



***REPORT ON THE  
ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA UNIVERSITY  
IASI, ROMANIA***

**MAY 17-21, 2004**

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**UNIVERSITIES PROJECT  
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**The Universities Project of the Salzburg Seminar  
Visiting Advisors Program**

**Summary Report of the Follow-Up Visit to the  
Alexandru Ioan Cusa University, Iasi, Romania  
May 17-21, 2004**

**Team Members:**

**Dr. Laszlo V. Frenyo** (team leader), President, Strategic Committee, Higher Education & Research Council, Hungary

**Prof. em. Dr. Hans Brinckmann**, Former President, University of Kassel, Germany

**Dr. Tracy Fitzsimmons**, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Shenandoah University, Winchester, Virginia, USA

**Ms. Anna Glass**, Coordinator for Central and Eastern Europe, Visiting Advisors Program, Universities Project, Salzburg Seminar

**Introduction**

This report provides a summary of the observations and experiences of the Visiting Team, as a result of a follow-up visit at the Alexandru Ioan Cusa University (AICU) of IASI, Romania from May 17 to 21, 2004. This and the first visit that occurred in October 18-22, 1999 were both carried out under the auspices of the Visiting Advisors Program (VAP) of the Salzburg Seminar. The team leader participated in both visits, while others on the second team joined the group because their particular expertise related to the issues raised by AICU for further discussion.

Prior to the first visit in 1999, AICU provided detailed factual information, data, statistics, and different descriptive materials from the host university. The summary report of the first visit reflected all that information, thus the current report for the follow-up visit is not intended to provide further description of AICU, the University and its programs. It focuses rather on the specific topics identified by the University for discussion.

This second group of visiting advisors came to AICU upon the invitation of Rector Dumitru Oprea. Our team was very much impressed with the dedication and commitment of the University leadership, as well as with the cooperative and open attitude of all colleagues attending the meetings. Furthermore, the team was impressed by the number and diversity of participants involved in the discussions during this re-visit. We were also delighted by the hospitality of the University; we would like to express our special thanks to all staff members at AICU who were involved in the preparation and the implementation of the visit.

The Visiting Team learned a great deal over the course of the many discussions at AICU and we are glad to take the opportunity to share our views through the following comments and recommendations.

### **Visit Overview**

During the follow-up visit the advisors were asked to focus on six topics. Some of these were also discussed during the first visit in 1999, so the second team was able to focus on the progress what the University achieved over the last five years. Other issues are related to new initiatives originating from the recently emerging challenges of higher education in Europe, specifically the Bologna Process.

The topics are timely and thorough discussions of these areas of interest may certainly initiate further decisions and actions at AICU concerning the challenges ahead as the University prepares to join the emerging Common European Higher Education Space.

The discussion topics were as follows:

- Scientific research: mobilizing successful individual work toward participation in major international projects.
- Quality assurance: structures and procedures. Case studies: ODL, doctoral studies, services.
- Resource management in an entrepreneurial university.
- 3-cycle reform: how to render student formation flexible in accordance with the market demands.
- Educational marketing, image promotion, internal and international cooperation.
- Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary studies.

Prior to the meetings with different groups, the advisors met with the rector and his deputies to discuss the general framework of the visit. The team was also briefed about recent developments in higher education (HE) in Romania, where lots of activities are taking place at the legislative level. The law that introduced a new financing mechanism in 1998 has been amended so that the current system of budget allocation takes some quality elements into account as well. A new law is now being prepared to create a framework for the adaptation of the Bologna scheme, which should begin to be implemented just next year, in 2005.

In the process of collecting information on follow-up actions by AICU in relation to the VAP Report of 1999, the new team learned that the University has a strong commitment to become an entrepreneurial university, and several actions have been taken in order to meet that objective. These include, among others: the major restructuring of internal budget allocation to improve local mobility; improvement in earning extramural revenue sources; opening a kindergarten in order to provide service for those in need of child care in order to study (in the framework LLL); upgrading student dining halls; and establishing high quality infrastructure for international exchange by completing the attractive Gaudeamus Center, which has the quality of a three star hotel. Although the team had limited opportunity to explore the details of the progress made in the last five years, some of the achievements

presented to us were very impressive. We believe that AICU is moving in the right direction to develop to a broadly recognized entrepreneurial university.

Among the important and impressive changes already achieved is the unique action of AICU prohibiting the teaching staff from holding academic positions outside of the University. This restriction has been combined with a markedly increased salary level, thus making it an attractive condition of employment at the institution. It was possible to take this imperative step toward quality enhancement because of the substantially increased revenue sources made available by the University.

