INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION AND
ITS IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW
QUALITY CULTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
BELGRADE

Institucionalna funkcionalna integracija i njen uticaj na razvoj nove
kulture kvaliteta na Univerzitetu u Beogradu

APSTRAKT U tekstu se analizira institucionalni okvir tradicionalnog tipa kontrole kvaliteta
nastave i naučnog rada nastavnika univerziteta. Potom se razmatraju novi, dodatni oblici
kontrole kvaliteta koji se uvode prema zahtjevima Bolonjske deklaracije. Pri tom se daju
primeri (tri fakulteta) kako se to sprovodi na konkretnom planu.

KLJUČNE REČI reforma univerziteta, tradicionalne forme kontrole kvaliteta, akreditacija,
nove forme kontrole kvaliteta, funkcionalna integracija univerziteta

ABSTRACT This text is devoted to the analysis of the institutional framework of the
traditional forms of quality control of the scientific and pedagogical work of teaching staff.
Then it discusses the new, supplementary forms of the quality control which are suggested by
Bologna declaration. Three examples are given (three faculties) to illustrate the way in
which it was implemented.

KEY WORDS reform of the university, traditional forms of quality control, accreditation,
new forms of quality control, functional integration of the university

Introductory Remarks

This article was part of the UNESCO-CEPES project Regional University
Network on Governance and Management of Higher Education in South East
Europe with specific reference to the development of the new quality culture and related institutional changes. It was considered and extensively discussed at the international conference *Institutional Structures and Governance Practices in the Context of New Quality Assurance* held in Vienna, April 1–3, 2004. It is believed to reflect mainstream ideas at the University of Belgrade in respect to the issue of quality assurance and quality culture.

This article is based on numerous discussions with many academics and students of the university, as well as discussions with many colleagues and experts from EUA, UNESCO-CEPES, and other institutions dealing with higher education and on numerous institutional documents such as: University of Belgrade self-evaluation report - European University Association, Institutional Evaluation Program (January 2002), University of Belgrade external evaluation report - EUA, (June 2002), Unesco-Cepes summary report based on the reports of the experts participating in the consultancy visit (Feb. 2004), Draft of the University Law (Sep. 2003), Statute of the University, activities of the faculties on the standardization and implementation of the quality control system, personal experience and insight into the functioning the university.

**A. Overall national framework for quality management**

UNESCO-CEPES experts concluded after the visit to the University of Belgrade that “[...] national framework for academic quality assurance is still in its infancy.”\(^1\) Indeed, there is virtually no provision for quality assurance and quality control in the existing *Law on University* from 2002.

Thus, efforts in the direction of introducing quality assurance and quality control policies at the University level are hampered by this fact. Notably, direct reference to the issue of quality – accreditation is explicitly present only in paragraph 118, stating that *Republic Council for the Advancement of University Education* is responsible for defining conditions for opening of the new higher educational institutions.

National Council based its decision to establish Accreditation Commission in January 2003 on this provision of the *Law*. The primary task of this Commission was to formulate guidelines for basic academic and other standards required for

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\(^1\) University of Belgrade: An Institutional policy paper on “Institutional Functional Integration and its Impact on the Development of a New Quality Culture at the University of Belgrade”; A UNESCO-CEPES summary report based on the reports of the experts participating in the consultancy visit (23-25 February 2004).
founding of new (mainly private-financed) higher educational institutions. (Currently, more than 50 such requests are pending.)

However, although necessary and much needed, these guidelines do not solve problem of institutional quality assurance and quality control. In a due course all universities in Serbia will undergo accreditation process. Given a large number of programs, and anticipating introduction of new ones, this is long-term task. Meanwhile, running programs are assumed as accredited, but subject to quality control. Number of faculties has introduced policies of monitoring and improving quality of teaching while in research area quality control is present due to the policies of Ministry of Science.

As noted above, there is no legal framework for quality assurance and quality control policies. Consequently, the state does not recognize the need for financial support and does not finance any activity in this respect. The whole financing of developing and implementing of existing policies was – and is – borne by individual universities/faculties. Regrettably, even current activities at the University are to be financed by the institution itself, and voluntary work is the main form of staff involvement.

