<u>**ΠΡΟΣ:**</u>

- Την Αντιπρύτανη
  του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου
  Θεσσαλονίκης
  & Πρόεδρο της ΜΟ.ΔΙ.Π.,
  Καθ. κ. Δέσπω Λιάλιου

  <u>**ΚΟΙΝ:**</u>
- Στον Πρόεδρο του
  Τμήματος Φιλολογίας του
  Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου
  Θεσσαλονίκης
- Καθ. κ. Ιωάννη Τζιφόπουλο

Αθήνα 17/3/2014
Αρ. Πρωτ.: 1044

Αξιότιμες Κυρίες και Κύριοι

Σας αποστέλλουμε συνημμένο το <u>τελικό</u> κείμενο της Έκθεσης Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης του Τμήματος Φιλολογίας του Ιδρύματός σας, το οποίο μας παρέδωσε η Επιτροπή Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης, αφού έλαβε γνώση των παρατηρήσεων που μας έστειλε το Τμήμα επί του "Σχεδίου" της Έκθεσης.

Το κείμενο της Έκθεσης θα αναρτηθεί στο δικτυακό τόπο της Α.ΔΙ.Π.

Με ευχαριστίες για τη συνεργασία σας και
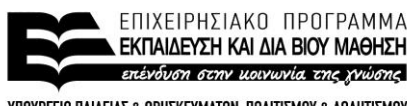Με τιμή,

Με εντολή του Προέδρου της Α.ΔΙ.Π.

*(υπογραφή)
Καθ. Γεώργιος Σταμέλος
Μέλος της Α.ΔΙ.Π.

*Η υπογραφή έχει τεθεί στο πρωτότυπο που παραμένει στο αρχείο του φορέα.

Συνημμένο: Τελικό κείμενο της Έκθεσης Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης του Τμήματος Φιλολογίας του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης.

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ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

Α.ΔΙ.Π.

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ & ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H.Q.A.

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT: School of Philology

UNIVERSITY/TEI: Aristotle University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the School of Philology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Prof. Panagiotis Roilos (Coordinator)
   Harvard University

2. Prof. Dr. Andreas E. Müller
   Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien

3. Dr. Alexis Dimitriadis
   Utrecht University

4. Dr. Maria Kaliambou
   Yale University

N.B. The structure of the "Template" proposed for the External Evaluation Report mirrors the requirements of Law 3374/2005 and corresponds overall to the structure of the Internal Evaluation Report submitted by the Department.

Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

The EEC visited the campus of the School of Philology on December 17-22 and was first formally received by the vice Dean D. Lialiou. The following days (Dec. 18-19), the EEC met with and interviewed the chair of the School, the directors of the Departments, the members of the IEC, the chairs of the committees on undergraduate and graduate studies and on the Erasmus program, (tenured and untenured) faculty members of all the Departments, undergraduate and graduate students, administrators of the School and EEDIP staff. The EEC examined the School's Internal Evaluation Report, extensive material/documents on teaching (syllabi, course descriptions, course packets, samples of term papers, final exams, MA and PhD theses, etc.), and a thorough powerpoint presentation prepared by the graduate students. Unfortunately, the EEC had no access to the School's facilities due to the fact that a very small group of students, who were protesting against the external evaluation process adopted by the Greek state and implemented by the University, had occupied the buildings. The same students interrupted the EEC's meeting with the vice Dean.

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

It should be stressed that the quality and appropriateness of the Internal Evaluation Report was exceptionally high, especially given the fact that the evaluation requirements are sometimes inapplicable to Humanistic disciplines. All other documents were also outstandingly detailed, clear, and very well-substantiated (to the extent the EEC can judge). The members of the EEC would like to commend the School and especially its administrative leadership and the relevant committee for the quality and completeness of the Internal Evaluation Report and the additional material that became available to them. The EEC is convinced that, despite initial and in some cases still lingering reactions against the evaluation process, the internal evaluation process has significantly contributed to the School's self-awareness and assessment, as was also stressed by members of its faculty and administrative leadership. The EEC was told by those members that the internal evaluation process provided the School with a very helpful overview of its many strengths and its weaknesses and helped it address and remedy some important issues, mainly related to the curriculum and its implementation.

. *Curriculum*
To be filled separately for each undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programme.

APPROACH

The School of Philology offers undergraduate, post-graduate (Master) and Ph.D. programs of studies.

<u>Undergraduate program</u>

The School of Philology offers a four-year undergraduate curriculum in three areas: 1. Classics, 2. medieval and modern Greek Philology, and 3. Linguistics. Although two of these specializations (Classics and Linguistics) could be autonomous departments, as is the case at other European universities, all these three departments are within the same institutional frame, according to the founding history and academic ideology of the School as well as current social and economic needs. The most important objectives of the School of Philology are 1. to teach students ancient, medieval, and modern Greek philology, and linguistics, 2. to prepare students to become excellent teachers for the secondary school system, and 3. to give them the option for research and academic career.

