



THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR VISITING ADVISORS REPORT

THE COLLEGE OF NYÍREGYHÁZA

NYÍREGYHÁZA, HUNGARY

November 11-15, 2002

Team Members

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Introduction

The Visiting Advisors Program of the Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project was created to provide institutions of higher education in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in Russia and the NIS (all of whom have attended previous Universities Project symposia) with an opportunity to enhance the process of institutional self-assessment and change by inviting a group of senior university educators and administrators for a consultant visit. By the nature of the Program, it is left to the host institution that requests consultation to decide which specific themes it would like to see addressed during the visit; it is also a matter of the host institution to design the actual agenda of the meetings and to provide an analysis of the issues and problems to be addressed, as well as factual information about the institution and the context of higher education in the host country, thus enabling the visiting consultants to prepare for the discussions in an appropriate way. The visit itself is an exercise in peer-group review in its best sense—colleagues who share similar occupations and interests come together for an open-minded exchange to learn from one another.

Purpose and Scope of the Visit

The Visiting Advisors team spent three days of intensive exploration and discussions at the College of Nyíregyháza (hereafter referred to as “the College”), whose Rector had extended an invitation for a consultant visit organized by the Salzburg Seminar. The Visiting Advisors appreciated the opportunity to visit the College, to observe its

functioning and facilities, and to meet with the Rector and a broad range of academic and administrative staff and students. The purpose of the visit was to provide suggestions and observations from our own experience, in an effort to help the College in its efforts to effect institutional change and reform. We hope that this report will assist the College leadership in its efforts to strengthen the institution in a number of critical areas identified by the Rector and his team.

The team wishes to express its appreciation to the Rector, Dr. Árpád Balogh and his staff, especially Dr. László Filep, for their gracious welcome and efficient cooperation in preparations prior to and during the visit. We greatly appreciated the openness and candor that marked the College leaders' responses to our inquiries. They enabled us to gain a grasp of their vision for the College and the strategic plan in pursuit of that vision. Our impressions and observations that follow are based on these discussions as well as on the informational materials with which we were provided.

The College of Nyíregyháza, located in the northeastern area of Hungary, was created in January, 2000 as a result of a merger of the György Bessenyi Teacher's Training College, and the Agricultural College Faculty of Gödöllo Agricultural University. Enrollment at the College has now reached 11,000 students, who study at four faculties—the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Economics and Social Studies, the Faculty of Engineering and Agriculture, and the Faculty of Science. The mission of the College is to become the intellectual center of the region, and to play a major role in the educational and professional life of that region by offering a wide variety of comprehensive programs at different levels, including college and university basic training and vocational training. The location of the College near the Slovakian, Ukrainian and Romanian borders also provides it with a unique opportunity to offer learning opportunities to Hungarian minorities who reside in these neighboring countries.

Prior to the visit, the Rector had identified a concise set of key issues for discussion and consultation that were selected because of their relevance to the future development of the institution. Those four target areas included:

- Academic structure and governance within the College, especially following a recent integration of two institutions. This was identified as the more important area of inquiry.
- The role of the College in civil society, specifically contributing to the betterment and development to the local community and region.
- Student needs and the role of students in institutional affairs, with emphasis on the participation of students in enhancement of education quality, plus student mobility.
- Quality Assurance

In preparation for the visit, the College provided team members with excellent background materials including an institutional development plan, as well as a number of publications and documents related to the issues for discussion. These materials were extremely helpful in enabling team members to acquire important insight into the issues and challenges facing the College.

During the three days of meetings, the team members met with a number of senior College leaders, including the rector, vice rectors, deans, department heads and professors, as well as student leaders. The broad spectrum of meetings, and the willingness of the College leadership to share with us detailed information on all issues, allowed the team to understand the particular conditions of the College, and the challenges it faces in a number of crucial areas.

Context

The Visiting Advisors Team wishes to place the College in the context of an abbreviated national history—at least since the end of World War II—and the impact of government policies on the institution leading up to the present day. We posit that some knowledge of governance and policy shifts will assist the reader in understanding the current College internal management and governance shifts, which by definition are responses to the external environment. Indeed, as a result of phenomenal change in that external environment, the College finds itself seeking creative responses to change toward institutional improvement, effectiveness, and efficiency.