B. The institutional framework for quality assurance

Background

In January 2002, in the University of Belgrade self-evaluation report written within the framework of European University Association Institutional Evaluation program it has been stated (p. 5):

[...] Specifically, the University considers the following immediate tasks as crucial for its modernization as an institution:

[...] introduction of quality assurance/quality control systems in teaching and managing;

systematic improvement in managerial skills of University administrators, professional staff, and decision-makers [...] 

The above is quoted as an indication that soon after the democratic changes in Serbia (October 2000) and re-establishment of regular academic work, University leadership recognized the need for and absence of a system for quality assurance

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and quality control at the University of Belgrade. Indeed, in their report, UNESCO-CEPES experts acknowledged that [...] management of the University of Belgrade has, so far, given proof of its commitment to the development of a greater awareness of quality issues among staff and students. This enhanced awareness is expected to lead to a new institutional quality culture [...]

Consciousness of the need for institutionalization of the policies mentioned at the level of the University is further strengthened by the Berlin Communiqué whereupon it is mandated that [...] by 2005 national quality assurance systems should include:

- a definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved;
- the evaluation of programs and institutions, including internal assessment, external review, the participation of students, and the publication of results;
- a system of accreditation, certification, or comparable procedures;
- international participation, co-operation, and networking [...]

All these issues call for special attention and concrete actions at national and institutional level, so that by 2005, as stipulated in the Berlin Communiqué, they will have taken concrete shape. Universities in general and the University of Belgrade in particular hold key positions in such a process, since “the primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with each institution itself”.

Current situation and recent developments

There is awareness of the importance of even partial introduction of quality control system as it may demonstrate benefits of such policies and have impact at the University level. In fact, several Faculties of the University successfully introduced quality policies and are successfully running them. In a significant development, University Council accepted a draft of Law on Higher Education that contains the following provisions relevant to this topic:

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3 University of Belgrade: An Institutional policy paper on “Institutional Functional Integration and its Impact on the Development of a New Quality Culture at the University of Belgrade”; A UNESCO-CEPES summary report based on the reports of the experts participating in the consultancy visit (23-25 February 2004)

4 ibid

5 Recognizing a need for a Law on Higher Education that would provide legal framework needed for implementation of Bologna process, and being unsatisfied with Ministry of Education and Sports proposal, Scientific Council established Commission that drafted Law proposal as seen from the standpoint of the University of Belgrade, with due concern to the other stakeholders views. It should be emphasized that this draft has been recognized as very good platform for further development by other universities in Serbia and Ministry of Education and Sports. (Meanwhile, Ministry changed, but the new one will give serious consideration to the proposal.) In particular, no
**National Council [for Higher Education]:** {Article 11}

5. establishes criteria for quality assessment of teaching, research, artistic and professional work, based on proposals from higher education institutions and Conference of the Universities [reector’s conference];

6. establishes standards for evaluation and procedures for accreditation of the study programs;

7. establishes standards for evaluation and procedures for accreditation of the institutions of higher education.

**Accreditation Commission:** {Article 13}

National Council establishes Accreditation Commission to carry out work on accreditation.

National Council nominates members of the Commission among eminent University professors, researchers, artists and professionals.

... University proposes members of Commission based on public call for application with due consideration to representation of various fields.

List of candidates is made public.

... Commission consists of ten members, two from each field ... 

**Accreditation Commission:** {Article 14}

1. proposes standards for evaluation and procedures for accreditation of study programs to the National Council;

2. proposes standards for evaluation and procedures for accreditation of institutions for higher education to the National Council;

3. carries out accreditation of institutions and study programs in higher education, decides on requests for accreditation and issues certificate of accreditation;

4. carries out accreditation of doctoral study programs;

5. realizes international cooperation in realm of accreditation, in particular with relevant institutions within European Higher Education Area;

6. carries out other tasks stipulated by the Commission Establishment Act.

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objections were raised whatsoever in respect to the provisions on quality assurance and quality control. The quoted articles are from the last revision of the proposal (February 2004).

6 Fields are: Natural and mathematical sciences; Social and human sciences; Medical sciences; Technical and technological sciences; Arts.
### Conference of universities [rector’s conference]: {Article 18}

1. considers questions of common interest for advancement of teaching, research, and art work at universities;
2. coordinates activities of the universities, in particular in respect to enrolment policies;
3. takes position on criteria for evaluation of teaching, research, art work, and professional work.

### Self-evaluation: {Article 38}

Institution of higher education carries out self-evaluation and evaluation of quality of its own study programs, teaching, and working conditions.