According to the last revision of the curriculum in 2002-3, students have to fulfill successfully 49 courses (which correspond to at least 240 ECTS) in order to get their first degree (*ptychio*). The undergraduate program is divided into two sections: 1. the first two years constitute the "core" of the program (*kormos*), 2. the last two are devoted to the "specialization" (*eidikeusi*). Out of the 49 courses for the degree, undergraduates have to take 25 compulsory courses during the first two years of the "core" program, in which the tripartite division of the School is clearly evident: 10 courses in classics, 10 in medieval and modern Greek, and 5 in linguistics. During the last two years of the specialization, students have to take 15 courses on their specialization, 5 electives courses from other Departments of the University, and 4 courses on a foreign language. There is no prerequisite system in use, which means that students can take further advanced courses without having passed the elementary ones.

In 2011, after the first internal evaluation in the School of Philology, a problem regarding the distribution of students to the three departmental specializations was raised and addressed: in the period 2006-2011 the majority of the students (56%) chose the specialization on medieval and modern Greek literature. In 2011-12 the School decided to implement two seminars (*frontistiria*) for this specialization, which immediately effected a drastic change in the enrollments: in 2011-2013 43% of the students chose medieval and modern Greek as their specialization, 33% classics, and 25% linguistics, a result which brings a better balance among the three Departments of the School. The EEC was very pleased to see the positive results of that internal evaluation.

<u>Graduate program</u>

The graduate program advances the strong foundations built on the undergraduate level and offers a two-year Master program and a three year Ph.D. program on the above-mentioned disciplines (Classics, medieval and modern Greek Philology, and Linguistics). Also, the School participates in various interdisciplinary/interdepartmental programs, such as: 1. Studies in European Literature and Culture, which is a collaboration with the Departments of English, French, German, and Italian of the Aristotle University, and 2. Modern Greek and Cultural Studies, which is a collaboration with the Departments of English, French, and

German of the Aristotle University and the School of Philology of the University of Crete.

The Master program consists of four semesters. In the first three semesters students should elect courses and write short research essays; the last (fourth) semester is devoted to the writing and completion of the MA thesis. At the PhD level, as the regulations require, students have to complete their dissertation in a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve semesters (i.e., minimum three and maximum six years) and are not required to attend any courses. However, students are encouraged to participate in seminars, colloquia, and conferences, so that they further familiarize themselves with current scholarship and develop a variety of academic skills.

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

Undergraduate program

The undergraduate curriculum is very well and clearly articulated and is comparable to the highest standards of the best Universities of the world. The EEC had the option to consult some syllabi, exams, and course packets of courses offered at all the three Departments of the School. The quality of all the material that became available to the EEC was excellent.

All courses are taught once a week, in three-hour slots. Some students commented that teaching in three consecutive hours is sometimes burdensome and suggested that certain courses should be divided into more units. The EEC holds that this may be a better option for the curriculum development as well: for instance, it may help the Departments to develop courses with many variables (e.g. theoretical and one practical constituents/units). However, the EEC understands that this may be a rather difficult option, given the current shortage of teaching staff at the School.

Another problem that was raised by the faculty members was the lack of prerequisites. As mentioned in the above section, students can reach their final year of studies without having passed the elementary courses. This causes some issues to the educational and overall academic experience of both students and faculty, since the level of knowledge and the skills of the students may not be the one expected or even needed for more advanced courses. Faculty members try to solve this issue with various methods: for instance, they incorporate in the exams of advanced courses some assignments relevant to elementary ones, so that students feel "obliged" to take the core courses first and then move to the advanced ones. The EEC believes that it is a pity to "sacrifice" the level of a potentially excellent advanced course because of this issue, which, of course, is not unique to the School but rather reflects systemic drawbacks of the country's overall University system. The EEC suggests that the faculty should try to develop a more formal framework that would address and remedy this problem in the most effective possible way.

Regarding resources, the Department has excellent libraries and a computer lab that contribute to the successful implementation of the curriculum. The EEC strongly hopes that the current dire financial situation will not affect the development and enhancement of the resources and, as a result, the curriculum too.

Graduate program

The goals of the graduate programs, which aim to educate and train students in advanced academic research, are clearly articulated, well thought, and successfully achieved. The program meets the highest academic standards at a European and even an international level. There is an evident and consistent curriculum coherence and continuity from undergraduate to graduate studies.

The graduate students with whom we met expressed their enthusiasm and contentment with their studies at the School of Philology, and gave us positive evaluations of both the faculty members as well as the programs of study. Some students commented on the lack of variety of courses. The EEC would like to suggest that, in order to keep a satisfactory variety of courses, the Departments of the School should consider addressing this issue in the best possible way and try to develop alternative systems of course offering at the MA level—to the extent this is feasible under current circumstances. The School of Philology already implements methods, such as cross-listed interdisciplinary courses with other Departments, or interdepartmental courses, or even distance learning courses in collaboration with other Universities as well. The EEC was very pleased to be informed about these important initiatives and would like to support their further development.

