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

THE WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMISOARA

TIMISOARA, ROMANIA

October 21-25, 2002

Team Members:

Dr. Yolanda Moses, President, American Association for Higher Education (USA)
Prof. Dr. Furio Honsell, Rector, University of Udine (Italy)
Dr. Stephen J. Reno, Chancellor, University System of New Hampshire (USA)
Prof. Dr. Daniel Rukavina, Rector, University of Rijeka (Croatia)
Ms. Anna Glass, Program Associate, Salzburg Seminar (Austria)

Introduction:

There are relatively few occasions for colleagues to come together, from different institutions, different countries, and vastly different situations, to reflect on the mission, values, challenges, and circumstances of a single university. Such was the opportunity afforded those of us who spent four days with our colleagues at The West University of Timisoara (hereafter WUT.) The visit took place at the invitation of the Rector, vice rectors, deans, and other members of the University community, for the purpose of helping our colleagues further refine their strategic planning effort.

We are extremely grateful to the Rector for his kind and generous hospitality. For all of us on the visiting team, this was our first visit to Romania. The excellent services of our "guide," Simona Neumann, the comfortable and friendly accommodations of our hotel, and the excellent logistical arrangements made on our behalf, reduced concerns about the unimportant and allowed us to focus attention and effort on the work at hand. We are appreciative of all those who assisted us: deans of faculty (or their representatives who escorted us), academic staff and students who met with us in candid and useful conversations, our interpreters and drivers, and the many other helpful persons known and unknown.

With respect to the materials sent to us in advance, we would comment that, as helpful as they were, they would have been even more useful had they

included complete budgetary information, admissions criteria, enrollment data and profiles, and a more complete description and evaluation of the University's administrative and academic computing infrastructure. Given the University's own stated interest to work more effectively with local and regional governmental, civic, and non-profit organizations, it would have enhanced greatly our work had there been provided beforehand a detailed inventory of these partnerships and if there had been an opportunity to meet with representatives of the local and regional communities.

The University has experienced unprecedented change over the last twelve years. While most in the institution know this, there has not been, perhaps, sufficient time to reflect *as a community* on its significance. What some individuals recognize, we would hope more will come in time to appreciate, namely, that all persons—whether students, staff, or administrators—are truly **transitional players** in an evolving University in an evolving region in an evolving country. Recognition of this reality should both sustain and further encourage thoughtful and creative efforts such as the development of new programs, partnerships, and ways of operating. But, at the same time, it should hopefully temper the quite understandable impatience and frustration that comes with recognition that other universities, especially in Western Europe and abroad, are relatively better funded and strategically situated.

As a team, we have read, listened, talked, challenged, investigated, and have come to feel a kinship with those who seek both to move the University to a new position within Romania and to make it the true and equal partner of institutions across the Continent. In the sections that follow, we offer first an analysis of the content, namely, a characterization of the University's current situation, strengths and opportunities. We then turn to the University's own stated "Main Strategic Objectives," which we take as a structure for presenting our evaluations and recommendations. In general, we believe these to be the right ones, but we do offer some additional recommendations for consideration. In offering these, we quickly acknowledge that so-called "best practice" in one country may well not apply to another, or at least not immediately given local circumstances. We acknowledge that financial resources are extremely constrained and that needs are widespread and profound. We know, too, that the establishment of new relationships with, for example, municipal, provincial, or national government and agencies, will take time, especially as they must be of a new type and scope.

The Context:

While the establishment of The West University of Timisoara is dated at 1944, the institution as it is today is largely the consequence of events and efforts since the 1989 change of regime in Romania. Nevertheless, both periods of the University's history must be included in any analysis of relative strengths, challenges, and opportunities. The reinstatement of the humanities, arts, and social sciences dates from the post-communist period, but the tradition of the natural sciences, notwithstanding current decline in popular interest, represents an earlier and sustained emphasis at the University. The senior leadership of the University knows that it must offer, within available resources, a full range of programs across the traditional and emerging

2

disciplines even if the immediate demands of the workforce and economic development do not call for such diversity.

Since 1989, there have been at least six principal factors affecting the evolution of the University. The first*, changes in national governmental policy* have given the institution greater latitude to reinstate formerly suppressed programs as well as to develop new ones. Most often, these developments have been in direct response to the second factor, **marketplace dynamics**. The growth of programs and enrollments in information technology, law, and economics are prime examples of the University recognizing economic and workforce development trends and then acting on them. The relocation of high technology companies within the Banat region has contributed significantly to this phenomenon. A third factor influencing the University is the **impact of traditional values and practices in the academy**. On the one hand, the reversal of former, communist policy through reinstatement of the social sciences and humanities is a reaffirmation of the important place such fields of study have in this or any university. This is clearly judged by all within the University community as a positive development. At the same time, however there are other traditions that are less slowly changed, including, for example, rather widespread and strong adherence to a very hierarchical structure within academic departments and schools. In the judgment of many students, this results in over-reliance on the lecture method of teaching, with little interaction between students and professors, virtually none among students in the classroom, and relatively little contact with professors outside of the classroom. Students expressed the opinion that such a structure often frustrates their efforts to be more engaged with their disciplines and faculty members.

A fourth factor influencing the University is the **change of local and regional needs**. As the most pluralistic region of the country, Banat and its capital, Timisoara, have an uncommonly rich ethnic heritage, a heritage that is reflected in the arts, architecture, language, and religion. Given this, the area is particularly westward looking and is receptive to overtures from business and cultural interests in Western Europe and beyond. At the same time, with the decline of the region's natural resource extraction industries, as well as of its heavy equipment-manufacturing base, there is great need for economic diversification as well as environmental recovery. It is our impression that there is no single agent or agency yet playing the role of convener of interests in the region. Rather, the various organizations, including the Chamber, regional economic development groups, and the University and other higher educational institutions, are acting independently of one another. These all offer the University urgent and compelling opportunities to be a partner in addressing these challenges. Given the fact that universities have not traditionally participated in such partnerships, there exists now both the need as well as the obstacle to meeting it. It is thus important for the University to consider how it might effect the cultural change required to permit it to play such a critical and timely role.