Self-evaluation is carried out according to procedures stipulated by the Statute of the institution of higher education.

Institution of higher education, on request, passes results of the self-evaluation to Accreditation Commission, as well as other quality-related data.

### Integrative function of university and other higher education institutions: {Article 48}

[...] University integrates functions of all its institutions and units, in particular faculties, by carrying out unified policies with an aim to advance quality of teaching, advancement research work, and advance art work.

In order to achieve above mentioned aims, university [...] has responsibility in particular in following areas:

1. strategic planning;
2. study programs;
3. quality assurance and quality control;
4. enrolment policies;
5. teaching staff elections;
6. issuing of diplomas and diploma supplements;
7. international cooperation;
8. investment planning.

[...]

### Expert Committees: {Article 55}
Expert Committees of the institution of higher education decides on topics of interest in realizing teaching process, research and art work.

[...] In Expert Committees, when dealing with questions related to the quality of teaching, reform of the curricula, analyses of the studying efficacy, and allocating of the number of ECTS points, students represent up to 20% of the Committee members.

| Own income: | {Article 60} |

[...] Faculties and higher education units that belong to the university are giving part of their own income\(^7\) to the university in order to finance common tasks at the university level.

The amount given to the university is decided on the base of planned activities and theirs costs, decided by the University Board for the academic year.

The above considerations related to quality assurance and quality control are accepted at the University (and in wider relevant community). Although not a law yet, they provide framework for the development of institutional policies that will be implemented at the University of Belgrade – its faculties – and action plan is in preparation phase that will incorporate requirements from the draft law.

Quality assurance should be inbuilt into the University mission through definition of learning goals (programs) that are aimed to provide graduates with knowledge relevant to the labor market. Extent in achieving goals in essence defines the quality of teaching, and adoption or adaptation of non-academic performance-measuring instruments may add to the relevance of the knowledge achieved at the university. In order to properly follow and to have appropriate follow-up, university has to develop comprehensive informational system. An information system developed at the University Lyon 3 is currently under consideration at the University of Belgrade.

\(^7\) Own income: Non-budgetary income.

\(\text{Figure 1. University of Belgrade academic decision-making bodies (next page)}\)
Commission for final
theses (master and
programs
Program Boards
Academic staff

Multidisciplinary
postgraduate studies
Vice-Deans (research)

Proposals: Theses Programs Academic staff

Program Boards
Existing system

If quality assurance and quality control are considered only as explicitly defined procedures and consequent actions, University of Belgrade as an institution does not have such a system in place yet. However, this does not imply that quality assessment is not present, nor that strive for “being better” is not inherent in everyday’s work at the University.

While not mentioned in clear text as such, assessment of performance of teachers is in fact performed each time when their contract expires. Thus, in regular intervals (four years for assistants, and five years for associate and extraordinary professors; full professors have permanent contracts), throughout their academic life university teachers are subject to scrutiny of their research achievements, but their pedagogical performance is also considered (based on peers’ and students’ opinions). Processes is multilayered, starting with consideration at the cathedra level, followed by peer (3-5 members) commission report that is publicly available and considered and voted at the faculty level; if approved by the qualified majority of the peers, final confirmation for position is given by the University Expert Boards, consisting of experts from the scientific field/area but from different faculties (see Figure 1). Applied properly, this system allows for transparency of the process, openness to all qualified candidates, possibility to eliminate unfit candidates, and equalizing criteria at the university level. The fact that process ends at the University Expert Board indicates that there are instruments for institutional-level policy. Admittedly, one has to recognize that there are still failures in the system implementation, but at the least instruments are in place.

Another aspect of a system that provides for university-wide adherence to standards is consideration of doctoral thesis proposals and defense commission final report on thesis at Expert Boards of appropriate scientific area. Only after these consideration and approvals thesis may be defended.

Finally, each curriculum proposal has to be approved by a particular Science Council (see Figure 1) that includes representatives from all faculties in the particular cluster, before considering the proposal at the University Council. It is not uncommon that during the consideration there are changes suggested and subsequently incorporated to the originally proposed curriculum.

