ADNAN MENDERES UNIVERSITY

EVALUATION REPORT

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of Adnan Menderes University in Aydin, Turkey. The evaluation took place in spring 2010, with a first evaluation visit on 24-26 March and a second visit on 12-15 May.

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture.

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

The evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a 'fitness for (and of) purpose' approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2 ADU and the National Context

ADU is situated in Aydin, a city with a population of almost 180,000. It is the seat of Aydin Province and is about a one-hour drive south-east of Izmir on the Aegean coast. Aydin is known for its fertile soil and climate that have made it a foremost agricultural region since ancient times. Consequently, transport routes to and through Aydin were built early on, and, in fact, the first railroad in the Ottoman Empire, laid down in 1856, runs between Aydin and Izmir.

Agriculture, in part, determines also the orientation of Adnan Menderes University. But as with the vast majority of Turkish universities, and indeed the country's educational policy and strategy, ADU

also plays the role of a regional educational and cultural centre. ADU was established along with 22 other universities in Turkey under Law No. 3837 in 1992. In addition to the five original faculties: Agriculture; Veterinary Medicine; Arts and Sciences; Medicine; and Economics and Administrative Sciences, there is now also a Faculty of Education and a recently founded Faculty of Engineering, for a total seven faculties. Within the University organisation – again, in line with national regulations – there are also three Institutes; four Schools; a Conservatory of Music; and 13 vocational schools dispersed over a wider geographic area in the Province. The Institutes are research units, with academic staff overlapping that of faculties and serving graduate students. Schools provide undergraduate and postgraduate education. At the time of the Evaluation Team visit, the School of Health had applied for faculty status, contingent on approval from the National Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Vocational schools provide two-year programmes primarily, leading to Associate Degrees. As opposed to the stringent entrance requirements for university entrance through national examinations, Associate Degree programmes at vocational schools are open. Transition from vocational schools into Bachelor programmes is possible after an entrance examination, but this is very rare.

Of the total student number at ADU of 24,479 in 2009/10, roughly half (12,072) were Associate Degree students. 11,709 were studying for their Bachelor's degree and 698 for Master's and Doctoral degrees. The student numbers have almost doubled in the last five years, up from 13,202 in 2005/06, and a strategic goal of ADU – in line with national policy – is to reach 28-29 thousand students by 2012. In 2009 the number of academic staff at ADU was 1,122 and administrative staff was 878, up from 1,050 and 794 in 2005 respectively. The tension between the steep – and ongoing – rise in student numbers coupled with an equally sharp proportional drop in staff is felt throughout the University.

As with all state universities in Turkey, ADU has limited autonomy in organisation and financing. Student numbers are set by YÖK. Administrative staff are appointed by YÖK, together with the Ministry of Finance, by way of a civil service examination. Similarly, the number and qualifications of academic staff are approved both by the Finance Ministry and YÖK. Salaries also are set nationally.

Financing is largely from the national budget (83% in 2009) and tuition fees (9%) are equally set down in national legislation. The remainder of the budget derives from the university's other incomes, especially the so-called revolving funds, which are generated by services to society. Revolving funds are earmarked to be spent on sustaining these services. With university hospitals and health services generating by far the highest income, this practice tilts the balance of disposable resources very much in favour of medical faculties in Turkey. Five percent of revolving funds can be used at a faculty's discretion for its research. Faculties that do not generate revolving funds, such as Arts and Sciences, can turn only to external funding sources, most notably from the national Scientific and Technical Research Council TÜBİTAK.

University autonomy is further curbed by the selection of its leadership. Faculty members may nominate six candidates for rector, of whom YÖK selects three, one of whom the President of the

Republic chooses and appoints as rector. Faculty deans similarly are appointed by YÖK. Rectors may appoint up to three vice-rectors, and they also appoint the heads of schools, vocational schools and institutes, but not his or her senior administrative staff, such as the secretary general.[1]

The Team would like to note that although it considers the degree of the central regulation of universities in Turkey as discouraging universities' sense of responsibility and individual initiative, it believes, at the same time, that there is greater potential for universities and their members to take action than is reflected currently in the university community. One example, stated in ADU's Self-Evaluation Report, is that, although YÖK must approve academic staff and promotions, universities "can take initiative to set some criteria on personnel selection and promotion, and to decide on requirements for a position" (p. 17).

