



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

BAKU STATE UNIVERSITY

BAKU, REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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INTRODUCTION

The first impression of Baku State University (BSU) is that of a very impressive campus located in the capital of Azerbaijan in a picturesque area on the Caspian Sea. The city of Baku has a population of more than two million in a Republic of well over seven million people. BSU is the leading institution of higher education in Azerbaijan, having been founded in 1919. Despite its relatively recent establishment, when compared with other famous universities, BSU has had a glorious history and it is now the most prestigious university in Azerbaijan. There were only 44 faculty members at the University in 1919, while today the total number of teachers is in excess of 1300. The University currently comprises sixteen faculties and enrolls 13,000 students

BSU is a forward-looking University striving with confidence to strengthen its position through internationalization. One of the strategies at BSU is the establishment of key international linkages with selected universities in countries throughout the world. Thus BSU cooperates with the Indiana University in the United States, the University of Genoa in Italy, the University of Nice in France, and the University of Yokohama in Japan. BSU is an active member of the Euro-Asian Association of Universities, the Caspian Sea Association of Universities, and the Black Sea Universities Network. Furthermore, the Rector of BSU, Professor Dr. Abel Maharramov, assumed the presidency of the Black Sea Universities Network this year.

The Visiting Advisors appreciated the privilege of visiting Baku State University, and are most grateful to the Rector and his team for their exceptional hospitality. BSU administration and staff were gracious hosts and did an exceptional job of making our visit as pleasant and productive as possible. The Advisors were hosted to delicious meals and a very impressive cultural program. We particularly appreciated the openness, candor and vigor that characterized every phase of the visit.

The shape of the mission involved seminar-type discussions, focused largely on the five main topics identified by the University: 1) university administration and finance, 2) academic structure and governance within the university, 3) technology in higher education, (4) student needs and the role of students in institutional affairs, and 5) the role of the University in the emerging civil society. In preparation for the visit, BSU conducted a self-study that brought forth the most crucial questions faced by the University. The Visiting Advisors carefully studied the self-assessment report along with other documents compiled by BSU. These materials provided valuable and critical background information for the visit.

The purpose of the visit was not to perform a formal evaluation of BSU but rather to share some observations and offer some suggested recommendations on the issues presented to our team. The Advisors relied on the available information, on the perspectives of the individuals they met and on their own familiarity with other systems of higher education. The team realizes fully that as outsiders who have spent only four full days in Baku they could not begin to understand all the complexities of the Azerbaijani society and its higher education system. This is even more the situation during this period of transition since liberation. Therefore, this report must be interpreted with this clear understanding. However, as outsiders, the Advisors bring distance and objectivity, along with personal and international experience, all attributes it is hoped will be of some value in reshaping the University.

UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Co-Chairs: Dr. Sabir Mehdiyev and Dr. Bernd Baumgartl

Introduction

BSU is the leading university in Azerbaijan, and as one of our BSU colleagues expressed it, as such the “wisest.” The vast majority (80%) of government officials are BSU graduates, including President Aliyev. In the words of the Deputy Minister of Education, who met the Visiting Advisors team briefly, BSU is “the brain and heart of Azerbaijan; it keeps the nation on an even keel and is a major force in its development.” The students who attend BSU (13,000 students: 7,000 free of tuition, 6,000 who pay) are the future elite of the country. Not surprisingly, several of the other existing universities in the country were developed with the assistance of BSU. These developments resulted in a situation in which BSU is still looked upon as the classical model for higher education institutions in the country. The university administration is a product of this history and deploys the traditional structure of classical European universities, with faculties, institutes and centres for research and teaching.

On 13 June 2000, a Presidential Decree on autonomy granted Baku State University formal independence to “solve all problems” by itself. The only exception is the national higher education strategy, which is decided jointly with the Minister of Education.

Governance and Finance

The two important administrative bodies at BSU are the High Academic Board and the Rector’s Special Council. The High Academic Board is the major decision-making body and is made up of 80 members, presided over by the Rector. Included are all Vice Rectors, all Deans, the Chief of Personnel, Heads of Section, etc. This Council elects heads of departments, approves scientific reports, and considers all-important academic matters affecting the University. It holds regular monthly sessions. The Rector’s Special Council (which also includes the chief of the students’ union), advises the Rector on all-important issues. Deans as heads of faculties are elected by all employees (teachers and staff) of a Faculty, and confirmed by the Rector for a four-year term. The Dean is the head of the Scientific Board of a Faculty; this Board runs all affairs between sessions of the Council.

As everywhere in the former Soviet Union, BSU was a full state University until 1991 and as such was financed totally by the state. Independence brought a transition to market conditions for the country, a change that included a special University financial account for revenues and expenditures. This special budget is supported mainly by tuition fees (actually these were fictional for the first four years, the result of the difficult situation during the Civil War). In 1994, 90% of the tuition was provided by the state and the remainder was supported by students. Now, in 2002, about 33% of the University’s funds are state supported and 66% stems from the BSU special

budget. BSU is to be highly commended for the fact that, through tuition and other revenue sources, it has been able to provide two-thirds of its needed revenue. It was clear to the Visiting Advisors that the current Rector deserves much of this praise.

Student admission is regulated via a system of examinations administered by a state student admissions committee. It is on the basis of these examination results that the determination is made as to who attends BSU tuition-free and who may be admitted on a fee-paying basis. For example, in its admissions plan the University (Academic Board) decides that in a certain discipline 100 students will be accepted. The 50 students ranked highest will receive free tuition, the second 50 are accepted but will be required to pay full tuition (the level of which is set by the University and varies by discipline). Unfortunately, no student loan system is currently available, an important fact given that the tuition fee is between 200 and 1100 USD/year (for comparison, the average salary in Azerbaijan, according to a World Bank study, was 510 USD/year in 1995). For a number of students, these tuition fees are a genuine hardship.

Both the state and special account budgets are carefully monitored and audited by the state (now only the Ministry of Finance – before autonomy was granted fully in May 2001 the Ministry of Education was also involved). For every financial year, the University prepares a budget (both for the state and special budgets), and presents it to the Ministry of Finance. The major part of state budget is salaries and grants (95%) along with communal expenses, but these funds cover less than one-half of BSU expenses. The rest of the annual budget is derived from the special budget (e.g. the state's share of electrical power costs covers only one month). Understandably, the interest of University is eventually to have full control over both budgets.

Budgets

For 2001, a 17 billion Manat budget had been estimated as revenue (mainly tuition), and the actual budget figures are given in the table below:

BSU state budget – expenses in 2001

?	Position	Amount (manat)	Percentage
1	Wages	4 811 942 400	59,41 %
2	Acquisitions	20 000 000	0,24 %
3	Trip expenditures	-	-
4	Community expenditures	165 000 000	2 %
5	Current repair expenditures	-	-
6	Other current expenditures	113 000 000	1,4 %
7	Capital refurbishment	20 000 000	0,24 %
8	Fuel expenditures	8 999 200	0,1 %
9	Telecommunication expenditures	54 999 600	0,7 %
10	Construction	300 000 000	3,7 %
11	Tax	1 425 028 600	17,6 %

1	Scholarships	1 240 000 000	15,3 %
2			
	TOTAL	~ 8 100 000 000	100 %

BSU special account – expenses in 2001

<u>?</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Amount (manat)</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	Wages	7 735 864 500	57,1 %
2	Acquisitions	1 684 632 900	12,43 %
3	Trip expenditures	73 803 900	0,54 %
4	Community expenditures	241 039 000	1,8 %
5	Current repair expenditures	204 277 200	1,5 %
6	Other current expenditures	188 881 500	1,4 %
7	Capital refurbishment	783 695 200	5,8 %
8	Fuel + spare parts expenditures	45 343 700	0,33 %
9	Telecommunication expenditures	20 896 000	0,15 %
10	Construction	189 268 700	1,4 %
11	Tax	2 379 033 700	17,6 %
	TOTAL	13 546 736 300	100 %

1 USD = approximately 4,900 manats.

Table 1 is decided by the State (Ministry of Finance) based on the University draft, with fixed budget positions that are not directly based on the number of students.

Table 2 is proposed by the University, and usually confirmed by the Ministry. At present, it is fortunate that these two budget sources are not "communicating recipients" (meaning that a higher revenue for the special account does not automatically mean a cut in the state budget). It is important that there be no disincentives to fund-raising on the part of the University.

Apart from tuition fees, the remainder of the special budget account (around 5%) is derived from international projects and grants (e.g. Tacis), infrequent philanthropy and sponsorship, commercial agreements (contract research - 3%), and donations. Capital construction work is at present covered by the state construction budget but there is increasing concern that this practice may be discontinued.