Curricula are conceived by the faculties – usually initiated by the cathedra or department – based on students’ demand or teachers’ perception on the current developments; in recent times, several curricula were developed in collaboration with the universities abroad, being it in the form of joint diploma or multiparty diploma. Also, an interesting development is under way, whereupon two or more faculties within the University develop joint courses (in most instances specialization or master courses).
It is foreseen that the role of the University – its Rector and Scientific Council – will be more active in developments of new programs, by proposing new areas for curricula development to the faculties. This being implemented, faster response to the requirements of the labor market could be achieved and “inbreeding” of programs may be prevented.

Procedures described are traditional and served as tools for establishing University-wide criteria and standards, providing a form of system-wide quality assurance policy.

*Developments*

Obviously, however, the system outlined above cannot be a substitute for a fully developed quality assurance and quality control system. Thus number of faculties – half of total (see Table 1) – introduced their own quality assurance and quality control system. The depth level of this procedures varies, the simplest being undemanding students’ questionnaires, ending with very elaborate analyses of students’ responses (Faculty of Philosophy) or precise protocols for preparation of lectures, performance of laboratory practices, exams etc. (Faculty of Economics), leading to adoption of industry-level standards such as ISO standards (Faculty of Dentistry, Institute for Molecular Genetics and Genetic Engineering).
Table 1. Quality assurance and quality control policies/procedures currently existing at the faculties of the University of Belgrade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution (Faculty of, Institute)</th>
<th>Written policies – guidelines</th>
<th>Students’ questionnaire</th>
<th>Evaluation of results</th>
<th>Results – analyses made public</th>
<th>Issuing recommendation based on analyses</th>
<th>Note(^8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil transportation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Promotion; individual assessments; cathedra; dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defectology</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Promotion; individual assessments; cathedra; dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentistry</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>ISO 9001 pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Standards for teaching, textbooks, curricula, performance, exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical engineering</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Promotion; individual assessments; cathedra; dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for molecular genetics and genetic engineering</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>ISO 9002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Individual assessments; cathedra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Promotion; individual assessments; cathedra; dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical engineering</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Promotion; individual assessments; cathedra; dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Sciences</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Promotion; individual assessments; cathedra; dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Promotion; individual assessments; cathedra; dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Standardized procedures, institutionalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Promotion; individual assessments; cathedra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and physical culture</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Promotion; individual assessments; cathedra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Center for Multidisciplinary Studies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>ISO 9000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University multidisciplinary studies – Joint Masters</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Joint master with La Sapienza Roma and University of Sarajevo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary medicine</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Promotion; individual assessments; cathedra; dean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^8\) Standards introduced, level of consideration, actions taken.
It should be noted that 3-years TEMPUS project on quality assurance has been accepted for financing by EC in 2002, and is currently under implementation.

Albeit depth and analytical value of individual pool results vary significantly from the faculty to the faculty, even these results may prove as a valuable input for initial meta-analysis of the level of students’ satisfaction with teaching and reveal major common weaknesses in learning process. Added value may be achieved by linking these results with the teaching outcomes – students’ results in terms of success level and length of studies. The University Commission for Monitoring and Advancement of Teaching is currently working on this idea.

Advanced developments (cases)

Faculty of Philosophy introduced in academic 2003/2004 formalized system on evaluation of studies, teaching and management. This system is based on targeted questionnaires filled by students, teachers or administrative staff regarding different aspects of the Faculty activities. The main purpose of the system is to evaluate studies, teaching, and management in order to improve quality and advance work. Evaluation is carried at the ending semester of the given course, and evaluation of the management by the end of the first year of Dean’s mandate. Evaluation is done by the Commission nominated by the Faculty Council, and includes students’ and non-teaching staff representatives. Commission forms Expert Group that proposes instruments for the procedure and provides Commission with the analytical reports (Individual Courses, Departmental Summary Report, Faculty Summary Report, Management Report). Individual Courses reports – after Commission consideration and approval – are made available to all teachers of that course, and (optionally) to all teachers and students. Departmental Summary Report is available to teachers and students of the Department, and Department has to consider report and to bring about stance on it. Faculty Summary report is available to Council, Dean, all teachers and students, and is considered at the Council. Management Report is available to the Board and Dean, and is considered at the Board. Raw data and results databases are confidential and protected and only Dean’s Collegium has access to databases, as well as Commission upon request. Procedure is financed by the Faculty.

