



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
Α.ΔΙ.Π.
ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ
ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
H.Q.A.A.
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION

ALEXANDER TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF THESSALONIKI (ATEITHE)

MAY 2010

External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Animal Production of the Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Prof. Dr. Jasmina Havranek (President)
University of Zagreb, Croatia
2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Christos Papachristoforou (member)
Technological University of Cyprus, Lemesos, Cyprus
3. Dr. Andreas P. Mavrogenis (member)
Researcher, Animal Breeding and Genetics, Cyprus
4. Dr. Vladimiros Christodoulou (member)
Senior researcher,
Director of Research Institute of Animal Production, Giannitsa, Greece

It was the wish of this Department to be evaluated by a committee including foreign, non-Greek speaking experts; consequently, following instructions by HQAA, the Department submitted its Internal Evaluation Report in English.

Introduction

The Department was visited by the Committee on May 11 and 12, 2010. Upon arrival in the morning of May 11, the Committee members had a brief meeting with the President of the Institute Professor Pavlos Karakoltsidis and the Vice President Professor Panayiotis Tzionas. Immediately after, the Committee met with the members of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG), Professors Vasiliki Lagka and Anastasia Founta, Assoc. Prof. Anastasia Eleftheriadou, Assistant Prof. Kyriaki Mazaraki and student Alexander Matentzidis. Many questions were answered by the head of IEG Professor Dimosthenis Nitas.

The Committee also met with the permanent academic staff, the secretarial staff and students. The Head of the Department Professor Vasiliki Lagka, was present at the meeting with the following permanent faculty members: Ioannis Katanos, Dimosthenis Nitas, Cyrus Poupoulis, Anastasia Founta, Anastasia Eleftheriadou, Aristotelis Lympelopoulos, Kyriaki Mazaraki, Vasileios Bampidis, Vasileios Skapetas, Dimitrios Chatziplis, Stavroula Kiritsi, Ioannis Mitsopoulos and Vasileios Michas.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the administration offices, academic staff offices, teaching rooms and laboratories, the Library, other facilities and the various animal units used for educational and research purposes and for practical training. The Committee members were provided with several reports and other documents including the Internal Evaluation Report (IER), the study guide book of the Department, certain statistical data and various documents related to the operation of the Department.

The Committee reckons that the time allocated to the visit of the Department was satisfactory and points out the willingness of the staff and of the students to cooperate and answer all questions put to them. The Committee notes the high number of students participating at the meeting with the Committee in the absence of faculty members and considers the outcome as very useful and productive. The views expressed by students indicate their real interest and concerns about the value and quality of their education.

The meeting with faculty members (permanent academic staff) was also considered as very useful and productive. Most of them participated in a lively discussion and expressed freely their personal views. It should be noted that most of them were directly or indirectly involved with the preparation of the IER. The Committee appreciates their willingness to proceed with the internal self-evaluation and to be evaluated externally. It shows very clearly self confidence and drive for improvement that ultimately leads to better education and better prospects for graduates and staff.

A. Curriculum and Teaching

A1. Curriculum

APPROACH

The Department offers a single undergraduate program, while a postgraduate program is under development.

According to the Internal Evaluation Report and the study Guide book the aims and objectives of the Department could be summarized as follows: *"The Department of Animal Production has the mission to promote the development and transfer of knowledge in technology and science of farm animals and related fields based on teaching and applied research work. The Department provides students with the necessary knowledge that ensures the proper education/training for their scientific and professional careers and development. The teaching format of the Department of Animal Production covers the cognitive subject of Animal Science and associated fields with emphasis on the application of modern technological methods in farming, nutrition, breeding, reproduction and health protection of farm animals, companion and exotic animals as well as laboratory animals. Moreover, it addresses the methods of production, processing and standardization of animal origin products"*.

In essence, the main objectives of the Department are to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to the students so that they will be able to apply modern technological and scientific methods in the Animal Production industry, as well as to work in the research sector.

It is strongly felt among the academic staff that, in order to meet Animal Industry needs more efficiently, student training and knowledge transfer should be more targeted and intense to meet modern demands. This is transparent through their aspirations to offer post-graduate programs.

According to the Internal Evaluation Report, the academic staff of the Department considers that the objectives are accomplished, especially with regard to the quality of the graduates and their response to market needs in the wider area of Animal Production. Actually the academic staff of the Department of Animal Production of the Alexander TEI of Thessaloniki, despite of some changes in the curriculum, consider that there are no important deviations from the officially formulated objectives in the OSJ. However, after the inclusion of TEI's in the Higher Educational Institutions according to Law 2916/2001, the recent law 3549/2007, and the staffing of the Department with personnel of higher academic qualifications, more favorable prerequisites for the advancement of applied research have been created with law 3794/2009.