1.3 The Self-Evaluation Process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by a Self-Evaluation Commission appointed by the rector. It was chaired by the vice-rector for academic affairs and was made up of academic staff from five faculties; the head of the secretariat of ADEK, the University's Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Committee; the head of the student council; and two staff members from the international office. The student representative participated in only one meeting. The Commission solicited information from all University academic and administrative units and external labour organisations and chambers. A draft of the Self-Evaluation Report was posted on the University website with a request for comments. However, feedback was limited.

The Self-Evaluation Report along with the appendices was sent to the evaluation team in February 2010. The Evaluation Team found the Report informative, with descriptive and analytical parts, and it appreciated the Commission's self-critical comments on most of the subjects analysed. At the same time, the Team was concerned about the lack of inclusiveness of the Commission and the self-evaluation process in general, with no one representing the views of schools and vocational schools.

In the interviews with the Commission and others it became evident that the ADU Senate had not discussed the Self-Evaluation Report, therefore the Team asked for comments from Senate members after its first visit. There were only four replies to this call. While respondents considered the self-evaluation process thorough, there was also criticism that some advancement in some fields were not mentioned among the achievements of ADU, and, more importantly, that only

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[1] YÖK "… allocates numbers of administrative and academic staff positions, sets minimum requirements for position levels and appointment procedures (universities have autonomy in filling positions); has approval powers on university budgets, approves rectors' appointments at foundation universities, ratifies new degree programmes on all levels, approves enrolment number on undergraduate level. It has 22 members elected for a once renewable four-year term (7 appointed by President of the Republic, 7 by UAK and approved by President of Republic, 8 by the government and approved by President of Republic; the president of YÖK is appointed by President of Republic)", *The Higher Education System in Turkey: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities. A System Review Based on Seventeen Institutional Evaluation Reports*. Brussels: EUA, 2008. www.eua.be/iep. pp. 71-72.

University faculties were on the Commission, but no schools or vocational schools. On the other hand, in other interviews respondents were generally content with the Self-Evaluation Report and suggested that reactions had been few precisely because they felt they had nothing to add. Importantly, they pointed out that the report and the process constituted a good point of departure for improvement for ADU, which is the real function of the self-evaluation process.

After its first visit to ADU, the Team requested some additional data and identified the units it wished to interview during the main evaluation visit. The information and arrangements were readily provided.

1.4 The Evaluation Team

In the course of its two visits to ADU, the Team arranged for several parallel visits, in which the Team split into two groups, in order to see as many units and groups as possible. In this way it was able to speak with:

- the Rector (several times)
- the Self-Evaluation Commission (twice)
- Senate representatives
- the Deans Council
- Central Office Staff
- Student Council representatives
- the Scientific Research Committee
- the International Office
- members of ADEK, the University's Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Committee
- the Governor of Aydin Province and the Mayor of Aydin City
- Heads and members of the Aydin Chambers of Commerce and of Industry

and the Faculties of:
- Arts and Sciences
- Veterinary Medicine
- Medicine
- Economics
- the School of Health

as well as the Vocational Schools of:
- Aydin
- Nazilli

The Team felt that the interviews were open and informative, and, although many University members did not feel proficient enough to converse comfortably in English, the translators engaged by ADU were highly efficient and professional.

The evaluation team consisted of:

- Lothar Zechlin, professor of law, former rector, University of Duisburg-Essen, Team chair

- Maxwell Irvine, professor of physics, former vice-chancellor and principal, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom
- Ivan Leban, professor of chemistry and crystallography, former vice-rector of the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Alina Gavra, graduate student in psychology, quality evaluator in higher education for the quality assurance agency ARACIS, Romania
- Christina Rozsnyai, programme officer at the Hungarian Accreditation Committee, Team coordinator.

The Team thanks Rector Sükrü Boylu, the Self-Evaluation Commission, the members of the International Office and all members of ADU for their helpful and constructive work in the preparation of the Team's visits and during the interviews. The Team also appreciates the kind hospitality of the Rector and his colleagues.