A fifth factor influencing the University is the **growth in information technology** and the corresponding challenge to invest wisely and timely in

appropriate systems, software, training, and support. The University has made huge strides in all areas, and the result is that faculty members, staff, and students are relatively well provided for. But much more needs to be done. And while the senior administration recognizes this, the availability of funds remains the major obstacle.

Lastly, the University is challenged by **changes in demography**, specifically the decline in university-going students. This is attributable primarily to the poor economy, the need for children to get into the workforce at an early age, and a corresponding growth in the school dropout rate. University officials recognize that this trend is exactly the reverse of what is needed to assist Romania's entry as a self-sustaining member of the European Community. This decline, together with the lack of interest of the schools in mathematics and the natural and physical sciences, makes the situation even bleaker. The need for the University—indeed for universities across Romania—to address this critical "supply pipeline" problem could not be more urgent.

STOCKTAKING: STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

We have identified eight major challenges for the West University of Timisoara. Our report will expand on each of these eight challenges and provide extensive recommendations for each. But, before we do that it will be important to note some outstanding strengths for WUT that will give them the ability to begin and sustain their transformation to become a more Western-style University. This planned transformation will begin to position the University for the role it will play in the EU when Romania becomes a member in 2007 or 2010.

Strengths

The first strength that we note is the commitment and dedication of the Rector, Ion Mihai, and his extremely competent senior administrative staff. He is a very respected administrator and leader who has a long and distinguished career in the faculty of economics. He appears from all indications to be the right leader for the University at this moment in time to take the University to its next level of achievement.

We noticed that faculty, while critical of the lack of overall funding for the University, appear to work well with the Rector and his cabinet. In addition, the Deans we spoke with are also working toward the advancement of the University as a whole. Some of these schemes include non-state supported fundraising efforts. The advisory group had the opportunity to meet with a wide range of faculty leaders as well. The overall sentiment expressed was one of guarded optimism about the future of WTU around the issues of raising the level of information technology, increasing the quality of postgraduate studies, emphasizing the pragmatic character of education while revising and adapting special programs and curricula to the market needs, creating new specializations and increasing teaching in foreign languages. On the whole, the faculty is also supportive of this movement toward more systematic

engagement of the university in local, regional, national and international endeavors.

We note that WTU has already established a number of international partnerships and collaborations with institutions in the West. This is especially true in the natural sciences and in the humanities. We believe that there is potential for many more such partnerships as the University puts its strategic plan in place.

We observed mostly loyalty, appreciation and guarded optimism on the part of the students. We had the opportunity to meet with students representing a wide range of subject areas from the natural and social sciences to law. They are enthusiastic about the Rector's goals for more harmonization of the University's curricula with Western universities, more opportunities for Romanian students to secure adequate funds to travel abroad, to have internship opportunities, and for more dialogue between "people in the East and in the West" as one student put it.

Challenges:

The Visiting Advisors observed the following eight major challenges for WUT, and offer the recommendations that also follow for consideration by the University leadership:

- Establishment of a Comprehensive Strategic Plan;
- Prioritization of Educational Initiatives
- Developing a Comprehensive Research Agenda
- Strengthening International Collaboration
- Focus on Student Recruitment and Retention
- Strengthen Information Technology
- Putting a Financial Planning Process in Place
- Strengthening Relationships with External Stakeholders at the Local, National and International Levels.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic Planning

Observations

The decision of the University to invite the Visiting Advisor's Team at this stage of the institution's development is an important and very strategic one. In all areas of Romanian society, enormous changes have occurred since the 1989 revolution, but even more so have these changes been felt in the Western region of the country, and perhaps most particularly here in the University. Over the last twelve years, the University has responded to changes in national educational policy, to demographic shifts, to a radically different economy and marketplace requirements, to emerging local and regional needs, and to new technologies. All of these changes have led, in

turn, to new expectations on the part of students, staff, and administrators. This visit is thus an opportunity for the whole University community to pause and reflect in the midst of this rapid change and to decide how it wishes to focus its energies more strategically.

The team members believe that the main strategic objectives outlined in the self-study document are the correct ones, and we encourage the University administration to refine these further, to publish them widely throughout the University community, and to invite discussion across all sectors so that there will be a true sense of shared responsibility and shared governance for the future of the institution. In support of these values, the Visiting Team respectfully recommends the following:

Recommendations

1.   For there to be widespread confidence that the strategic planning process will truly result in productive changes, it is important that responsibility for the activity be entrusted either to the Senate or to a special ad hoc committee established for that purpose. If the work is assigned to the Senate, the Senate should take it up outside of its regular business so as to give it the attention it deserves and the visibility it requires. A realistic but relatively short timetable for completion of the project should be agreed upon. Whether it is the Senate or a special steering committee, this group should be free to invite comments and suggestions from all sectors of the University, to explore alternative structures of governance and operation, and make final proposals for review. We particularly suggest that each of the faculties be invited to participate fully in the strategic planning process.

2.   We recommend that there be a review of communication structures and publications within the University to ensure that there is a complete and timely dissemination of information regarding planning, curricular changes, policy modifications, and other matters affecting the University community. We recommend that the Rector or director of the project report on the progress of the strategic planning effort at regular intervals.