Revision of the undergraduate program should be based primarily on the needs of the

animal production industry. In this regard, a system should be introduced and implemented to document and monitor the industry needs so that relevant modifications of the undergraduate program be based on objective information. Technological and scientific developments, in the specific area, may also be taken into consideration when revising the curriculum.

Although the curriculum of the undergraduate program of the Department was revised three times from 2002 to 2008, the objectives of the program remained to a large extent the same and reflected, as the Committee was informed, the needs of the market. The Committee, however, was provided with the results of a survey conducted among graduates of the Department between 2005 and 2009 concerning their employment, where it is shown that only 22 % of the graduates have been employed in jobs relevant to their studies. This is indicative of the need to improve the system by which information on the needs of the market is gathered and assessed.

IMPLEMENTATION

According to the IER, Department Chair, faculty staff and students, the curriculum is implemented reasonably and in accordance with the aims and objectives of the TEI. The curriculum, although extensive, it covers all various parts of the Animal Technology field. According to the IER, however, delays in hiring non-permanent staff or part-time employees every academic year are a major concern of the academic staff. Moreover, the system of admission to Institutions of higher education quite often reflects political decisions in Greece. As a result, a much larger number of students than the actual capacity of the institution, in terms of non-permanent academic staff, classrooms, laboratories, library facilities, books and other tutorial material are occasionally admitted.

In the curriculum, four categories of courses can be recognized: Thirteen (13) general infrastructure courses (12 compulsory plus one compulsory elective out of two), 12 special infrastructure courses (all compulsory), 14 specialty courses (11 compulsory plus 3 compulsory electives out of six) and 4 optional courses. In total, 75 % of courses are compulsory, 17 % are compulsory electives and 8 % are optional. The curriculum implies that students take 5 to 6 courses each semester, a work load that seems reasonable.

For the majority of courses the ratio between theoretical teaching and laboratory practice is 60:40. The practical training, which lasts 6 months, is performed in the 8th semester provided that the student has successfully attended 2/3 of the course work including all courses of specialty. A questionnaire distributed among students, revealed that both the course and teaching levels were evaluated as moderate to satisfactory (IER).

Present academic staff (permanent and temporary) appears to be adequate to cover present needs. In addition to their teaching duties, they are engaged in research activities either independently or in cooperation with other institutions. This is evident from the large number of research projects and publications appearing in the IER. There is a feeling among students that the methods and/or media used for the presentation of some courses should be improved. Procedures for recruitment and terms of employment of temporary staff need definite improvement according to both the academic and the student bodies.

Teaching equipment and instrument resources are quite satisfactory. The livestock, animal

sheds, instruments and installations available, meet the standards for sufficient research and teaching. They are well maintained and functional for student demonstrations. However, certain lecture rooms and labs are not sufficiently equipped.

RESULTS

Based on an inquiry made by the Department regarding employment opportunities of the graduates and the staff perception, the implementation achieves the aims of the curriculum to a high degree. However, there is a need for the establishment of a body to continuously monitor information concerning employment. According to the Departmental IER, the positive aspects about the implementation of the curriculum include the publication and update of books and notes by the educational staff, the efficiency and importance of the practical training which contributes to “the improvement of professional absorption of graduates” and the fact that the undergraduate program has attracted a number of foreign students (6.9 % of registered students).

The Department considers as disadvantages causing administrative and educational problems the large number of non-permanent staff and the variation in the number of new students enrolling each year. The number of students that graduate is considered very low and the time allowed for graduation is unreasonably lengthy. There is a need to assess the reasons for that and undertake corrective measures. Some curriculum revisions and other actions may be necessary for the improvement of the situation. According to departmental staff and students, the high failure rate and the long duration of studies are related to the educational system which allows a 4-year program to be extended up to 10 years, the fact that students do not take seriously their studies and they are not motivated by the academic staff, some of the students have to work during their studies.

IMPROVEMENT

The Committee believes that the admission system must be improved. The current system leads to a compulsory acceptance of attending an institution of low preference by the student.

