila Haroutunyan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Evaluations of Faculty Members 	Department of Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology
13:00-13:45			<i>Lunch</i>	Hotel
14:00-14:45	All the team	Radik Martirosyan Edward Ghazaryan Ara Avetisyan Hrachik Mirzoyan Ludmila Haroutunyan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Relations with other Institutions of Civil Society 	Vice-rector's office
15:30-16:00			<i>Coffee/Tea</i>	Hotel
16:00-17:30			Visit to Museum	
18:00-21:00			<i>Farewell Dinner</i>	Restaurant

Sunday, May 5	Salzburg Seminar Team	YSU Representatives	Event/Topic	Location
8:00-9:00			<i>Breakfast</i>	Hotel
10:00-13:00		Ara Avetisyan Ashot Karapetyan Marianna Khachatryan	Tour to Echmiadzin	
13:00-13:45			<i>Lunch</i>	Hotel
13:45-15:00			Free Time	

VAP Report—Yerevan, Armenia, May, 2002

15:00-17:30		Ara Avetisyan Ashot Karapetyan Marianna Khachatryan	Tour to Garni-Geghard	
18:00-19:00			<i>Dinner</i>	Hotel
19:00-21:00			Cultural Program	

Monday, May 6	Departure	Salzburg Seminar Team	Event/Topic	Destination
			<i>Breakfast</i>	Hotel
Departure from Yerevan				

- Notice:
1. YSU will provide the team with an interpreter, who knows English, French and Russian
 2. YSU will cover all the expenses connected with Coffee/Tea breaks, Cultural Programs, as well as Transportation during your visit.
 3. The YSU Rector will give two official dinners.

VAP visit to Yerevan State University (May 1 – 6, 2002)

Consultant Biographies

- **Emita Hill** (team leader) is former chancellor of Indiana University, Kokomo. Before joining the University, Dr. Hill spent twenty years at Lehman College, the Bronx campus of the City University of New York, where she first served as chair of romance languages, then as associate provost and finally as vice president for institutional advancement. Since leaving Indiana, Dr. Hill has participated in three on-going international university development projects through the Indiana Consortium for International Programs, one in Poland, one in Kyrgyzstan, and one in Macedonia. She consulted for Ford Foundation with the University of Namibia's northern campus. Dr. Hill earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in French from Cornell University and Middlebury College, respectively, and received a Ph.D. in romance languages from Harvard University. She is an alumnus of the Universities Project 10th Symposium, *Globalization and the University*, in 1999 and was a faculty member at Salzburg Seminar Session 361, *Higher Education: Leadership and Institutional Reform*, in 1998. She has participated in consultant visits by the Visiting Advisors Program to CEE.
- **Robin Farquhar** is professor of public administration and former president (1989 to 1996) of Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. From 1981 to 1989 he served as vice chancellor and president of the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and has chaired the Canadian Bureau for International Education. Dr. Farquhar is former president of both the Canadian Society for the Study of Education and the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration. He received a B.A. and an M.A. in English from the University of British Columbia and a Ph.D. in education administration from the University of Chicago, Illinois, USA. Dr. Farquhar is a member of the Universities Project Advisory Committee.
- **Daniel Matuszewski** is former president of the Executive Committee to the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), Washington DC, USA, where he was formerly president of IREX, responsible for the development of a combination of field research and professional training programs in the countries of Central/East Europe, the Russian Federation, Eurasia, Mongolia, and China. From 1989 to 1992, Dr. Matuszewski was executive director of the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity. He is the author of studies on Soviet nationalities issues and international relations in such volumes as *Soviet Nationalities in Strategic Perspective* (1985), and co-author of *Modernization in Inner Asia* (1991). He earned a Ph.D. in Russian and Turkic history from the University of Washington. Dr. Matuszewski is a member of the Universities Project Advisory Committee.

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.

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