



THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR VISITING ADVISORS REPORT

BELARUSIAN STATE UNIVERSITY MINSK, BELARUS

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Team Members

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INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE VISIT

Belarusian State University (hereafter referred to as "BSU" or "the University") invited a team of Visiting Advisors from the Salzburg Seminar as a way of deepening its relations with the Seminar's Universities Project and of broadening its contacts to the international higher education community. Prior to the visit, the leaders of BSU had identified a range of issues for discussion and consultation that were selected because of their relevance to the future development of the institution:

- University administration and finance
- Strategy for changes in the academic structure of the university
- Introduction of a new degree structure (mass and elite higher education)
- University autonomy, academic freedoms and internal quality assurance
- Generating of research priorities: demands of the society or market-oriented approach
- Students in the changing university
- Information technology in training and management

In advance of the team's arrival in Minsk, BSU had prepared very useful background materials describing the nature of these issues within the framework of the University and why they are deemed crucial for its advancement. These materials enabled the team members to familiarize themselves with the particular set of opportunities and challenges on which BSU sought advice, but they also provided an insight in the broader context of higher education reform in Belarus.

During the three days of meetings in Minsk, the team had a series of substantive discussions with the rector, deputy rectors and vice-rectors, deans, department heads, professors, and students to examine the issues and concerns set forth by the University leadership. The broad spectrum of meetings allowed the visiting team to understand the particular conditions of BSU—to the extent possible during a three-day visit—and the role it plays in meeting the country's needs for a highly educated, resourceful citizenry and a well-trained workforce.

The members of the team wish to express their thanks to Rector Alexander Kozulin and his staff for their gracious welcome and warm cooperation in preparing for and carrying out the visit. Special thanks to Vice Rector Vladimir Astapenka for overseeing the logistics of the visit, for his willingness to provide additional information whenever requested, and for hosting along with Rector Kozulin the elegant social arrangements attendant to the visit. Finally, we wish to express our appreciation for the frank and open discussions regarding BSU that we were able to conduct with senior staff, faculty and a number of very bright and articulate students.

The team was most impressed with the many excellences of BSU. Not the least of the strengths of the institution is the sheer *energy* expressed in all quarters, from vision in the Rector's office, through the ingenuity of faculty, to the aspirations of the students to whom we spoke. Given obvious problems of severe lack of adequate funding and of relative insularity of the Belarusian academic community, much has been accomplished through an inventive, entrepreneurial spirit. Students place an exceptionally high value on education and their motivation is excellent. The current BSU leadership has worked hard to create an environment, both physical and intellectual, which enhances this trust in education and the 'corporate identity' of the University. There are several elegant modern buildings for classroom, laboratory and residential use. Some of the older buildings in the center of Minsk have been renovated and joined to a small campus, pleasantly surrounded by a park. Plans are in place for a much-needed building for the library (now housed in a general classroom building), and for further upgrades of current facilities. These building projects have been financed with substantial financial support from the government, and University funds. BSU has every right to be proud of significant achievement and is to be encouraged in its high aspirations.

In the following pages of this report, we summarize our perceptions of BSU's present context, outline our impressions and observations with regard to the issues that the University chose for discussion, and offer some suggestions for further consideration by University leaders. We do so in full recognition that we don't know all the relevant factors and certainly don't have ready answers. As we emphasized to our BSU colleagues at the outset of our meetings in Minsk, the mission of the Visiting Advisors Program is far from a formal evaluation. Instead, the goal is to focus on the concerns presented by the University, and to share our views and experiences.

CONTEXT

The Visiting Advisors wish to note three different contexts for the institution that affect the comments and suggestions that follow.

(1) *BSU in Belarus*: the Belarusian State University is *the* state university in the Republic. As *the* state university, located in the capital city, BSU has a very broad educational responsibility. It does not have the luxury of offering “boutique” education with a highly restricted program of studies only for narrow specialists. The demands on *the* state university are not only quantitative (the breadth of studies) they are also qualitative. BSU is charged to be the *leadership* institution in Belarus. A British based web-site comment on BSU refers to the institution as “the Oxford of Belarus.”

