

REPORT ON
I.I. MECHNIKOV
ODESSA STATE UNIVERSITY
ODESSA, UKRAINE
March 31-April 5, 2007

SALZBURG GLOBAL SEMINAR

VISITING ADVISORS PROGRAM



*This visit of the Visiting Advisors Program
has been made possible by a generous grant
from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.*



SALZBURG GLOBAL SEMINAR

Visiting Advisors Program

Summary Report of the Visit to I.I. Mechnikov Odessa State University, Ukraine March 31 - April 5, 2007

Team Members:

Olin Robison (Team Leader), President Emeritus, Salzburg Global Seminar, Austria; President Emeritus, Middlebury College, Vermont, USA

Neil Grabois; Vice President and Director of Strategic Planning and Program Coordination, Carnegie Corporation of New York, USA; President Emeritus, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York; Former Provost, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Helen Kamensky, Program Director, Salzburg Global Seminar, Austria

Istvan Teplan, Executive Vice President, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

Our four-day visit to I.I. Mechnikov Odessa State University (ONU) was very well organized and provided the team with a very in-depth and comprehensive view of the present status of this magnificent university and its great intellectual traditions. The Rector, the Vice Rectors, and the host team were very well prepared and did their utmost to make our team familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the University in the time provided.

The overall sense of the Visiting Team was that the University does quite well given the restraints under which it must operate. The leadership is strong and determined; members of the staff are seriously dedicated to the work of the University and much is accomplished by dint of that dedication and determination. If the University is to flourish in these days of globalization it will be because of that dedication and determination much more than because of anything coming from the government.

The University, similar to most ex-Soviet state universities, found itself in a swiftly changing environment after the proclamation of independence some fifteen years ago. The new environment forced the University to face new challenges. These new challenges included issues related to curriculum, governance, funding, and new higher education regulations.

During our visit the Team learned that ONU responded to these challenges very well within the given circumstances. However, these circumstances can constitute a very serious threat to the University in the long-run and, already in the short-term and medium-term, create obstacles and set-backs in the increasing competition of the higher education scene. Unfortunately, many of these problems cannot be eliminated at the institutional level and they require a general reform and development at the national level.

One of these problems centers around the independence of the University management in decision-making. The Team found that the University management's decisions are still very much constrained by the sometimes outdated higher educational laws and regulations of the country and the tight control of the government through the Ministry of Education.

While the government funding of state universities in the Ukraine was seriously reduced, universities were not equipped with appropriate independence to generate revenues for their development. Nevertheless, ONU managed to generate 60% of its funding from non-government sources, which is a remarkable achievement by any measure. This also demonstrates very well the abilities of the management of the University. The rule that self-paying students cannot exceed the number of state-supported students occurred to us as an unnecessary state regulation which, in the long-run, hinders the ability of the University to adequately respond to the changing environment and to competition.

The regulation that the tuition fee charged from foreign students cannot be higher than the tuition paid by self-paying local students seems to the Team to be particularly obstructive. This of course has the effect of severely limiting the number of outside students and the revenue that other, non-Ukrainian universities, routinely enjoy. The regulation in the case of ONU also prevents the

University from fully capitalizing on the strategic location of the University and the city in the Black Sea region. Historically, Odessa has been one of the major gateways to the Eurasian mainland connecting Europe with Asia Minor and the Caucasus and the Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian plains with the Mediterranean. With such geographical assets, ONU is predestined to become a great center of excellence in this region provided the State creates the necessary legal and financial framework for the initial take-off. There is every reason to believe that Odessa as a place and ONU as a university would be a strong magnet for outside students and they could well bring with them much needed cash. But this requires governmental changes and that seems unlikely in the near term.

We had the impression that the University management is well aware of these potentials and threats and doing its best effort to overcome the difficulties. The University is well connected in the European higher education scene and implementation of the Bologna Process is well under way. The full implementation of the Bologna Process will make the University compatible with its European counterparts and will enable it to take advantage of the numerous European schemes which support higher education and research.