An important degree of solidarity among the colleagues at AICU has also been demonstrated in the decision to provide considerable additional support for Faculties involved in basic science. This was achieved because it was widely recognized throughout the University that the value of those Faculties contributes to the overall reputation of the institution.

### **Scientific Research**

AICU, as a comprehensive university, has a strong emphasis on research activity. The University is involved not only in the domestic areas of scientific research, but also in many international projects (including: 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Research, NATO, EURECA, COST, etc.). However, AICU continues to strive in this area and is determined to find a strategy to improve the situation. The current conditions for the funding of scientific research, however, make it impossible for a single university to be competitive in all fields. In addition to the international trends, the sudden disappearance of industry-based research support, which was available before 1999 almost automatically, created a vacuum in research funding. The legacy of the former system, which – for political reasons – obliged academic institutions to be involved in every possible scientific field has resulted in a rather heterogeneous quality in certain areas of science. Thus, the University leadership has the very difficult but imperative task of concentrating on those areas where AICU already has outstanding expertise or to which it will direct future attention. Defining those research foci is crucial in order for the University to define the niche it will fill within the European HE community. Meanwhile, in order to maintain the academic profile of the institution as a whole, support must also be maintained for those units outside of the special focus areas.

During the discussions, the Visiting Team received information about the major actors of the research area in the national arena. It is obvious that the competition for research grants is substantially increasing, since universities must contend with research institutes (supported by the Ministry of Education & Research), Institutions of the National Academy of Sciences, and enterprise-related institutions, which are all allowed to apply for the funds available.

In order to strengthen AICU's position in relation to scientific research, the following recommendations are offered for consideration:

1. Efforts should be made at the national level to convince funders to provide fewer but substantially larger grants.

2. AICU, on the other hand, should provide matching-fund grants to make the competition more attractive to university colleagues.
3. It is crucial to increase the number and strengthen the involvement of PhD students, as the most important resource for innovation. According to certain international examples, 15 to 20 % of graduates from the Master's level should go on to join PhD programs. Resources must be made available to support an increased number of PhD students, which in turn can be used as additional support for the academic staff.
4. In accordance with its strategic plan, the University should identify a limited number of research foci to be publicized widely to encourage people to join those designated areas. By doing this, AICU might overcome the paradox of having a great number of papers published yet being able to attract only limited research funds.
5. New initiatives for creating networks among some formerly neglected fields (such as sociology, psychology, education, etc.) should be encouraged and supported.
6. It must be a priority to improve the success rate of research grant applications. The University should establish an office and hire a professional to assist in the proper elaboration of grant proposals and to regularly provide the latest available information on funding opportunities.
7. The University must make its expertise visible to the international funding authorities in order to successfully attract them.
8. The academic community throughout AICU should access those more competitive grants available domestically, which are currently being successfully approached mainly by research institutes.

### **Quality Assurance (QA)**

The traditional understanding of Quality Assurance, based mainly on the concept that a good professor knows and does what is good for the students provided he/she has got the means to do so, no longer applies today. Due to the many new trends (globalization, massification, alternative knowledge providing, diversified educational needs, etc.), fundamental reconsideration of QA issues are inevitable.

There are issues that need initial clarification, such as:

- What do we mean by quality?
- Shall we rely upon market mechanisms or have quality defined and controlled by national, European or other authorities?

Another essential aspect of the topic is accreditation. While this is a very important measure of consumer protection, and undoubtedly an important achievement throughout Central Eastern Europe where the quality of educational institutions must be recognized by the many different States, it is still only a part of the quality

assurance system yet to be developed. It is essential to understand the complexity of QA. Quality is about stakeholder satisfaction and academic standards. It is also about institutional culture, rather than rules and regulations. Quality is specific and not universal, concrete and not abstract. Quality must be constantly monitored in a university in order to establish a healthy balance between short term and long term quality issues and to periodically revisit and revise the entire QA system.

QA has become a high priority internationally, partly through recognition of the need for strengthening the overall competitiveness of European higher education. This important need made QA an integral element of the Bologna concept during the Berlin follow-up meeting in 2003. Apart from the many initiatives establishing an internationally comparable framework for QA, and beyond the central regulations for all universities in Romania stipulated by the new law on HE, each university has to work out its own stimulating and sustainable internal system, which must be accepted by the institution's constituents.

QA is an umbrella under which all manner of activities must be established and managed, from issues on how to run cafeteria to the quality of doctoral studies. Quality assurance is much more than collecting data and filling out forms, but without a transparent, reliable, and accountable system for handling data, or without a clear mechanism for procedures to describe and monitor activities of the university at every level, no powerful quality assurance system can be established. This is why it is absolutely essential to create an effective and efficient management information system.