2. General Remarks about ADU

Before embarking on a review of particular issues relating to ADU, the Team would like to convey its general impressions about the University. Among its strengths it found in particular that the Self-Evaluation Report was for the most part well received among the members of the University. Comments relating to it were similar to those noted by the Team, namely that the Report provided a clear and informative overview of the University and was at once self-critical and objective.

The Team has been able to identify many scattered quality initiatives at various units of ADU. To name just one, the Veterinary Faculty is seeking accreditation from a European accrediting organisation, which has raised the awareness of the faculty members for the need for and advantages of involving students in some processes.

What struck the Team during both visits was the general satisfaction of both staff and students with their University. During interviews many critical remarks were made, but the general impression was one of approval of the University's environment and performance. That included the good facilities at the main campus, which both the University community and the Team appreciated.

Among the weaknesses were, on the other hand, the less satisfactory conditions at other campuses and the dispersal of the University over a wider area means that those students on these campuses have very little opportunity to take advantage of the services available at the main campus.

The Team noted in many interviews that the sharp increase in student numbers without a close matching growth among academic and administrative staff was of severe concern to the University community. Although the Team believes that with good organisation a student/staff ratio can be stretched in specific teaching activities, such as lectures, it notes that the overall distortion of the ratio severely influences the quality of teaching and learning. It has implications also for the implementation of certain aspects of the Bologna process, such as student-centred learning, where individual attention to students is needed.

The Team has taken note of a further weakness in the lack of student participation in the University decision-making bodies and also in other relevant structures, such as ADEK. International experience suggests that student participation is a relatively new concept in many European countries but is among the cornerstones of the Bologna process. As a consequence, Turkey has mandated the involvement of students in university bodies in its legislation; however, it does not require students to have the right to vote in these bodies. This gradual introduction of the notion protracts the perceptible lack of a culture of active student involvement that, at ADU, is also seen in the self-evaluation process elaboration and also in the meetings the Team had with the ADEK members and the members of the Self-Evaluation Commission. The Team strongly believes that a more straightforward participation of students would reduce their present passivity and reinforce a sense of responsibility in the members of the student representation.

While the Team has observed that University members were generally satisfied with ADU, it also observed a pervasive passivity against action. While many individuals the Team met showed a dedication and willingness for action, there was, overall, a sense of helplessness. That may be attributed to the limited autonomy for universities in Turkey as a result of national regulations, which sets limits for action and, at the same time, entrenches a sense of status quo. The time constraints resulting from the high student numbers and the exhausting teaching load of academic staff certainly also contribute to a lack of energy for further activities and initiatives. The Team again notes that there are opposite examples among University members and groups as well, and that by identifying best practices within the University a general strategy for ADU as a whole could be marked out. The Team strongly believes that institutional improvements are both possible and needed even under the given limits to autonomous decision-making. In fact, the Team believes that the existing regulations leave room for some flexibility that universities could exploit. ADU can build on the self-evaluation process and the momentum of this review by involving a wider range of University members in discussions about ADU's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, it can identify best practices within various units and among individuals in the University to serve as models for further action. To achieve progress, the process should be coordinated by the central leadership, perhaps under a vice-rector, and could include the Self-Evaluation Commission.

3. Norms and Values, Mission and Vision

The norms and values, mission and vision of a university answer the strategic question: What is the institution trying to do?

The identification of a university mission and its vision establish the foundation for its situation and goals within the educational and societal community in which it operates. They are also the basis for its operational strategy from which, in turn, general and specific plans of action derive. Therefore it is essential that a university formulate its mission and vision carefully, and involve the university community as much as possible in the discussions of what the university is and where it wants to go. In this way the process is not only strategic but also tactical and operational, since it strengthens the university members' sense of community and identity, and instils a sense of personal commitment to achieving the stated goals.