(2) *BSU and global higher education*: higher education has a natural and traditional extension beyond national boundaries. Physics is physics in Belarus and Berkeley—evidenced by conversation with a BSU physicist who worked in both locales. The globalization currents of the early 21st century and the specific actions of the neighboring European Union would impact BSU no matter what. It is to the credit of BSU leadership that they are acutely conscious of the fact of globalization of higher education and the institution’s need and desire to benefit from such trends—particularly those of their immediate neighbors on the European continent.

(3) *BSU and the Salzburg Seminar Visiting Advisors team*: the members of the visiting team brought with them sensibilities, information bases, and structural assumptions from American and European universities. Given the short time available for the visit and the limited paper work available in English, it was often difficult for the visitors to fully understand some of the structures and practices at BSU. Thus, there may well be comments and suggestions within the body of this report which are either simple misunderstandings or which miss some special nuance that is vitally important in the local BSU context. In this instance, we believe that even *misunderstanding* may be helpful to the institution. BSU has quite properly chosen to interact vigorously within a global and European context. It will be imperative, then, that BSU be able to communicate with maximal clarity the special nature of the institution within the larger context of world-class higher education. Our misunderstandings, if any, may well indicate critical points in the development of this broader communication.

COMMENTS

In a three-day visit, albeit intensive, it was possible to explore only a limited range of the issues with which BSU is concerned. For instance, there was no extended discussion of budgeting or an opportunity to consider the state of long-range planning. The following comments, therefore, do not follow any necessary order of development although, as will be obvious, there are many interconnections among the areas discussed.

Classical University/Centers of Excellence

BSU is the largest and most comprehensive of the Higher Education (hereafter HE) institutions in Belarus, with 19 faculties and 172 departments, along with several research institutes and national science centers. The curriculum offers teaching in about 90 specialties. The best known institutes are nearly all oriented towards physical sciences and also chemistry, which should leave possibilities for

establishing 'centers of excellence' in these and in other and even emerging fields of study and research.

The total coverage of various fields at BSU is thus very impressive. By its structure and scope, BSU could be made to resemble the 'classical' university, built around professors' specializations and their research. Yet in several discussions the team also noticed a serious attempt to move the emphasis more towards what is called a 'modern' type of university in which the overall aim is to promote the students' career interests and the needs of the society rather than focusing solely on faculty specialization. (Such interests are certainly also pressured by a significant population of fee-paying students.) This trend is reflected in the matter of the Bachelor's degree as discussed below. More generally speaking, the shift from a 'classical' to a 'modern' university changes the emphasis from a supply-driven approach (where those who supply the knowledge, i.e., the professors and researchers, determine what the university can offer to its different clienteles) to a demand-driven approach (where the clienteles—students, employers, companies, other local and national stakeholders) and their needs and expectations are taken into account in setting the strategic priorities for the institution).

A related differentiation between the 'classical' and the 'modern' university is that the former aimed at being all-inclusive, while the modern university seeks to develop and build on special strengths in order to sharpen the institutional profile. Looking toward "centers of excellence" is seen as a means to stay competitive and creative. Often individual institutional centers of excellence can be enhanced by creating horizontal networks with other universities and HE institutions both in their own countries and internationally.

Several countries and their universities have adopted policies aimed at creating special 'centers of excellence' for research and/or learning, either with special funding or by strategic concentration of the university's own resources towards certain specific functions. They could also include specific Ph.D. programs. Again, several universities and research institutes may pool their resources and manpower. These centers may (and maybe should not!) be permanent, but their funding and support is usually dependent on the (high) quality of their work and functions. Good seeds and beginnings in this direction apparently already exist in BSU, and they could be made part of an explicit strategy of the University.