Students communicated also to us that they are not offered opportunities to be actively involved in teaching. The majority of them think that such an involvement (ideally as teaching fellows) would help them acquire pedagogical skills that are necessary for their careers as educators. It should be stressed that the lack of an institutionalized framework that would enable graduates to teach is not unique to the School but reflects the practice and regulations of the country's University system as a whole. However, there is no doubt that the participation of Ph.D. students in the teaching process could contribute to the enhancement of the curriculum and further improvement of its implementation. Ph.D. candidates could teach some of the language courses on ancient Greek and Latin.

Students have also expressed their desire to be offered instruction on academic writing. As faculty members assured the EEC, they do teach courses and seminars (at both the undergraduate and graduate levels) in the context of which students are offered such instruction. The EEC would like to recommend to all the Departments of the School to try to systematize such courses, which can be taught in collaboration, for instance, with the new computer laboratory, which should be more actively and frequently used for teaching purposes.

Co-teaching, a practice already followed by faculty members of the School, can contribute to the development of additional elective courses. The EEC would like to stress the significance of co-teaching and support its continuation by the faculty members.

In general the goals of the curriculum are very well implemented and its objectives are successfully met at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. However, there are several difficulties that hamper the normal function of the School, such as the frequent occupations (*katalepseis*) of the School by groups of students or other members of the community, which gravely affect also the effective implementation of the curriculum. Other difficulties such as the large audiences at the core courses, the lack of sufficient classrooms, and the lack of technical support for some classes in the Department of Linguistics further inhibit the normal function of the School.

IMPROVEMENT

The School of Philology is aware of the problems mentioned above and discussed with the EEC some measures that may improve the curriculum, all of which are strongly supported by the EEC. The improvements to the curriculum suggested by the School are as follows:

1. Courses on pedagogy (teaching qualification)

   In the light of the new reforms in education recently voted by the Greek parliament, the School has to introduce a "certificate of education" for those students who will choose to work as teachers in secondary education. In order to be able to offer such a certificate the

School needs to offer a certain number of relevant courses. This will affect the curriculum as a whole. The School already offers some courses on pedagogy, but more courses are needed to fulfill the requirements for the certificate of teaching qualification. The faculty members are working on the best way to develop and implement those changes.

2. Language courses on ancient Greek and Latin

In recent years a number of students are enrolled in the School without previous knowledge of ancient Greek and Latin, which —needless to mention—causes a huge problem to the normal function of classes and to the academic progress of other students. Faculty members expressed their concern about this issue and suggested the introduction of language courses for those students who need extra language support.

3. Introductory course on ancient Greek literature and culture

Another course offering that may improve the curriculum would be a new, introductory course on the study of ancient Greek literature and culture. So far the possible content of such a course is dispersed in various other courses. A concentrated course on this subject would help students to get a concise and general overview of the discipline of Classics, to feel well informed and more confident when it is time to choose (or not) this major, and to be well prepared for the rest of the curriculum.

The EEC believes that introductory courses like this could be helpful not only for the Classics but for all the three Departments of the School.

4. Interdisciplinary courses

Faculty members of the School suggested that collaborations with other Departments and Schools of the University (such as history, literature, archaeology, philosophy, pedagogy etc.) should be developed with a view to establishing new, interdisciplinary directions of study (e.g. "Ancient Studies," "Byzantine Studies," "Modern Greek Studies" etc.). If such developments are introduced, the curriculum would encompass various classes from various disciplines. The EEC supports this vision, all the more since such interdepartmental/interdisciplinary collaborations may create more curricular options especially at the graduate level.

In addition to these ideas suggested by the School of Philology, the EEC would like to recommend the following:

5. Further use of digital technology and online methodologies

The current curriculum is excellent in terms of content. The EEC suggests expanded and more consistent use of modern pedagogical methodologies and current technological services and media (such as digital humanities, e-learning etc.). The EEC also suggests that the Laboratory of Philology and New Technology be more frequently used for the development and teaching of undergraduate and graduate courses at all Departments of the School. Collaboration in this sector with other, perhaps even international, institutions that systematically employ advanced technological methods of teaching may be helpful.

6. Equal distribution of the core courses among the three Departments of the School

The Department of Linguistics has a thriving and strong presence at the School. However, the "core" (*kormos*) courses, which are obligatory for all undergraduate students of the School, are primarily targeted to the needs of students in Classics and medieval and modern Greek Philology, something that is reflected in the

unequal distribution of core courses among the three Departments. The EEC understands that this is a difficult issue, closely related to the lack of faculty members, the history of the School, etc. The School is encouraged to revisit constructively the presence and representation of the Department of Linguistics, and the needs of its students, at that level of studies.

7. Curriculum Committees

The School of Philology has recently (since October 2013) expanded its reliance on the committee system, empowering among others the committees on undergraduate and graduate studies. The EEC applauds this important and significant progress and believes that the School should further develop such institutionalized administrative bodies (committees) that would oversee curriculum revisions.