The central, national-level regulations governing many details of Turkish universities may give rise to a sense of redundancy about the need to identify a university's particular features, since much of these are laid down already. The mission and vision ADU has formulated in its Self-Evaluation Report are in line with the broader objectives expected of a university in Turkey. The Evaluation Team believes, however, that, while the general aims and obligations of universities in Turkey are circumscribed nationally, individual universities do have the possibility and responsibility to work through this process. There are numerous features of universities that distinguish one from the other, given their particular background and environment.

In the case of ADU the Team believes that, as stated in the introduction to this report, the environment in the Aydin region determines ADU's position in enhancing its agricultural and natural resources profile. This entails a variety of related branches, noted also by the heads and representatives of the Chambers of Industry and of Commerce, from agricultural engineering to environmental sciences and industries to tourism, and involves business and economics, logistics and much more.

The other distinguishing trait mentioned in the introduction is the role of the university as an educational and cultural centre for the region. While that is not a unique role at ADU in particular, but is, in fact, common to most universities in Turkey and is centrally determined, the service of ADU specifically to the community of Aydin distinguishes it from other higher education institutions.

Moreover, and related to the previous point, ADU, in its brochures and on its website, very succinctly – and with deserved pride – describes itself as a young and dynamic teaching and learning institution. With the new teaching and learning approach entailed in the Bologna process, with project-based learning and active student involvement in the learning process, ADU has a great potential to make itself a key actor of this type of teaching and learning in the region.

The three distinguishing features of ADU are examples that the Team has identified during its brief visits, and it is, of course, up to the ADU leadership and community to conceive and formulate the trademarks that it considers distinctive for itself. Once the mission and vision have been worked out, realistic and university-specific priorities need to be identified and then broken down into action plans for University development. All actors within the University should know what to do to achieve these goals and how to work on a daily basis to sustain them in the future. The key is to involve as many members of the University community, on as many levels as possible, in working out the plans, and ensuring that all members of the community, including students, are aware of them. This will ensure that the goal set out in ADU's vision, namely to be an institution "preferred by students, academic staff and personnel who will feel proud to be a part of it" will come true.

4. Governance and Activities

University governance and its activities answer the strategic question: How is the institution trying to achieve its mission and goals? They play out in all the main activities identified in ADU's mission, in teaching, research and its service to the community.

4.1 Teaching

As noted, ADU prides itself on being a teaching institution and, in its brochure, where it says that "Students are offered various preparatory opportunities in terms of field work, public settings and applied occupational areas", it reflects its awareness of modern teaching trends. This awareness, and the numerous individual initiatives along these lines that the Team discovered during its interviews at various University units, are a strength that ADU should build on in order to implement the approach across the institution.

In order to ensure that all academic staff become familiar with the new teaching methodologies, ADU should continue to offer such training. Initiatives of this kind have been taken at some units. The Team learned of a "Train the Trainers" programme at the Medical Faculty and similar undertakings in other units. However, a centrally organised approach building on existing experiences that includes all staff – perhaps progressively in a mandatory way – would ensure that ADU can rightfully claim that it delivers this approach to its entire student community. A possibility could be to build up the existing continuing education centre with the remit and resources for such a task.

The existing set-up, where the ever-rising number of students is faced by a nearly stagnating number of teachers leaves academic staff little room for additional activities. Recognising that the trend will only get worse before it becomes better (indeed, increased student numbers is a goal in ADU's strategic plan), requires the University to meet this challenge in a strategic way. A brainstorming with deans and the central leadership could produce viable managerial and organisational solutions with existing resources. For example, some lectures, where the number of students is less significant, could be combined to allow time for practical classes with fewer students. A further possibility is to screen the curricula of all departments within faculties in order to identify parallel courses within and between the different faculties that could be combined under one teacher. While recognising that this would affect the leadership on various levels of the University, the Team believes that, if it is worked out together, it could produce some models, and such best practices could gradually produce change among the wider range of units.

One consequence of such a re-evaluation of existing curricula would be increased interdisciplinarity. While realising that it may be challenging to cooperate in courses among staff at different campuses, the Team believes that interdisciplinarity should be greatly expanded at ADU. Again, this is a question of organisation, and the Team recognises that attempts have been made in this direction, as mentioned in the Self-Evaluation Report. That report has identified numerous issues (pp. 14-15) such as the lack of interdisciplinarity, elective courses for students, learning-centred teaching and staff development, that the ADU leadership should address.