Organizational Structure

The structure of institutions develops gradually over time. Complexity evolves in a gradual and in an almost imperceptible way and seems to increase inexorably—the reverse rarely happens. Individual decisions; the creation of a new function; satisfying the ambition of an individual senior faculty member; or trying to respond to a new government-induced pressure are often taken without regard to their accumulative efforts.

The outcomes are many and are generally unhelpful. Many rigid and impenetrable boundaries are created, the cost base for the institution rises to unsustainable levels and inflexibility is an inescapable outcome. Finally, such top-heavy structures spawn a multitude of committees which attempt to improve cross-functionality and dialogue;

this is rarely or never achieved but it has the result that ever more faculty time is taken up by unproductive committee meetings. Such institutions become ponderous and find it difficult to be innovative and to respond readily or in a comprehensive way to new needs and opportunities.

The Visiting Advisors were not familiar with the historical background of BSU's organizational structure, but we were concerned that, however it reached the current configuration, the outcome seems particularly cumbersome when placed against comparable institutions elsewhere. There are a very large number of vice-rectorial positions, faculties, and departments; a number seemed to be in excess of the obvious needs of the University.

It also seemed (admittedly following an altogether too brief dialogue) that departments are created to match the research specialty of an individual professor. If true, this creates separate and largely independent entities with a reduced likelihood of interdisciplinary teaching and research and of cooperative or joint initiatives. The number of faculties also appeared excessive, again reinforcing separateness. Team members noted that large universities in the European Union, the US and Australia function rather well on approximately seven faculties or fewer. Ultimately, the financial cost of top-heavy and fragmented structures is considerable. Apart from helping to save costs, a lean and nimble organizational structure can also reinforce the ambition of a university to renew its direction and become an institution that is devoted to solving real world problems that don't always fall nicely into the existing pattern of academic disciplines. As a consequence, many universities no longer adhere to the traditional faculty structure but instead define larger areas of concern that transcend disciplinary boundaries (like environment or life sciences) as the organizing principle of generating and disseminating knowledge. The Visiting Advisors strongly suggest a serious study of the entire administrative, department and faculty structure with the aim of reducing positions and simplifying reporting structures. Specifically, BSU should consider merging departments into multi-professional units within the framework of a larger strategic planning effort.

Strategic Planning & Resources

A well argued, articulated and quantified university plan is now regarded as a sine qua non for progress and as a means for identifying threats and opportunities. It has too often been regarded by the internal constituency as threatening, there being a feeling that "we are doing well enough" and "let's not upset the status quo". But universities that have committed to planning do so on the basis that anticipating the future and planning for that future, with all its worrying trends, is the best guarantee of survival and of future success. Some may believe that a plan, once adopted, will be rigid and unyielding to change; this concern was sometimes based on the known inflexibility of some administrations. However, thinking and practice have matured, such that the university plan is seen as the best estimate of the future taken at a particular point in time.

Universities now review their plan regularly—every three years or so—and they regard the contents of the plan as pointers in a particular direction only. Innovative universities will, at times, depart from this plan when circumstances change or when unanticipated opportunities present themselves. This is not seen as an expression of

a lack of confidence in the adopted plan, but rather as a proper reaction to changing circumstances. The university plan is, therefore, a living organism and not a rigid “prescription.” A plan must be opportunistic as well as being faithful to its origins.

The Visiting Advisors have, individually, been involved in strategic planning for their universities in the past. The team concluded from dialogue with senior BSU officials that serious consideration is being given to the matter of the strategic plan for the institution. To what extent such a plan already exists in sketch or more developed form was not clear from our discussions. There are obvious multi-year plans for aspects of the University, but the state of a comprehensive plan was undetermined. If requested, the Salzburg Seminar can offer to be helpful in identifying various resources both in formulation and evaluation of a comprehensive strategic plan like literature or contacts to other universities that underwent a similar process.