In light of the achievements that have already been made at AICU, and the clear commitment of the University toward the further elaboration on QA matters, the Visiting Team offers the following recommendations:

1. In order to create a coherent QA mechanism for the entire University, the existing elements of QA must be further developed and converted into a coherent procedure that is:
  - Systemic
  - Comparable
  - Consistent and
  - Formative.
2. Based on a thorough analysis of the internationally available examples, AICU should develop a QA system model appropriate for Romania and specifically for Iasi. The QA system of AICU must be adapted to the complexity of problems, issues, and history particular to this University. The system will have to be customized to meet specific needs, and it must remain flexible enough to accommodate substantial changes as necessary, according to future developments.
3. During the establishment of an institution-wide QA system at AICU, a sandwich approach should be followed, meaning that both the rectorate and the decentralized units (down to the department level) are equally involved in the process of elaboration and implementation.

4. In order to support this process, a special Department or Center should be established specifically dedicated to QA. This office would coordinate the entire QA system and provide a diversity of well proven tools, while stimulating all members of the University to take an active part in it. (The demonstrated achievements in assuring quality within the ODL system may serve as a good example.)
5. It is especially important to emphasize the necessity of a university-wide student-based evaluation system to be established by the principles mentioned above. This system should guarantee that every course and every professor will be evaluated each semester and that the students will receive a timely response to their assessments.
6. The student-based evaluation should be used as important feedback for the appraisal of academic staff and as a significant element in the restructuring of curricula.
7. AICU should create a procedure for grievances (violations of rules and rights) and a forum for student and staff complaints/concerns.
8. Beyond a well functioning University level QA system, a periodic external review must be made of the entire institution (this may soon be required anyway in accordance with the new national law on QA).
9. AICU must establish an effective method for tracking alumni (graduates of the University), with the goal of tracing their success during their careers and obtaining feedback for improving curricula and learning/ teaching methods.
10. It is strongly recommended for AICU to establish a Benchmarking Club, perhaps beginning with the cooperation of those universities in Romania that have hosted advisory teams from the Salzburg Seminar.

## **Resource Management**

In order to better understand the overall framework of resource management, some striking weaknesses of the HE system within the Central Eastern European region must be mentioned, namely:

- Inefficient governance and administration
- Unreliable and frequently changing financing mechanisms
- Inefficient use of resources

The current trends in finance and management are:

- A constant increase of costs
- Introduction and/or increase of tuition fees
- The need for alternative (non-state) revenue sources
- Limitations on capacity and accessibility

Public revenues for HE are more and more limited, because of competition with other public fields (general education, health, infrastructure, etc.). Therefore new strategies have to be established for financial viability (greater efficiency, cost-sharing, etc.).

The Visiting Team is convinced that AICU has done extremely well in creating a stable financial basis in a very difficult economic environment. The University and its leaders have managed a dramatic increase in the number of students and have opened a broad variety of income sources as supplement to the decreasing state funding. AICU has also developed a convincingly elaborated internal financial management by transferring significant responsibility and autonomy to the middle tier of the University and by making arrangements for an internal market, i.e. use of space. The Visiting Team sees this as a remarkable and wise response to the fact that an important part of the University's income is dependent on the activities of the Departments and their ability to adapt to the market's demands.

In a short but very informative session, the Visiting Team received insight as to the status and some of the main problems at AICU in regard to resource management. As we learned, the diversity of sources of income is relative to the variety of expenditures. We also learned that AICU supports *additional burdens* that go along with being the leading university in the region, such as the very impressive botanical garden, a museum and a wide range of infrastructure for students. All these additional facilities require maintenance and/or capital appropriations for modernization. This will include financial risks that should be thoroughly controlled and which have the danger of coming into conflict with the core business of a university: teaching, learning, and research. A healthy balance can always be maintained, however, when the university has a sound commitment towards the core mission, while being entrepreneurial in ways compatible to those priorities.

AICU has also proven itself to be aware of its social responsibility in caring for retired staff members. The University contributes a substantial amount to the state's retirement payments for these individuals. In the long run, these expenses should be transferred to the public budget.