3.   We support the University's intention to review all of its administrative services in order to improve them where possible and suggest that all transactions be considered, including the levels and hours of services provided in financial affairs, personnel affairs, library and technology services, and general student needs. To achieve this review effectively, it will be necessary for each head of an administrative unit to understand what is called for by this exercise and what types of improvements might be proposed.

4.   We support the University's intention to recruit and retain the best academic staff possible and caution that it not rely too greatly on the hiring of its own graduates into important teaching positions. We encourage the heads of department to give time and attention to the orientation and professional development of new academic staff so that they may be assured that students are receiving high quality instruction both in terms of content and pedagogy. The proposed Center for Academic Evaluation could be a very effective

6

mechanism for providing systematic evaluation of teaching by students. It should be established, given a well-qualified director, and required to conduct its activities and provide regular reports of its activities.

5.   Given the goal of the University to achieve international recognition of its programs, especially its research, we recommend that it undertake a review of staff workloads. Specifically, teaching responsibilities should be adjusted so as to allow sufficient time for research, for publication and presentations, and for curriculum development. We would particularly recommend that the University consider supporting several of its younger faculty members in their application to the "European Young Investigators Awards Program," administered by the European Union Research Organizations Heads of Research Council.

Prioritization of Educational Initiatives

Observations

In a relatively short time, the University has restructured its faculties and developed new programs offerings as well as refocused others. Many of these changes have been prompted by marketplace factors, including the growth in the region of high technology, business, and law. At the same time, the University has reinstated the natural and social sciences, and given an important place to the arts. The Visiting Advisors commend this entrepreneurial and innovative stance of the University. It acknowledges, too, the many partnerships the University has established with higher education institutions elsewhere in Europe and abroad. And finally, the Advisors recognize that the University wishes to promote research while also emphasizing the importance of undergraduate teaching. But we are also concerned that the University is attempting to do too much in too many areas. In brief, it is trying "to be all things to all people." Given existing resources, this cannot be done, and certainly cannot be done well. Inevitably, quality will be the victim.

With an acknowledgement and genuine appreciation of the University's courageous efforts to date, the Visiting Advisors nonetheless respectfully recommend the following:

Recommendations

1.   That the University continues its efforts to develop a core curriculum for first degree students that includes preparation leading to basic competencies in agreed upon areas, including foreign language, communication, and computer literacy (e.g., ECDL).

2.   That the University direct its faculties to review all course offerings across the institution with the goal of reducing unnecessary duplicative courses and to establish, where appropriate, courses that would serve students from a variety of faculties.

3.   That the faculties of the University (especially the professional schools) work closely with professional associations in their fields, as well as their alumni, to ensure that the degree programs contain the appropriate content and teaching methods.

4.   That the Faculty of Sociology and Psychology be encouraged to work closely with local and regional agencies and organizations to identify opportunities for internships for students as well as to develop interdisciplinary approaches to such problems as low school attendance and aspiration, environmental protection management policies, and regional social improvement.

5.   That the University establish partnerships with local high schools for the purpose of promoting the natural sciences, including the sharing of University research with high school teachers and their students, development of science workshops, and invitations to students to visit the University.

6.   That the University establish a Center for Teaching and Technology to support academic staff in the integration of IT-based research in their teaching. The Visiting Team recommends that those academic staff most familiar with these practices serve as colleague-mentors to their peers.

7.   That the University encourage and truly support efforts of the deans and professors to participate in and influence national-level discussions of curriculum and pedagogy so that the creative efforts the University might help strengthen standards and expectations nationally.

8.   That the University examine its admissions standards and procedures across all faculties to ensure that only well-qualified applicants are admitted regardless of their financial circumstances.

Developing a Comprehensive Research Agenda

Observations

Romania has clearly expressed interest in joining the European Union and is one of the candidate countries for the period 2007-2010. Therefore, the country has to achieve basic values compatible with the standards of the European Union through the process of reforms. One of the main goals of the EU is to narrow the existing gap in relation to the United States and Japan, especially in the area of research and development by building the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA) as well as a society based on knowledge.

All the countries wishing to participate in that process have to harmonize their higher education systems with the European higher education structures by adopting commonly accepted norms in order to consolidate the role of higher education in the knowledge society by 2010.

Furthermore, in the EHEA and the ERA the level of quality-oriented culture achieved within the university will be the only measure of its position and recognition. This is one of the essential strategic challenges for the WTU management and its academic community.

The research activities at the WTU are carried out in the following fields: humanities and social sciences, natural sciences, and arts. During the discussions with the academic community we realized what was repeatedly and openly said: the academic staff is overwhelmed with educational duties such that one of the participants defined this situation as "research is far away from teaching". We understand the orientation of the University to the market and the decision to meet almost all interests of high school graduates in the last period of the democratic changes when the market desperately needed new types of graduates. Simultaneously, tuition fees were a very positive stimulation to attract high quality graduates and teachers to the University. However, strategic planning for the next period should recognize the essential role of research and should answer the questions of how to promote activities in harmonization with the EHEA and ERA and how to develop a quality culture that meets high international standards: these should be the only acceptable criteria.

We recognize and strongly support the main strategic objectives in the field of research, which the Rector and his team prepared and presented in the materials that we have obtained.

In the next phase of the development of strategic planning, the University should recognize the fundamental role of research for its development and its international recognition, as well as for the development of the local and regional communities and of the country. We recommend some measures and activities that could be useful in the planning activities suggested in the materials prepared by WTU

Recommendations

1.   It is necessary to define clearly the criteria for designating Centers of Excellence and to evaluate their programs in the light of these criteria. It is our opinion that international criteria should be accepted.

2.   We suggest that the Ministry of Science and Higher Education should provide more financial support for research projects than was the case in the previous period when research projects were seriously under funded. We support the orientation of the University expressed in the Main Strategic Objectives to assure more money for research, which is a crucial investment for the next step in University development based on the research.