The College has had a relatively brief 40-year life, having started with a limited focus of training teachers. By the late 1970s it had developed into one of the largest higher education institutions in Hungary. In 2000 a faculty and an independent college formed the new College of Nyíregyháza. The impetus for this latest consolidation was the result of sweeping change for higher education mandated at the national level.

During the time of the College's development, over the period and events cited above, the institution experienced the very restrictive policies and practices of the socialist regime. This era, which covered the post World War II period to 1990, saw an extensive proliferation of colleges and universities. These numbered a total of 89 with 55 of those being state institutions. Social policies made it desirable to keep higher education institutions small, both in terms of faculty members and numbers of students. Most enrolled fewer than 500 with a third of the institutions enrolling fewer than 300 students. These institutions were elitist, rigid, and unresponsive to educating the masses or to the demand of a market economy. Just 10 years ago, in 1991, Hungarian higher education institutions enrolled just 12 percent of the age 18-22 "college-eligible" population. These students enrolled in over 400 courses with virtually no provision for transferring from one program to another.

In 1993, the higher education law placed most colleges and universities under the Ministry of Education. At the same time, the Hungarian Accreditation Committee was created, which overhauled virtually all of higher education policies and practices. More recently, in 1999, an amendment to the higher education law initiated the integration of colleges and universities and mandated that mergers should occur. The 55 state higher education institutions were reduced to 30. Importantly, as well, the amendment decreed an expansion of enrollments. Remarkably, in 10-years time, colleges and universities went from enrolling only 12 percent of the 18-22 year cohort to 28 percent, with plans to increase enrollments to 50 percent of that group. Among the reasons for this dramatic growth were the new governmental provision, which allows students to pay for the cost of education—even though the majority of students still enjoy full government support for tuition costs—and demographic

changes. Among other provisions, the results of which are discernable at the College, include the introduction of the credit system and the mandate that all colleges and universities must develop an institutional development plan, which at times is also referred to a quality assurance program.

Thus, we believe that the relationship of the external demands described above, to the proactive activities of the College in responding to those demands—including inviting the team of Visiting Advisors to assist in bringing solutions to internal organizational challenges—is evident. Indeed, a college with enlightened leadership has no choice but to respond creatively to such demands for change. Upon reviewing the description of the target areas defined by the College for study by the Visiting Advisors, the patterns of growth and change now visited upon the institution, and the recommendations offered by the team of advisors, one sees the clear connection between environmental change and institutional response.

Academic Structure and Governance

The team considered issues of management, administration, as well as the role of the rector, the deans and the faculties within the context of a multi-faculty institution experiencing substantial change. The administrative leadership was very generous with their time, meeting with the team of advisors on various occasions during our visit.

It became clear to the team of advisors that the merger, which created the new College of Nyíregyháza, presented the most pressing concern related to addressing matters of academic structure and governance. The merger of the two institutions presented a variety of challenges for the College leadership, one of the most important being the need to develop a common institutional culture. The four faculties, which now comprise the College, had enjoyed a wide degree of autonomy before the merger, and issues of managerial structure and placement of decision-making authority between the faculties and the central administration were of prime concern. We were greatly encouraged to learn in discussions with vice rectors and deans that considerable progress has been made in this area. It became clear that an enormous amount of good will on all sides has been necessary in order to move the College toward a common institutional culture in just two short years. These efforts must go forward, and we encourage the central administration and the deans and vice-deans at the four faculties to continue their very positive collaboration and cooperation to reach their common goal.

Overall, it appears that extraordinary change has been accomplished at the College of Nyíregyháza, for all apparent purposes, with a generally positive attitude and a collaborative and cooperative approach. From our conversations and the printed materials we reviewed, there is a general sense that the merger was a good idea, and that the process of integration has gone well so far. Decision-making seems to be quite inclusive, with the recognition that at certain times in the past two years, the rector had to make key decisions and some of those had to be made quickly with limited consultation. Many with whom we spoke believe that the current organization makes sense in terms of efficiencies, as well as the broad range of programs available to students.