While working on ways to relieve the teaching burden by way of reorganisation, the evaluation of teaching performance cannot be neglected. Almost all units the Team spoke to have some form of student evaluation, but most were rarely carried out and on an ad hoc basis. The Team realises that academic staff enjoy public employment status and that performance is often not a main criterion for promotion. Nevertheless, it encourages ADU to implement student evaluations as a common tool for performance assessment and where consequences for performance – both good and bad – are consistently implemented. The responsibilities of leaders at all levels of University management in this regard should be documented and consistently monitored.

4.2 Research

While teaching for a growing young population and serving the community are part of ADU as a regional player, ADU recognises the significance of research as a university function and has made it one of the three pillars of its mission. Research is important in three ways: as a university, ADU has the infrastructure and manpower to take a leadership role in research in the region; research is linked to staff development and knowledge advancement for teaching; and research is an integral part of training graduate students.

For these reasons it is crucial that ADU address the teaching-load problem of its academic staff that was mentioned earlier. The contradiction between ADU's research policy and high teaching load of academic staff needs to be resolved. The current teaching load may seem preventive, but the Team learned that employing external teachers is possible and cheaper than full-time staff costs. It should be noted, however, that while all academic staff at a university should be involved in some form of research, the degree of involvement and intensity of research activity need not be the same for everyone.

On the University level, a research plan should be derived from the University's strategic plan and its priorities. On other levels there should be links to the University's strategic plan, and results should be monitored regularly on the central level, in order to follow up on the University's mission. Incentives for research, such as using achievements as a criterion for staff promotion and granting staff the possibility to get periodic exemption from the full teaching load when a major research project is underway, should be considered in all departments. Individual initiatives, or those of individual University units, should be recognised on the central level and presented to the community as models. That would provide a synergy that would lend momentum to the process. All these could and should be part of an overall quality assurance system.

In order to generate research funding, ADU can seek third-party funds actively and in an organised manner. That could be helped by establishing a University-level support service to assist in the formulation of bids and for the dissemination of information about funding sources. A central service unit could also help in procuring new research equipment, which units may have difficulty in accessing individually, but which is essential for successful research. With such assistance, all faculties should be encouraged to raise earned income, part of which, according to a formula, could go towards foundation money to support increasing research at ADU.

4.3 Service to the Community

ADU seems to uphold a good relationship with the community in a number of ways (e.g. the rector is on the advisory board of the mayor of Aydin). As a centre for education and culture, ADU is well placed as a service-provider for the region. That is even more so when it comes to health services, as the University hospital serves the local community. Similarly, the department of Veterinary Medicine provides services. The Self-Evaluation Report describes an array of courses and services provided by ADU that are accessible to the general public. The report also notes, however, that there is a lack of coordination in this respect.

The Team found that there is enormous potential for ADU – and for the community – in this area. In its discussions with the Chambers of Commerce and of Industry, their representatives expressed their readiness to work with ADU leaders to develop a number of projects, and the Team encourages ADU to take advantage of the offer. In order to make cooperation more productive and efficient, ADU could invite liaison persons in the chambers and the University to ensure a stable and sustainable cooperation. Other potential projects were identified in these discussions, such as the launching of an Agro-Technopark that would provide a teaching, research and service link between the University and community, a job opportunity for some graduates, and could generate income for ADU. The chambers also expressed their readiness to cooperate in providing various training courses for the labour market.

Beyond cooperation with the Chambers, the potential for services at perhaps all University units is enormous. ADU should step beyond the external regulatory constraints and motivate some of the energetic and dedicated individual University members to implement service projects. One area of great potential is distance learning, which ADU could develop with a small group of dedicated staff and possibly with the involvement of employers. Initially some courses for the community and staff training could be developed and eventually more complex packages for students could be designed and implemented.

Importantly, ADU should set up a central office to coordinate the activities of the liaison persons and the demands from the community and to channel them to the appropriate University units. The money generated with such services could be used to pay for the small administrative staff of the community contact office and also to stimulate various other forward-looking initiatives.