Identified weaknesses of the present educational system must be improved. For example, some of the optional courses, considered essential by the EEC, could be included in the list of compulsory courses (e.g. animal farm management). The job description of, especially, the non-permanent staff, must be clarified and improved. The need for changes in the curriculum is reinforced by the employment survey results among graduates. We share the feeling of the academic staff and students that changes in the curriculum should be dictated by market/industry needs. A system for exchanging information between the Department and the industry on scientific and technological developments, industry needs and problems would be very useful. The Department could utilize this sort of information for strategic planning in education and research. The closer cooperation of alumni and industry is essential.

A2. Teaching

APPROACH

The undergraduate program consists of lectures (60 %) and practicals (40%). In addition to the seven teaching semesters, there is one semester of practical training outside the institute, and completion of diploma thesis. According to the internal evaluation, 75 % of courses are compulsory, 17 % are compulsory electives and 8 % are optional. The teacher to student ratio is 1:40 for lectures and 1/2:20 for laboratory work and practical training with livestock. Based on the capacity of the labs and the current teacher/student ratio human resources seem adequate. According to the IER, the academic staff and the students, a large number of registered students are inactive. Some of the reasons are low motivation, loss of interest in academic studies in the field of Animal Science. Moreover, attendance in lectures is very poor. According to the academic staff this problem is inherent in the regulations that allow non compulsory attendance of lectures. The students share the above feeling, but they also believe that the problem is also associated with repetition of material given in lectures and the practical/lab, and partly to the poor presentation of subjects. In addition, the student evaluation of many theoretical courses at the end of the semester is not possible, because of the very low attendance of the students.

With regard to student teacher relations, the Committee believes that there are issues that need extensive examination. There are differences in the teaching approach between permanent and non-permanent staff. Contact with the students is made, according to the IER, through the function of the Advisor, board announcements and the intra-net communication system. There is a general feeling that the function of the advisor is very poorly utilized. Students believe that the initiative should stem from the advisor. Most teachers are available for consultation with the students, but the students believe that there is room for further improvement.

Book and other teaching material can be considered adequate. Teaching material is upgraded and updated quite often (every 2 years) covering 80 to 100 % of the needs of course work. However, students argue that there is a problem with the timely availability of teaching material, mostly because of the printing and procurement procedures of the industry. Efforts are made for the solution of existing problems by providing textbook and other teaching material through the intra-net facilities.

The examination system is considered satisfactory. It provides the opportunity for the evaluation of the student at different stages of the course and for different parts of the subject, such as mid-term exams, lab tests and final exam for the theoretical and practical part of the course. In addition the students have the right to discuss with the teacher his/her evaluation for the course.

A major concern was expressed by the students regarding the similarity in the content of lectures and lab/practicals. This was associated to the low participation of students to the theoretical part of the course. This implies that they do not get the knowledge that is essential for the understanding of the part associated to the lab/practical training.

IMPLEMENTATION

Teachers' performance was evaluated by the students. The mean score for the quality of teaching was from 4,0 to 4,4 out of 5, indicating a good teacher performance. The corresponding evaluation for teaching assistants was satisfactory (3,9). The teaching material available for courses received lower scores in the student evaluations (3,6 out of 5). The EEC believes, however, that the teaching material is adequate. The needs for teaching material change and are often unpredictable, partly because of the variation in student number each year.

Faculty mobility was very limited, while student mobility was nonexistent. There is room for significant improvement in this area.

Based on the IER, for the majority of courses the rate of participation in the examinations is 60 to 70 %. The mean grade at graduation is 6,65 and the average duration of studies is 6 years. There is room for considerable improvement of all indices.

It became clear to the EEC that the same courses are offered in both semesters (fall and spring). This system is followed because of the policy of admitting students in both semesters and because of the large number of students having to repeat certain courses.

RESULTS

As it can be followed from the summarized results of the student's questionnaires, student attendance to the lectures, punctuality in written essay/assignments and systematic study of the course material was assessed between moderate and satisfactory (3,0 to 3,9 out of 5). Their attendance to the lab/practicals was higher (4,4 out of 5). The students, however devoted very little time per week for the study of each course (2,1 out of 5).

There is considerable variation in the success/failure rate among courses. For instance, the success rate for compulsory courses varies from 5 to 69 %. This can be attributed to a number of reasons, such as student – teacher communication, course content, suitability of teaching material and aids, teacher approach to teaching and student attitude.