There also seems to be a keen sense among those we met that the institution is at a new, critical stage. The mechanics of the merger have been achieved—for the most part—but broad-based completion of the merger calls for more and continued collaboration and coordination among the faculty units and the central administration. The overall goal must continue to be the unification as one college and the administrative leadership (rector, vice rectors, deans) must work closely together to accomplish this.

The issues of the locus of decision making, control, and responsibility—centralized versus decentralized—will continue to warrant attention. Also, as in any complex, multi-unit organization the central administration has an important role to play, which cannot be minimized or ignored.

The key to continued success as the new organization develops further and matures will be enlightened, participative, and creative leadership. In this important next stage of organizational development, the challenge will be how to make the new organization work even more effectively than it has to date. In this stage, the institution will benefit from more inclusiveness and participation in the overall management and leadership of the college.

The College of Nyíregyháza has made remarkable strides in the past few years in an environment of tremendous change and significant challenges, internally and externally. Developing a common culture in a new organization as well as continuing to assess the appropriate management structure is demanding work that takes time, and requires creativity and the willingness to take risks on the part of all involved.

The rector, the vice rectors, and the deans share the responsibility for articulating—to internal and external audiences—the mission of the College of Nyíregyháza, its goals and its dreams. Such communication is critical to creating a sense of common purpose and a shared culture for any organization, especially this new entity. It may be an important task to focus more on the meaning of a degree from the College of Nyíregyháza for its students in order to create a common academic culture that is tangible and experienced by all.

An environment of honesty, democracy, and shared responsibility has been critical to the recent accomplishments and will be even more important for the work yet to be done. Building on that foundation of openness and goodwill will require hard work and good intentions by all involved. Accomplishments to date, coupled with the attitude and orientation of those currently in leadership roles, bode well for the College of Nyíregyháza to effectively meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Role of the College in Civil Society: Relevance to Area and Region

According to the Mission Statement of the College of Nyíregyháza, the major aim of the College is to become the intellectual centre of the region and of the Hungarian minorities living in the surrounding countries. The College plans to play an important role in the life and future development of the country and the northeastern Hungarian region through offering various comprehensive programs.

Our team took notice that the College is doing its best to fulfill that rather ambitious mission, by developing a diversified portfolio of activities including:

- resources acquired by the College support the development of the community and the area by providing work for people at the College and at new College buildings and facilities;
- training tourist guides to assist in the development of tourism in the region;
- establishing the “Friends of the College” association. The association helps the College in finding practice sites and on-site training possibilities for students, thereby helping the College and the local business community;
- the College serves as a training and further training centre, assisting in the development of human resources for the region;
- teachers and staff of the College work together with the leaders of the community in councils oriented to promotion of social services and quality of life in the region;
- the citizens of the community and the region can use the excellent facilities of the College, including the swimming pool and the extensive sports complex;
- at the College farm, the College sponsors an inspirational program where physically or emotionally challenged children ride College-owned horses, as part of the children’s rehabilitation therapy;
- the College has established an Institute for the development of entrepreneurial activities of the College in cooperation with the community; and
- the main impact of the College upon the community and area is related to the development of human resources. The College has at present about 11,000 students and organizes courses for graduates who completed their secondary education and are not enrolled at the College. In the past few years the enrollment of students increased by about 40%. There is strong potential for continued growth in enrollments, given that recent applications for enrollment by interested students is about three times as large as the present capacity of the College.

The visiting team was glad to learn that there is considerable interest in establishing a Centre for Innovation and Development. We understand that the Centre would play an important role in the development of the region and area. Taking into account that Hungary will most likely enter the EU in May 2004, the visiting team proposes that

- the College take the necessary action to establish the Centre;
- as part of the Centre, create a unit that can develop the ability to write successful grants (this will become more important with the advent of joining the EU); and the Centre for training and further training continue to offer short courses in English, 14 days or longer, for people working in various types of services in the community and in the area.