Faculty of Economics developed a set of policy papers and guidelines dealing with various aspects of teaching process and standardizing procedures of each of them:

1. Strategy in reforming of the teaching process
2. Standardization of course preparation

9 By-Law on Evaluation of Studies, Teaching and Management, Faculty of Philosophy, 2003.
3. Standardization of teaching
4. Development of the informational package
5. Standardization of textbooks
6. Standardization of evaluation
7. Standardization of seminar work and diploma theses

These papers set standards, describe in details suitable procedures, as well as instruments for measuring appropriate performance.

The value of the approaches described above has been recognized by UNESCO-CEPES team\(^\text{10}\): […] The alternative approach, which has been developed in certain faculties, such as that of economics and that of philosophy, is very much related to some of the most recent developments in the European quality assurance systems that place on emphasis on such issues as academic standards and benchmarking, student evaluation, and peer reviews […] Given the fact that systems established at faculties of Philosophy and Economics (and some others) will be taken as model systems at the University level (see below) in our view statement\(^\text{11}\) that […] this … approach is far from being generalized in the University. It is suggestive of islands in a sea of institutional traditionalism […] does not reflect full reality at the University of Belgrade. As it is mentioned above, half of the faculties does record at the least students’ opinion and considers them. Undoubtedly, however, there is plenty of room for improvement.

A special case and important development is Faculty of Dentistry that undertook task of being certified according to the ISO 9001 standards; this task is considered as interim step towards accreditation of the Faculty according to the EU standards. A characteristic of this task is that team of teachers from the Faculty was joined with the professional consulting agency and working plan developed that included among others: introduction of methods and techniques of quality improvement and establishing processes of continuous improvements and development of the quality system (identification of processes, inputs and outputs, bearers of tasks, and elaboration of the contents of guidelines that support the procedures). There are 38 documents required by the ISO 9001 standard, some of them to be mentioned:

1. Policies
2. Guidelines

\(^{10}\) University of Belgrade: An Institutional policy paper on “Institutional Functional Integration and its Impact on the Development of a New Quality Culture at the University of Belgrade”; A UNESCO-CEPES summary report based on the reports of the experts participating in the consultancy visit (23-25 February 2004).

\(^{11}\) ibid
6. Procedures for conflict resolution
7. Procedures for corrective measures

11. Data protection and security

15. Human resources management

19. Students’ requirements fulfillment

21. Overseeing and control in teaching process
22. Preparation and approval of curricula

24. Development and improving of teaching

27. Informing students
28. Preparing and effecting practical teachings

31. Helping students in absorbing and fulfilling curricula requirements
32. Exams

37. Ethical code

Documents directly related to students are to be written in form of Student Information Booklet, distributed among the students.

There are several reasons for the University of Belgrade – its teachers and staff – to initiate and support changes required by the introduction of quality assurance and quality control system. The most superficial level is awareness of the demand by ministers that a system should be in place by 2005, and it is expected from the government to seriously and within acceptable time frame consider this issue. On the other hand, awareness is present that the University of Belgrade is the most important institution of higher education in Serbia and that it has to preserve and protect aspects important for the University identity, but to qualify for such guardian role the University must prove its fitness in establishing and guarding standards. Very important incentive is students’ righteous demand to be taught under acceptable conditions, to relevant and contemporary contents, without over-demanding requirements at exams, and to have (at the least partial) control over the
learning process. The dynamics of permeation of these ideas in academic community will be increased by the formation of the Students’ Parliament at the University level, as well as more rigorous requirements that individual’s promotion will depend considerably on performance evaluation.

It is not surprising – and known from other traditional academic communities – that quality assurance and quality control systems are not heartily welcomed by all members of the University. While taking exception for the use of the word “most”, the statement [...] The dominant view among most of the academic staff at the University seems to be that quality is inherent to the University of Belgrade, because it is the largest, the most prestigious, and the oldest Serbian university. Academic quality is highly personalized, considered to be embodied in each staff member. It is assumed as given and thus to be taken for granted.[...] is close to the heart of non-negligible number of the teachers at the University. Yet, when faced with arguments such as accreditation issues, and pressure from peers and students, resistance dissipates to individual level that can be overcome. However, more explicit commitment of the government is much needed, followed by concrete actions and particularly with financial incentives. University leadership has to promote issue more aggressively together with Deans, and students have to be substantially more active and organized in demanding guaranties for quality of teaching.