5. Quality assurance and quality culture

Quality assessment addresses the question: How does the institution know it works? Quality assurance is a complex system higher education institutions put into place to measure the quality of their activities; to take action where deficiencies are identified; to re-evaluate whether such actions have produced the desired effect; and to continue this process and to revise the system on an ongoing basis. Quality culture is attained once the mentality that constant quality evaluation and subsequent improvements has been internalised by the institutional community.

A 2006 YÖK regulation directs universities to assess their quality on an annual basis and to prepare their strategic plans based on the results. It also set up YÖDEK, the Commission for Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions, whose task it is to prepare guidelines and criteria for the internal evaluations and to collect the annual reports of universities. Mandatory external quality assurance or accreditation was not foreseen but left up to the individual institutions to request it.[2]

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[2] *Ibidem*, p. 35.

In accordance with the regulations, ADU has set up its internal quality committee, ADEK. This is a body of eleven members headed by the rector and including the vice-rector for academic affairs, the director of the Institute of Sciences, a member of the self-evaluation group, the general secretary, and the head of the student council. While ADEK meets three to four times a year, it operates nine subcommittees that collect data on various cross-sections of the university and according to the 72 performance indicators set by YÖDEK. They are assisted by an IT system that allows anonymous data collection. ADEK produces an annual report on the analysis of the collected data, which is sent to YÖDEK. This data are also considered by the University leadership in producing its strategic plans.

There are other quality assurance initiatives within ADU. The Faculty of Medicine runs alumni satisfaction surveys and measures the success of its graduates; has a quality assurance group dealing with personnel development, job satisfaction and job description updating; and solicits regular and documented feedback from students. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine has applied for international accreditation by the European Veterinary Association and is in the process of setting up a stringent internal quality assurance system in line with their requirements. Several University units have, or are planning to apply for, ISO certification. Almost all faculties the Team visited mentioned that they were administering student evaluations of teachers, and some (including some students) reported that action was taken as a consequence. Several faculties have ethical boards and/or regulations. The request for an evaluation by IEP is also a quality assurance measure that has disseminated the concept of quality culture not only through the external review itself but, more importantly, through the self-evaluation process that preceded it.

The Team appreciates the initiatives, described in the Self-Evaluation Report (p. 19) and mentioned in some interviews, concerning a future scoring and feedback system for evaluating staff, and the numerous job training activities for both administrative and academic staff that is taking place at ADU.

One of the tasks of IEP is to evaluate to what degree the institution complies with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and specifically the seven standards in Part 1 pertaining to the internal quality assurance at higher education institutions. The Team found that with the various quality assurance initiatives described above, ADU complies with several standards, at least in part, in many or some of its units. The Team believes, however, that ADU should strive to build up a comprehensive quality assurance system for the whole University, in order to comply with the ESG on the one hand, and to establish gradually a quality culture involving all members of the University on the other. Just as important, such a system would serve as an instrument for University management on all levels.

An efficient quality assurance system at ADU would operate under the authority of the top institutional leadership, the rector or a responsible vice-rector. It would be run by a University-level quality assurance body and could build on the many existing experiences by the Self-Evaluation Commission, ADEK and others. In order to be effective, the process should be implemented both from top down and bottom up. That means that under the authority of the top leadership, the various existing practices could be collected and gradually presented to all members of the University, from the faculties to the vocational schools. Concurrently, a detailed system of data

collection, involving all units and certainly building on the existing system, with staked-out action-lines and with responsible persons and timelines, could be developed.

The Team believes that ADU is well placed for setting up a comprehensive quality assurance system in the near future – certainly within the time-frame of the next strategic plan –, since it has the roots of such a system in place in many of its units. What is needed is central steering and coordination in order to bring the entire University on board. The Team heard repeatedly in interviews that the current system is considered a formality because YÖDEK or YÖK do not provide any feedback about their quality reports. Once ADU internalises its own system, it is key that the stream of actions described above – known as the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle – be conducted on an ongoing basis and by all University members. In this way, feedback would be provided on all levels on an ongoing basis and with visible results, and the process would be considered intrinsic to the University's operation.