Since 1991, efforts have been made to obtain foreign support. The degree of success is shown in the following table:

Japan: language laboratory	500,000 USD
UNESCO: TV studio and cabling	050,000 USD
Tempus-Tacis: University Management and Personnel	300,000 EUR

Tempus-Tacis:	600,000 EUR
US State Department, Indiana University: American Studies Centre	300,000 USD
NATO: School for Applied Mathematics	050,000 USD

The cost of tuition in the various disciplines and professional programs is closely related to the potential lifetime income streams of graduates of the program (physics, ironically, is more expensive than law). Commercially viable professional and related programs of study thus subsidize academic fields that provide lower future lifetime income streams. The collection of tuition fees is complicated. For many students raising the necessary funds is extremely difficult and stressful. It is quite common for the Rector, at his weekly reception day, to be greeted by large numbers of second and third year students seeking deferrals on their tuition fees. Several overtures have been made to the state to have a program of student loans available to students in need. Such programs of grants and loans are relatively common in many systems of higher education throughout the world. At present such a scheme is available only from the Bank of Baku and on prohibitive commercial terms. The issue of creating a loan fund was raised with the World Bank representatives several times but to date there has been no positive response.

On top of the difficulties associated with revenue creation, substantial taxes and state pension contributions have to be paid by the University to the state from its budget (18% tax on tuition fees, 29% for state pensions), so a substantial amount of revenue has to be delivered back to the state. But, unlike in Austria, at least tuition goes to the University directly and not to the Ministry of Finance.

As far as new additional sources of income are concerned, opportunities are presently limited. Culturally, in Azerbaijan there is no tradition of charitable giving, a potential source of support that will have to be cultivated. The petroleum industry has no Azerbaijani tradition of providing support to higher education, a situation that is certainly not true in other parts of the world (e.g. North America). However, foreign companies do occasionally provide scholarships or tuition for in-service training or professional development. This is clearly an area for further consideration by both the state and the higher education system

Observations

In the ten years following independence the University has definitely achieved a great deal. Despite a difficult environment, it has not only managed to survive academically but has also maintained impressive campus facilities, many of which are in excellent condition. Using a step-by-step approach to reform, BSU has managed to avoid sudden disruptions and drastic changes. It has maintained the previous network of CIS universities and is actively

working to enhance these traditional links. Integration with Western Europe has been identified as a positive and important strategy option for BSU.

It is remarkable and extremely positive that BSU is both a member and active influence in three important higher education networks; namely, the Eurasia, Black Sea (where the Rector of BSU now holds the Presidency), and Caspian networks. It may be worthwhile for BSU to consider the possibility and benefits of membership in the European Universities Association (EUA). Clearly the University is interested in an international reputation beyond its own nation and region.

The Advisors were pleased to see that efforts are being made to develop partnerships with stakeholders outside the University. It is commonly accepted that universities throughout the world will be increasingly required to develop these external relationships in order to supplement declining resources. The modest but important agreement with Pepsi Cola for the mensa, and the occasional scholarships provided by foreign companies for continuing training courses are examples of many possible future initiatives to be undertaken by BSU.

At present there does not appear to be an on-going and systematic long-term planning process within the University. Current planning appears to be primarily reactive and defined by the resources available. Comparison with other universities is an important part of the planning process if BSU is to achieve its goal of being a world leader in higher education. The mission of a University needs to be articulated and accepted, followed by regular planning exercises (often to cover a particular term; e.g. five years). To assist with University planning, BSU now has an international grants office and an office to initiate international agreements. However, there is as yet no administrative unit responsible for development or enhancement (an office which would also deal with fund-raising).

Personnel

In the area of personnel matters, the Advisors observed that few women held senior administrative positions within the University nor did they appear to play any major roles on the important governing bodies. Throughout Europe and North America the trend is for much greater involvement of women faculty, staff and female students in the operation of universities. Given its eminent position in the country, BSU should consider what its leadership role should be as it relates to gender issues in Azerbaijan.

On another personnel matter, the Advisors noted that senior administrators at BSU have demanding teaching loads. As universities become more autonomous and have increasing responsibilities outside the university, the workload for administrators is increased. Consequently, teaching loads need to be reduced and in some instances additional administrative help needs to be provided. In Russia and in Western Europe, workloads are usually reduced by 50% and 33% for Vice-rectors and Deans respectively; in North America, administrators are often freed entirely from any teaching assignments in order

to improve effectiveness in administration and management. Training courses are often developed as a means of assisting academics that take on management positions. In Europe, teams of colleagues from other universities often provide at least some of such courses.

With respect to the student body, our contact was limited but most impressive. The special session that the Advisory Team had was most satisfying. Students were proud of their university, open-minded, interested and keen to be seen as an essential part of BSU. At present, they have representation on important university bodies and they have a limited weekly opportunity to be in contact with the rector. Students are what the future of Azerbaijan is all about and it is important to engage their contributions as much as possible and as early as possible. The same can be said for the graduates of BSU, a very distinguished group.

The Advisors were encouraged by the changes being undertaken in the area of student examinations. The concept of continuous assessment, of contributions other than a single final examination, and a reduction in the reliance on exam-based assessments are all sound pedagogically.

Recommendations

The financing of higher education is universally difficult, especially in times of fiscal restraint. However, the specific conditions of post-Soviet education institutions surpass such “usual” budget constraints and difficulties. Under these adverse conditions, the success of BSU in maintaining and expanding its material base, infrastructure and investment in research and teaching is applauded by the Advisors’ Team. The Advisors also recognize fully that many attempts have been made to identify other budget sources and that positive results have been achieved. However, it is the Team’s view that further attempts are necessary. Such initiatives must be carefully planned and structured if they are to be successful.

Financial needs invariably change during the course of a year and a more effective and efficient financial management system would allow locally determined internal transfers. Such shifts of internal resources should be accompanied by a well developed reporting and post-audit system, thereby ensuring greater accountability. Many European and most American governments long ago gave up external controls and instead instituted evaluations, ex-post audits and internal financial controls. In addition, such systems would signal a greater sense of local responsibility for financial management and self-government. Moreover, the general trend of reduced governmental funding as a proportion of all University funding is clearly a worldwide phenomenon. Universities around the world are increasing their efforts to raise non-governmental resources.

One of the most important drivers of efficiencies in universities is the existence of reasonable incentives to seek alternative sources of funding. Another enabling driver is the flexibility needed to experiment and to make changes without undue external constraints. In terms of incentives to seek

additional non-governmental funds, a fundamental principle is that the additional effort to raise these funds is “rewarded” rather than “punished.” That is to say, if Universities raise extra funds only to see these funds substituted for previous government funding, then the incentive to continue or expand these efforts is substantially reduced. Some governments even provide positive incentives by matching certain categories of such fund-raising.

The financial accounting and reporting systems at BSU should be shared widely with all University stakeholders in order to allow these groups to understand and have confidence in the financial management of the university. It would also allow such stakeholders to understand better the institution’s funding needs. Thus the Advisors team recommends greater transparency and sharing of financial information, which seems to be a common concern in all Russian universities as well. It seems to be the nature of most organizations to withhold financial information. But if the University is to cultivate greater confidence among its stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, it is very important that financial information be widely shared as well as presented. Further, it needs to be explained in terms that are easily understood. This practice should be offered to both external and internal constituents.

Moreover, horizontal integration with other Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the region may bring substantial benefits to all. There are other such institutions in Azerbaijan, namely in medicine, agriculture, technology, petroleum, culture, etc. Co-operation and liaison among them may benefit their curricula, enhance the development of the infrastructure (libraries etc.) and enhance many other important higher educational functions and activities. It may also increase the range of students’ choice of academic programs and thus give them opportunities to build individual and personalized academic careers. One HEI may also outsource some its activities to be performed by another HEI in order to achieve cost savings. It is not uncommon in several countries that different universities in the same region share faculty time and certain administrative functions (e.g. purchasing).

In the minds of the Visiting Advisors team the key issues relating to administration and finance are:

- the University’s autonomy in making principal budget decisions (vis-à-vis the Ministry of Finance),
- the University’s discretion on budget allocations (pre-defined or local option),
- the link between the budget process and the University’s overall planning strategy (rationally the strategy comes first),
- the degree of decentralization within the University (how far budgetary power is decentralised) and
- the identification of additional and diversified sources of income.

This leads to the following recommendations:

- Drawing on international practice, the Advisors strongly recommend that BSU seek to achieve budget autonomy as it is understood in many

European and most North American universities. This will obviously involve political discussions with the Ministry of Finance and the lobbying of other elected officials. The goal is to have a single lump-sum budget controlled entirely by the University.