Coming soon

In a recent move, Council of the University of Belgrade formed Commission for Advancement and Monitoring of Teaching consisting of the individual faculties’ Vice-Deans (in charge with study programs) and with an expert board that involves persons that developed or participated in development of successful systems. Working plan of the University of Belgrade for the next year contains provision for ensuring proper working conditions for this Commission (office space, administrative support, equipment), and it is envisaged that permanent body will be established at the University of Belgrade after initial set-up of the system.

C. Institutional functional integration and its relationships with the current institutional governance and management structures

Confederal structure of the University of Belgrade brings about concern of foreign observers whether reforms – specifically those related to the Bologna process – are something achievable: [...] The most debatable legal issue refers obviously to the organizational structure of the University. The current structure of the University of Belgrade, with its thirty faculties, is the result of long-term historical development. It would not be an exaggeration to call this university a “conglomerate of faculties”. The faculties are currently the only legal entities, and the deans lobby and negotiate their annual financing directly with the ministry (or ministries). Around half of the students pay tuition fees, and overall student support by the government (e.g., in terms of housing in residence halls, etc.), covers six years, which as such may be inducive to prolonging the time to graduation. With the extra income from services, tuition, or contract work, some of the faculties seem to fare considerably better financially than others.

The role of the Rector and his team under present circumstances seems “weak” and generally difficult, simply because the existing university structure and management practices leave little managerial room for him. Yet we were frequently told that the Rector’s role needed to be strengthened and that the overall management needed to be made more integrated. Apparently, the Rector’s office cannot even have access to a university-wide database simply because one does not yet exist, even though one is absolutely needed for management purposes. But there also seemed to be a lack of any concrete models for such a new construction and for the possibility of discussing it. One fear often cited is that an integrated approach might result in the dissolution of the entire university. The current law can be interpreted as being a kind of ‘umbrella’ law that although is very detailed is short of specifics regarding the directions to be taken by statutes, etc. The overall university organization thus appears fragmented and ineffective. The opinion expressed was that there is a “gap” between the government and the university in this respect. There is apparently no coherent national policy or strategy for the development of higher education, the task of which has been “left” to the universities themselves – perhaps not the way to identify a good solution. Actually, this situation has given a great deal of room for the emergence of private universities, because a part of the higher education “market” has been left “empty” [...]\footnote{ibid}

Undoubtedly, the role of the University of Belgrade as an institution has to be strengthened – the basic premise that University is legal entity (besides its faculties
and Institutes) is already in place. Attempts of the regime to tame the academic community in 90-ties through University (institution) on one side and to strike deals with individual faculties led to “disperse” culture at the University. However, some disrupting effects were noted immediately, such as almost unrestrained proliferation of teachers at individual faculties, with application of local standards only. Consensus was quickly achieved that there must be formal University-wide consideration of individual’s qualification for a given teaching position, apart from making a report publicly available. By mid-90-ties system of University expert boards was established, and is still in place, providing a form of systematic evaluation procedure.

As it was due to external factors that “dissipative” approach was in a way logical, current situation favors – demands – more functionally integrated University. This is specifically seen in several areas, already mentioned (article 48, 60) mostly concerned with teaching process and related strategic planning. We can add hear one more, very important dimension, such as the development of

University-wide informational system.

University integrates functions of all its institutions and units, in particular faculties, by carrying out unified policies with an aim to advance quality of teaching, advancement research work, and advance art work.

It seems safe to conclude that members of the University of Belgrade are aware of the need of a functionally integrated University, while it is perceived that faculties need also status of a legal entity in order to fulfill additional tasks, such as providing specialized services to the third parties.

In initial report, question of the internal organization of the University of Belgrade was commented in a footnote: “Discussion on the need of Faculties as legal entities is beyond the scope of the present report. Few issues have to be mentioned, however. Management analyses indicated enormous difficulties in running the whole structure of the University of Belgrade as centralized system, the fact that University spreads over the whole city being not the least concern. The other issue is a way of financing that appear to be in place for a time being – the state provides only a part of money needed (somewhat above 50% on the average), and the rest of the money faculties are earning on the market; it may be expected that incentive for earning would be substantially reduced if the alimentation is to be done through University. Furthermore, research institutes that are part of the University of Belgrade are governed through Law on Science, and cannot be easily denied of existence as law entities. And, finally, no study or simulation brought about model or proved alternative that would sound plausible for implementation within the present reality framework.” However, some questions were raised whether university organized as the Belgrade’s may provide strong enough institution to ensure proper QA&C. Consideration of the article cited above and the
note that a faculty cannot exist outside of the frame of an university, nor as an independent entity, argues for clear division of competencies and responsibilities. Functional integration of the University of Belgrade is based on careful consideration of the present and projected circumstances. The prime target is curricular reform along the Bologna process lines, and everything else is considered as the tool for achieving this.