3.   Since University resources are limited, we suggest that the University should actively ask for support from local and regional governments, businesses and communities by inviting them to participate actively in the plans for development.

4.   We suggest establishing a WUT Foundation, or similar institution, to support basic University activities in developing various fields of research and in the overall plan for University development. As founding members of this Foundation, we suggest the University, town of Timisoara, the district, businesses, alumni and international resources. We are very well aware of the serious financial restrictions at the moment, but we have to look at the future: without the appropriate infrastructure, major changes cannot occur.

5.   In order to achieve recognition of the importance of research for the development of the University and the local community, open support of the plans by the University management is essential in order to set the appropriate atmosphere for the recognition of the important contributions by various scientific groups. This will create a positive atmosphere and generate enthusiasm.

6.   For every university the development of basic natural sciences is important in order to have a credible connection to major scientific breakthroughs and trends in new technologies, as well as to contribute actively to them. Natural sciences also provide an excellent school for the development of critical thought which is so important for the function of the University and for the development of society in the future. In this sense every Center of Excellence in science is a most valuable asset for the University and should be supported by investment in equipment and by promoting further international collaboration.

Strengthening International Collaboration

Observations

We are fully supportive of the past activities of WUT in the international higher education (HE) community. The results reached in many programs involving international collaboration—particularly in mobility programs like Socrates, PHARE, Leonardo de Vinci, etc.—are indeed impressive and are among the best achievements of the University. They helped the University to become a part of international HE and scientific communities and are a source that continuously brings fresh ideas and approaches to the University and to the local community. These programs helped to establish many personal and institutional links that we think are reflected in the whole atmosphere at WTU and which we can characterize as international and Europeanized. In our opinion, students should have a better understanding of these programs so that they can utilize them fully.

We would like to point out the competence of the administrative services for international programs, which we appreciate very much. We suggest that the University management continue to support enthusiastically international scientific collaboration and international scientific events in Timisoara. This will benefit both the University and the local community.

Recommendations

1) There are a large number of bilateral agreements with other universities. We suggest developing a closer partnership with universities that can support development in accordance with the University's main strategic goals.

2) Students should have a better understanding of exchange programs, particularly Socrates, so that they can utilize them fully. It will be important to raise additional funds and, if necessary, to support student participation.

3) We suggest that the University management should continue to strongly support international scientific collaboration and international scientific events in Timisoara. Both the University and the local community will benefit.

Student Recruitment, Retention and Success

Observations

In this section we reinforce two key issues: (1) the fact that it is important for the University's programs and services to reflect the whole development cycle of the student. (2) The University must focus on keeping students in the University (retention) by giving them successful curricular and co-curricular experiences.

The hallmark of any successful democracy is the caliber of the education of its citizens. The students who attend Western University of Timisoara are those citizens of today and leaders of tomorrow. The current mission statement says that the University "aims to promote learning, research and training through partnerships between staff, students and local community." It also says that the University "equips individuals with skills needed for effective contribution to society." This work is currently done through eleven faculties that provide a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs. We had the opportunity to talk with students who are very pleased to be on campus, and who for the most part, are pleased with the quality of their studies. Some students did, however, voice concern about the lack of adequate computer workstations, and the lack of adequate funds for stipends in international programs such as Socrates. On the other hand, the student leaders we spoke to felt that the administration, especially the Rector, the vice rectors, and deans were available to discuss the issues of students. The editor of the student newspaper, and one other student in the Physics Department expressed concerns about the fact that students need to be more engaged with helping to shape their own education by, for example, talking with and getting to know faculty outside of class and getting more involved with student leadership opportunities. In the spirit of collegiality, the visiting committee offers the following recommendations:

Recommendations

1.   Make sure all qualified students who are admitted to the University receive the resources they need. This is going to mean that in the short run the University should align the numbers of students with budget realities.

2.   Continue to strengthen the (ECTS) transfer system. Students we spoke to were eager to participate in and promote these international experiences even more. It will be important to raise additional funds, if necessary, for students to participate in programs such as Socrates. Perhaps the University can develop a compelling cost-sharing scheme with the Ministry of Education.

3.   Strengthen the central library system and increase the space of the reading rooms located in the University. Provide additional hours of access to computers and more open stack space in the proposed new library building. These goals should be incremental in recognition that these changes will be gradual, over a period of several years.

4.   Continue to upgrade use of and access to computers for students in the departments. Lengthen the opening hours of labs to reflect the reality of student lifestyles, providing additional hours later at night and on weekends.

5.   Pay attention to quality of life issues for students. Make sure that the quality of student life is enhanced. For example, create more on-campus programming for cultural and social events. Create a long-range plan for how you want to develop residence halls and recruit students to live in them. In the short term, you may want to establish offsite housing for students (e.g. opportunities for living in boarding houses, renting rooms from families with extra space) to experience both living and learning communities, and the positive relationships that can come from being on campus for an extended period of time. Ultimately paying attention to the quality of student life will yield loyalty and the development of supportive alumni in the future.

6.   The provost and deans should establish both paid/unpaid internships for students in all appropriate fields. Partnerships with business, government and NGO's are important to achieve this goal.

7.   Recruitment and retention—all student recruitment should be coordinated at the University level through the strategic planning process.

8.   Establish an enrollment management unit that has University authority and responsibility. Its primary role would be to coordinate the recruitment and retention efforts all across campus. Recruitment and retention resources can then be centralized around a set of goals and appropriate benchmarks established at the university level.

9.   The Visiting Advisors recommend the development of a more coordinated (not necessarily centralized) set of opportunities and experiences for student services. For example, faculty should conduct more student curricular and programmatic advising; students should be encouraged to

participate in student government and student club activities; and the University should develop a personal counseling program for students. For example, graduate students from the psychology department could be trained to counsel undergraduates. Professional counselors could be brought in to talk with graduate students, even if you have to hire the person part-time at first.