B. Teaching

APPROACH AND IMPLEMENTATION

The EEC wishes to note that unfortunately it was not possible for its members to have access to classrooms or to attend classes during their visit to the campus, due to the fact that the buildings of the School were occupied by a small group of students protesting against the evaluation procedure. However, the School made available to the EEC substantial material concerning the preparation, implementation, and assessment of course teaching (course descriptions and syllabi, copies of written exams, MA theses, PhD theses, final research papers). That material concerned no less than 60 courses. In addition to those files, EEC was given online access to material about an almost equal number of courses. As a rule, the course descriptions and syllabi provide very clear and detailed outlines of the courses, which, to a great extent, cover up-to-date bibliographies and familiarize students with current scholarship on a number of different research topics.

Undergraduate courses are taught as lectures (*dialexeis*), whereas the graduate ones as seminars ([*phrontisteria*]; advanced classes requiring attendance and having an enrolment limit of 25). Teaching is done in traditional as well as more modern ways involving the use of technology (computers and/or audiovisual media). Books and other teaching material (articles etc.) are distributed to students or posted online on electronic platforms (blackboard or open e-class). Students' performance at undergraduate courses is assessed through written examinations; performance at seminars is assessed through final research papers or sometimes through other work carried out during the semester.

Detailed information about the curriculum and course offerings becomes available to students from the very beginning of their studies. As for this semester, the course catalogue, the program of study, and course syllabi are available also online, a development that the EEC considers of great importance for course planning. At the end of each semester students are invited to participate in course evaluation, which is done electronically. The University has recently revised the course evaluation questionnaire, making it somewhat shorter in the hope of increasing participation.

The data provided by the Internal Evaluation makes it clear that each semester only 63% of registered students take the final exams. 80% of these students pass the exams. The minimum duration of required studies is 4 years; however, only 24% of the registered students graduate at the end of their senior year. The majority of the students need an average of 5,5 years to complete their studies. The average graduation grade is 6,67 (out of 10). The ratio of teaching faculty to undergraduate students is 1:40, and to graduates 1:5. In the academic year 2012-2013, 30 faculty members out of a total of 58 offered graduate courses. The minimum required teaching load for each faculty member is 6 hours per week.

Teaching is facilitated by the availability of the excellent libraries attached to the Departments that house more than 90,000 volumes (not including periodicals).

The School of Philology (both students and faculty) participates in the Erasmus program, which allows students to study and teaching staff to teach at Universities outside Greece. Course credits earned at European Universities in the context of the Erasmus exchange program are acknowledged by the Aristotle University.

According to the data provided by the Internal Evaluation, the School of Philology has had collaborations with 62 Departments at European Universities (in 18 countries) in the recent years (including the academic year 2012-2013). In the period 2011-13, 30 students per year visited other Universities (the number is now increasing; in the academic year 2013-14, 44

students benefit from this program), while 31 students came to the Departments from other European Universities. Concerning the number of students from foreign Universities attending courses at the Aristotle University through the Erasmus Program, the School of Philology is second only to University's Law School. These impressive numbers attest to the very active participation of the School in the Erasmus Program as well as to the School's commendable visibility at an international level. It should also be noted that around 10 faculty members per year teach at other European Universities, while 2-3 faculty members from other Universities contribute to the course curriculum of the School.

RESULTS AND IMPROVEMENTS

A main aim of the teaching staff is to ensure the effective transmission of scholarly knowledge and skills to students. Based on material that became available to it (course packets, syllabi, etc.) the EEC feels that teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels meets high standards (it is a pity that the EEC could not attend classes due to the occupation of the School by a small group of students; see introduction above). Teaching often draws from the research of the faculty and makes regular, and at times innovative, use of multimedia facilities and technologies, thus being at the forefront of teaching practices both at a national and even at a European level in the broader field of Humanities. The EEC enthusiastically praises (and strongly recommends the expansion of) the use of such facilities in teaching.

Although the current dire economic situation has not affected the (majority of the) teaching staff's enthusiasm, zeal, and devotion to their academic mission, it has caused a number of practical problems, which unfortunately enhance the negative effect of some chronic, structural drawbacks of the country's University system on academic performance: for instance, the ratio of faculty to students becomes even more problematic due to the fact that no new faculty are hired and retired teaching staff are not replaced, whereas the number of incoming students remains more or less the same; the maintenance of classrooms and other teaching facilities, as both faculty and students have let the EEC know, is often problematic, etc.

The graduate students with whom the EEC met had prepared an impressive powerpoint presentation of their involvement in the overall academic activities of the School. We suggest that both the School and the HQA should review and take into serious consideration this important document, if it can be made available to them, since it includes some noteworthy (indicative) statistical and other data, which attest to the effectiveness of the teaching practices at the School as well as to some issues of concern related to the overall University system of the country.

The School should strive to establish mechanisms of formal collective oversight over the form and quality of teaching, by empowering appropriate committees to assess all available quantitative and qualitative indicators (including student evaluations, if this can be arranged) and prepare recommendations for improvement, when appropriate. Unlike external Quality Assurance bodies at the University or the national level, the School is in a position to assess the totality of the situation instead of relying on limited quantitative data. Nevertheless, the course evaluations, which are not currently utilized sufficiently, could be valuable indicators of problems, if regulatory obstacles to their use can be resolved, which we encourage the School to pursue.