While the University cooperates very well in with its European, North-American and other partners, we could not help seeing the difficulties in the University's need to take part in old-style "bargaining" with the State. There is no doubt that the State lawfully imposes demands on the universities it maintains, however, the direct control and direct management through which their demands are implemented seem counterproductive. Hopefully, the Ukrainian higher education system, in the process of the Bologna Process' implementation, will soon adapt the institution of the governing board which is now used in many European countries to delegate state control to a more effective operating body. In such governing boards, the state control is exercised through state delegates in the Board but the board itself is responsible for the well-being of the university, thus, eliminating the direct bargaining between the university management and state bureaucrats. In the Team's opinion, such an institution would greatly improve the ability of institutions such as ONU to adequately respond to quickly changing challenges.

There was also a conviction on the part of the Visiting Team that the heavy workloads of faculty and others on the University staff mitigate against creative development of new courses and new pedagogical approaches at the University. Again funding restraints stand in the way. But the Team sensed that the Rector and his team fully understand all this and are moving to correct as much of this as possible.

The Team found that the University has every internal ability to respond well to the changing needs of the students, society, and economy. The state approval of the curriculum and courses constrains this ability. Today every course must be approved by the Ministry of Education through a complicated process which is apparently intended to take into consideration the needs of the country. The Team found that the old habits of the planned economy in this practice die hard. Here again, the hope of the Team is that Ukraine will adapt the European system of accreditation delegated to an independent peer organization and concerned mainly with quality assurance, thus, giving a higher degree of independence to the institution in academic planning.

The Team also found that the state regulations concerning the personnel and non-personnel part of the university budget create obstacles for the business management of the University. Apparently, there are strict regulations on the revenues earned by the University which impede the University's ability to upgrade its physical plants and information technology system. The regulations on educational and general expenses and on instructional expenses are similarly rigid. The salary scale of the faculty and staff is prescribed by the State, but is often circumvented by giving an individual more than one job and more than one salary. In the Team's opinion, this system prevents good performance evaluation and the ability to honor outstanding achievements.

State-funded jobs are clearly secure but the system allows little room for restructuring, development, or even salary increases. There is a persistence of the egalitarianism of the old Soviet system which does not necessarily honor innovation and the changing of teaching methods and paradigms. The Team found that the circumstances in general still do not adequately support the desired changes.

One of the more creative moves on the part of the University leadership has been to develop four satellite campuses. The Visiting Team was welcomed to one of these (Ilichevsk) and was most impressed with this innovative approach to providing the services of the University to the broadest possible number of the local population. Ilichevsk is a robust, rapidly developing economic center with a very energetic municipal government. The Rector and the university leadership worked closely with the town government to establish an extension which serves the educational needs of Ilichevsk. This young city has a growing young population which needs higher educational services and the relatively good financial resources to pay for their education. At the same time, the companies of the town are also in need of a skilled, young labor force. These circumstances made possible the establishment of a branch of ONU in Ilichevsk. It appears that it is a successful undertaking and that the majority of stakeholders are satisfied. At the same time, it branch generates needed revenues for the University. There is also further potential to grow in cooperation with the town government which is prepared to provide more buildings, premises, infrastructure, and other resources for this development.

A further suggestion of the Team as to how the University could better serve its constituency would be the **establishment of an Advisory Council for the Rector**. This Council would consist of successful alumni, business and municipal representatives, and others with the view of further including these potentially influential constituents in the life of the University (i.e.: curriculum design, academic planning, etc.).

The Team also observed that the University is quite adept at partnering with other universities for European Union grants such as the TEMPUS scheme. However, there is no **central support office for applications and tenders with foreign institutions**. There are many new programs at the European Union and elsewhere and most universities now have a central office to monitor and facilitate such applications. Such offices are typically financed from the overhead component of successful grants. We believe that such a central grant, tender, and application office would be beneficial for ONU as well.