6. Strategic Management and Capacity for Change

Strategic management is the instrument of a University that asks the question: What does the institution change to improve? The institution's capacity for change, although not free from external constraints, is in large part contingent upon the institution's strategic management.

As noted in the introduction and elsewhere, Turkish universities operate under detailed external regulations, which limit the options available for leaders to manage their institutions. The Team found that ADU's leadership is exploring the opportunities to act within the confines of the system, while being careful to balance the demands of the various units inside the University. Within this structure, many initiatives have been taken, as can be seen, for example, in the various new buildings, from the University hospital to the new Faculty of Economics in Nazilli. The IEP evaluation is another management instrument the ADU leadership has taken advantage of, and there are numerous others.

The Team believes that, while a balance between the different interests of the University community is not irrelevant, a vigorous and strategically oriented central leadership would benefit the University by moving it forward and developing it into a competitive institution. Several central management instruments have already been addressed, such as identifying institutional priorities that make ADU unique; setting up a central quality assurance unit; and coordinating various activities in line with the University strategy.

The Team would further encourage ADU to ensure a linkage between strategic goals and funding on all levels. The Team noted that the budget is restricted and some of its distribution is governed by formulas. On the other hand, the leadership has certain funding and budget distribution options as well. In order to ensure that the University develop in a coherent manner, it is important that funding be allocated according to set priorities, which are developed and accepted by the University community as a whole, rather than ad hoc on request. In this way, funding could be used as a strategic and management tool.

The dispersion of ADU across a wide geographic area and the make-up of a University consisting of very different kinds units, from faculties to vocational schools, lend particular importance to ensuring strong communication and coordination on the central level with all its units. That includes strengthening the links with vocational schools so that they become an integral part of the University organisation and identity. The strategic priorities suggested, from the exploitation of the regional advantages to providing further education courses for the external community, can and should all involve vocational schools too.

The Team was informed of the existence of a master plan for the University campus. The Team believes that this is important in order to have a strategically planned and coherent structure. In addition, the Team urges ADU to explore how the central campus could be expanded. While it recognises that the Turkish university system, with its vocational schools serving various communities near by, is accepted as the norm, the Team had the impression that the advantages of having as many units as possible in the central campus and thereby allowing its staff and students to take advantage of the superior services there far outweighs the potential travel distance for staff and students in outlying areas. The dearth of communication and of services (cultural, educational, library, etc.) was mentioned by almost all groups interviewed at the external campuses.

Finally, increasing the involvement of students in University decision-making in line with the Bologna process should be crucial for ADU. It could revise its rules (in consultation with YÖK if needed) to allow not only the head of the student council but substitutes to sit on decision-making bodies, to ensure student involvements at all times. Moreover, perhaps again in consultation with YÖK, students should be considered as equal partners and be given the right to vote in University bodies. The right to vote should increase the responsibility of students in the life of the University, for which the student body should hold them accountable. In the current situation, where participation is seen as a formality, that is not possible.

In order to reinforce its own standing within the University and to ensure that ADU students are abreast of national and international developments relating to students, the student council should uphold links with the national student body and perhaps also be in touch with international student organisations, such as the European Student Union (ESU). Additionally, to reinforce the participation of students in University life, the student council could set up a system of tutoring and mentoring other students in need.

7. Bologna Issues

At this point, the Team would like to emphasise four aspects of importance in the Bologna process at ADU: ECTS, the Diploma Supplement, the educational structure and learning-centred teaching.

The Bologna process has introduced a number of innovations into higher education in Europe, which, in some way, all revolve around the concept of students being seen as partners in higher education, rather than pupils in a hierarchical relationship with teachers and university leaders. "The concept rests on the conviction that students are adults with a stake in the services provided by universities, whose quality affects their future, and into which they invest their resources. Students are hence entitled to have a say in shaping these services. Students also accept

responsibility in participating in decisions that affect them as university stakeholders, and in their active contribution in the provision of student-related services."[3] The various Bologna instruments are thus intended to facilitate students' progress in their studies and in their preparation for a career.