- The University should continue to seek creative solutions to the important problems currently faced.
- Strategic planning has become an imperative if universities are to be successful in the 21st century. Such planning should be taken very seriously, be on-going in nature, and begin with a carefully crafted statement of mission for BSU, including the objectives related to teaching and learning, research activities, and broader service to the outside community.
- Support for the University must be understood more broadly as a concept that includes a variety of resources and capital (not only financial support and not restricted to government). Every possible opportunity must be explored with the view to enhancing co-operation, exchanges, information technology, partnerships with government and the private sector.
- New and diversified revenue sources need to be explored (e.g. fees for PC use, charging for services to the outside community, publicity from radio and TV programs run by BSU, intellectual property agreements, sponsorships, expert consultant work, enhanced retraining courses, housing, food services, programs to develop more small enterprises, make more campus services self-supporting, recruit more international students, initiate an alumni association, etc.)
- University fundraising from external sources, while limited in scope in Azerbaijan, is worthy of serious consideration. Every effort should be made to explore further international sources of support as well as consider ways in which financial support can be gained within the country itself. Clearly the government of Azerbaijan benefits in a big way from BSU graduates, as does the private sector. Its support can be rightfully expected.
- An important part of the strategic planning process is the need to identify, in priority order, the investment decisions that must be made. As in all universities, some areas of development and enhancement are more important than others and must be supported first. Trying to make advances on all fronts at the same time is a futile exercise that will result in a lack of overall success.
- Hand in hand with the need for greater university autonomy is the need for greater decentralization within the University. As a general rule within educational institutions, decisions should be taken at a level as close as possible to where implementation takes place. Often this has led to surprising savings. It means that authority and responsibility are

also delegated within the University, along with important budgetary authority.

- While commented on in detail elsewhere in this report, an important source of potential savings has to do with the present cost of BSU Internet services. This could very likely be achieved by having BSU becoming a free educational provider on its own, or alternatively connect for Internet services via a backbone to one of the Austrian or Turkish universities.
 - Managing scarce resources and identifying new resources is becoming a heavy burden for university administrators and managers, activities that are all time-consuming. At the same time, such activities require specific skills that are not typically part of the educational preparation of academics. Thus thought should be given to their professional administrative development and their roles in fundraising. Such initiatives have resulted in substantial gains for many universities in Europe and North America.
 - The system of sensitive reward and incentives for faculty and staff should be expanded. If the University leadership restricts its aims only to increased budget effectiveness, it will very likely encounter difficulties in achieving its goals. If each university member (faculty, staff and students) is motivated to think about a better use of a bigger budget, the results are likely to be manifold. The increasing use of performance indicators has been of considerable benefit to universities that have taken such an initiative seriously.
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* Examples of mission statements of Higher Education institutions in Europe and North America are attached in the Annex

GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

Co-Chairs: Dr. Ibad Ibadov and Dr. Alfred Ebenbauer

Introduction

Not all of the issues suggested in the Self Assessment Report could be discussed during this session and not all belong strictly to the topic of “Academic Structure and Governance” within the University. However it can be stated with assurance that BSU has done a remarkable job of ensuring that its program of higher education continued without major disruption following the break-up of the Soviet Union. Under the circumstances in the early 1990’s, this was no mean achievement. BSU succeeded in preserving the best of its former traditions in its educational programs. It is significant that BSU achieved formal and academic authority from the Ministry of Education in 2001 and became the academic and scientific centre of the country, a centre “where Azerbaijan’s social mind is formed.” This is an achievement that bodes well for the institution as conditions in Azerbaijan continue to improve.

In the structural sense BSU has made some important changes. As noted elsewhere, the University has maintained, indeed strengthened, its external network affiliations with three important higher education associations. With a view to possible future membership in the European Universities Association, BSU has tried intensively to integrate its education in the wider context of European education. BSU is interested in a credit system, compatible with the one in the European Union or the USA and did introduce two-step academic degrees (Bachelors and Masters) in 1993, thus anticipating the Bologna process in Europe. The Visiting Advisors are supportive of these efforts to expand the horizon of BSU in the European context. Hopefully, that linkage will occur in the near future, followed by initiatives that will enhance the University's ties to North America and Asia.

Good progress has been observed in providing a university cultural environment in which democracy is at work. Faculty and students to whom we spoke are extremely proud to be associated with BSU. The environment is characterized by flexibility and is inclusive in nature. Students are represented on important University decision-making bodies and opportunities are provided regularly for them to meet with the Rector if they wish. However, if BSU is to reach the potential envisioned, it will only be able to do so if it can enlist the unqualified support of faculty, staff and students. These three groups of personnel constitute the most valuable assets of BSU. Efforts need to be continued to ensure that all university stakeholders see themselves as playing a significant role in the future growth of the University.

Other significant changes since independence include a new office of international education and co-operation. The effectiveness of this body will have much to do with the success of BSU in developing the important external linkages, academic and otherwise. Other evidence of the University's desire to become better recognized on the international scene has been the proposed introduction of Japanese and Chinese language programs. These are in addition to the traditional offerings in Azeri, Russian and English. As BSU continues to develop academically, there will no doubt be the need to include other foreign languages. The addition of the American Studies Centre should be of assistance in becoming better known in the United States, in providing a greater awareness of new funding opportunities, and in improving the opportunities for BSU students to study abroad. There are other nations that have similar types of program that should be considered (e.g. Canada, Germany).

Of interest to those of us who are from elsewhere is the apparent lack of input from the external community that BSU serves. In order to continue to be supported a University must be perceived to be serving society's needs in the broadest sense. In many European and North American universities governing boards or a variety of other advisory groups provide this important linkage. These bodies help to ensure that the autonomy of the University is protected through the provision of a buffer among the University, the government and the broader community. This form of organizational structure is no doubt foreign to universities in Azerbaijan but is worthy of consideration

in enhancing the goal of making BSU an important international University. Contact outside the University is important.

The efforts to make higher education available to all segments of Azerbaijan society are commendable but it is not yet clear how successful these important democratic initiatives have been. No doubt there are a number of able students for whom the ability to pay tuition prevents their enrolment in the university system. The introduction of the common entrance examination does give all students in the country an equal opportunity to enter the university system. However, such a highly selective single examination also has a number of well-known deficiencies that are often accommodated elsewhere by using additional criteria (high school grades, writing ability, etc.), thus providing a more complete picture on which to make the admission decision.

As noted above, financing one's own education in Azerbaijan is made more difficult because there is no government-supported system of grants and loans. The eventual goal should be that anyone who is qualified for admission to university should be provided access, regardless of ability to pay. Failure to aspire to such a goal will result in a nation that fails to make full use of its "human capital" - at a time in world history when intellectual development and ideas are the currency of the day. Educating the young, and increasingly the not so young, is the surest way to ensure the future social and economic health of Azerbaijan. Serious efforts should be made by the universities collectively to ensure a change in public policy as it relates to financial assistance for needy students. The failure to educate a qualified student is a life wasted.

The students that we met were extremely proud of their university and of their own achievements. They were articulate about their aspirations and the need for further university education. Many expressed an interest in study abroad, a possibility that could be met in part by the introduction of more exchange programs with universities on a worldwide basis. Such programs would also provide opportunities for faculty exchanges. Students appeared to be satisfied with their learning environment, except for inadequacies in library and Internet access.

On the faculty side, BSU has the same experience as many universities in the world; namely an ageing professoriate. The University has a total of 168 full professors, 114 of whom are over 60 years of age and 39 are more than 70 years old. The teaching staff as a whole comprises 1304 members, 423 of whom are more than 60 years and 1056 more than 50 years old. On a worldwide basis there will shortly be a critical shortage of university professors (e.g. Canada will need in excess of 30,000 professors in the next decade; this on a current professorial base of 37,000). Serious initiatives will have to be considered by BSU to ensure the rejuvenation of its teaching personnel. However, it is worth noting that BSU has a low faculty-student ratio (1304 faculty for 13,000 students, about 10:1); in North America the ratio is in excess of 20:1.

One observation, noted in part elsewhere, has to do with the gender balance at BSU. Universities have a responsibility to be on the leading edge of important social movements. One such movement today is the universal effort to ensure equal rights for women and men. The Advisors saw virtually no women in their contacts on campus or at social events. Consideration should be given to the creation of more opportunities for women in teaching and higher administration. The University, as a mirror and forerunner of important social movements, should push the advancement of women in key positions. In an initial phase some affirmative action may be necessary in order to start such development in order to achieve a higher percentage of female administrators, managers and leaders.

The Advisors commend the University for its current compensation policy as it relates to faculty. Providing a base salary that can be complemented with a bonus based on performance is sound practice. Such incentives are fundamental to improved performance, higher motivation and overall excellence.