We sketch out considerations for BSU in examining a strategic plan:

University planning has gone through many phases over the past few decades. “Top down” approaches were very much in vogue in the early years but this has been supplanted by the “bottom up” approach—namely, by involving all levels of all staff, whether academic or not. An interesting intermediate step saw Governing Boards or Presidents drafting a plan that was then discussed by the academic community and often modified as a result. This latter approach was jettisoned because of the limitations that it placed on options and solutions. In the past decade, the approach has been to form Working Groups of individuals who focus on agreed issues, the full range of issues having been articulated following an extensive consultation period undertaken by a Planning Steering Group which in its membership would be broadly representative of all levels and of all interests, including students within the university. An external specialist facilitator is also regularly involved to offer guidance based on his/her knowledge of international best practice. This approach is recommended for BSU.

One important aspect of planning is fitting the plan to identifiable resources. The structure of the budget at BSU is not sufficiently flexible to allow shifts across categories to meet changing needs and priorities. That should be remedied as much as possible. It is not clear that BSU has a firm notion about what various activities cost—a further problem in resource allocation. (BSU shares with most universities problems with assessing costs!)

BSU should certainly consider identifying funding opportunities internationally—from EU, UN, foundations, industry and business. Such efforts require the dedicated, full time attention of specialists with, of course, the support of the rectorate and of the academic community. The Visiting Advisors recognize that traditions in Belarus differ considerably from those of the EU and, in turn, EU traditions are different from those of the USA where fund raising from the private sector by universities represents a major source of support. But EU universities have, over the past 10-15 years, begun to raise funds from non-governmental sources with some success. Though clearly more modest than our USA counterparts, however modest the success has been, they have added greatly to many European university resources and to their ability to fund existing and to undertake new activities. The Visiting Advisors recommend that

BSU give serious consideration to this additional approach while acknowledging that it must be placed in its proper context within Belarus.

Degree Structure and Curricula Reform

During times of rapid scientific, economic and social changes, universities worldwide must ensure that their curricula are sufficiently flexible and responsive to altering realities. This is even more true for the countries of CEE and the NIS that after 1989 inherited a higher education system that was predominantly tailored to serve the needs of a change-adverse society and the enclosed command economy of the COMECON. The universities in these countries find themselves faced with a double task: they must refurbish and innovate their curricula according to radically new needs and demands, while at the same time the world surrounding them is not standing still but moving on in accelerated pace known as “globalization.” Thus, these universities are facing formidable challenges with regard to the renewal of both the content *and* the structure of their curricula. There were extensive discussions with vice-rectors, deans and students about the new degree structure being introduced at BSU. The basic change is the introduction of the Bachelor’s Diploma (4 year curriculum) along with the more traditional Specialist Diploma (5 years) and Master’s (6 years). Introduction and encouragement of the bachelor’s degree reflects both the European and Belarusian contexts. The European universities have for financial and social reasons committed themselves to the terminal bachelor’s degree. The move toward a shorter degree avoids the “perpetual student” syndrome with the obvious costs to the state of extended study. More importantly, the enormous upsurge in university attendees means that most graduates will undertake more “generalized” occupations in the business sector. Narrowly specialized degree programs do not fit the manpower needs of the society. BSU has adapted to the European structure and it seems most plausible that Belarus’ manpower needs will require more generalists than specialists.

The principal concern of the Visiting Advisors was whether the internal content of the bachelor’s degree along with the expectations of faculty and staff would truly create a *new* degree. Given the specialist tradition that was characteristic for higher education curricula in Eastern Europe when the universities served a centrally planned labor market, there can be a tendency to make the BA degree a “weak” specialization instead of a fully restudied and restructured general degree. Because there are private institutions in Belarus offering a four year bachelor’s degree and because of the aggressive promotion of the degree in Europe, BSU has a special responsibility as the leading higher education institution in the Republic to see that its BA degree establishes a standard of excellence within a genuinely new set of educational assumptions.