We also noticed the high degree of emphasis that ONU places on quality assurance but were confounded by the lack of a **centralized system of systematic evaluation** by students and the lack of necessary institutional research to improve teaching quality. We suggest that an institutional research unit be created for the organization of regular student evaluation at the end of each term. This is also a requirement of the Bologna Process. Examples of the methods of evaluation and the use of the aggregate results are available in many universities in Europe and in North America.

The Team would also recommend that more emphasis be put on **alumni and career services**. It is very important for ONU to assist in the professional placement of its graduating students not only for the benefit of students, but also as a means of strengthening ties with local employers. Such an office could also offer training for students in skills such as composing of curriculum vitae, applying for international and domestic jobs, and interviewing skills. It would also be important that the contact with alumni be kept in a more organized way. It was brought to the Team's attention that an entire graduated class from Germany visited the celebrations of the University's anniversary. Such contacts with ONU graduates should be more regular and this eventually can yield serious benefits (including financial ones) from the alumni.

We also believe that there are good opportunities for ONU to participate in **exchange programs and joint-degree programs of the European Union** (such as Socrates, Erasmus Mundus, External Window etc.), due to the language of instruction (Russian is still a very desired language) and geographic location and tradition. However, we believe that eventually some university division in English would serve very well the internationalization of ONU.

The Visiting Team took several occasions to try to impress upon the Rector and members of his team that aggressive and creative uses of available technologies offer excellent opportunities for the University. Again, lack of sufficient funding is the main impediment.

Again and in summary, the Visiting Team was most impressed by the leadership of the University and by the energy and determination shown by one and all. The

students are bright and eager to learn. The faculty are able and dedicated to the place and to their students. There was nonetheless a consensus among members of the Visiting Team that much more could be done if the University were released by appropriate governmental authorities to take advantage of the many opportunities that are present.

Visiting Advisors:

Olin ROBISON (Team Leader), USA

Olin Robison is president emeritus of the Salzburg Seminar where he served from 1991 to 2005. For the fifteen years prior to that, he was president of Middlebury College, Vermont. From 1990 to 1991, he served as a visiting fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London. Dr. Robison began his career in Washington, DC and served at the State Department as special assistant to three successive deputy undersecretaries of state. He has been an advisor to both Democratic and Republican administrations on US-Soviet relations. Among his numerous professional activities Dr. Robison was co-founder and chairman of the American Collegiate Consortium for East-West Cultural and Academic Exchange from 1987 to 1994. From 1977 to 1982, he was chairman of the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. Dr. Robison has served as a faculty member at numerous Salzburg Seminar sessions and has participated in a number of Visiting Advisors Program trips to countries throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.



Neil GRABOIS, USA

Neil Grabo is vice president and director of the Strategic Planning and Program Coordination, Carnegie Corporation of New York, where he is responsible for the direction, conduct, and evaluation of all programs of the grantmaking foundation, which will award \$ 85 million this year to colleges and universities and independent nonprofit organizations for educational and other purposes. He served as president of Colgate University, New York, for more than ten years. Prior to that he dedicated twenty-five years to Williams College, Massachusetts, serving in such positions as provost of the college, dean of faculty, and dean of the college. As a professor of mathematics, he taught at Colgate University, Williams College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Pennsylvania, University of Oregon, State University of New York at Albany, and Wesleyan University in Connecticut. Dr. Grabo received a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Pennsylvania. He is an alumnus of three Universities Project plenary symposia in 1998, 1999, and 2001 and participated in both trips by the Visiting Advisors Program to Brno, Czech Republic in 1999 and 2001.



Helene KAMENSKY, Austria

Helene Kamensky is program director of the Salzburg Seminar, where she is responsible for the development and direction of academic programs on higher education and related issues. Before joining the Salzburg Seminar, Dr. Kamensky served as an adjunct professor of philosophy at the Institutes of Philosophy at the University of Salzburg and the University of Vienna. Previously, she was research fellow at the Institute of Scientific Theory at the Salzburg International Research Center. From 1985 to 1989, she was dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University in the Russian Federation, where she previously served as associate professor and senior lecturer in the department of philosophy. Dr. Kamensky's area of research interest is higher education policy and management. 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.