Organizational Structure

A review of the organizational chart of the University suggests that it is flexible and democratic in the sense that it performs all the important tasks of a modern University and it makes provision for student representation on important university boards. The position of the Rector appears to be one of considerable power and authority. However, the strength of that position is ascribed in the sense that the Rector can only act on the authority of the Academic Board. Unlike most constituencies with which the Advisors are familiar, Azerbaijan has no statute in the area of higher education. Consequently, the position of Rector is filled through appointment by the president of the republic. It is the hope of the Advisors that new higher education legislation will soon be enacted, including provision for the election of the Rector by university personnel.

The academic governance of BSU is conducted by the Academic Board (Senate), comprised of 80 members under the chairmanship of the Rector. Two student representatives sit on this board. Its responsibilities are many and include the following:

- (a) Important issues related to development, directions for education and research activity, and international relations
- (b) Approves all decrees, instructions and important University documents
- (c) Approves the enrolment plans, annual budget, academic appointments, and appointment of chairs
- (d) Determines the organizational structure of BSU

The Advisors have questions about the ability of a body this size to deal with the important issues of a modern University in an adequate manner. This is obviously a question that only the Board and the Rector can answer but it is an issue worth considering.

The Rector's Council is a smaller body that advises the Rector on administrative matters. Included in its composition is a representative from the student body and the head of the student union. A possible review of the functions of the Academic Board could result in a transfer of some of its responsibilities to the Rector's Council. In any case, the Advisors suggest that the Rector's Council could assume responsibilities over and above strict administrative matters.

As noted earlier, BSU has no formal means of receiving advice from the external community. The Advisors are of the view that the University should consider the creation of an appropriate Outreach Advisory Council (a concept known as a Board of Trustees or a Board of Governors in other countries). Such a body could strengthen relations with the outside world. The functions of such boards in other countries are:

- Accountability for the spending of public funds
- Strengthening links with the outside world
- Appointing the Rector
- Assume decision-making powers of the Minister of Education
- Identifying and attracting resources
- Providing new ideas and opportunities for the University
- Working with the alumni association, the private sector and the civil society
- Assist with fund-raising
- Helping to establish science parks (elaborated elsewhere)
- Finding incubators

Such a body could assist in the quest of BSU for greater financial autonomy, serving as a buffer between the Ministry of Finance and the University. Such a board could also serve a very useful function in the BSU search for greater recognition internationally.

Another suggestion that could be of benefit is the establishment of an Alumni Association. The graduates of any University are among an institution's strongest assets. In the case of BSU this is especially true, given the role that BSU graduates play in government. Alumni can be a source of financial support through annual giving, one time only donations, and bequests. They can also be of help in student recruiting and in job placement. It is important to be in regular communication with the alumni of the University.

The "central units" of BSU are the Departments, which altogether are part of the "Department of Education" and which are the responsibility of the First Vice-Rector. Included are:

- Mechanics - Mathematics
- Oriental Studies
- Physics
- Chemistry

- Biology
- Law
- Philology
- International Law and International Relations
- History
- Applied Mathematics and Cybernetics
- Library Studies and Information
- Journalism
- Social Sciences and Psychology
- Theology
- Geography
- Geology

These “Departments” consist of 115 chairs (“Cathedra”). The relationship between Departments and Chairs (“who reports to whom”) would have been an interesting and relevant question, but time did not permit a discussion of this topic. It is important to note that the appointment of chairs is through an open competition and that the Academic Board determines its decision through a secret ballot. This procedure and the appointment of faculty members ensures that there is no influence from outside the University.

In addition to the traditional disciplines and professional programs associated with a classical University, BSU has established a number of successful other units. For example, the Department of International Law and International Relations and the American Studies Centre are both important additions to the program offerings of BSU. These interdisciplinary initiatives will do much to ensure that the importance of BSU becomes more widely recognized throughout the academic world. BSU should explore the opportunities that exist for the creation of more such interdisciplinary offerings.

The School of Heydar Aliyev, which concentrates on external policy, ethical concepts and other relevant questions for the society plays an important role within BSU as well. It serves as a forum for discussing central questions relevant to the future welfare and direction of the country. Such a school is of significant importance to government and its development of public policy. Students are participants in the activities of the school; this is of special importance because these young people are the future leaders of Azerbaijan.

The Department of Journalism is of significance to BSU. It serves as a very significant means of communication with the external community and is an important source of human resources for the media world. Graduates of this program are and will continue to be in a position to influence public opinion about higher education and the need for it to be adequately supported. As well, the Faculty plays a significant role within the University by providing information to faculty, staff and students about activities taking place on campus. Opportunities may also exist for raising revenue for the University through the television and radio station.

An institute for the professional development of elementary and secondary teachers existed in Soviet times but is no longer in operation. Keeping school teachers current in their respective teaching fields is important and properly the responsibility of the University. A part of BSU of high profile should be the enhancement of the unit responsible for continuing education and the upgrading of the knowledge base of teachers could be one of its activities. Continuing education (night school and distance education, etc.) has become almost as important as the regular University program in many North American universities. This is also an ever-increasingly important source of revenue.

Research Activities

Great universities are known for two things: the quality of their graduates and the value of their research. Research at BSU is organizationally separate from the teaching function and is the direct responsibility of the Vice-rector of science. At present there are 31 research laboratories, 3 scientific-practical centers and one research institute (the Scientific Research Institute of Applied Mathematics). Research activities are focused on (a) the development of basic and applied research, and (b) the professional development of graduate students and faculty.

It is evident that funding for research at BSU is a problem. The collapse of the traditional university-industrial liaisons of the Soviet period has left universities of the former Soviet Union in extremely difficult circumstances. Every effort needs to be made to revitalize the links with government agencies and the private sector in order to restore research support. Efforts should also be made to convince the government of Azerbaijan of the importance of federal research granting councils (in three areas; namely, humanities, science and engineering and health sciences) to administer peer-reviewed research proposals.

Another aspect of research at BSU that should be reviewed has to do with the relationship between the University's teaching and research programs. Traditionally, the Soviet model of higher education separated these two functions when in fact they are actually a continuum. In other words "I teach what I know and I know the field in which I do my research". BSU would probably benefit from a serious discussion of this matter. In today's University these two major purposes of this type of education cannot be separated.

Conditions for Study

The educational program offered at BSU is highly selective and takes place both on and off campus. Bachelor's programs are offered in 48 specialties and master's offerings are available in 143 fields. The majority of BSU graduates are employed by other higher education state institutions.

The Advisors perceive a need to encourage more BSU graduates to consider establishing their own businesses when their University education is complete. The economy of Azerbaijan must be rejuvenated and this can only

happen if the market economy is promoted. It is also important that graduate students complete their dissertation research and complete its defense in a timely fashion. Not only are they failing to contribute to the economy; they are using University resources inappropriately.

It is of interest to note that the administration of a number of different BSU programs are conducted by bodies other than the University itself. For example, admission to BA programs is administered by the State Student Admission Commission (SSAC); the administration of the MA Program's examination procedures is conducted by the Azerbaijan Ministry of Education; the degree of "Candidate of Sciences" (in connection with the aspirantura and disserantura) is awarded by the Higher Attestation Committee (HAC); the degree of "Doctor of Sciences" is also awarded by the Higher Attestation Committee (HAC). At BSU there are 5 specialized Academic Boards for candidate and doctoral dissertation defenses but overall the responsibility for all kinds of terminal examinations is highly centralized, governmental in nature and outside the control of the University itself. These practices should be reviewed to determine whether or not the autonomy of the University is being compromised. In most countries, the admission of students and the awarding of degrees is properly the exclusive domain of the University itself.

Enhanced autonomy would allow the University the flexibility needed in the 21st century. Greater flexibility in curriculum development, increased use of technology for instructional purposes, more in the way of interdisciplinary programs, and more interactive learning would all be possible if the University had greater freedom to set its own direction.

Finally, as noted elsewhere, BSU should consider seriously the establishment of a "Development Office" or an "Office of University Advancement." This could be part of an overall long-term planning process that defines the mission of BSU and the strategies needed to achieve its goals. Such a process must be ongoing.

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Co-chairs: Dr. Izzet Rustamov and Dr. Canan Cilingir

Introduction

BSU, being one of the leading institutions in Azerbaijan, has the opportunity and also the responsibility to set an important example for other institutions of higher education. Innovative ideas in the fields of information transfer and technology stemming from BSU also have considerable likelihood of being followed both by the state and the private sector. In this respect BSU needs to play an active role in creation of the new information society which will provide a competitive advantage to all institutions of Azerbaijan and help the efforts toward the internationalization of BSU. The natural prerequisite of this development is the establishment of a high-speed and reliable communication infrastructure.