10.   Partner with existing NGO's to serve student needs; or create them if necessary.

11.   Establish an "early warning system" that lets both faculty and enrollment management administrators know when first year students are in trouble in their classes.

12.   We support your recommendations to recruit more international students, but we recommend that you do so only after you have determined – based on marketing research, what kinds of student would be attracted to and thrive in this setting. You need to build this process into your strategic plan.

Strengthening Information Technology and Informatics

Observations

In Western Europe and in the United States, digital information and communication technologies are posing tremendous challenges to Universities. I.T. is considered one of the major forces currently reshaping the structure of Universities and their relationship to stakeholders. Universities should take advantage of these new digital technologies in order to turn traditional lectures into more effective learning experiences for students, they should be used to overcome time and space barriers so that Universities could offer services also to non-traditional segments of the population. New curricula should be introduced in all Faculties to prepare for the emerging professions that such technologies are triggering in all fields. All students should be put in the position of developing I.T. skills to enhance their personal productivity. Finally, massive information systems and corresponding data mining tools should be set up to support leaders in University governance.

It appeared very clearly throughout the meetings and discussions that the team has had with the deans, the faculty members, and the students, that everyone at WUT is fully aware of the potential and beneficial impact of the new digital technologies. This was obviously so, for the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, but it was true also for traditionally less technological faculties such as psychology. The Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts has recently begun to offer courses and curricula focusing on Computer Art, Graphics and Web Design; the Faculty of Letters and History is currently working on databases for automatic translation, and the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports is utilizing I.T. for monitoring training and performance levels.

The overall impression we received of WUT is that of a very creative, energetic, active, and innovative University. All staff members, both teaching and research, are very enthusiastic and determined to experiment with all the new opportunities and modalities offered by I.T. Furthermore good multimedia tools were available in most classrooms in the new buildings, e.g. those of Economic Sciences and Law.

We believe that the main strategic objectives of the West University of Timisoara in I.T., listed in the self evaluation form, as well as the faculty strategies and the projects in I.T. as presented during the special meetings we held devoted to these topics, are all very significant and timely chosen. All of them should be strategically pursued. However, the team respectfully offers a short list of comments and recommendations for WUT to consider.

Recommendations

1.	For the new digital technologies to be fully effective, their introduction and utilization should not be limited just to research activities or to some syllabus or course "of excellence," rather they should be pervasive throughout the University system. The University could consider building a central I.T. Service Unit, possibly remotely accessible, much like the Library System, for the needs of all members of the University community, i.e. researchers, students and administration. This could reduce duplication and lower costs in an area that is very expensive and subject to obsolescence.

2.	The University should not focus only on setting up hardware facilities such as computer rooms and network infrastructure. Vital as these may be, software assets, such as comprehensive information systems for storing and updating all relevant data, and powerful decision support systems based on these are necessary tools for a fully responsible University governance system.

3.	The efficiency of many student services could be greatly enhanced by having an appropriate information system for students' careers and by automating many ordinary procedures related to the student's life, such as enrollment, on-line payments, exam registration, obtaining official certificates. The user-friendliness of the interfaces of such tools should always be considered both for the sake of the administrative operator and that of the student.

4.	WUT is going in the right direction as far as e-library programs, and there should be full support to any initiative in this direction. The team became aware during the visit that the WUT is currently setting up, under the guidance of the vice rector for finance, a powerful ERP system for financial management and cost analysis and control. The team is in full support of such action, which is vital for the competitiveness of the institution in the marketplace.

5. Everyone at the University should try to utilize, and encourage others to utilize to their full extent, websites, web-tools, mailing lists, electronic special-interest forums, and electronic bulletin boards. These are among the most effective tools for distributing information available to the leaders and governing bodies, in order to generate consensus, as well as to communicate with other groups. These are the new channels through which best practices and ideas can be most easily disseminated by individual members of the University community. All relevant information should be put on the web. There it can be easily accessed and copied indefinitely. The University could consider also having on-line house organs and newsletters.

6. After over ten years of rapid, and at times explosive growth of I.T. technologies, it is strategic to synchronize activities across faculties and departments. The University central management should launch a program of integrated planning and collaborative action. Similarly, a much higher level of collaboration then currently exists, has to be attempted across the various universities in Timisoara. This will reduce unnecessary duplication of human skills and resources, eliminate redundancy in the organizational structure, and will allow for more economically cost-effective acquisition of equipment from the supplier.

7. A minimum standard for computer literacy should be established in all curricula for all faculties. Possible standards are the European Computer Driving License (ECDL) level introduced by CEPIS, or the corresponding U.S. equivalent. Self-instruction tools could be used for this purpose.

8. Given the current rate of technological development and innovation, the University should allow for maximum freedom in experimenting with new I.T. supported teaching/learning methodologies and strategies. We recognize that there is no single effective formula that can be applied to all courses. Local constraints can suggest new solutions. One can even capitalize on what would otherwise appear to be apparent drawbacks. For this purpose, incentives should be introduced for all teaching staff to foster new I.T. related practices. These could range from enhancing traditional front-line instruction to developing a full virtual new educational experience for the student.

9. During our discussions we have become aware of several excellent practices at WUT, but the University should try to push forward the overall I.T. awareness among all its research, teaching and administrative staff. To this end a steering committee should be established to indicate "good practices" to imitate, and set precise goals and objectives for the whole University to follow.

10. Similarly, in order to develop and improve curricula with respect to I.T., steering committees should be set up involving teaching staff, and representatives of all stakeholders, such as I.T. companies, associations of professionals, and local administrators. These committees could discuss common issues, share concerns, disseminate ideas, gather suggestions, and coordinate student internships.