Another concern of the EEC is the low grade at graduation (6,65) and the long duration of studies (6 years instead of the normal 4). The 4-year graduation rate is disappointingly low and varies between 2,1 and 9,7% depending on year of admission (years 1999 to 2004), with only one higher figure of 21% for those admitted in year 1998. The proportion of students with grades over 8,5 is only 0,75 % of the total. The drop out rate (students abandoning studies) is also high. These facts seem to be inherent to the educational system of the country and not particular to the institution being evaluated.

Based on a questionnaire, performed by the academic staff, 52 % of the graduates are employed outside their curriculum. Only 22 % are employed in jobs associated with their studies. A considerable part is unemployed (20 %), while a small percentage (6 %) continues with studies.

IMPROVEMENTS

Even though teaching material may be adequate for course work, the practice of upgrading it must continue on a regular basis. The low attendance in certain subjects by students is a concern that may also contribute to slow and low graduation rates. Perhaps one of the ways to increase interest in class attendance would be to include in the presentation novel material that cannot be found in books and other printed material. In addition, teaching materials and methods should be re-evaluated when necessary.

The academic staff strongly believes that the government policy for the admission of new students allows for poorly qualified students to enroll and proposes that restricted acceptance may improve the situation.

The EEC believes that the system used to evaluate the students at various stages of the course should continue. Each part should be evaluated and the final grade should be a composite of mid-term and final exam.

The practice of offering the same courses in both semesters (fall and spring), although considered as positive by the academic staff, does not seem to contribute towards the reduction in the length of studies. The possibility of having a review of the paper adds to the democratic handling of the student body.

The Department proposes certain measures to improve teaching performance. One of the measures is to increase the positions of the permanent staff and to employ more lab technicians. To improve attendance, they suggest that teaching facilities and teaching equipment be improved and attendance of 50% of lectures is made compulsory. The Committee regards this proposed figure as low and suggests that it should be raised to 80%.

Existing regulations give the right to students to transfer subjects from one academic year to subsequent years. This in effect allows for a long period of studies and prolongs the actual study period to as much as 10 years. Introduction of rules imposing restrictions to the maximum length of time allowed for completion of studies was proposed by the Departmental staff. The students appeared not to object to such a development.

B. Research

APPROACH

The Department places emphasis on education and training but at the same time it encourages and promotes research activities. The results in this area are satisfactory considering the availability of research facilities and the insufficient state funding for research in the field of animal production. The permanent staff developed research initiatives in their respective fields focusing on the applied technological part of research, exploiting their own facilities and also cooperating with other institutions within the country and overseas. The Committee believes that certain labs are well equipped for research purposes while other labs need to be renovated. The number of research technicians is low and this is a disadvantage for expanding research activities.

IMPLEMENTATION

According to the internal evaluation report, the permanent staff leads 33 research projects and the non-permanent staff leads 12 projects. The permanent staff mentioned that a number of research projects are implemented in cooperation with several private enterprises.

The number of scientific publications in international peer reviewed journals, in scientific conferences and in local journals over the last 5 years (2004 to 2009) is quite high. This is a very positive aspect for the Department. The permanent staff mentioned that a number of research projects are implemented in cooperation with several private enterprises.

For some important compulsory courses there is no research infrastructure.

RESULTS

The internal evaluation report mentions that the degree of participation of students in research is satisfactory and depends on the requirements of each research project. However, there is no information about the number of students involved in research.

The internal evaluation report provides information on the number of scientific citations related to the published research results of the permanent and temporary staff and the Committee regards these figures as satisfactory.

Application results were not recorded in the internal evaluation report.

IMPROVEMENT

Improvements in the area of research may be realized through better and broader cooperation with the industry and, especially, with other institutions in the region and in Europe. The Department will particularly benefit from EU funded programs. Improvement of existing and establishment of new labs in some areas will enhance the research potential of the Department.

C. All Other Services

APPROACH

Regarding other services such as student facilities, administration, Information Technology, Library, cafeteria and restaurant, mechanical and electrical support to livestock units, the general consensus is that they are adequate. The collaboration between administration and faculty is satisfactory. The Library, in addition to its primary function as a book lending service, provides on line access to data bases and e-books and scientific journals.

The faculty feels that there is room for the upgrading of the library facilities and services and enrichment of bibliography, particularly new text books and journals to cover more cognitive fields of the Department.

The IEG feels that more technical support should be provided to the institute's farms as well as other functional areas of the Department. A number of rooms do not have an effective cooling system.

There is no support service for working and weak students, hence, the high failure and drop-out rate of students.

IMPLEMENTATION

The use of facilities is considered satisfactory. During the last few years, a large number of facilities has been added to the infrastructure of the Department.