The team was impressed with the motivation and efforts of academic and administrative staff toward the establishment of better ITC infrastructure within the campus. Although the Internet connections and the use of computers have been substantially upgraded since the appointment of the current rector and on-campus fiber-optic cabling is almost completed, there are still some significant problems associated with the speed and capacity of connections. A strong ITC infrastructure is a prerequisite to achieving the aims of BSU; namely, towards enhancing its international reputation and links. BSU has established the present ITC infrastructure through the support of important international funds (Japanese, US-American, UNESCO, NATO), but still there is a considerable need for further investment. In an attempt to improve computer usage and ICT proficiency, BSU is providing computer courses for all students during first and second year of the undergraduate programs (18 hours lecture and 54 hours laboratory). It is inevitable that this will increase the demand for higher quality and much faster Internet services.

Computer Availability

Presently, the University is able to provide one computer for every 70 students enrolled. This disproportionately high ratio is a significant deterrent to the effective use of computers as a component part of departmental academic curricula. Students at BSU will continue to be at a disadvantage unless this deficiency is rectified as soon as possible

The use of computers and automation in the internal and administrative activities of BSU is very limited. To date only the payroll system of the University is computerized while other administrative functions are performed using the traditional manual systems. The strengthening of ITC infrastructure will create important opportunities for improvement of other administrative functions, such as: budget, human resource management, library management, personnel, etc. The introduction of such automated functions will be very cost-effective for BSU.

The University library has a substantial collection of books, but the number of international journals is insufficient for a world-class university. Furthermore, there is only limited access to electronic journals. The international practice makes it clear that it is possible to access several thousand electronic journals for the cost of few hundred printed ones, provided that necessary Internet capacity is available. Again, the effective use of technology will result in better journal availability at a lower cost once the administrative support is provided.

External Communication

In an effort to disseminate information more broadly, BSU has recently established a radio and television studio. In addition to contributing to the enlightenment of the general public, this studio and its needed programming provides a wonderful opportunity for BSU students. It serves as the laboratory for those who wish to pursue opportunities in journalism, media, writing, etc.

Contract research is an essential requirement to the enhancement of university-industry relations. While currently conducted to a limited degree at BSU, the Visiting Advisors were greatly interested to observe that BSU has the capacity and possibility of developing new technologies (e.g. ozone

purification for water). In a university such as BSU that has important competencies in the basic and applied sciences, there are likely many such ideas that could lead to establishment of spin-off companies in the private sector. However, BSU presently lacks the needed infrastructure and organization for the development of such new ventures. The possibility of establishing a science/research park was discussed and evidenced some interest among the BSU leaders to whom the team members spoke.

BSU has a potential to provide professional development programs for the adult employees in public and private sector enterprises. As well, the University should be providing assistance to previous BSU graduates in their efforts to renew intellectual skills through short training programs. It is well known that many outstanding universities enhance the intellectual development of their communities through continuing education (life long learning) courses. BSU's academic structure is well suited to organize such programs in the fields of languages, computer literacy, business administration, management, law, applied mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc. Up to now this potential has not been utilized effectively. In many universities throughout the world, life-long educational programs have become the dominant university activity.

Recommendations

The Visiting Advisors are of the opinion that BSU, being the leading university in Azerbaijan, must assume the important responsibility in enhancing the technological development of the state and in setting an example for all educational institutions. The creation of a democracy and the fostering of democratic citizens are very crucial responsibilities of universities. The strong ties established between BSU and the Azerbaijani government may facilitate the implementation of creative proposals in these fields.

It is imperative that highest priority be given to the strengthening of the Internet system. As is the practice in many other countries, the Ministry of Communication of Azerbaijan should initiate the legislative action needed to provide low cost Internet services for educational institutions. Increasing the existing connection speed from 64KB to at least 1 MB should be considered as a minimum short-term improvement provided it can be made available at a reasonable cost. Once the necessary permissions are granted BSU has the technical know-how and the capacity to implement these. At present the price quoted to BSU for 1MB speed is among the highest on the international scene. It might be possible to negotiate with AZRENA (national service provider) to establish low cost alternatives.

There are several bilateral agreements between Azerbaijan and Turkey covering communication infrastructure. These agreements may not yet be fully utilized. A dialogue with AZRENA may lead to new venues. For example: Turkish universities are using the free Internet services provided by ULAKBIM (which is fully financed by the Scientific and Research Council of Turkey), which is also connected to GEANT (European research network). AZRENA and ULAKBIM may be willing to share the existing infrastructure at a relatively

low cost to Azerbaijan or to BSU. A Strong ICT infrastructure is the main component for establishing an electronic-university and BSU needs to use all the national and international channels to achieve this.

The University administration is rightfully concerned about the lack of employment opportunities for its graduates. In an environment where economic development is incomplete, many individuals look at the state as the major provider of employment. However, recent political changes in Azerbaijan mean that new generations must be encouraged to create jobs for themselves and others, rather than be dependent on government. This will undoubtedly require a mental shift in a society where entrepreneurship is not a part of the culture. Being the leading academic institution in many fields, BSU has an opportunity to help to trigger such a change. The international experience indicates that university science/research parks (techno-parks) have great potential to provide opportunities for young entrepreneurs. BSU has a potential to develop new technologies but these ideas have not been commercialized. Existence of a science park will provide a means of commercializing the results of academic research and to use University infrastructure for technological development. It will also create employment opportunities for graduates and alumni.

The establishment of a science park in BSU could do two things. On the one hand, it could strengthen university-industry relations and reinforce the development and transfer of knowledge to society at large; on the other hand, it could provide an opportunity to generate new sources of income to the university. A project proposal to set up a science park and a business incubator may attract the support of the World Bank and the Ministry of Industry, given that they would help the development of small enterprises. IASP (International Association of Science Parks) defines the science parks/techno-parks as follows: *'A Science Park is an organization managed by specialized professionals, whose main aim is to increase the wealth of its community by promoting the culture of innovation and the competitiveness of its associated businesses and knowledge-based institutions.'*

To enable these goals to be met, a science park stimulates and manages the flow of knowledge and technology amongst universities, R&D institutions, companies and markets; it facilitates the creation and growth of innovation-based companies through incubation and spin-off processes; and provides other value-added services together with high quality space and facilities.' Considering the quickly changing scientific environment and the economic problems of Azerbaijan, establishing a science park may be an important step forward for the realization of BSU's ambitions.

In the near future, if the University decides to establish a continuing education center, this center may cooperate with the enterprises within the science park to disseminate newly created knowledge to industrial establishments. This will also help the University to gain a competitive edge in the area of technology transfer. A science park and a continuing education center, coupled with a strong Internet infrastructure, will provide a great opportunity for the development of distance learning (e-learning) capability of BSU. The courses

offered for continuing education must be demand-driven and tailored to the needs of users (mainly industry), and hence an attractive pricing policy can be adapted. The self-gained income generated in this way may be used for a variety of purposes by the University. Since the faculty participating in such programs should be compensated they will likely be motivated to take an active role.

BSU has an important communication opportunity through its campus radio. It is expected that the relatively young population of Azerbaijan will be responsive to the broadcasting of the BSU-Radio, therefore expanding the campus radio to the local community has possibilities. In addition to its educational value for students, the radio station with a sizable audience may attract the attention of advertisers and help BSU to raise additional income.

The Visiting Advisors observed that most of the classrooms are in need of upgrading. For example, instructional aids (e.g., overhead projectors, screens), and some laboratories need upgrading, all of which unfortunately require additional resources. Given Azerbaijan's recent independence and limited involvement with Western technology, it might be worth exploring the willingness of European and North American manufacturers to provide equipment at reduced costs in order to break into a fresh market. It is also possible that the University could raise these needed resources by newly developed entrepreneurial assets. The improvements in the laboratories will also help to establish better links with industry. The new laboratories may also be used on a fee basis to do experimental work and testing to meet the demands of other public and private sector organizations.

The use of information technologies in the administrative activities of the University is quite limited. The size of student population and the plans of the University to move to a credit system will impose considerable pressure on the student registration system. The existing registration system should be tailored to accommodate the needs of the new approaches. A computerized student database is one of the prerequisites of effective registration. BSU may consider starting the gradual automation of the registration system in-house. The experiences of other universities have shown that use of generic software imposes some difficulties; therefore the use of tailor-made software may be preferred. It is important to recognize that the development of sound and reliable administrative systems is both demanding of scarce resources and essential.

STUDENT NEEDS AND THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

Co-chairs: Dr. Sh. Khalilov and Dr. George Pedersen

Introduction

Universities play an important and unique role in the overall educational system of any country. Nowhere in the world will this be more so than in Azerbaijan where Baku State University can expect to play a major role in the 21st century. Universities are charged with the creation of new knowledge as well as ensuring its distribution, roles of increasing importance.