Student participation in the electronic course evaluation system is currently extremely low, with participation for most courses ranging from 1% to 5% and only a few courses approaching 10 or 20%. While participation in the old paper-based system was higher, the

students who spoke to the EEC reported that many of them do not see any purpose in continuing to participate, since they believe that the evaluation results are not used by the School to identify and address problems. The EEC expects that participation will improve, if the results of student evaluations are utilized in some way in the future, and this becomes known and demonstrated in practice.

The EEC would also like to recommend that the Department make any effort possible to overcome the obstacles (most of which are systemically related to the structure of University education in the country as a whole) that inhibit employing graduate students for teaching (teaching fellows; see also above, Section A).

C. Research

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

APPROACH

The School's main objective is to promote first-rate research in the four disciplines that it covers: classics, Byzantine philology, modern Greek philology, linguistics. The School has a long tradition in all these fields, which it continues to promote and develop most successfully. Research in all these disciplines is most commendably pursued at both an individual level and a more collective one, through collaborations among faculty or between faculty and well-respected research centers and institutions. As a rule, research topics vary according to the scholarly interests of individual faculty, although some trends/projects particular to this School as a whole may also be discerned, such as the philological study of archaeological material available in sites and museums in Thessalonike and the broader area, an important emphasis on applied linguistics, the resourceful and frequent use of the archives of modern Greek literature housed in the Library (*Spoudasterion*) of Modern Greek Philology, , etc. (for a more detailed description of the range of research projects, see below in this section). The extent to which the above-mentioned objective is achieved is indirectly assessed mainly through 1) established procedures of academic promotion within the School; 2) the publication of articles in peer-reviewed journals.

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

Research is promoted through a great number of important projects that contribute considerably to scholarship in the areas represented in the School at an international level. Most of these projects are supported 1) by University (state) funds, which however have been extremely affected by the current economic crisis in the country; 2) European research funds/programs, which have also been considerably curtailed in recent years. Faculty members make very good use of the available Departmental research infrastructure and resources (see below, Section D).

Faculty members are engaged in many research projects: as main researchers they are in charge of 37 international projects (funded mainly by European research funds, allotted on a competitive basis); as partners they participate in 78 such projects. Given the nature of the disciplines represented in the School (Humanities), this number is exceptionally high and attests to the faculty's devotion to their respective fields and outstanding scholarly visibility on an international level.

Research projects completed in the recent past or still underway cover an impressive variety of scholarly areas and topics, ranging from archaic epigraphy, ancient elegiac poetry, ancient rhetoric, the study and editorial preparation of the Derveni papyrus, the study of ancient Greek dialects, to Latin lexicography, prosopographical issues of Byzantine history (mainly of the Palaeologan period), to autobiography in modern literature, modern Greek women writers, gender studies and modern Greek literature, the work of G. Vizyenos, Greek journals, digitization of the School's archive of modern Greek literature, to the comparative study of the Greek and Turkish languages, a number of studies on the acquisition and teaching of Greek as second language, language and gender, technology and language teaching, modern Greek dialects, etc. (detailed lists of research projects are to be found in the School's Internal Evaluation Reports). Important is also the contribution of the program IASON to the establishment or support of programs of Greek studies in Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia. The research activities of the linguistics department have resulted in a number of

text corpora, some completed and some still in preparation. A few of these are accessible through web interfaces.

A considerable number of these projects are conducted in collaboration with researchers from other Greek or international academic and research institutions, including the Center of the Greek Language, Institute of Modern Greek Studies/Manolis Triantaphyllides Foundation, Workshop of Comparative Literature, the Archaeological Museum of Thessalonike, a great number of Universities in Europe and the USA, the Academy of Vienna, etc. (complete lists are available in the School's Internal Evaluation Reports).

Conferences and colloquia are important constituents of the School's most vibrant research activities and visibility. The Department of Classics has established a series of annual conferences of international visibility, entitled "Trends in Classics." The papers presented in this context are published in the homonymous journal or/and book series published by W. de Gruyter. The Department of Medieval and Modern Greek Philology also organizes international conferences of major scholarly significance on a biennial basis. The Department of Linguistics most successfully continues the long tradition of its internationally acclaimed annual conferences, whose proceedings are published as *Μελέτες για την Ελληνική Γλώσσα* (Studies in Greek Linguistics); since 2010 the conference is preceded by a pre-workshop where graduate students present their work; the EEC believes that this is a very important initiative that should be strongly supported in the future as well, since it encourages and promotes the active participation of graduate students in the research activities of the Department. At the other two Departments graduate students are also given opportunities to contribute to research, mainly as participants in major research projects. In addition to these colloquia/conferences that take place on a regular basis, other scholarly meetings/symposia on a variety of subjects take place; just in the period 2011-2012 there took place six such symposia on topics ranging from ancient Greek epigraphy to Byzantine epistolography and to gender studies. The EEC would like also to stress the importance of *Parekbolai: An Electronic Journal for Byzantine Literature.*

The vibrant scholarly/research activity of the School is also evidenced by the great number of MA (221) and PhD theses (63) completed in the period 2006-2013.