The students find the library adequate in material and services but limited in space, especially in study areas, since most of them live in town, a long distance from the Institute.

There seems to be good relations with certain agricultural enterprises which should be strengthened and promoted further for both the training needs of the students and for small scale research.

Although not investigated extensively by the EEC, it is suggested that an attractive extracurricular activities (sports and culture) program may contribute to attracting both local and foreign students to enroll.

The cooperation and relationship between the secretarial staff and the administrative staff of the Department seem to be good.

Many indoor spaces (corridors for instance), and the quite spacious long room leading to the Library, have been filled with political party posters. The latter space, being common to students of all Departments of TEI, is used by students as a large smoking room and for selling several items irrelevant to education.

RESULTS

It is a general consensus that buildings, classrooms, labs, facilities and equipment are adequate at present. Any abrupt changes in the student population will certainly cause problems that should be faced accordingly.

The IER recognizes as negative the insufficient infrastructure of the library especially in terms of space availability for the students.

IMPROVEMENTS

The construction of the new gymnasium will certainly contribute towards a better and more functional school and student environment. Among future priority plans, is the construction of a new Library building that will also provide more study area. Some of the lecture rooms and labs need renovation and improvements in equipment.

The opinion of the Committee is that students must be political creatures, but politics have no place in their current form and expression within the Department. In addition, commercial activities and smoking should not be allowed in common indoor spaces. Special rooms for smokers have to be designated.

D. Strategic planning, perspectives for improvement and potential inhibiting factors

According to the Internal Evaluation Report and the study Guide book the aims and objectives of the Department could be summarized as follows: *"The Department of Animal Production has the mission to promote the development and transfer of knowledge in technology and science of farm animals and related fields based on teaching and applied research work. The Department provides students with the necessary knowledge that ensures the proper education/training for their scientific and professional careers and development. The teaching format of the Department of Animal Production covers the cognitive subject of Animal Science and associated fields with emphasis on the application of modern technological methods in farming, nutrition, breeding, reproduction and health protection of farm animals, companion and exotic animals as well as laboratory animals. Moreover, it addresses the methods of production, processing and standardization of animal origin products."* In essence, the main objectives of the Department are to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to the students so that they will be able to apply modern technological and scientific methods in the Animal Production industry, as well as to work in the research sector.

These goals were confirmed by the academic staff. Although there is no specific procedure, Academic Development Strategy of the Department of Animal Production is designed in the

framework of the General Assembly of the Department, as pointed out by the IER. Positive and negative points were traced and studied and solution steps were proposed in order to improve negative points.

It was the strong feeling of the academic staff that the current government policy for the admission of new students allows for candidates with poor qualifications and/or interest in the curriculum to enroll. They both agree that restricted acceptance may improve the situation.

Existing regulations give the right to students to transfer subjects from one academic year to subsequent years. This in effect allows for a long period of studies and prolongs the actual study period to as many as 10 years. Introduction of rules imposing restrictions to the maximum length of time allowed for completion of studies was proposed by the Departmental staff. The students appeared not to object to such a development.

It is quite clear, and the Committee would like to stress this point, that both the study regulations and the system of admission of new students to the Department, lead to a substantial waste of national resources (human and financial).

The Department collaborates with a number of public and private institutions in the country and abroad, especially on cooperative research projects. The existing dialogue with the industry, as determined by the EEC, it is only informal and through personal contacts and occasionally through questionnaires. Dialogue with industry is not systematic or on a regular basis. Better cooperation with the industry and particularly, with enterprises of the broader animal production sector operating not only in the region, but in the whole country, will benefit the Department in many ways. This type of collaboration should be put on a firm basis. Therefore, updating of the curriculum seems to be based on informal and non-systematic input from outside sources and is finalized in the General Assembly.

The Department has set specific tasks for its academic development. Among those are: the introduction of short-term (4-year) planning, recruitment of high standard academic staff, revision of the curriculum, etc. without setting priorities.

The Department shows an appreciable research output. To maintain and expand the capacity of the scientific staff, labs should be upgraded and better cooperation within the Department and with other local and foreign institutions should be sought.

Attendance to lectures is very poor. According to the academic staff this problem is inherent in the regulations that allow non compulsory attendance of lectures. The same feeling is shared by the students. They suggest that attendance should be compulsory.

The EEC was informed about the procedures concerning the election of permanent academic staff. The Committee feels that more objective criteria and regulations should be engaged.