Consequently, universities are recognized for two things: the competence of their student graduates and quality of the research produced by their members of faculty. Students are an essential part of the university system, given that it is essential for the global society to have well-educated citizens, human capital that will be essential to Azerbaijan's future social and economic health. Given the astonishing rate of globalization, Azerbaijan must educate its people to the highest possible levels.

The education of a university student is a complex process, but when done properly results in an individual who possesses a broad liberal and scientific education. The latter includes the development of verbal and quantitative skills, the ability to think creatively, and the capacity to deal analytically with complex problems. University preparation also serves as the basis for future life-long learning. Ideally, a university education produces a person who provides community leadership while at the same time has a sound concern for fellow citizens; in short, a humanitarian.

Unfortunately, because of the brevity of our visit to Baku State University, the Visiting Advisors could spend only slightly over an hour with approximately 100 students. It was a good meeting at which students were encouraged to discuss any matter of interest to them. Following the normal reluctance to take part, a good number of comments were made, many complimenting the university and its professors, others suggesting matters of concern where improvement should be considered.

All of the team members were impressed with the student body. Each individual with whom we interacted was articulate, enthusiastic and eager to learn of other opportunities for further education. Baku State University students obviously take pride in their university involvement, in their attire and appearance, and in their country. The University is fortunate to have recruited such a fine student body.

Involvement of Students in University Governance

As with all universities that were previously part of the Soviet Union, students at Baku State University appear to play only a limited role in the day-to-day

activities of the institution. In other parts of the world, it is not uncommon in institutions of higher learning to have students and their elected leader provide strong leadership in such diverse areas as university governance, athletic and social programs, raising funds for scholarships and other worthy causes, lobbying politicians, engaging in volunteer work outside the university, and serving as major advocates on behalf of their student colleagues. In this way, university students see themselves in a partnership role with the administration, thus taking some direct responsibility for the quality of education they receive. It is not possible for the Visiting Advisors to describe in detail what BSU might do to enlist more student participation except to say that such active involvement in the day-to-day life by the University is important and should be encouraged.

An important responsibility of most student governments is to encourage and assist the University to provide high quality and relevant student services. Such valuable aspects of university life as housing, food services, medical services, financial aid programs, leisure programs, volunteer activities, library and computer services, ombudsman roles, lobbying, and instructional evaluation receive their attention. Universities lose out if they fail to take advantage of the contribution that students can and wish to make to their own educational well being.

Career Advancement and Tuition Fees

One of the problems currently faced by BSU graduates is the lack of employment opportunity upon graduation. So called “brain drains” are relatively common throughout the world and are of great concern to the region providing the human capital. The answers to this phenomenon are complex and not easily found. Stated simply, where permitted, well-educated people will migrate to locations and positions where their education can be exploited. BSU may wish to consider using its professional services, in conjunction with the government of Azerbaijan, to develop the policy strategies needed to revive the national economy. External funding support, incentives for external investment in Azerbaijan, and support for entrepreneurial activity, are but some options. Encouragement to create an Alumni Association to assist BSU in its placement activities is also worth considering.

Tuition fees are always a minefield, simply because they have no theoretical base from which to operate; they are strictly a political decision on the part of governments or institutions of higher education. Who should pay and how much? There are no simple answers to these questions and obviously the team members had no time to review practices at BSU in detail. However, from a policy point of view, the concern of Azerbaijan and BSU has to focus on the development by this nation's human capital. Stated simply, no individual who is capable of benefiting from higher education should be deprived of that education for financial reasons. If accepted, such a policy speaks to the need for an adequate program of financial assistance, such that individuals from less adequate financial backgrounds can go to university. This is only fair and equitable.

The matter of broadening the curriculum, specifically as it relates to interdisciplinary courses, was also considered. This poses the question of whether or not undergraduate students should have greater flexibility and choice, particularly in the early exploratory years of their programs. It is part of the age-old academic argument about specialization versus a more liberal approach to higher education. The Advisors are of the view that this question should be considered carefully, given a widely held international view that one's undergraduate education should produce an individual prepared to enter and benefit from several career options. Employers want employees with a broad education, able to enter the employment market but also prepared to benefit from required life-long learning education. What students need to be prepared for in the first place is learning to learn. Today an undergraduate degree is only the first step in a lifetime of learning and the knowledge is outdated in a few years; indeed, increasingly even graduate programs are becoming multidisciplinary in nature.

The issue of students' transfers and credit recognition from one institution to another was also drawn to our attention. As globalization increases, it will be important that Azerbaijani students be in a position to benefit from the offering by other institutions in their homeland and elsewhere. BSU has recently entered into a number of new consortia with other universities and it is the view of the Advisors that early efforts should be made to allow a free flow of students between and among these sister universities. Furthermore, consideration should be given to seeking government support to allow Azerbaijani students to enhance their studies abroad (the initiatives in Yakutia in Russia are worth further consideration).

Concerns were raised by students about the adequacy of access to current information in a timely fashion. Library facilities and holdings along with adequate computer support are essential components of any modern-day university. It is our understanding that these matters are under serious consideration and review and we would urge that they be given high priority as resources become available. In the minds of the VAP, funding to ensure adequate access to the Internet should have first priority in the allocation of scarce new resources.

Student Evaluations

Student evaluation of their instructors is the final matter to be considered in this section of our report. In many universities, such assessments are mandatory on a regular basis for tenure, promotion and senior appointments. The Visiting Advisors support such evaluations, assuming they are properly administered, given their value in providing feedback to professors. Among important issues to evaluate are the administration timing, the breadth of coverage (instruction, course content, etc.) and the transparency of the process. It should be noted that a good deal of research has been done on instructor evaluations.

Recommendations

To summarize, the following recommendations are offered as suggestions:

- A program of determined affirmative action be considered with a view to enhancing significantly the involvement of students at BSU. Some form of joint committee involving administration, faculty and students might be given this assignment.
- Associated with the above recommendation is the need to review regularly the range and quality of student services provided by BSU.
- That the problem of a perceived “brain drain” of BSU graduates be examined in detail by an appropriate committee of the University. Further, it is recommended that the creation of an Alumni Association be encouraged and that this newly formed association be asked to assist in resolving the problem of job placement. It may also be worth considering the establishment of an office or career placement.
- That BSU initiate appropriate discussions concerning a broadening of curricular offerings at the undergraduate level, with a special focus on interdisciplinary studies. A special need exists to satisfy the language needs of studies in Caucasian Studies.
- That BSU consider the granting of greater flexibility in the matter of student transfer and credit (between disciplines and subjects, between universities inside and outside Azerbaijan).
- Given that a well-equipped library and adequate computing services are fundamental to a university in the 21st Century, it is strongly recommended that BSU review carefully the matter of library access and Internet availability.
- Student evaluation of their instructors is seen by the Advisors to be of value. Much research has been conducted on this process and should be reviewed should the decision be taken to proceed on a university-wide basis. A joint committee of students, faculty and administration is normally assigned the task of researching professional evaluation and developing the appropriate instruments and procedures.
- While quite understandable under the circumstances, the loss of the use of the dormitories creates a hardship for BSU. Efforts should be made, in conjunction with government, to relieve this situation.
- In the interest of improving communication within the University, it is recommended that the Rector consider extending and publicizing a time each week (in a location other than his office) where anyone from the University can come to discuss his/her concerns. This would be in addition to the time he now devotes to student communication.

SOCIAL AND CIVIL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

Co-chairs: Dr. Hazrat Aghabayli and Dr. Helene Kamensky

Introduction

One of the major trends in higher education across most countries is the movement from the self-contained post-secondary institutions that operate in isolation from society; toward a model in which universities are responsive to the needs of the community they serve. This especially concerns research-intensive universities, like BSU, which are expected to respond to the current needs of the private economy, the state and their specific stakeholders.

While responding to the current society's needs and demands, universities should also assume a long-term responsibility towards society and its needs. They should secure and transmit the cultural heritage of a society, offer their wealth of professional expertise to the local and broader community and be able to analyze social problems independently, scientifically and critically. Thus, higher education institutions should be responsive to their rapidly changing environment and responsible for the community they serve.

University Leadership

As the leading higher education institution in Azerbaijan at the time of liberation, BSU assumed a special responsibility to contribute to national well being and development. BSU has significantly contributed to the independence of Azerbaijan and to the creation of a new democratic society. After gaining its independence from state control, the University took a leading role in addressing the new society's needs and in transforming the social, economic and political system. During the Civil War, BSU served as a mediator promoting values of peace, friendship and mutual understanding. The value of this contribution cannot be underestimated.