Student’s Role in Enhancing Quality of Education

The inclusion of students, assuring their participation in the internal governance affairs of institutions of higher learning, is a wise and accepted practice in progressive and democratic institutions. At the College of Nyíregyháza the impetus for wishing to explore the role of students in enhancing the quality of education, stems from various sources. First, it is the opinion of the team of advisors that the need comes as a

result of there being enlightened leadership at the College—leaders who recognize the value of seeking and using students' observations. Other reasons include the fact that student evaluation of education quality was a key part of the Internal Quality Assurance Pilot Project developed by the College and funded by the Ministry of Education. Finally, another reason would appear to be rooted in common sense: the sheer growth in student enrollments, which by definition create extensive demands on College services.

We wish to begin our set of observations by relating that the advisor team members were delighted with our interactions and conversations with student leaders. Indeed, we found that the students were entirely positive and forthcoming, which provides a very fortunate student relationship situation for the College to build on. Frankly, the advisors expected the usual laundry list of complaints and demands, which we have become accustomed to expect at other colleges and universities that have been visited. Instead, these student leaders were positive and wished to be proactive in creating opportunities to be helpful. Evidence of the students' non-adversarial and complimentary attitude was that they exhibited courtesy and respect toward College officials. When asked to describe the nature of their relationship with the College professional staff, they began by providing examples of the positive aspects of those relationships. They explained how they were asked to take the initiative, which they did, in fashioning an instrument for the evaluation of teaching. They readily produced a copy of the instrument for the consultants. Additionally, they proudly related their responsibility for scheduling student social activities and told of being consulted or asked about other matters important to students, including the food service, student hostels, the availability of teachers, etc. Additionally, they indicated a willingness to be more involved in any aspect of college life where they could be helpful. They spoke of the adequacy of the channels of communication, specifically pointing to the Rector's Council of which the student president is a member, and the College Council in which the student president and seven other students are members. They also were specifically very complimentary of their relationship with and assistance provided to them by the Office of International Relations. Finally, with regard to their positive comments, and we believe quite importantly, the student organization president specifically lauded the excellent channels of communication with the rector, stating that this official was the most efficient in responding to student requests.

With regard to students' stated concerns or areas in which they had limited information, they offered the following. They were not sure about the status or the extent of implementation of the new credit system, except that at the present time it was limited to new, incoming students. Secondly, they would request that classes be scheduled so that they ended early in the day, preferably by mid afternoon. An option, though less desirable, would be to experiment with block scheduling. In any event, the idea would be to allow for a more broad and comprehensive set of opportunities for complementary learning activities to replace the very heavy contact-hour load (28-30 hours per week), which consumes most of the students' time through each day. Some examples given by students of desired, enhanced learning opportunities included adequate study-time, time to prepare for exams, independent study, and ability to use the computing and library support. Overall, these changes would help round out a college education and improve student life.

The visiting team took special note that the number of weekly contact hours for students' academic schedule is significantly high. By way of comparison, the weekly student contact hour load is twice as high as in the U.S. Therefore, it is recommended that serious consideration be given to reducing the number of student weekly contact hours, with related positive results as described immediately above.

Additionally, the positive impact of reducing the number of in-class meeting hours would extend to teachers in various ways, as well. Reduction in the classroom teaching schedule would enable teachers to use the newly-found time for creative activities such as interacting more with students in informal ways; engaging in faculty development initiatives as well as research and professional activities associated with their disciplines; and allowing them to work toward improving their strategies for effective teaching and learning. In turn, the College could promote and support many of those activities through an emphasis on faculty development as part of the ongoing institutional improvement program. And so, what is proposed is not necessarily that the assigned workload be reduced—at least not in the near term—but that the College and its teachers facilitate a more creative and productive change in the way that the time is used.

Continuing with the student observations, they defined some barriers currently in existence, which inhibit their learning efforts. These included a lack of computing capacity, and even though there are plans to double that capacity it will still be inadequate given the current number of students and the projected increase of students. They also cited a problem with the early closing of the library, which occurs at the same time that classes end in the evening. They also noted the need for improved communications with students, generally by various college support units, explaining it often takes a long time to respond to student needs or inform them of any progress toward meeting those needs. One other concern, which they neither defined as a college problem or a situation that had a ready solution, was that there is a mass exodus by the students virtually every weekend as soon as classes end on Friday. Mostly, we were told, students simply go home for the weekend. It is not known whether there is a solution to this situation; perhaps this could be an area for proactive action on the part of the College, by creating activities that would lend themselves to social interaction and enhancement of learning that would entice students to remain on campus. A suggestion for the College to consider, which is common practice in U.S. colleges, is to deliberately schedule a no-class/no activity period—perhaps one afternoon during the week—to be used by students and teachers in their own creative ways.