We understand that the sustainable and well-structured development of AICU's budget does not rest in the hands of the University alone. As is the case for public institutions everywhere, the budget is greatly subject to the rule of the state and the Ministry of Higher Education. The Visiting Team sees at least two of the state rules to be problematic, however, since they will certainly lead to serious disadvantages for the present and future budget of the University. Therefore we would like to encourage the central government to reconsider the following issues:

1. The basic income structure of a Romanian university of two main sources – the state budget based on the number of non-fee-paying students and the fees gained from additional students – is understood to be a motivating method in support of entrepreneurialism. But this scheme also has negative consequences both internally and externally in respect to quality and equity. Therefore, for the long-term, the introduction of a scheme for fair fees from all students should be established. It would be a means to reduce inequalities between students, Faculties, and Departments and it would also establish terms for fair competition between the different higher education institutions



throughout the country. Such a scheme with general fees for all must be implemented in parallel with a reliable loan system for students with financial difficulties.

2. The University should be granted more flexibility in handling and managing resources earned by the university on an entrepreneurial basis. The legal framework supporting the above would serve as a good instrument to take care of unexpected expenses, financial crises, or co-financing competitive projects (i.e. EU projects).

To the leaders of AICU, the Visiting Team offers the following recommendations:

1. We learned that the internal budgeting process is based on a strategic plan that comes from the decentralized units to the central level, where it is coordinated. The Visiting Team also understood, however, that this plan does not support internal resource management because the distribution of the budget is mainly based on the respective income of the decentralized unit minus a 25 % overhead for the central level. It seems that there are no special funds for innovations such as the creation of new study programs or other innovative ventures. In order to sharpen the future profile of the University's teaching program and to create a plan for centers of excellence or for clusters for research, *a strategic plan covering a period of 3 to 5 years* must identify the direction in which the University wants to move and how it will allocate funds for those innovations.
2. In order to strengthen basic research, the University could reconsider the student-based formula in respect to the spread between the more and less expensive programs, departments, and subjects. It seems that the chances to buy and maintain modern research equipment, necessary in order to attract funds nationally and internationally, are inhibited by too narrow a spread.
3. In respect to the *additional burdens* mentioned above (see page 7), which already require a substantial share of the budget and very likely will need more in the future, the Visiting Team feels that AICU must differentiate between those tasks of the current mission that should be maintained (what the University *needs* to have) and those that are not essential for the development of teaching, learning, and research but rather are a generous offering to the society (which are *nice* to have). These decisions have to be connected with the profile and the focus that the University chooses as guiding principle.
4. It should be discussed whether the salaries of professors could be oriented more towards the mission of the University, to their market position (employability outside of the University), and their performance rather than only in terms of their financial contributions to the University's income.
5. It seems advisable to offer more incentives for inter- and trans-disciplinary studies and programs. This could be accomplished by opening the way for inter-Faculty compensation, for example.

6. Since the person holding the position of Dean of Faculty is responsible for the decentralized budget, his/her term should begin with a sort of introductory training course addressing the financial and personnel challenges of this important job. This course should be offered at the central level for all employees who hold or who plan to apply for a management position.

### **3-cycle reform: how to render student formation flexible in accordance with the market demands**

The world of European higher education has recently undergone significant and substantial changes. Current major trends influencing HE include:

- *Mega-trends*: globalization, revolutionary explosion of information-communication technology, expansion of the knowledge-based society.
- *Meta-trends*: massification, emergence of private-, corporate-, and foundation-based HE institutions, nontraditional knowledge providing services (ODL, virtual university, e-learning), growing needs for quality assurance mechanisms, etc.

The above trends led to the recognition of the need to strengthen the overall competitiveness of the European HE. Initial efforts have been made at the Sorbonne Forum, where a joint declaration on the harmonization of the architecture of European HE has been accepted. The Bologna Declaration in 1999 further extended the concept and led to an agreement on joint objectives for the development of a coherent and cohesive European HE area by 2010. The follow-up meetings in Prague (2001) and Berlin (2003) clarified many details and the decision was made to accelerate the process of reform. Romania, as a signatory country, is among those countries that have committed themselves to the above process.

In two very intensive discussion sessions, the Visiting Team was made aware that all members of AICU are very well informed about the Bologna Process and its framework. The understanding of the team, however, was that many academics still see this process more as a risk than as a chance; more as a new rule coming from outside and above than as an incentive from within the country/institution to be creative and innovative; more as an untimely and unwelcome additional chore than as a necessary step towards mastering massification and globalization. This is highly understandable considering the conditions surrounding the higher education law now in preparation, not to mention the experiences in this region from the past and the current-day difficulties, especially in relation to the dramatic increase in student numbers.