The high quality of the faculty's research is reflected in their impressively numerous and, as a rule, first-rate publications, which contribute to the visibility of the School as a whole at an international level (complete lists of publications are available in the School's Internal Evaluation Reports). The EEC finds it very commendable that a considerable number of the teaching staff participate in the editorial boards of many Greek and international journals and are the recipients of very prestigious awards and distinctions. There is no doubt that concerning research the School, as a whole, meets its ambitious objectives in the most successful possible way and sets the model for similar Departments not only at a national but also at a European level.

IMPROVEMENT
The Department of Linguistics has communicated to the EEC the need for the establishment of a functional lab that would allow faculty and students to conduct research in the most productive and effective possible way. The EEC was told by the faculty that technological equipment is available but additional funds are needed for it to be installed and maintained. Members of the faculty have stressed that the three Libraries of the individual Departments (classical philology, medieval and modern Greek philology, linguistics) need to be consolidated into one major library (or perhaps two); such a development would facilitate

access to available resources and contribute to more judicious distribution and use of available funds.

At a time when the state's financial support for research has been drastically cut back, international funding agencies and private foundations provide a particularly important alternative source of badly needed support. Unfortunately, some of the School's staff have indicated that they find the process for obtaining such funding (including but not limited to the financial accounting necessary) to be prohibitively complex. Their access to external sources of funding would be improved if the School or the University would set up mechanisms, formal or informal, that may provide advice and support in the formulation of research grant applications.

It is a great pity that, due to the current economic crisis, subscriptions to online journals have been suspended (at a national level) and the overall budget allotted to book acquisition has decreased dramatically. It is of utmost importance that funds be allotted to the School that would support book acquisition and allow faculty and students to have unhampered access to online publications.

The EEC finds it most commendable that, despite these dire conditions, the faculty continues to conduct outstanding research in all relevant fields and produce scholarly publications that, as a rule, are of exceptionally high quality. However, lasting budget restrictions would be detrimental to the impressive research output of the School.

D. All Other Services
For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

In this section we discuss the School's administration, infrastructure, and other services. Each section includes a description of one of these domains, its strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations for improvement. A final section discusses additional possibilities for improvement.

1. Introduction
2. Administration
3. Infrastructure
4. Services
5. Improvements

1. INTRODUCTION

The School's governance is reported to function well. The infrastructure of the University and the School are very good, and the School takes seriously its services to its students, which complement the services and benefits offered by the University. The difficult economic situation has had a drastic negative impact on both infrastructure and services.

2. ADMINISTRATION

The main decision-making organ of the School of Philology is the General Assembly (Genike Syneleuse), which is assisted by a number of newly empowered committees. The committees are responsible for policy recommendations, which they submit to the General Assembly for approval. Individual leadership is vested in the chair (Proedros) of the School. The School's three constituent Departments exist as academic units only, and have no separate governance. The Departments do have their own administrative assistants, and separate branch libraries/reading rooms.

The committee system, which decentralizes problem solving and endows policy recommendations with collective authority, has reportedly contributed to the more efficient operation of the School. The EEC applauds this successful approach to decision making, which was only recently deployed in its present form, and recommends that it be strengthened and maintained as a permanent part of the School's governance.

The teaching staff is supported by an administrative staff of 9, with an additional staff of 6 tasked with the operation of the School's three branch libraries. This level of staffing, which is lower than a couple of years ago, is reported to be barely adequate, a fact that raises worries about the sustainability of the good operation of the School, especially if fears about additional cuts materialize.

The responsibilities of the administrative staff include the following: undergraduate and graduate students; records and archives; secretarial services for the School and the three departments; and the operation, circulation, and administration of the library. The student record system is handled electronically and functions effectively with the result that the secretariat is able to meet most student requests within the same day. Other functions are

also increasingly handled electronically (e.g., since last year there is an online room reservation system). Somewhat oddly, the University supports not one but two Course Management Systems: Blackboard and e-Class. Most courses appear to be hosted in the former.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE

Campus

Aristotle University is situated in an excellent campus, centrally located in Greece's second largest city. This privileged setting contributes to a lively campus with significant student presence (we are not aware of any efforts to increase student presence on the campus, nor are any necessary)—a campus whose potentially excellent infrastructure is at present heavily degraded due to the ongoing economic crisis, with serious consequences for the quality and range of the services provided. Although the EEC was unable to visit the School's buildings due to an occupation staged by a small group of students, we received reports of broken-down computers and classroom equipment, lack of heating and cleaning services for extended periods of time, and other less grave problems of a similar nature. It is indicative that neither of the elevators in the administration building was operational during our visit. Within the School's own jurisdiction, cutbacks in administrative personnel have led to severely reduced hours of operation for one of the departmental branch libraries, creating problems for staff and students.