Finally, the students had some concerns regarding their role in the area of student evaluation of teaching effectiveness. While they were asked to develop and implement the use of the student evaluation of instruction form, they have not been informed regarding the results or how the results of such evaluations are to be used. On this note, we believe it is important to suggest that the responsibility for conducting student evaluations of teaching effectiveness definitely is misplaced. We therefore recommend that the College needs to assume the responsibility of conducting student evaluation of teaching. The teaching professionals cannot be expected to take seriously an evaluation program initiated and conducted solely by students. On the other hand, if it is sponsored, implemented and valued by the College and its officials—and the protocol as well as the use of the product of the

effort is communicated—the chances of a successful implementation of the evaluation program are greatly improved.

In response to a request by College officials, a member of the visiting team provided a fully detailed and described model for the evaluation of teaching, which has been developed and implemented successfully at a comprehensive college in the U.S.A. The packet of information contained all forms, instructions, and actual completed evaluation documents. A copy of the table of contents of the model is appended to this report as an appendix. It is hoped that the information may be helpful to the College of Nyíregyháza in its efforts to develop its own evaluation program.

Student Mobility

The team noted with appreciation the efforts of the College toward development of student mobility. Within the framework of European Union projects Tempus, Socrates and Erasmus, about fifteen students visited the UK and five visited Portugal, Finland and Germany. The College is organizing successfully student exchanges and about five students from abroad have already visited the College, most likely attracted by its excellent facilities. About fifty students from Slovakia and Romania, whose mother language is Hungarian, study regularly at the College.

The “internal mobility,” in the sense of students choosing credits offered by other faculties than their own, and which would afford students the opportunity to select their study path more freely, is at present inhibited by the large number of direct contact lessons.

It is laudable that the College in the near future plans to organize courses in the English language, which would make student exchanges more attractive for students from abroad. This action would go a long way toward facilitating such student exchanges. The College also intends to organize intense courses of English for faculty members. This certainly should also contribute to the development of contacts with higher education institutions abroad.

At present there still exist two obstacles preventing more rapid and more intense development of the mobility of students and teachers. One is the persisting language barrier and the other is related to financial problems with traveling abroad. It is our recommendation that the College concentrate on student exchanges organized in such a way that expenses are covered by the host institution with a possible contribution by the family of the exchanged student. We also recommend that the College take steps toward harmonization of its credits with other institutions of higher education in Hungary, thus permitting student mobility within Hungarian institutions as a first step towards the increased mobility of students in the EU.

Quality Assurance

In addition to the targeted areas identified by the College, the team of advisors decided to offer some observations regarding the issue of quality assurance. First, we should begin by commending the College for its creativity and resourcefulness in being among the first and few Hungarian higher education institutions to take the initiative toward developing a quality management model. As well, it became

apparent that College leaders have acquired an excellent knowledge base of various total quality management programs, which facilitated their analysis of the applicability—or not—of those programs to the needs of the College. Secondly, a fair assumption would be that other colleges and universities will benefit from the work of the College leadership in this regard. Having said that, we now move to the matter of offering some constructive observations.

The College is in the beginning stages of developing its quality assurance program with funding secured from the Ministry of Education. As previously noted, Hungarian higher education institutions are under state mandate to develop quality management programs. Yet, assistance to institutions beyond mandating the requirement appears to be lacking. And so, the institution is at a point of needing to decide upon a viable approach to use for defining what is to be measured and how, what use will be made of the results, and how to develop an evaluation protocol at the end of each cyclical iteration.

College leaders are clear, in a general sense, regarding what they wish to assess. It was described as institutional/educational effectiveness. Regarding the actual conducting of the assessment, the institution is not at a point of conducting any measurements as yet. Thus, the Advisors' visit came at a very opportune time for offering suggestions to the College leadership.