The bachelor degree is and should be seen as a preparatory phase for either the labor market or for graduate studies. Thus its contents have to be planned anew and properly to meet the new requirements; it should form a flexible base so that those who choose to pursue graduate studies can do so. However, it is important to emphasize that the bachelor’s diploma should have a value of its own by giving a relatively broad base for preparation for the labor market. In either case, the bachelor’s program should prepare the student for a process of life-long learning. Flexibility is required especially in the fields of so-called Liberal Arts, although some

areas, e.g., medicine, may be more highly structured. Finally, the BA as a new 'currency' of achievement in higher education will need validation from the labor market in order to be successful as a formal university degree. As the experience in many European countries shows, it will take some time before the companies, other employers and organizations get acquainted with the new degree and learn to trust it. BSU should aggressively "market" the bachelor's degree to the potential employment base.

BSU and the Bologna Process

The impetus for development towards the new degree structure comes partly from the so-called Bologna process in the European Union (EU), as it is also being adopted by several countries outside the EU, i.e., the EU candidate countries and also Russia. The main aim of the process is the creation of the European Higher Education Area, with an intended deadline by the year 2010. The EU is also developing other related guidelines, namely for a new policy of international scientific and technological cooperation, called the European Research Area.

The so-called Bologna declaration was signed in 1999, and it was followed by a meeting of the European Ministers of Education in Prague in May 2001. This process aims at harmonization of HE degree structure in Europe, so that the system is easily comparable, and qualifications can be recognized by the interested parties. The new degree system is based on two main cycles, articulating HE in undergraduate and graduate studies. Several European countries have already adopted this two-cycle system, which most commonly is based on 3 + 2 years of studies. Furthermore, the so-called Diploma Supplement system is being developed to complement the new degrees, which should make it easier to recognize transnationally the qualifications and skills of the student.

One important aim for the European HE Area is the promotion of mobility, be they students, teachers, researchers or administrative staff. The EU has several specific programs to support this mobility. In this context and with reference to BSU policy at large, it would be beneficial to have more exchange of staff with other universities and HE institutions and even industry and administration. (The Visiting Advisors observed examples of this outward-looking direction already in place in BSU.) BSU would benefit greatly by following closely the European developments of the Bologna process, and, where possible, participating itself in it either directly and/or through official national channels. It seemed clear that BSU fully intends to follow that course. An important feature is that in the planning of the Bologna process a strong role of students and student organizations in Europe is recognized and encouraged. This should be a good guide also for BSU and its students when the University is planning and implementing the new degree structure. The team strongly suggests that BSU consider "twinning" with at least one comparable European university in order to gain direct practical experience of trends in European education through mutual exchange and learning.

The developing European HE Area is also heavily emphasizing the establishment of a system of credits such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) or one compatible with it, providing both transferability and accumulation functions. The planning of the new degree structure offers an opportunity to plan a coherent and

university-wide credit system for all the studies, and further expand it nation-wide. This would also add to the flexibility of planning of individual studies, and it could also take into account independent studies and not merely counting the class hours; it would allow students moving into other HE institutions to transfer accumulated credits as well as help the students in the open university sector ('evening students', etc.) to accumulate studies for a degree over a longer period of time. The team noted that several positive steps have been already taken in this direction. Again, it is useful to have an eye on the European developments for compatibility, and to have the students fully engaged in the process. (It was not clear that current students fully understood BSU system of credit transferability.) In summary, a functional credit transfer system will enhance the 'horizontal' flexibility in HE studies and thus overcome the rigid structure of the curriculum that still prevails not only in Belarus, but also in most European countries.

As a footnote to what is stated above, the Visiting Advisors would like to share an observation regarding the general faculty situation. We noted a rather heavy dependence on appointment to BSU faculty of former BSU graduates themselves, reflecting as it does an understandable historical isolation of Belarusian higher education. To the extent possible, we feel that recruitment from a wider spectrum of institutions would provide intellectual enrichment.