It is expected that by-laws of the University members and that of University will be changed to reflect approach mentioned. It should be emphasized in strong terms that reluctance of the University of Belgrade to steeply change its organization at the administrative level is also based on the perception that primary target in years to come is change of curricula to the Bologna guidelines and to increase quality of teaching and reduce studying time (current average 8 years for nominal 5 years of studies), and to be accepted as full-fledged European university in European Higher Education Area. These tasks alone are of great complexity, and with meager state support it appears unrealistic to consider simultaneous administrative restructuring. It is believed that maximalistic approach in respect to teaching and minimalistic approach (change only those aspects that would hamper teaching reform) in respect to the administrative organization will bring about University that is functionally integrated and adapted to the local conditions.

While it is true that there is no University-wide data base even on students enrolment, this is consequence of virtually non-existing investments to University of Belgrade for almost 15 years, including such necessities like high-speed communication links between faculties, and availability of computers. It cannot be expected that University and its faculties operating on a brink of financial breakdown can invest without firm state commitment and help.

During the last four years, however, situation substantially improved because of the efforts of the Ministry of Science, and currently almost all faculties of the University of Belgrade are linked with fiber optics, and University Computing Center (focal point of the national academic network) is equipped to handle gigabyte-level communications.

Government of the Republic of France committed € 600.000 to the improvement of the management at the universities of Serbia, with University of Belgrade being a coordinator of the project; the primary aim of the project is implementation of the software package developed by the French universities for managing institution-level data acquisition and processing at the University of Belgrade. France’s budgetary problems delayed somewhat onset of the program, but it seems that it will take off this year\(^{14}\).

\(^{14}\) University of Belgrade application for a TEMPUS project that was geared towards formation of databases was rejected on technicality.
Again, it should be stressed that number of faculties – and even clusters of faculties – already have in place some systems, and once funding is being provided it is expected that formation of data-bases will be commenced within a relatively short period.

D. Policy recommendations for further development of the institutional quality culture

Introduction of quality assurance and quality control policies in higher education aims towards improvement of teaching, and consequently better knowledge and professional preparation of students that makes them more adaptable at the labor market. In addition, quality control should enhance awareness of improvements in education in all stakeholder groups (teachers, students, administration), and it should link all participants in interactive process of quality enhancement at the University of Belgrade. This will provide for development of the culture of evaluation and self-evaluation that will ensure constant betterment of teaching quality at the University. To reiterate, it is understood that primary responsibility for the quality assurance and quality control lies with the institutions.

General principles to adhere in respect to the new quality culture at the University of Belgrade have been formulated by the UNESCO-CEPES group\(^{15}\), which stated that new quality culture should:

- guarantee that certain quality standards, taken as references in the University and agreed upon by all those concerned, are met while also making sure that study programs and degrees correspond to generally accepted quality descriptors, thus assuring their international recognition;
- focus quality assurance mechanisms on both internal traditions and external benchmarked standards related to student learning outcomes;
- establish clear correspondences between internal and external (international) benchmarking of standards and criteria, with reference to each study program and degree, thus allowing for wider student mobility and credit transfer;
- systematically inform the students and the public at large about the quality assurance institutional arrangements;

\(^{15}\) University of Belgrade: An Institutional policy paper on “Institutional Functional Integration and its Impact on the Development of a New Quality Culture at the University of Belgrade”; A UNESCO-CEPES summary report based on the reports of the experts participating in the consultancy visit (23-25 February 2004)
- facilitate the relations between quality statements and the recognition of programs and qualifications, including entries to professional practice.

*Figure 2.* Quality assurance and quality control flow chart – basic approach at the University of Belgrade.

Recognizing the validity of those considerations, a developmental plan is to be devised for the task of introducing quality assessment and quality control culture at the University of Belgrade as an institution.

Analyses of experiences that other universities had and have now allow for a conclusion that there is no "the best" model that could be copied and straightly implemented. In reality, each university (and for that matter faculty) should develop its own model taking into account its own tradition and needs, environment, resources, as well as existing models. *Figure 2* illustrates general approach to the quality in higher education that seems proper for the University of Belgrade.