11.   The use of I.T. tools should be promoted for improving everyday activities and procedures, both at the administrative and teaching levels.

12.   The University leadership, at all levels, should focus on specific and circumscribed activities to advocate. For instance the University could plan for just one full curriculum to "go on line" initially, but this should be done in a comprehensive way, so that all problems would be carefully considered, rather than supporting a multitude of partial, scattered "on line" courses.

13.   The University should try to promote agreements with I.T. companies for favorable bargains for its students to purchase computer equipment.

14.   Finally, the leadership should focus on scalable and focused initiatives. In this way such initiatives can be evaluated, assessed, and possibly redirected.

Putting a Financial Planning Process in Place

Observations

Financial resources are currently not abundant, and the situation is likely to remain that way for the foreseeable future. The high level of competition for resources currently experienced in Western Europe and in the U.S. is likely to arise in Romania, the more the country enters into the European Space of Higher Education. Thus it is necessary to put into practice only those initiatives that are sustainable and can be clearly assessed.

Two of the three main strategic objectives listed in the self-evaluation report, namely those having to do with core financing and complementary funding, are completely in line with the financial policies currently being pursued in western universities. With central government funding diminishing, universities have to rely more and more on different sources for co-financing their core activities. This is quite easy to achieve as far as research is concerned. Many of the European initiatives, including the 6th Framework Program currently being launched, are likely to provide significant resources even to Romania, if Romanian universities will be reactive and entrepreneurial enough.

The more difficult issue will be to find significant resources for basic teaching activities. Resources deriving from student tuition cover costs only in the case of very popular initiatives. But universities cannot be so dependant on the marketplace. In any case, WUT appears to be fully aware of the financial implications that the challenges of globalization and competition are posing on Universities and their values.

The third strategic objective of WUT in financing, namely that concerning decentralization of the budget management to each Faculty, has aroused mixed feelings among team members. A university is a complex institution that derives its strategic strength precisely from its "universal" nature. In the

current society there is a natural drift towards lack of communication deriving from overspecialization. The need for multidisciplinary knowledge is more and more necessary. Therefore, Faculties and their initiatives should be more and more coordinated and integrated. Budget decentralization can lead to disintegration, to uneconomical duplications, to an increase in the difficulty of strategic planning, and possibly compromise the balanced development of the university because of temporary and transitory cultural fads.

It would have been helpful if, during the visit, financial matters and administration and organizational issues had been discussed more at length. More emphasis should have been placed on such issues and space should have been allocated on the schedule for addressing such matters.
In any case, the team respectfully offers the following comments.

Recommendations

1.   Costs will probably never decrease, unless drastic cuts in certain areas are made. This is dangerous, as it is very difficult to foresee clearly the impact of such cuts. Universities are institutions working for the public good both in the present and in the future.

2.   Only scalable initiatives should be launched and duplications across Faculties should be avoided (in acquiring goods and resources). The best bargains are often achieved by centralized opportunities.

3.   Incentives should be provided for special actions. Volunteer activities can only be temporary. Even small financial incentives can have very positive effects.

4.   Non governmental institutions and private companies should be provided some form of incentive for sponsoring University initiatives. Involving their representatives in steering committees can have very positive effects in bridging the gap between academia and private enterprise.

5.   An Industrial Liaison office should be set up to coordinate and streamline consulting activities. The University should foster the development of University spin-off companies, graduate student entrepreneurship, and enterprise incubators and nurseries for such initiatives to grow should be envisaged. Patent development should be supported.

6.   Decentralization of the budget management to each Faculty can be done only if general, but precise, criteria and objectives are set by the central governing body. Otherwise this will produce duplication or even conflicting actions, and definitely poorer deals with the suppliers.

7.   The image of the University as a strategic institution for technological innovation transfer in business and industry should be promoted

Strengthening the University's role in the Social and Economic Environment at the local, Regional and National levels

Observations

As one of four universities in Timisoara and as a premier University in Romania, the University of Timisoara must by definition have a multifaceted mission that focuses simultaneously on the local, regional, national and international communities. Your goals recall the spirit of the model of land grant universities of the United States, who have the dual mission of both creating new knowledge and educating the eligible citizenry of the state on the one hand, and the mission of being of service to the community depending on how narrowly or broadly it is defined on the other hand. We also offer the best of the teaching and research universities of Western Europe as our models as we respectfully recommend the following ideas and strategies for your very ambitious goals:

Recommendations

General

1.   In the next overall strategic planning process, the mission statement should be changed to reflect the University's engagement with the larger world. Campus leadership should realistically spell out what can be done in both the short and long term. The next strategic plan should also reflect local, regional, national and international commitment through detailed goal setting and benchmarking by administration as well as faculties. This work should be highly focused. Given the lack of adequate resources, there is a need for an integrative plan of action.

2.   The Department of International Relations is doing a commendable job. That Department should be strengthened from government funds, funds from E.U., and/or from United States State Department and from private foundations. Rather than creating more new relationships, the University should first establish criteria to strategically build on existing strengths and/or selectively create new niches. For example what can you do that no one is doing? What unique programs can you offer that no one else can?

Local Level

1.   Use the occasion of this report to have a public symposium in Timisoara. Use it as an opportunity to invite local supporters to join with you in your efforts. This document is a way to launch a new community partnership initiative.

2.   Create opportunities to systematically link research and practice capabilities with needs of local communities.

3.   Civil Society—link University resources to community needs through a few key large and jointly conceptualized projects.

4.   Reward faculty and students for collaboration with local communities. What do they get out of it?

5.   Continue to build continuous education programs; work with the private sector as well as the government to provide life-long learning opportunities for employees and citizens.