However, everyone involved in the discussions agreed that the coming reforms are inevitably going to happen. In order to meet the pending challenges in the best way possible, the University must create its own strategy in relation to the Bologna Concept, establish its own goals and present a unique profile reflecting the University as a whole. This will help AICU to act in a proactive way toward the Bologna objectives, for which there is no prescribed strategy. Every European institution must create its own method for successfully reaching the common goal.

Creating a two-tier degree structure involves establishing a system for the transfer and accumulation of credits, and cannot be accomplished without an accepted lifelong learning scheme. The new credit transfer system will influence the modular structures of study programs. A new definition of quality and a new quality assurance system must be established in order to define learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, competencies and skills. AICU already has a broad range of acceptable learning outcomes, so the University can certainly achieve a trusted mutual recognition and also boost mobility. The appropriate answer to Bologna, therefore, is not just to reduce 4 years of undergraduate studies into 3 years, cutting two majors back to one, but a more far-reaching and meaningful change in terms of content and in teaching and learning methods.

AICU has already adopted the credit system, but the Visiting Team is under the impression that this is attached more to the traditional system of grading and the traditional system of academic examinations. Assessment of learning outcomes should, however, recognize different learning/teaching efficiencies and should also inform students, teachers, and employers not only about the content learned, but also of the capabilities and skills of the students, his/her intellectual development, professional, vocational, and corporate qualifications.

The Visiting Team would like to draw the attention of all Departments to one of the dominating objectives of the Bologna Process, which is to create and foster employability. Participation in a study program should lead to an outcome that is not only of high quality in academic terms, but which also enables the student to solve problems, to understand the world, to fulfill duties, or to perform in a social or professional situation better than before. All the stakeholders expect some sort of learning outcomes, which mean a set of competencies including knowledge, understanding, and skills that the graduate is expected to know/ understand/ demonstrate after completion of the process – whether it be a short or long one. Competencies can be divided into two types: A) generic competencies, which in principle are independent of the subject that was studied, and B) subject-specific competencies. Competencies are normally obtained throughout the study program, including via the study environment (the hidden curriculum).

The discussions on this topic seemed to be mainly content-oriented and less concerned with competencies or with how to define, reach, and assess the outcomes of a study program. For everyone who has to develop and deliver programs, it is essential to know which part of the study process imparts the various competencies. Learning outcomes can be identified and related to whole programs of study (first or second cycle) as well as for individual units of study (modules).

It goes without saying that competencies and learning outcomes should correspond to the final qualifications of a learning program. It would be presumptuous to prescribe to all individuals and institutions the one best or the only way to achieve optimal learning outcomes just because we don't have enough reliable insight. This is why the method AICU has already successfully introduced to provide more choices to the individual learner, should be continued further, rather than creating new comprehensive programs.

Employability is an open concept and has to be interpreted according to the regional and national labor market, the path that determines a national or regional higher education system and the demands of the students for more general competencies in the increasingly dynamic knowledge society. The academic tradition of providing an elite education mainly for the civil service and for some special professions in the fields of law and medicine cannot be preserved, because as a result of massification all upper levels of social activities should be accounted for in higher education.

Considering this situation, the Visiting Team would like to give the following recommendations in respect to the adaptation to the Bologna Process by AICU:

1. In relation to the Bologna-oriented program structure, instead of waiting for a prescribed central framework, all Faculties and Departments should design their options, enter into discussions with students and other stakeholders of the region, professional organizations, and partner departments in other universities (nationally or internationally) in order to establish opportunities for their own initiatives and innovations. Even if there is only a small chance to bring forward the University's own concept, this process will be productive and it will open prospects for new concepts and variations. It will bring the University into a better position in the bargaining process with the Ministry. It will help the Faculties and Departments to enrich the parameters prescribed by the state in accordance with the University's profile.
2. Since employability is one of the objectives of the Bologna Process, new programs have to include new aspects of teaching and learning that provide generic competencies in addition to the subject-related competencies. Since these new integral parts of BA/MA programs have to be designed in accordance with the special profile of the respective Department/program, there is an urgent need for a strategic debate. AICU should use to its advantage the fact that it is a partner in the EU Tuning Project, which is focusing on these issues.
3. There was some discussion about a downgrading effect for the BA-level. We would like to draw attention to the opportunity for AICU and all its Departments to re-examine the entire structure of all the undergraduate programs, taking into account not only the shift from teaching to learning and the trend towards more individual choices and self organization of the learning process, but also the new mission of higher education in times of massification as mentioned above.
4. This changing role of higher education also means that the balance between content-oriented elements and other competencies, between disciplinary and trans-disciplinary elements must be reconsidered. We will come back to this point again (below) under the topic of inter- and trans-disciplinary studies.
5. At the graduate level, the Visiting Team recommends the development of three types of Master's:
  - a consecutive Master's with the purpose of deepening the competencies within a specialty and a research orientation,