Quality Assurance (QA)

In the HE world everywhere, the question of the quality of academic work has become an issue. Formal systems of QA have gained in importance in the recent decade. BSU has already recognized these problems and is committed towards working on them. The recently (1997) established Education Development Centre has as its purpose seeking new approaches in educational technologies and incorporating them into the learning processes and scientific research as well as management of the university. This is an important part of the university and its functions could be easily expanded to cover other research on HE at large.

The main concern for BSU should be the quality of teaching. Research, universities and scientific societies everywhere have established peer review systems and publication practices that are quality-related, but the realm of quality in teaching is much more problematic. Apparently faculty compensation in BSU is mostly related to the volume and amount of contact hours while the evaluation of quality of teaching is not a factor. Quality of teaching may become even more important at BSU as it adjusts to a broad student population with diverse interests and capacities. There is a system of self-evaluation of courses for the teachers; student evaluations of teachers are being used, though they apparently do not cover all faculties and specialties. To what extent they are actually being used for improvements was not clear to the team. Given the minimal to modest level of faculty salaries, spreading meager resources equally may be the only policy, but in the longer-range development of the institution and with the expectation of more adequate salary levels, quality measures should be created and added to the salary process.

The Prague communiqué hopes to promote European cooperation in quality assurance in order to ensure high standards, to facilitate the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe, and to create trust in and acceptance of national

QA systems. There are many organizations, at national, European wide and even global level, working to develop systems of quality assurance. Nevertheless the main responsibility of QA lies with the national systems and their universities and other HE institutions as well as national agencies. BSU obviously has a key role to play in establishing a system of quality assurance in Belarus.

Teaching: Quality/Quantity

It seems appropriate to turn from the question of individual quality assessment of teachers to the deployment of teaching resources at BSU. If quality of teaching were measured solely by student/faculty ratios, BSU would excel. The Visiting Advisors were informed that the student/teacher ratio at BSU was 8:1. Some years ago the university system in the United Kingdom had a similar student to staff ratio, 8:1. Over the ten years from 1980 to 1990 this ratio increased to approximately 15:1. In the USA the ratio is 20:1; in Ireland it is 24:1.

What concerned the Visiting Advisors was the pressure on resources that this generous ratio must create. The financial and related resourcing pressures on universities are everywhere considerable and ever increasing. From the richest to the poorest country, university rectors complain about the shortage of finance. In many countries, university leaders have had to devote increasing proportions of their already pressurized days to fund raising and to seeking cost savings in the day-to-day operation of their universities. At times, very unpalatable decisions have to be taken—the closure of departments or the reduction of academic posts in order to stay within budget.

BSU has urgent needs to invest in computers, library stock, technology and equipment. What then is the solution? Perhaps government could be persuaded to allocate more funds to BSU? But given the stringent economic conditions in the Republic this would seem highly unlikely in the near future. Another approach would be to recruit many more students, thereby increasing income from government or from students, but without increasing the number of staff.

A third approach would be to maintain the current size of the student body but target a higher student/faculty ratio, e.g., 16:1, and to move towards that figure gradually by a policy of not replacing faculty who retire. This would be a slow process but is preferable to wholesale reduction of staff. At the same time, this policy would result in an incremental increase of funds which could be used for other, more urgent needs, provided the University is allowed to retain the funds that it saved on academic staff and allocate it for other urgent needs. Within university budgets internationally, staff salaries account for a maximum of 70% of recurrent expenditure. BSU should seek to position its staff budgets within the range of comparable institutions outside Belarus. BSU should not make head-count alone the measure of institutional effectiveness especially if staff costs block out aspects of the University that are vital to providing proper student and faculty learning/teaching support. The Visiting Advisors acknowledge that such a policy only works if the University is granted control over budget allocations, i.e., if it operates with a block grant of a lump-sum budget. But even where this is not the case and the budget is strictly allocated according to line-items, there have been examples that a university arranges a contract with the relevant ministry under which it is permitted to keep the

savings resulting from staff reductions and use these funds for other purposes like learning equipment, modernization of classroom and laboratories, etc.