6.   Work with local high schools to make sure there is a better articulation of courses, learning outcomes and competencies to enhance the transition of students to Timisoara University.

7.   We support the administration's recommendations to strengthen the Publications Office to develop new web print, and a video that promotes campus-community collaboration.

8.   Utilize electronic technology and media more effectively at the University and at the unit or faculty level. For example, highlight or profile one faculty each month such as the music, art, and physical education and law faculties.

Regional/National

1.   Secure governmental or private funds to focus research and practice on pressing important economic development issues. That is, link the goals of government and emerging civil society to University research. For example, get the government to help fund environmental tourism and ethnic and minority studies programs. Again, we urge you to be strategic. What do you gain as an institution from the partnerships? What are the short, medium and long-term benefits?

2.   Identify the three or four areas in which you want to build an international reputation over the next five to ten years. Prioritize the development of the programs with a carefully developed plan. Look to special units of the European Union who are looking for innovative projects to fund. Take advantage of the Fulbright Scholars Program, The Woodrow Wilson Fellowships, and the Ford Foundation who would be interested in this work of scholarly exchange. Finally, link with institutions that will help with or complement your development activities (A medical school or a school of engineering for example).

3.   The Rector should appoint a University Advisory Council, made up of faculty, administration, and students to work to help coordinate activities of the Department of International Relations. The University image should have an integrated plan.

4.   We support the University's goal to encourage international events, both scientific and cultural. For example, the Faculty of Arts has expert faculty in a wide variety of areas. The department has both the faculty expertise and

the excellent up to date facilities in a superb location ideally suited to conduct international conferences and workshops.

5.   We support the University's goal to encourage summer courses on Romanian language and culture, as well as summer courses on specialty issues that are unique to Romania. For example, the Faculty of Economics could develop the ability to do economic forecasting. There appears to be considerable potential to attract international colleagues for short stays. We also encourage you to make these new and innovative programs self-funding. For example, you could host a summer institute for European administrators on various cutting-edge higher education issues to help keep them up-to-date. As far as we know, no other university has a program of this kind in Central Europe.

Conclusion

We would like to stress the tentative nature of both our observations and our recommendations. Both have been made with admittedly minimal time at the University, and in some instances we may have missed critical background information that might have led to different observations or conclusions. We also recognize that while some of the recommendations may seem reasonable, they will simply need time to implement.

It is our hope that the suggestions contained in this report will be useful as the West University of Timisoara continues its efforts to promote change and reform from within. We stand ready to consult further with the Rector and his colleagues on the issues that were raised during the consultant visit, or any others where our experience may be of value. In conclusion, we wish once again to record our sincere thanks to the Rector and his team for their many kindnesses to us. We wish the University leadership, faculty, staff and students of the West University of Timisoara the very best in what we believe to be a promising future.

The West University of Timisoara team:

University leadership
Prof.dr. Ioan Mihai, Rector of the West University of Timisoara (Universitatea de Vest din Timisoara - UVT) (rector@rectorat.uvt.ro)
Prof.dr. Nicolae Avram, Vice-rector for scientific research and postgraduate studies (navram@rectorat.uvt.ro)
Prof.dr. Horia Cristea, Vice-rector for finacial and economic strategy (hcristea@rectorat.uvt.ro)
Prof.dr. Adrian Chiriac, Vice-rector for academic curricula and student life (achiriac@rectorat.uvt.ro)
Prof.dr. Stefan Balint, Vice-rector for international relations (sbalint@rectorat.uvt.ro)

Deans:
Prof. dr. Ileana Oancea, Faculty of Letters, Philosophy and History
Prof.dr. Mihail Megan, Faculty of Mathematics
Associate-Prof.Dr. Dorina Andru Vangheli, Faculty of Physics
Prof.dr. Aurel Faur, Faculty of Chemistry, Biology and Geography
Associate-Prof.dr. Gabriela Coltescu, Faculty of Political Sciences and Communication
Prof.dr. Emil Cazan, Faculty of Economics
Prof. Felicia Stancovici, Faculty of Music
Prof.dr. Stefan Buzarnescu, Faculty of Sociology and Psychology
Prof.dr. Radu Motica, Faculty of Law
Associate-Prof. Dumitru Serban, Faculty of Arts
Associate-Prof. Sorinel Voicu, Faculty of Physical Education and Sports

Team:
1. Prof.dr. Pia Brinzeu, Faculty of Letters, Philosophy and History
2. Prof.dr. Ileana Oancea, Dean, Faculty of Letters, Philosophy and History
3. Prof.dr. Victor Neumann, Faculty of Letters, Philosophy and History
4. Associate-Prof. dr. Reghina Dascal, Faculty of Letters, Philosophy and History
5. Teaching-assist. Dorel Micle, Faculty of Letters, Philosophy and History
6. Prof.dr. Stefan Balint, Faculty of Mathematics
7. Prof.dr. Dumitru Gaspar, Faculty of Mathematics
8. Associate-Prof. dr. Alexandru Cicortas, Faculty of Mathematics
9. Associate-Prof. dr. Daniela Zaharie, Faculty of Mathematics
10. Prof.dr. Ion Cotaescu, Faculty of Physics
11. Prof.dr. Zeno Schlett, Faculty of Physics
12. Associate-Prof.dr. Agneta Balint, Faculty of Physics
13. Associate-prof.dr. Dumitru Vulcanov, Faculty of Physics
14. Lecturer dr. Daniel Vizman, Faculty of Physics
15. Prof.dr. Vasile Ostafe, Faculty of Chemistry, Biology and Geography
16. Prof.dr. Eugen Falnita, Faculty of Economics
17. Prof.dr. Gheorghe Ionescu, Faculty of Economics
18. Prof.dr. Nicolae Bibu, Faculty of Economics
19. Teaching-assistant Claudiu Brindas, Faculty of Economics
20. Prof.dr. Stefan Buzarnescu, Dean, Faculty of Sociology and Psychology
21. Prof.dr. Romulus Dabu, Faculty of Sociology and Psychology
22. Prof.dr. Anca Munteanu, Faculty of Sociology and Psychology
23. Prof.dr. Zoltan Bogathy, Faculty of Sociology and Psychology