- a non consecutive Master's with the objective of widening the competencies in a specialty or to add a new specialty (for example: economics to geography or pedagogy to literature), and
  - as an offering in the new field of lifelong learning, a Master's for people returning to the University after some years of work experience.
6. Lifelong learning is not only an important aspect of the Bologna Process but also a way the University can reach new frontiers. An entrepreneurial university – like AICU – should take this chance to be one of the first and than one of the best on the market. In the view of the urgency of the Romanian society and economy to adapt to the new knowledge society, the Visiting Team is sure that lifelong learning will be a very promising activity for most of the AICU Departments. Early steps in that direction are therefore highly recommendable.

### **Educational Marketing, image promotion, internal and international cooperation**

With the convergence of globalization forces and the Bologna Process, student and professorial mobility has increased and is likely to increase even more dramatically in the coming decade. Proactive management of an institution's reputation is essential in order to retain the current size and composition of the student population. If the institution wishes to expand its numbers or enhance the quality of incoming students, proactive marketing and recruitment efforts will be necessary.

At AICU, little has been done in the area of educational promotion thus far. In 1999, the University published a brochure in Romanian, which is just now in the process of being re-printed. The University and all Faculties also have Web sites with basic information available but in uneven levels and different stylistic approaches. A few Faculties have attempted to do localized promotion, notably the Math Faculty's publication and dissemination of a brochure to secondary schools.

The University's leadership clearly sees marketing, promotion, and recruiting as a priority in terms of need and future focus. Efforts toward educational promotion will have payoffs in almost every other arena addressed in the Visiting Team's report: such promotion can help attract more research funding and can help recruit students from abroad as Europe moves to a 3-cycle system. Furthermore, a quality assurance study would provide much fodder for use in marketing the value of an AICU education.

To this end, the Visiting Team offers the following recommendations:

1. AICU should first identify *what* it wants to promote and *why*; then identify the *target audience*; and finally, identify *how* to do the promotion. The leadership of AICU should solicit input from all constituencies in formulating these plans.
2. AICU should establish a separate Office of Educational Promotion staffed by professionals trained in educational marketing, public relations and recruitment. This office should have a strong working relationship with the offices of admissions and international relations.

3. Because students are attracted both to a field of study and the reputation and services of an institution, AICU should aim to promote *both* the University as a whole and the individual Faculties. Furthermore, because students go to study at an institution in a particular location, AICU should work with the city of Iasi to promote *both* the University and the city.
4. In this increasingly technological world, the World Wide Web serves as an important vehicle for educational promotion and recruitment. AICU should therefore update and enhance the University and Faculty Web sites. As AICU seeks to be a destination for students from across Romania, Europe and beyond, the Web site should offer parallel, comprehensive versions in English and perhaps in French or German as well. All important information, including some representative photos of the University and the city, should be on the *first two or three levels* of the Web site.
5. AICU leadership should work with students and professors to identify an agreed upon University “brand” and motto, and use them in all promotional materials.
6. Because student and alumni satisfaction is essential to AICU's reputation and ability to recruit new students from afar, the University should make the enhancement of student services a priority.
7. The new Office of Educational Promotion should collect data, through surveys and focus groups, on why students choose to come to AICU and why they stay at AICU. This information can be used in promotional materials and planning.

### **Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Studies**

Interdisciplinary studies is increasingly recognized as an important vehicle for understanding processes of economic and political change, the development of science and culture, and the challenges of integration and mobility. Interdisciplinarity in theory or methodology may yield new discoveries, academic fields, and policy prescriptions. Furthermore, in an era in which graduating students are likely to have not just one or two jobs over their lifetimes, but multiple careers, cross-disciplinary learning can facilitate their success in these multiple venues and across such life changes.

Clearly, the value of interdisciplinarity is understood by those at AICU. The Visiting Team was very impressed by the multiple levels and facets of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary studies already achieved at AICU. Of particular note are the emerging Women's Studies Program, the established Center for European Studies and the Center of Aegeo-Mediterranean Studies, the bachelor's programs in History and Language and in Geography and Geology, and the many research projects undertaken by professors.

However, while AICU seems to put a high value on interdisciplinarity academically, there appear to be structural barriers to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary studies at the national level and within the organization of the University. In terms of the

power structure and the budget process, there is a clear bias among most Faculties and in the organizational structure of AICU in favor of traditional disciplinary studies. Furthermore, there appears to be a communication lag within AICU that has led to a lack of knowledge at all levels about the depth and breadth of what is already being done in interdisciplinary studies throughout the institution.