Library & Technology

There is increasing recognition that teaching as such is not the final measure of university excellence, it is *learning*. Concentration on *learning* broadens the tasks of the university beyond the individual professor in the class to the whole range of *learning opportunities* and *tools* available within the total institution. Emphasis on learning calls for new approaches to teaching, to the student/teacher relationship, the use of facilities and opportunities for independent study. Libraries especially are being transformed into 'learning centers'.

The University is cognizant of this situation and is moving in the right direction to meet the challenge, though heavily constrained by the budget. BSU is fully wired for computers and apparently the students have reasonable (though varying) access to computers and the Internet. The library services seemed to be smooth and the library itself is being expanded and modernized.

The rather large number of faculty contact hours may be related to the situation of the library that is lacking in sufficient contemporary textbooks and journals. The library subscribes only to some 32 foreign journals that is far too small a number for a university of this size that is also involved in research. Lack of proper library resources limits self-study unless the students work in such fields where the available library books are pertinent. Access to various international electronic libraries is helpful for the students and the staff, and more cost-effective than (costly) subscriptions.

Technology Transfer

In terms of technology transfer, BSU has already taken some very serious steps towards serving the society outside the historical core activities of teaching and research. Currently, the University has direct ownership of six industrial enterprises working in the fields of pharmaceutical products, precious metals, environmental technology, etc., mostly for the domestic market, though certain joint activities exist with some foreign companies. The enterprises enjoy special privileges in regard to state taxation, and thus they provide for additional income (some 25% of the budget) for the University. Besides normal staff, a sizable number of students (some 2000) were said to be engaged in research activities, many of which are fully or partially supportive to these enterprises. (BSU is engaged in applied or directed research in contrast to the Academy of Sciences' direction toward basic or fundamental research.)

The existence of semi-independent University enterprises is a remarkably modern feature which BSU shares with a number of highly prestigious and thriving universities around the world (though it may be a feature which is not so new in a country where in the past universities were the primary research and development partners of the large, state-owned industrial companies.) While the current enterprises serve BSU well, from a long-term perspective new directions may be required. The team gained the impression that the state of Belarus is aiming towards

a 'knowledge-based' society. The future economy of the country will certainly require a large number of new enterprises in all manufacturing and service sectors, and BSU is thus in a pivotal position as a source of spin-off activities and as a developing 'entrepreneurial university'. This term 'entrepreneurial' is emerging as a description of many universities in Western Europe and North America. These universities are not directly engaged in entrepreneurial activities, but they prepare their students for work in enterprises; they provide teaching and research in business management and relevant law; they practice exchange and mobility of staff and experts between the academe and companies; they promote innovations made in their labs for technology transfer to other outside companies and organizations (science parks, technology centers, etc.) which then provide necessary investment funds, 'incubating' the enterprises, etc. ("science parks" are often physically very close to or share space on the campus of a university.) The universities may provide, through contracts, various training and advisory activities to serve the outside community and its enterprises, and usually they collect proper fees for these services. Such entrepreneurship requires clarity in the practice and ownership of intellectual property rights (IPR) as well as in (national) patent policies. BSU should review these "legal" issues if it plans to engage in joint business or development activities with foreign companies and organizations

Horizontal integration with other institutions of higher learning and research organizations in Belarus, e.g., the Academy of Sciences, may bring additional benefits in terms of innovative activities, technology transfer and in common use of (expensive) instruments and laboratories. (In Belarus, the number of scientific workers in the Academy of Sciences is said to be of the order of 7500.) The advantage a university always enjoys is that it can better employ young people and young scientists compared to purely research organizations that do not have a teaching function.

The Visiting Advisors applaud the efforts of BSU leadership to create and sustain an entrepreneurial R&D branch that can supplement, and sometimes subsidize, teaching and research as the core functions of the university. BSU may wish to study the various types of cross-institutional cooperation and integration as they occur in Europe; the forms of liaison between the university and the companies may certainly take different forms whether as 'institutes' or Technology Transfer Offices. Sometimes the universities have found it useful to establish, for liaison purposes, an External Advisory Group that includes the University's former (successful) graduates, industrialists and other "business" oriented individuals whether alumni or not.