The Visiting Advisors were impressed by the commitment of BSU to the development of a civil society in Azerbaijan and to the promotion of democratic values. BSU provides significant accommodation for refugees from the region of Nagorny Karabakh. Academic staff and students are engaged in a multiplicity of social activities. As the Advisors learned, sixteen university professors are members of the Parliament. A journalism school was established and named after the President Aliyev to strengthen communication within the local community and the media in general.

As the Advisors noted, BSU plays a significant role in securing, maintaining and transmitting the cultural values of the society. During the Soviet regime BSU was able to preserve the national language and culture, in spite of efforts by Moscow to reduce their importance. BSU took the initiative to establish the department of Azerbaijani language at the University and at the public schools

as well. Furthermore, the University undertook to re-write all curricula for secondary schools in the national language. Also, BSU initiated the shift to the Latin alphabet, thus assisting Azerbaijan to become more integrated into the international community and to transmit the cultural heritage of Azerbaijan to the world.

To date, BSU can point to significant achievements in addressing the needs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. However given the rapid rate of change in the external environment, there is the need for BSU to engage more systematically with its stakeholders. The present challenge to BSU is to ensure excellence in teaching and research while being both responsible and responsive to the society it serves and to which it is ultimately responsible.

Important Civic Issues

There are several issues that warrant immediate consideration and resolution. They include the need to develop a clearly defined statement of mission regarding the University commitment to civic service; the creation of more faculty, staff and student volunteer programs, and the recognition of the importance of an appropriate reward system for faculty/staff/students involvement in civic service. In general, the Advisors came away with the impression that BSU exercises a piecemeal, rather than a holistic approach to civic service. The priority for BSU therefore is to develop a carefully reasoned community service strategy.

By planning a community service strategy it is important that BSU reflect on the international trends. There are certainly considerable differences among countries and universities with regard to community service activities. While European universities make a variety of contributions to the communities in which they are situated, this is a serious mandate for North American institutions of higher education. However, there are a number of universal trends that are worth considering when any given institution is planning to increase its social effectiveness.

Community service can mean several different things in addition to educating the community's youth. Probably one of the most visible forms of community service in the United States and Canada is the extensive provision of adult education programs. In particular, the demand for the provision of programs of a practical nature is high. Thus, universities provide professional development programs through a variety of ways, such as short-term courses, distance learning, etc. Many of the programs focus on specific mid-career skills; others offer seminars aimed at cultural enrichment and self-help.

The prominence of life-long education and programs oriented to the practical concerns of local communities has helped to facilitate the development of more for-profit higher education programs. A number of schools go into the potentially lucrative business of providing short-term, evening, and weekend courses for adults. Colleges and universities still structured as non-profit organizations found that they could make money responding to markets for seminars, extensive courses, professional certificates, and distance learning.

However the majority of these offerings are done on the same fee basis as regular offerings.

Other Initiatives

Beyond this, universities have taken on other community-service tasks. Universities operate small business development centers and programs to educate and advise newly elected legislators. Similarly, university faculty members provide consulting services to local companies, organize conferences for top-level professionals in the area, or conduct contractual work for companies. Colleges and universities also lend or rent their space to a variety of autonomous community organizations—one more way to create linkages with outside organizations.

To be effective, many universities form loosely coupled networks to work jointly on a number of social, political, and economic ventures. In today's more complex world, universities, businesses and governmental agencies are learning ways in which to form partnerships in order to reach their own goals as well as society's goals. Universities are often engaged in developing these types of partnerships. Many universities have formed consortia with sister institutions in order to undertake projects beyond the capacity of a single university.

North American universities also develop partnerships with their students who are viewed as partners in the higher education process. Students are engaged in University policy-making and the decision-making process. Students are also closely involved with the provision of a variety of community services. In many North American universities there is some type of community service center that organizes the community activity of students.

What all this means is that successful colleges and universities must be closely integrated into the life of their local communities. BSU, therefore, needs to consider a concentrated effort that will allow it to broaden the scope of its community-service initiatives. This would go a long way toward ensuring that communication between the University and society is two-way and developed fully. Just as BSU is an important resource within its community, the reverse is also true.

Recommendations

- BSU is challenged to retain the best of its traditions but at some time be willing to make important changes in order to satisfy the demands of the emerging civil society and the market economy. BSU should continue to press for increased autonomy for the University while at the same time ensuring that the campus is a place where a diversity of opinions, differing perspectives and new ideas are welcome, indeed expected.
- BSU might find it useful to define its public mission and form a community service strategy based on an agreement among local educational institutions, relevant businesses and industries. BSU should serve and lead; that is, meet needs already articulated, cultivate

new ways of serving the local community, and exercise a leadership role in the social fabric of the country.

- The Rector and his team should identify a series of new social initiatives relevant to the demands of the local community. The initiatives should be chosen on the basis of three main factors:
 - a. the degree to which the initiative addresses the important needs in the emerging civil society and market economy
 - b. the degree to which the initiative takes advantage of the existing strengths of the institution
 - c. the potential for the initiative to make a return to the long-term well being of BSU (i.e., added value).
- BSU should reconsider its role and effectiveness in terms of a broad spectrum of social and civil responsibilities in order to achieve a balanced contribution to the local community. BSU should ensure that national minorities and their cultures are fully represented in all aspects of university life.
- BSU should provide adult education programs oriented to the practical concerns of the local community. By responding to market demands for seminars, extension courses or professional certificates, it might be possible for BSU to generate a new source of income.
- BSU needs to broaden the depth and breadth of the outreach activities. It is recommended to create an outreach center with internal and external members for contact with the local community and NGOs.
- It would be useful to consider the establishment of centers focused on issues of public concern (awareness issues such as the environment, bioethics, etc.)
- The development of a network of alumni might be considered to advise the BSU administration on changing conditions in the market place and to promote continuing loyalty to the University. Alumni can be useful in making university contacts with the organization at which they work, to establish field internships, entrepreneurial contacts, research contracts, job placement, etc.
- Determined by the global economy and by demands and constraints on the Republic of Azerbaijan, the new socio-economic context requires a new type of strategic thinking and this should be reflected in the training focus of future leaders. One of the strategic targets of BSU should be the cultivation of a new generation of students who will be willing to volunteer their energy and time to the service of the community.
- BSU might find it useful to reflect upon the relevant experience in North America and establish community service programs for students. The programs should focus on a clear community need that is not being met. It could be useful to organize summer internships and practica

(cooperative / sandwich education), supervised by faculty and industry employees as an extension of the curriculum.

- BSU should involve students in the decision-making process in order to promote democratic values in the society. Democratic values are demonstrated by the manner in which students are regarded and treated. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that the university faculty and staff treat students as equals and involve them in university policy-making and the decision making process.

CONCLUSION

The members of the Salzburg Seminar Visiting Advisors' Program greatly appreciated the opportunity to visit the campus of Baku State University and to meet with its faculty, staff and students. The reception we received was exemplary. It was a particularly satisfying experience, given that no one on the team had been privileged to visit Azerbaijan previously. It is unfortunate that our visit was of such short duration but effective use was certainly made of the time available.

BSU enjoys a special position within the Azerbaijan system of higher education, widely recognized as the outstanding university in the country. Such status carries with it not only privileges but also important responsibilities. Baku State University has taken these responsibilities seriously, ranging for example from the provision of strong assistance during the transition from the Soviet period to setting the academic norms for higher education in Azerbaijan. However, such national responsibilities will only increase as the country moves to a market economy and a democratic society.

The Advisors were impressed with what BSU has been able to accomplish under less than ideal conditions. This strong leadership will only increase as conditions in the country improve. The University clearly has the human resources to continue to contribute in highly meaningful ways.

It has been a special privilege for each of us on the Visiting Advisors Team to be invited to visit and meet with the citizens of Baku State University. It is the Advisors hope and expectation that the University will continue to satisfy the extensive mandate it has assumed.

Annex - Mission Statements

The Reasons for a Mission Statement

Developing a mission statement is a challenging process if done well. Organizations need to make a [commitment](#) to the process, but the benefits are well worth the effort. The following benefits can be realized by an organization embarking on the mission development path.

1. Missions promote unity. A well-written and understood mission statement can rally the entire organization around a core set of values and reasons for being. Focusing on the most important purposes of an organization brings clarity to expectations.

2. Missions help allocate scarce resources. No organization has all the resources it could use, whether financial, environmental or human. Resource allocation decisions are among the hardest, but linking those decisions to an organization's mission makes them more reasoned and defensible.