Istvan TEPLAN, Hungary

Istvan Teplan is executive vice president, Central European University, Budapest. From 1992 to 1996, he was the University's director of budget and planning. Dr. Teplan has served as a research fellow, Center for East and Central European Studies, Budapest University of Economics; visiting professor, Seoul National University; advisor and program coordinator for the mayor of the City of Budapest; and program coordinator, Budapest Center, at the University of California and University of Wisconsin. Dr. Teplan was educated at Eötvös Lóránd University; the State University of New York at Binghamton, where he received an M.A. in sociology; and the Budapest University of Economics, where he earned a Ph.D. in sociology. He is an alumnus of both Universities Project symposia and Visiting Advisors Program visits to the Russian Federation.



Schedule:

March 31, Saturday, Arrival Day	
14.00 – 15.00	Team arrives
17.00 – 19.00	Sight-seeing walk
19.00	Icebreaking Dinner
April 1, Sunday	
10.00 – 16.00	Visit of ancient fortress with lunch outside of Odessa
16.00 – 19.00	Humor Day in Odessa (optional)
19.00	Welcome Dinner
April 2, Monday, 1st Day of Program	
09:00 – 10:00	Meeting with the Rector & Presentation of the program.
10.00 – 10.30	Museums of ONU
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:30	Working Group A , University administration and finance (general organizational issues)
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	Working Group A , University administration and finance (general management issues faced by university administrators)
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 17:00	Working Group A , University administration and finance (allocation of budget resources)
17:00 – 18:00	Team Debriefing Meeting
18.00 – 19.00	Symphony Concert
20:00	Dinner
April 3, Tuesday, 2nd Day of Program	
09:00 – 10:30	Working Group A , University administration and finance (revenue planning and management including fundraising strategies)
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:30	Working Group B , Student needs and the role of students in institutional affairs (introduction of interdisciplinary courses)
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	Working Group B , Meeting with students
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 17:00	Working Group C , Technology in Higher Education (use of technology to improve administration and general services)
17:00 – 18:00	Team Debriefing Meeting
19:00	Dinner
April 4, Wednesday, 3rd Day of Program	
09:00 – 10:30	Working Group C , Technology in Higher Education (impact of technology on the curriculum)
10:30 – 12:30	Team meets to prepare a preliminary report
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	Presentation of the Oral Report to the Rector and the University Team
15:30 – 16:30	Museums of ONU
19:00	Farewell Dinner
April 5, Thursday, Departure Day	
10.30 – 12.00	Press Conference
13.00 – 15.00	Team departs

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

THE VISITING ADVISORS PROGRAM (VAP)

The Salzburg Seminar launched this enhanced aspect of the Universities Project in the autumn of 1998. Under the VAP, 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. To date, seventy-nine visits have been held 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 RUSSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM (RHEP)

In 2003, in response to the need for continued engagement, the Salzburg Seminar and the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation initiated a five-year partnership (2003-2008) designed to promote the exchange of knowledge and best practices between the higher education leadership of the Russian Federation and their counterparts from North America, Western Europe and Central-Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States countries and Eurasia. The Russian Higher Education Program consists of two symposia per year, which take place in Salzburg and in the Russian Federation. Each symposium convenes representatives of universities, higher education organizations, service organizations, governmental structures, and stakeholders. The Russian Higher Education Program centers around five main topics:

- Russian Program of Modernization in the Context of Global Education Reform
- Higher Education Governance Reform: Issues and Challenges
- Strengthening the Role of Russian Universities in Service to Society
- Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Sharing International Experience
- Higher Education and Research (Networks, Linkages, Best Practices)

The Salzburg Seminar acknowledges with gratitude the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which provided funding for the Universities Project, the Visiting Advisors Program, and the extension of the VAP in Russia, respectively.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information regarding Salzburg Seminar programs, please contact one of the Seminar's offices below.

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