24. Prof.dr. Dorel Ungureanu, Faculty of Sociology and Psychology
25. Lecturer dr. Bogdan Nadolu, Faculty of Sociology and Psychology
26. Prof.dr. Radu Motica, Dean, Faculty of Law
27. Prof.dr. Viorel Pasca, Faculty of Law
28. Associate-Prof.dr. Radu Bufan, Faculty of Law
29. Lecturer Irina Sferidan, Faculty of Law
30. Lecturer Lucian Bercea, Faculty of Law
31. Associate-Prof. Dumitru Serban, Dean, Faculty of Arts
32. Lecturer dr. Dan Stanciu, Faculty of Arts
33. Lecturer dr. Dan Moga, Faculty of Arts
34. Lecturer Carol David, Faculty of Arts
35. Lecturer Ileana Pintilie, Faculty of Arts
36. Lecturer Maria Birzu, Faculty of Physical Education and Sports
37. Lecturer Nagel Adrian, Faculty of Physical Education and Sports
38. Prof.dr. Walter Kindl, Faculty of Music

Students' Union members:
Ciprian Baciu, leader
Lungu Loredana
Adrian Dabu
Mihai Anghel
Sebastian Petrisor

From the Department of International Relations, Mrs. Simona Neumann was permanently present to the activities.

More information see: http://www.uvt.ro

Visiting Advisors

Yolanda Moses (team leader) is president of the American Association for Higher Education, a higher education membership association composed of faculty, administrators, and graduate students – based in Washington, DC. From 1993 to 1999, she served as president of The City College of New York, prior to which she was vice president for academic affairs and professor of anthropology at California State University, Dominguez Hills. In 1995, Dr. Moses was elected president of the American Anthropological Association, the first African-American president in the Association's ninety-three year history. She has also served as president of the Council on Anthropology and Education, on the Executive Committee of the General Anthropology Division, and on the Board of the Association of Black Anthropologists. She chaired the American Council on Education Commission on the Status of Women and the United Negro College Fund National Advisory Board for Service Learning, and is a member of the Board of Trustees of The Ford Foundation. Dr. Moses holds master's and doctorate degrees from the University of California, Riverside. She is an alumna of the Universities Project 12th Symposium, *The Impact of Globalization on Higher Education* in 2000 and was co-chair of the 18th Symposium, *Universities and Social Transformation* in 2001.

Furio Honsell is rector of the University of Udine, where he served as vice principal until June 2001, and previously as dean of the Faculty of Sciences. He has been a visiting scholar in the Computer Science Department at Stanford University, California, USA, and in the Division of Informatics at Edinburgh University, United Kingdom. Since 1988 he has been principal investigator of various scientific projects financed by the Italian Ministry of University and Scientific Research in Theoretical Computer Science. Professor Honsell holds advanced degrees in mathematics from the University of Pisa. He is an alumnus of the Universities Project 18th Symposium, *Universities and Social Transformation* in 2001.

Stephen Reno is chancellor of the University System of New Hampshire. Formerly he has served as the co-founder of the Department of History and Phenomenology of Religion at the University of Leicester, UK, visiting scholar at the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, associate provost of the University of Southern Maine, and provost and president of Southern Oregon University. He is vice chair of the New Hampshire Forum for Higher Education and has served as commissioner for the Northwest Commission on Colleges. Professor Reno holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is an alumnus of the Universities Project 16th Symposium, *Social and Civic Responsibilities of the University*, in 2001 and of the 20th Symposium, *The Meanings of Autonomy: University Governance Reconsidered* in 2002.

Daniel Rukavina is rector of the University of Rijeka, where he was dean of the Medical Faculty from 1983 to 1987, and founder and chair of postgraduate studies in clinical immunology and experimental and clinical transplantation. Before returning to the University of Rijeka in 2000, Dr. Rukavina served as president of the Association of Medical Faculties in the former Yugoslavia; professor of clinical pathology at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School, Pennsylvania, USA; and was a member of the Task Force for Continuing Medical Education in Europe for the World Federation for Medical Education. He is a member of the Academy of Medical Sciences of Croatia and the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Dr. Rukavina holds an M.D. and a Dr.Sc. from the University of Zagreb. He is an alumnus of the Universities Project 16th Symposium, *Social and Civic Responsibilities of the University*, in 2001 and of the 20th Symposium, *The Meanings of Autonomy: University Governance Reconsidered* in 2002. The University of Rijeka hosted a consultant team of the Visiting Advisors Program in 2001.

Anna Glass is program associate for the Universities Project at the Salzburg Seminar. She is responsible for the administrative and logistical preparations of several symposia per year, provides support for the Visiting Advisors Program, and has accompanied Advisor Teams to universities in both Central and East Europe and the Russian Federation. Originally from Maine, Ms. Glass has also lived in Frauenfeld, Switzerland and Paris, France during the course of her studies. She is a graduate of Middlebury College, Vermont, where she studied French, German, and English literature.

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 2002, more than fifty VAP visits will have taken place to universities in East and Central Europe and Russia. A full schedule of visits is planned for 2003. The addition of the Visiting Advisors Program brings to the Universities Project an applied aspect and serves to enhance institutional and personal relationships begun in Salzburg.

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

Salzburg Seminar website: www.salzburgseminar.org