3. Missions help move from ideas to action. Undertaking the strategic planning steps of goal setting, developing objectives and defining measures are impossible without the critical step of defining the mission. This applies to the organization as a whole as well as to subunits and individuals.

4. Missions establish culture. The [culture](#) of an organization emanates from the entity's mission and from its leaders. The effort to modify organizational culture can be daunting, but the acceptance of an organizational mission statement can ease the task and help overcome resistance to these changes.

The Characteristics of a Mission Statement

A mission statement should have the following four attributes to be successful. It:

1. Elicits an emotional, motivational response in employees. The rank and file should be able to identify with the mission statement, using it to make decisions and focus their energies.

2. Be easily understood and be transferred into individual action. The mission statement should be a practical tool to allow employees to see how their part of the organization relates to the greater whole of the mission. At its best, a mission statement breathes daily in the lives of the employees.

3. Is a measurable, tangible goal. Employees, managers, shareholders and other should be able to measure the organization's performance against its mission. Lofty, ethereal missions are less effective than measurable, quantifiable ones.

4. Is rooted in the competitive environment. Each organization is in competition for something; even monopolies have to maintain value in their product. There is not much value today in having a monopoly in buggy whips. Measuring the competition and linking your mission statement to competitive advantage works.

One Way to Craft a Mission Statement--The Q&A Model

While the development of a mission statement takes time and effort by many factions, the effort normally should center around getting answers to three vital questions, and then building those answers into the mission statement. The questions are:

1. What is our most significant market? Whom do we serve? Who makes our business worthwhile? Which part of the market is our target?

2. What is our contribution to the market? What value do we add to the customer's life and work? How are the members of our target market better because of us?

3. How do we rise above the competition in making that contribution? What distinguishes our product or service from our competitors? What SHOULD distinguish us? What is our unique niche?

As these questions are evaluated, a mission statement will start to evolve. By following these guidelines, your organization can work to develop its own powerful and effective mission statement, and receive the significant benefits that follow this critical process.

Examples:

University of Vienna (Austria):

The University of Vienna is an international university. It is characterized by inter-disciplinary research and teaching within one "house". It is serving 70,000 students from 130 countries of the world. There are 263 Erasmus/Socrates agreements, and 25 over-all partnership agreements with 25 other universities.

The University is led by a modern administration, a directorate with 6 departments that function as profit-centers of major businesses. Together they warrant the functioning of the enterprise "University of Vienna" with its 6,000 employees.

The University is proud of its library, which is the biggest in the country, and can be reached on-line. The information and communication services of the university are managed by a central information service and are continuously expanded.

...

Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, University of Bratislava (Slovakia):

The Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences will be a constituent of Comenius University and in its research and educational work it will acknowledge the democratic traditions of this higher education institution. Its teachers and students will acknowledge the respect and protection of generally accepted ethical standards and the Charter of Human Rights.

In its study programs, the Faculty will systematically enforce education of students with respect to European and global cultural and democratic values, in the spirit of tolerance and respect for other nations and nationalities. It will contribute to a better knowledge of countries and citizens of the unifying Europe, and design its work in accordance with these processes.

The basic mission of the Faculty is to develop theoretical knowledge and apply it in the area of economics and international relations, in European and regional studies, in the application of social and political sciences, in the development of knowledge in disciplines that concern intercultural relations and minority issues, in the area of public policy, and in the systematic dissemination of this knowledge among the Faculty's students and – through information media – also to professionals and laypersons.

As a scientific and research unit, the Faculty will have an irreplaceable function in the process of practical education of the politically active intelligentsia of the future. In accordance with this, the Faculty and its departments will create conditions for ongoing discussion between students and teachers concerning current social issues, activities on the political scene, independent evaluation of the economic and social development of the society in the context of European and global development. The Faculty, its departments and employees will express their opinion to the events in domestic and foreign politics and extend the information basis of our citizens to the needs of a qualified application of their constitutional rights.

The Faculty will systematically develop and support international scientific research and educational programs as well as its own research programs, and help the teachers and students to become involved in these activities. The Faculty will create organizational and curriculum conditions for its students to extend their education at all partner schools and faculties, both home and abroad.

The Faculty will educate its students in the environment of highly developed information technologies. A significant reduction of contact teaching and a suitable material basis will support the individual work of students. The Faculty's graduate will be a product of European and global educational environment. A graduate of the Faculty ought to have professional preparation and knowledge, and his/her practical experience ought to be sufficient enough to enter successfully the European and global labor market.

In addition to a broader basic educational program, the Faculty will also have the task to educate highly qualified, adequately prepared top experts and candidates for the highest management and concept posts in state administration, the Slovak political system, international organizations, as well as in diplomatic services of the Slovak Republic.

Graduates of the Faculty are expected to express their clear professional orientation, willingness and ability to assume a duty to lead and direct working teams, be publicly active, present their opinions in a qualified way, accept criticism, and come to constructive conclusions from it already during their study at the school.

The objective of the higher education system for teachers of the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies will be an ethically advanced and socially successful graduate. It is expected that students of the Faculty will significantly contribute to a successful fulfillment of this objective.

Visiting Advisors

K. George Pedersen, Canada (team leader)

George Pedersen is former chancellor of the University of Northern British Columbia and former president of the University of Western Ontario. Dr. Pedersen has served as president of the University of British Columbia; founding president of Royal Roads University in Victoria and of Simon Fraser University; and the interim president of the University of Northern British Columbia. He has held teaching and administrative posts at the University of Toronto, the University of Chicago, and the University of Victoria. He has held the positions of board member and president of the Canadian Club of Vancouver, chair of both the Council of Ontario Universities and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, served twice on the executive board of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and twice as vice president (Canada) for the Inter-American Organization for Higher Education. In June 2000, Dr. Pedersen was elected chair of the board of the Bill Reid Foundation. Dr. Pedersen holds an M.A. in geography and administration from the University of Washington and a Ph.D. in the economics of education from the University of Chicago. He is an alumnus of several Universities Project symposia, and has participated in consultant visits by Visiting Advisors Program teams to the Russian Federation.



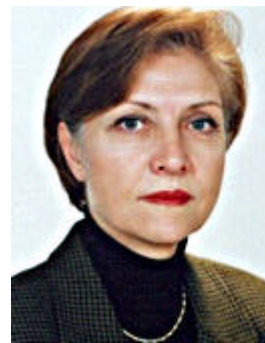
Bernd Baumgartl, Austria

Dr. Baumgartl is an executive of Navreme Knowledge Development, an expert platform based in Vienna for consultancy, research, and training on public administration reform, education, communication, and human resources in EU-Projects and in Central and South East Europe. Dr. Baumgartl is also a lecturer at the European Peace University, Stadtschlaining, and the Austrian Diplomatic Academy. He has worked as an EU official on matters of the accession of Central and East Europe, and as a researcher and author on environmental issues, xenophobia, and racism in Europe at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy. He holds a Ph.D. in political and social sciences from the European University Institute. Dr. Baumgartl is an alumnus of two Salzburg Seminar Sessions, in 1991 and 1999, and a Universities Project symposium in 2001.



Canan Cilingir, Turkey

Dr. Cilingir, professor in the Department of Industrial Engineering, is vice rector for socio-cultural student activities and for non-governmental funds management at Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, where she is also responsible for the development of a project to improve technological development on campus. She is a member of the Turkish Chamber of Chemical Engineers, a board member of the METU Foundation Schools and chairperson of Board Teknopark, Inc. Dr. Cilingir holds an M.Sc. in industrial engineering and management from Loughbrough University of Technology, United Kingdom and a Ph.D. from Ege University, Izmir.



Alfred Ebenbauer, Austria

Alfred Ebenbauer served for three terms as rector and one as pro rector at the University of Vienna. He is president of the Austrian Academic Exchange Service and the Viennese Eco-Social Forum, and member of the board of the Sigmund Freud Society. He has been named honorary senator of the University of Vienna, and recently concluded a visiting professorship at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. Dr. Ebenbauer holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Tirana, Albania, and a Ph.D. in German and history from the University of Vienna. He is an alumnus of the Universities Project 19th Symposium, *Placing Universities in a Social Context*, in 2001.



Helene Kamensky Austria

Helene Kamensky is Russian program coordinator for the Universities Project of the Salzburg Seminar. In addition to her work with the Universities Project, she is lecturer in philosophy and Russian studies at the Universities of Salzburg and Vienna. Previously, Dr. Kamensky was research fellow at the Institute of Scientific Theory, Salzburg International Research Center. From 1985 to 1989 she was dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University, Russian Federation. Earlier, she served that same institution as associate professor and senior lecturer in the department of philosophy. She holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from the department of logic and epistemology at the Russian Academy of Sciences, which was authenticated by the University of Salzburg, Austria in 1993.



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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