Interdisciplinary studies is likely to continue to gain stature nationally and internationally; AICU is poised to be an important contributor to interdisciplinary studies in the international arena and should be the leader in this area in Romanian higher education. To this end, the Visiting Team offers the following recommendations:

1. AICU should expend considerable effort to facilitate and encourage the addition of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary programs to the state-approved list of majors/degrees.
2. The Bologna Process opens a window of opportunity for Romanian higher education, and AICU specifically, to increase its level of discussion and commitment to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary programs. In particular, AICU should capitalize on the transition of undergraduate studies from 4 years to 3 years to explore possibilities for enhancing interdisciplinary studies across the curricula.
3. The leadership of AICU should facilitate internal communication so that everyone at the University is aware of AICU's current interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary efforts. As well, AICU should actively promote the existence and benefits of interdisciplinary programs to potential employers and to government officials within Romania and neighboring countries.
4. AICU should re-examine current funding and organizational patterns that give power and funds to disciplinary-based Faculties over and above interdisciplinary centers.
5. With the goal of infusing interdisciplinarity into the University culture, AICU should embed the rhetoric and practice of interdisciplinarity within all parts of AICU – this includes incorporating issues of interdisciplinary studies into the rector's speeches, the Senate meetings, the Web site, and student expectations.
6. Beyond the Faculty-specific research support that already exists, AICU should create a new University-wide competitive fund to support interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research by professors.
7. AICU should establish scholarships to enable students to pursue interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary degrees and research.

## **Conclusion**

The Visiting Advisors wish to express once again our commendation to AICU for the impressive progress the University has made over the last five years. The developments observed by this Team provide further examples of what commitment and dedication may create. The effort devoted at AICU to establishing a competitive entrepreneurial university will certainly result in further strengthening the University's reputation not only in Romania, but internationally as well. These efforts combined with the willingness to participate in the new European trend – the Bologna Process – in a proactive manner will substantially help AICU to fulfill its mission. Naturally there are considerable challenges ahead as well, and the recommendations provided by the Visiting Advisors are intended to offer influential leverage in order to promote those changes necessary to reaching the declared goal of the University.



### Visiting Advisors:

**László FRENYÓ** (Team Leader) is president of the Strategic Committee of Higher Education and Research Council and professor of immunophysiology of the Szent Istvan University, Budapest, Hungary. He serves as dean of faculty for McDaniel College, USA (formerly known as Western Maryland College) Budapest Program. Dr. Frenyó is involved in the higher education restructuring project by UNESCO-CEPES within the framework of the Task Force Education and Youth (within the Stability Pact for SEE). He served as president of the Hungarian Higher Education and Research Council from 1997 to 2000, and was head of the task team responsible for the Higher Education Reform Project of Hungary from 1995 to 1998. Dr. Frenyó was president of the Hungarian Rectors Conference from 1995 to 1997, and served as chairperson of its International Committee from 1991 to 1995. He served as rector of the University of Veterinary Science in Budapest from 1990 to 1997, the same institution from which he earned both D.V.M. and Ph.D. degrees. Dr. Frenyó was a member of the Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project Advisory Committee.



**Hans BRINCKMANN** was president of the University of Kassel, Germany from 1989 to 1999 and professor of public law and public administration from 1972 to 2002. He holds a Ph.D in law from the University of Bonn and a Dipl. Ing. degree in applied mathematics/communication engineering from the Technical University of Darmstadt. Professor Brinckmann has served for more than 12 years as member of the Board of Directors of the Center for Research on Higher Education and Work in Kassel, and was involved there in many projects in higher education. He has been an active participant in the Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project and Visiting Advisors Program. Professor Brinckmann's scientific studies focus on the modernization of the public sector and on the changes of structures, processes and products in public services, administration and politics, mainly by means of new information and communication technologies. He currently runs the partnership B<sup>2</sup> Bremeier & Brinckmann, consultants in public administration, and serves as an advisor in academic offshore activities at Kassel University.



**Tracy FITZSIMMONS** is vice president for academic affairs at Shenandoah University, Virginia, USA, where she previously held the position of dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Prior to moving to Virginia, Dr. Fitzsimmons was chair and associate professor of government for the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Redlands, California. She is a member of the Association of American Colleges and Universities in Washington, DC. Dr. Fitzsimmons holds an M.A. in Latin American studies and a Ph.D. in political science from Stanford University, California.