The School is housed in three buildings in close proximity to each other. The "old Philology building," a beautiful landmark that is the original seat of the University, continues to serve its function well, although some facilities (especially the toilets) are widely cited as unsatisfactory. Another problem is a chronic lack of classroom space, which requires the staff to schedule classes that end as late as 9 p.m. This in turn has given rise to concerns for student safety in the inconsistently lit campus. The existing classrooms (which we were not able to visit during our evaluation but which are familiar to certain EEC members from past visits) are of adequate quality when not compromised by the above-mentioned maintenance problems.

Libraries

The University library is decentralized, with 47 branches in addition to the central library. In keeping with the history and prominence of the University, it is a mature library with extensive holdings and some truly unique special collections. (The library website does not give separate numbers for books, serials, and electronic resources, but reports that together they total over a million items.) The library catalog is available online, and somewhat complemented by auxiliary search engines (one of them, "Ιχνηλάτης," was non-operational during the evaluation period; the other, *Summon,* is a one-year trial subscription.) Students, both graduate and undergraduate, can check books out of the University libraries (something that most Greek Universities do not allow).

The School of Philology operates three departmental libraries in different locations: for classical studies and ancient history; for medieval and modern Greek Philology; and for Linguistics. There are two seminar rooms, attached to two of the libraries, which help alleviate a chronic shortage of classrooms.

The School boasts of an important archive of modern Greek Literature that houses archives of major 20th-century Greek authors, including O. Elytes, M. Axiote, A. Sikelianos, S. Doukas.

The library of medieval and modern Greek philology (40,000 volumes) is one of the largest of its kind in Europe. Of comparable importance is the library of Classical Philology and Ancient History (50,000 volumes); the School also has a library on linguistics (17,000 volumes). Especially worth mentioning is also the archive of microfilms and photographs of manuscripts and early editions of works of early modern Greek literature. Library catalogues are available online. Seminars are offered to users of these resources on a regular basis. It is a great pity that, due to the current economic crisis, subscriptions to online journals have been suspended (at a national level) and the overall budget allotted to book acquisition has decreased dramatically. It is of utmost importance that funds be allotted to the School that would support book acquisition and allow faculty and students to have unhampered access to online publications (see also above, Section C).

Computer facilities

There is wireless internet access in much of the campus, including all three of the School's buildings. There are numerous general-purpose computer rooms (nesides ypologiston) made available to students at diverse locations by the University's IT Center. The School of Philology operates its own computer room (identified as the Laboratory of Philology and New Technologies) that had a peak capacity of 25 but is now limited to about 15 due to equipment breakdowns, which have not been addressed due to budget problems. It was reported to the Committee that the School is due to deploy a research laboratory for linguistics, but that while computer equipment has been purchased and delivered, the process is stalled due to lack of a suitable space and funds to cover its operating costs.

NOTE: The School has informed us after the completion of the draft report that "informal discussions are underway, but there is no official decision at the moment" with respect to establishing a linguistics laboratory. The Committee is therefore unsure about the actual status of this undertaking, but urges the Department to ensure full utilization of any purchased equipment or other resources that have already been committed for this goal.

4. SERVICES

The School supports a number of services in addition to those provided at the University level. These services are restricted by the general difficult economic situation, though to a degree that has so far allowed them to function.

Students additionally receive, at the University level, services such as bus passes, meals, and student residences. We have not reviewed the adequacy or smooth functioning of these services.

Student counseling

The School delegates seven academic advisors, one for each constituent area of specialization, tasked with helping students with academic concerns. In practice they also go beyond purely academic advising, and try to help with personal problems and other student concerns of a more general nature. There is no person specifically tasked with dealing with student complaints or conflicts with faculty, nor any other established process that may address such issues.

However, during its meetings with several groups of students (some of whom had the closest, and some the most adversarial relationships with the teaching staff), the EEC discovered that few, if any, of them were aware of the existence of the office of academic advisor. The EEC advises the School to find effective ways to make students aware of this important resource. Many of the same students also reported that they feel that some of their needs and concerns are not being addressed, and that informal complaints about specific events or persons did not have any effect (or that they did not expect them to). While the EEC has no evidence of actual problems in this domain, the lack of confidence in the process is itself a reason for concern. The EEC recommends that the School take steps to provide an Office of Student

Ombudsman, either at the School or at the University level, that can hear and attempt to resolve issues in its jurisdiction.
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Web presence

The School has a website, which it is reportedly planning to update and expand in the near future. Neither the School nor its Departments have an official presence in social media, but the University's students share information through Facebook groups that they have organized (reportedly one for each Department).

5. IMPROVEMENTS

The most acute problems in this domain concern infrastructure and library acquisitions, which as discussed above are caused by the ongoing severe budget cutbacks.

Consolidation of libraries

As already mentioned, budget and personnel cutbacks have already led to a reduction in the operating hours of the departmental libraries, creating problems for staff and students. To alleviate the problems, the School is considering the consolidation of the libraries for Medieval and Modern Greek Philology and Linguistics into one. We support this goal (whose realization is contingent on finding suitable space for the combined library, and other factors), and urge the University and other entities to help bring it about. A consolidation would not only reduce operating costs and redundancies and allow longer hours of operation, but would also, given the thematic overlap between the two libraries, create a remarkable combined collection.