The Visiting Advisors believe that the broad based approach to develop a quality assurance program, as was being considered, will not serve the College well. Indeed, a recommendation is that the program start by limiting its focus for two important reasons: to ensure the capacity for managing the process, and for ensuring a good measure of success. Specifically, it is recommended that the focus be on teaching and learning and that the process be tied ultimately to an overall plan for institutional effectiveness and the College's strategic plan. The rationale for suggesting that the narrow focus be on teaching and learning is related to the more urgent demands being placed on the institution for the allocation and use of its financial resources now and in the foreseeable future. That demand is the continued growth in student enrollments, with the concomitant, necessary response by the College for allocating resources to the teaching function. Indeed, it could be argued that virtually everything else at the College should be part of the larger support system for sustaining quality teaching and learning. In the future, and after the institutional effectiveness program is more fully developed, other components of the College operations could be added to the evaluation protocol.

College leaders specifically asked advisor team members for assistance with their efforts toward securing working models of institutional effectiveness programs and strategic plans. In response, a complete institutional effectiveness plan as well as a model strategic plan, both currently being used at the home institution of one of the advisors, was promised and is being delivered as an appendix to this report.

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 College, 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. We all agree that in the College of Nyíregyháza one sees a vibrant College that is deeply committed to implementing the necessary changes so that it will indeed become the intellectual center of the region and play an important role in its future development. The College has been quite successful in meeting its greatest challenge since its foundation—that of creating a common institutional culture as a result of the merger which created the College. The Rector has a clear vision for the future of the College, and it is clear that his goal to achieve unification as one college is shared by the administrative leadership. Continued cooperation and collaboration will be necessary, and the college will benefit from increased inclusiveness and participation by the many stakeholders at the College—vice rectors, deans, professors and students.

It is our hope that the suggestions and observations contained in this report will be useful as the College of Nyíregyháza 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 Rector Balogh and his colleagues—academic, administrative, interpreters—for their many kindnesses to us. We wish the leadership faculty, staff and students of the College of Nyíregyháza the very best in what we believe to be a promising future. We convey again our most favorable impressions of the College and its present directions.

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Leonardo de la Garza (team leader), USA

Dr. de la Garza is Chancellor of the Tarrant County College District, Fort Worth, Texas. Previously, he was President of the Santa Fe Community College, Santa Fe, New Mexico and the El Paso County Community College District, El Paso, Texas. In addition to his duties as Chancellor of the Tarrant County College District, Dr. de la Garza is adjunct professor of the University of North Texas Higher Education Program and the University of Texas at Austin's Community College Leadership Program. Dr. de la Garza was educated at Bee County College, Beeville, Texas, Saint Edward's University, Austin, and at the University of Texas at Austin, where he earned a Ph.D. in educational administration. He has conducted post-doctoral research in higher education management at Harvard University.



Jan Pisút, Slovakia

Professor Pisút is head of the Department of Physics Education in the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics at Comenius University, Bratislava. He was the minister of education, youth and sports from 1990 to 1992 and first deputy from 1989 to 1990. He coordinated the Tempus Project "Innovation of Teacher Training in Physics and Maths" at Comenius University and recently received the E. Mach Medal of the Czech Academy of Science. Professor Pisút holds a Ph.D. in physics from the Faculty of Natural Science, Comenius University.



Peggy Williams, USA

Peggy Williams assumed the presidency of Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York in 1997. She had been president of Lyndon State College in Lyndonville, Vermont for eight years, prior to which she held the positions of associate academic dean and chair of the business and economic department at Trinity College in Burlington, Vermont, where she was also associate professor. Dr. Williams earned a doctorate in administration, planning, and social policy from Harvard University.



Marty Gecek, USA

Marty Gecek is administrative director of the Salzburg Seminar's American Studies Center, in addition to serving as coordinator of the Universities Project Visiting Advisors Program. Currently she serves as president of the American Studies Network, a group of nineteen American Studies Centers located in West and Central Europe. A member of the Salzburg Seminar staff since 1966, she has held several positions including associate director for administration and personnel. Ms. Gecek earned a B.A. in sociology from Hollins University, Virginia.



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.

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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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