**Anna GLASS** is the coordinator for Central and Eastern Europe, Visiting Advisors Program, Universities Project. She began working at the Salzburg Seminar as a program assistant in 1999 and joined the Universities Project in 2000. Originally from Maine, Ms. Glass has lived in Switzerland and France during the course of her studies. She is a graduate of Middlebury College, Vermont, where she studied French, German, and English literature.



**Schedule of the Visit:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Monday, May 17</b>			
9:30-11:00	Team Debriefing meeting	VAP team	Hotel
11:30-13:00	Meeting with the Rector, Presentation of the program.	VAP team UAIC team	Rector's Office
13:00 -14:00	Lunch		"GAUDEAMUS"
14:00- 15:30	Resource Management in an Entrepreneurial University	VAP team + Workgroup 1	Rectorate (Senate Hall)
15:30-16:00	Coffee break		Rectorate (Senate Hall)
16:00-17:30	Quality assurance: structures and procedures. Case studies: ODL, Doctoral studies, Services	VAP team + Workgroup 1	Faculty of Law
18:00 - 19:00	Team Debriefing meeting	VAP team	Hotel
19:30	Welcome Dinner	VAP team + UAIC reps	"GAUDEAMUS"
<b>Tuesday, May 18</b>			
9:00-11:00	Quality assurance: structures and procedures. Case studies: ODL, Doctoral studies, Services	VAP team + Workgroup 2	Rectorate (Senate Hall)
11:00-11:30	Coffee break		Rectorate (Senate Hall)
11:30-13:00	3-cycle reform: how to render student formation flexible in accordance with the market demands	VAP team + Workgroup 3	Rectorate (Senate Hall)
13:00- 14:00	Lunch	VAP team + UAIC reps	"GAUDEAMUS"
14:00-5:30	3-cycle reform: how to render student formation flexible in accordance with the market demands	VAP team + Workgroup 3	Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEAA)
15:30-6:00	Coffee break		FEAA
16:00 -17:30	Meeting with students (Students' Associations, Senate members, Faculty Board members)	VAP team + UAIC reps	Senate Hall
18:00-19:00	Team Debriefing meeting	VAP team	Hotel
19:30	Dinner	VAP team + UAIC reps	Restaurant to be confirmed
<b>Wednesday, May 19</b>			
9:00 – 11:00	Educational marketing, image promotion, internal and international cooperation	VAP team + Workgroup 4	Rectorate + Faculty of Physical Education and Sports (FEPS)
11:00-1:30	Coffee break	VAP team + UAIC reps	FEPS
11:30-13:00	Scientific research: capitalizing individual successful work into participation to major international projects	VAP team + Workgroup 5	Rectorate + Faculty of Physics + Faculty of Chemistry
13:00-14:00	Lunch	VAP team + UAIC reps	"GAUDEAMUS"

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14:00 -15:30	Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Studies	VAP team + Workgroup 6	Centre for European Studies + Postgraduate School of Aegeo-Mediterranean Studies + Faculty of Geography – Geology (FGG)
15:30 -16:00	Coffee break	VAP team + UAIC reps	FGG
16:30-7:30	Team Debriefing meeting	VAP team	Hotel
19:30	Dinner	VAP team + UAIC reps	Restaurant to be confirmed
<b>Thursday, May 20</b>			
9:00-1:30	Preparation of the Report	VAP team	Hotel
12:00-13:00	Presentation of the Oral Report to the Rector	VAP team+ UAIC reps.	Senate Hall
13:00-14:00	Lunch	VAP team	“GAUDEAMUS”
16:00-19:00	IAȘI City Tour	VAP team + UAIC reps.	
19:00-2:00	Farewell Dinner	VAP team+ UAIC reps	Restaurant to be confirmed
<b>Friday, May 21</b>			
	Team Departures		



## **THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR**

Universities throughout the world are undergoing systemic changes in their governance, academic design, structure, and mission. From 1998 to 2003, the Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project focused on higher education reform in Central and East Europe, Russia, and the Newly Independent States as universities in these regions redefined their relationships with governments and try to become more integrated into the global intellectual community.

The Universities Project was 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 focused 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 aimed 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 the Program in June 2004, seventy visits were conducted at universities in Central and East Europe and in Russia. The addition of the Visiting Advisors Program brought to the Universities Project an applied aspect and served to enhance institutional and personal relationships begun in Salzburg.

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

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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

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

Telephone: +43 662 839830  
Fax: +43 662 839837

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

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

Salzburg Seminar website: [www.salzburgseminar.org](http://www.salzburgseminar.org)