Finally, the EEC fully agrees with the recommendations of the IEG on developing methods for closer and more effective cooperation among departments of the institution aiming at the maximum utilization of equipment, facilities and experts, and concurrent reduction of running expenses.

E. Conclusions

The Department of Animal Production of the Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki is located within the campus of the Institute in an agricultural area close to the city of Thessaloniki. The Institute owns about 150 hectares of arable land most of which is cultivated and used for crop and animal production. These conditions are ideal for the purposes of education and research in the sector of animal production.

The Department has good infrastructure for providing high quality scientific technological education in animal production, and reasonable facilities for research. Extremely useful are the various animal units kept within walking distance from the main buildings, mostly utilized for the practical training of students and to a lesser extent for research. For most of the theoretical courses included in the curriculum, there are well equipped training and research laboratories. The overall impression of the EEC, is that existing facilities for teaching and practical training are serving well these functions. Some lecture rooms need to be improved in terms of electronic equipment, furniture and heating/cooling systems. Certain laboratories are in the process of being developed and equipped (e.g. Animal Physiology and Reproduction) but for a few subjects like Animal Genetics and Breeding, Fodder Plants etc there are no labs as yet. The Committee agrees with the Department that there is a need for the establishment of such laboratories.

The permanent academic staff of the Department appears to be competent and dedicated to their duties. The Committee believes that their willingness to proceed with the internal self-evaluation and be externally evaluated shows clearly the high degree of self confidence and commitment to improvement. The report prepared by the Internal Evaluation Group is a good result of collective efforts and contains a lot of useful information. By identifying strengths and weaknesses of the present situation along with suggestions for improving the level of education offered, the academic personnel showed that they are fully aware of the current status of the Department and also, that they are ready to accept changes. This is a very positive attitude.

The low ratio of permanent to temporary academic staff in the Department is a disadvantage. To improve the efficiency and the operational capacity of the Department, this ratio must be increased. At the same time, a clear job description of non permanent staff is necessary together with the introduction of more objective criteria and regulations for the election of permanent academic staff. Also, the Department indicated the need to employ more laboratory technicians.

The variation in the number of new students admitted each year at the Department is a disadvantage causing serious administrative and educational problems. In some years, the number of students admitted, is far beyond the capacity of the Department. The admission system allows for poorly qualified students or students having very low interest for the Department, to enroll. It is suggested that this issue be resolved at the state level taking into consideration the views of Higher Education Institutions.

The duration of studies for those graduating is much longer than the normal 4-year period, while a high proportion (about 2/3) of students fails to complete their studies. Both are serious problems, especially the high drop out rate, which needs to be addressed. Besides the negative economic impact at the state, family and student level, the social impact is adverse and substantial. Therefore, this priority issue must be carefully examined at all levels (Institution, students, industry, society, and state) to come up with the best possible solution.

Non compulsory attendance of lectures is a problem inherent in the regulations that apply to higher education in the country. The staff and the students agree that lectures must be compulsory but at the same time, content and presentation must be improved. Problems related to the timely supply of books and other teaching material to students, are expected to be solved by providing them through the intra-net facilities.

The student-teacher relations seem to be good but their interaction is limited because of the poor functioning of the counseling system. There is room for improvement in this communication.

The Department frequently revises the undergraduate curriculum according to scientific and technological developments and industry needs. However, the need for a better and more efficient system for revising the curriculum is reinforced by the employment survey results among graduates. The Committee agrees with the position of the academic staff and students that changes in the curriculum should be largely dictated by market/industry needs. Therefore, a system for continuous exchange of information between the Department and the industry on scientific and technological developments, industry needs and problems would be very useful. The Department could utilize this sort of information for strategic planning in education and research. The view of the Committee is that the Department may consider giving more emphasis to the technological part of the curriculum and to subjects relevant to farm management.

Though education constitutes the major component of Departmental activities, research is not neglected and this is obvious from the staff coordinating in many research projects and the number and quality of scientific publications. Improvement in this area is anticipated with the completion of new laboratories, through better collaboration with research establishments and the industry, and by hiring skilled technicians. Student participation in research should be encouraged.

The Committee believes that the Department has the potential to offer scientific technological education of the highest level and to respond to the current and future needs of the animal production sector.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname

Signature

1. Prof. Dr Jasmina Havranek

2. Assoc. Prof. Dr Christos Papachristoforou

3. Dr Andreas P. Mavrogenis

4. Dr Vladimiros Christodoulou