Consolidation of research labs

The School is simultaneously struggling to maintain the operation of the existing computer room of the Philology and New Technologies Laboratory. In view of the dire economic situation and the moderate rate of utilization of the current facility, the EEC suggests that the School look for a way to consolidate the two laboratories and house them in a common space that can be supported with fewer staff hours; and more generally that it try to utilize its resources to serve a broader range of the School's needs.

While there are some opportunities for savings and efficiencies through such consolidation, many of the measures considered or already adopted by the School are dictated by sheer necessity. Going beyond the School's jurisdiction, there is a pressing need to alleviate the budget shortage that makes these tough choices necessary. The EEC notes with concern the current alarming state of the School and University infrastructure, and fears that they will continue to degrade and contract, unless funding can be restored to levels that allow them to maintain a minimal level of adequate operation.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

The School of Philology is prominent in the cultural life of Thessaloniki, and members of all the three Departments (especially the Departments of Classics and of medieval and modern Greek Philology) are involved in the leadership of an impressive list of civic

organizations and cultural activities (a complete list of such organizations and activities is available in the Internal Review Report).

The Department of Linguistics has been particularly active in the socially important area of teaching Greek as a second language, with participation in curriculum and textbook development, teacher training, and infrastructure and networking activities for language teachers. The same Department was involved in teacher seminars on the utilization of new technologies, development of an online platform for training and communication between language teachers, "reception classes" for foreign and newly repatriated students, development of heritage language teaching, and more. These activities also engaged a number of graduate (both MA and doctoral) students.

E. Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential Inhibiting Factors

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

The School, like all University bodies in Greece at present, is faced with a dire financial situation that is compounded by uncertainty about its budgetary, personnel, and enrolment prospects. Consequently the School's primary near-term objective is to adjust teaching, curriculum, administration and services so that they can continue as best as possible with the limited resources available. To meet this important objective, the School has proposed a number of strategies, which the EEC finds commendable. These strategies include the School's strengthening its interdisciplinary character; expanding external cooperation with Greek and international institutes; building connections with the secondary education sector; making the curriculum more flexible; and expanding utilization of information technology.

Concerning medium-term planning, the School has decided to undertake a revision of the curriculum in order to accommodate the 30 ECTS of courses, which, according to a recent reform at the state level, are necessary for teaching certification. This task too is made more difficult by the fact that available staffing is extremely limited and inelastic (i.e., a curriculum that requires adding personnel might prove difficult to implement).

Concerning long-range strategic planning or collective exploration, members of the School have mentioned a number of aspirations that, if implemented, could move the School in a number of different, additional productive directions. These aspirations include making the School accessible and attractive to paying students from other countries; expanding the program in Classics with methodological classes on teaching ancient languages; expanding the dynamic program in applied linguistics; strengthening the School's role as a core contributor to the development of Greek as a second language; establishing a permanent international summer school; etc. The EEC finds these visions important and encourages the School to consider, formulate, and adopt a *collective* vision for the longer term, so that it can guide short- and medium-term priorities to the extent possible. The responsibility for planning is shared with the University itself, since the strategic plan of one School must harmonize with the overall strategy and priorities of the University as a whole.

The School's ability to undertake effective planning would be greatly enhanced, if the state would announce budget commitments as far in advance as possible.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

The Aristotle University School of Philology is a very venerable institution at a European level, which produces and advances first-rate research and scholarship in all the fields it represents. The faculty of the School is rightly very concerned about the impact of the current budgetary cutbacks and is exploring ways to offset them in the most effective possible way. While acknowledging the scale and complexity of the challenges as well as the numerous structural problems of the country's overall education system, the EEC would like to express the following suggestions that might help the School carry out its mission even more effectively. To a great extent these suggestions reflect and endorse also the faculty's own assessment of issues related to the academic mission, function, and vision of the School:

1. That both the University and the School further develop and elaborate a strategic plan for the longer term, in order to meet the challenges presented by current and future circumstances.

2. That the balance of required courses offered by the School's three constituent departments be revisited, during the upcoming curricular restructuring, also with a view to serving equally well the curricular needs of all major study directions.

3. That the School's faculty agree on a system of prerequisites and on the best way to implement it.

4. That the School establish ways to address the needs of students who enter the program without the presupposed (in fact, required) background knowledge, through remedial courses or other arrangements.

5. That the School assume collective oversight over the form and quality of teaching, by empowering appropriate committees to assess all available quantitative and qualitative indicators and issue recommendations for improvement when appropriate. Every effort should be made to overcome regulatory and other obstacles to using student evaluations for this purpose.

6. That the School or the University establish mechanisms, formal or informal, to support the formulation of external grant applications that would fund visiting faculty and/or research projects.

7. That the School explore ways to increase awareness, among the public and by other institutions, of its outstanding scholarly and cultural contributions.

The Members of the Committee

      Name and Surname   Signature

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