CONCLUSION

The Importance of Belarusian State University

The Visiting Team wishes to conclude this brief report with an overall comment about the importance of BSU to the Republic of Belarus. There are three salient and vital points to be made:

* *The Belarusian State University is a **necessary institution** within the Belarusian Republic: no modern state can hope to prosper and develop without a strong and vital higher education segment. BSU is already a significant institution*

with many strengths; its accomplishments and aspirations should be celebrated and supported by the society.

* *The Belarusian State University is the **leading institution** of higher education in Belarus. The standards and successes of BSU will perforce be the standard against which all other higher education will be measured within the Republic. In this sense, BSU in various ways both now and in the future should actively pursue the function of building higher education in the Republic.*

* *The Belarusian State University is a significant institution for sustaining **civil society** within the Belarusian Republic. As a necessary institution for higher education, as the leading institution of higher education, BSU has a special responsibility to foster the institutions and habits of civil society. It can do so not only through its formal curriculum but also through its own internal governance structures and daily life. Finally, the Belarusian State University is not only an instrument for fostering civil society; it is and must continue to be *a leading (and living!) example of civil society*. Perhaps no task is more important for the future of the Belarusian people and the Republic.*

* * *

In closing, the Visiting Advisors would like to stress its hope that the contact with our colleagues from BSU established during the short visit will be an ongoing one. We would welcome the opportunity for a return visit in about two years to learn about the progress that has been made in the meantime, most notably in the areas of strategic planning organizational structure and implementation of a new degree structure. We are deeply grateful to the rector of BSU and his colleagues for having provided us with a unique opportunity to broaden our professional perspectives, and we would like to reciprocate by offering our continued assistance and support for the development of BSU.

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VISITING ADVISORS

Dennis O'Brien (team leader) is president emeritus of both the University of Rochester (1984-94) and Bucknell University (1976-84), and has held a variety of administrative positions at Middlebury College and Princeton University. In addition to these administrative duties, Dr. O'Brien has taught courses in philosophy at the University of Rochester, Bucknell University, Middlebury College, Princeton University, La Salle College, Rutgers University, and the University of Chicago. His research interests include Hegel, philosophy of history, theology, philosophy of art, history of higher education, modern art, and philosophy. Dr. O'Brien received his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Chicago.



Jochen Fried is director of the Universities Project of the Salzburg Seminar. Prior to joining the Seminar in 1998, he worked as head of programs at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, and as senior officer in the secretariat of the German Science Council in Cologne, Germany. After receiving a doctorate in German literature from Düsseldorf University, Germany in 1984, he was lecturer at Cambridge University, United Kingdom and at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia under the auspices of the German Academic Exchange Service. Dr. Fried's main area of professional interest is higher education and research policy. He serves as an expert for the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, and is a member of the editorial board of the UNESCO-CEPES quarterly review *Higher Education in Europe*.



Ossi Lindqvist was elected chairman of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council from 2000 to 2003 and is director and professor at the Institute of Applied Biotechnology at the University of Kuopio. From 1990 to 1998, he served as the University's rector and has also served as chairman of the Finnish University Rectors (1993 to 1997), and member of the National Council for Science and Technology (1996 to 1999.) Dr. Lindqvist earned a Ph.D. from the University of Turku. He is an alumnus of several Universities Project symposia, and has participated in consultant visits by Visiting Advisors Program teams to Central and East Europe and the Russian Federation.



Daniel O'Hare is president emeritus of Dublin City University. He is chair of the Irish Government Organizations, serves on the Committee on Expert Skills, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, and is a member of the Food Safety Promotion Board. Dr. O'Hare's interests center on higher education governance, management, and planning. He earned a B.Sc. and an M.Sc. from the National University of Ireland, Galway, and a Ph.D. from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.



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.

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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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