University of Belgrade is large and complex institution, and currently has limited resources, financial and administrative, for introducing full-fledged institutional quality assurance and quality control policies in a single step.

Thus, the concept of initial introduction of quality assurance and quality control – *Policies for monitoring and improving of teaching at the University of Belgrade* – have to be based on the following principles:
1. Realism: Aims and goals have to set up with consideration of the existing situation at faculties regarding quality of teaching and management, awareness of importance of quality improvements, resources available.

2. Practicality: Taking into account existing experiences regarding quality assurance and quality control at the individual faculties and to use those as a basis for institution-wide developments of models.

3. Flexibility: Adaptation to specificities at different faculties – to consider differences in teaching methodologies, number of teachers and students, as well as resources available for the quality assurance and quality control monitoring. Standardization of the procedures should not become rigid, and QA&C should not develop into obstacle in process of teaching, or the end by itself.

4. Participation: Sustainable and improvable system mandates that as much as possible teachers and students are to be involved in a process, meaning that all faculties have to be enrolled in initial phase of system development, and that from very beginning there must be efficient communication and transparency in development.

5. Decentralization: Faculties should take over as soon as possible responsibility for assessment and evaluation of quality, organizationally and financially. University itself has to supervise, advice and coordinate, i.e. to ensure choice of the best model, its harmonizing at faculties, and institutional consolidation.

6. Stepwise introduction: Due to the differences in achievements in quality assurance and quality control, the system has to be introduced stepwise, e.g. starting with simple questionnaires where there were none, while in more advanced and experienced environments further policies will be developed. This way existing experiences would be put at the best use, communications enabled, awareness raised, and faculties with the least experience would have time for organizational preparations.

7. Efficiency: Stepwise and relatively fast accomplishments of smaller goals will increase self-awareness of participants and enhance consciousness that introduction of quality assurance and quality control policies and practice is realistic and achievable idea.

E. Concluding remarks

University of Belgrade is aware of the processes that are shaping European Higher Education Area, and is accepting note that it has – as an institution – to be changed. Being signatory of Bologna process, Serbia and its institutions, universities
included, have to take steps to fulfill obligations undertaken by signing *Bologna declaration*.

Quality assurance and quality control policies are the priority tasks in reforming European universities. University of Belgrade has some experience in this respect, and few of its member faculties are performing well in this context. Much has to be done, however. Initial steps are taken, basic consensus achieved, experience exists. Obstacles are not irrelevant, and structure of the institution is not best suited for the quick and decisive moves. Yet, it can be done, and in a due course – not too long – University of Belgrade will develop New Quality Culture, appropriate for an European Higher Education Area university.
APPENDIX 1

University of Belgrade – Clusters of faculties

Natural sciences and mathematics
Faculty of Biology
Faculty of Chemistry
Faculty of Geography
Faculty of Mathematics
Faculty of Physical Chemistry
Faculty of Physics

Medical faculties
Faculty of Defectology
Faculty of Stomatology
Faculty of Medicine
Faculty of Sports
Faculty of Pharmacy
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Humanities and Social Sciences
Faculty of Civic Defense
Faculty of Economy
Faculty of Law
Faculty of Philology
Faculty of Philosophy
Faculty of Political Sciences
Faculty of Teacher Training

Engineering
Faculty of Architecture
Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Metallurgy
Faculty of Civil Engineering
Faculty of Electrical engineering
Faculty of Management
Faculty of Mechanical Engineering
Faculty of Mining and Geology
Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering
Technical Faculty in Bor

Biotechnical
Faculty of Agriculture
Faculty of Forestry

APPENDIX 2

Guidelines and Criteria for Evaluation and Accreditation in Higher Education (to be considered by the Republic Council for Advancement of University Education):

Introduction
Norms and standards for establishing and running institutions of higher education in Republic of Serbia
Guidelines for self-evaluation and criteria for evaluation and accreditation of universities
Guidelines for self-evaluation and criteria for evaluation and accreditation of university units
Guidelines for self-evaluation and criteria for evaluation and accreditation of study programs
Guidelines for self-evaluation and criteria for evaluation and accreditation of scientific and pedagogical performance of teachers
Criteria for electing and promoting teachers at the universities
Guidelines for self-evaluation and criteria for evaluation and accreditation of management and non-teaching staff
Guidelines for student’s participation in evaluation and accreditation
Terminology