A credit system was introduced in Turkish universities many years ago, but it was a system based on contact hours rather than student workload. The ECTS approach, which is one of the cornerstones of the Bologna process, calculates credits based on an estimated average hours of work students need to do to complete a course. The basic concept is crucial because it is more realistic and fairer, but also because it is more operable when viewed together with another new approach to teaching and learning, namely student-centred learning. That approach rests much less on lectures and contact hours than on individual research and project work. The Diploma Supplement is an internationally recognised instrument that facilitates mobility of students between different countries by standardising the description of course content and achievements.

At ADU, a workload-based ECTS system has already been implemented in some faculties and units (e.g. Medicine) and is underway in some others (e.g. Economics and Administrative Sciences), while yet others have not even started discussions. In order to increase ADU's competitiveness and potential for student mobility to and from ADU, the Team encourages the central management to take a leading role in ensuring a compatible credit system at all units of the University. The experiences of units that have implemented the ECTS system should serve as models for other units.

The Diploma Supplement is automatically issued to all undergraduate students at ADU and free of charge, in line with national regulations in place since 2005. This is important in light of the fact that the Diploma Supplement is a long-term instrument that students may make use of throughout their careers for decades to come.

The Bologna documents do not mandate years of study for the Bachelor, Master or doctoral levels, although the 3+2+3 structure has become common. Generally, 300 ECTS credits for the Bachelor and Master components combined are the norm, within which the length of the two cycles individually can vary. Seen in this light, the Turkish system, with a 4+2+4 structure – though set only as maximum – seems to the Team to be excessively long.

Finally, learning-centred teaching is the most complex but, as noted, the most fundamental element in the Bologna process concept. The Team, with experience in this type of education and seeing the advantages of it, strongly encourages ADU to reconsider its educational provision at all units in this light. Learning-centred, project-based teaching – or, to use the more comprehensive term, "student-centred teaching" – enhances students' skills and competences more efficiently than when the stress is on knowledge absorption and allows them to become more efficient and competitive in modern, highly flexible work situations. The learning-centred approach assesses achievements based on learning outcomes, rather than factual knowledge alone. Therefore, the system is very complex and novel, and it is essential that academic staff receive guidance and training in these methodologies.

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[3] *Ibidem*, p. 31.

8. Student Services and International Relations

The Team would like to draw the attention to two issues that arose during its interviews with students. The Team was told that while the central library was of satisfactory quality, students would prefer longer opening hours. At other campuses the Team visited, the availability of books and of quiet study places was of key concern. Another repeatedly mentioned issue was the availability and quality of dormitories for students. The Team would encourage the Student Council to take an active role in negotiating improvements with the University leadership in this respect.

As to international relations, the Team found that the ADU international office has a small but dedicated staff, but that its activities could be expanded to increase international activity and mobility. Students should receive more information and encouragement about mobility on an ongoing basis. On the academic level, academic staff with international contacts should be actively encouraged to seek bilateral agreements with foreign departments to facilitate student and staff exchange. Parallel to that there could be a responsible person at all faculties for international matters and in ongoing contact with the international office. In order to increase the efficiency of the office, it should be given its own budget, beyond the Erasmus funding, to be used for non-Erasmus activities.

9. Recommendations

1. The Team was concerned about the lack of reaction to the Self-Evaluation Report and, among student council members, about the lack of knowledge about the report. The Team encourages ADU to keep up the momentum achieved in the process and to ensure that the process be ongoing, perhaps by involving ADEK or by setting up another standing internal quality assurance committee within the University.

2. The Team recommends that ADU build on the experiences and results of the self-evaluation process to identify strengths and weaknesses. There are numerous good initiatives throughout the University and many dedicated individuals who can be drawn on to initiate change if they are coordinated by the senior leadership.

3. The Team recommends that ADU provide ongoing training in the new teaching methodologies to its academic staff, which progressively is made mandatory for all teachers. This would ensure that all students receive high-quality teaching and get the opportunity to develop their own skills and commitment to work, while further enhancing ADU's image.

4. The Team recommends that students be granted voting rights in the University bodies in which they are represented, in order to lend value to their presence and, at the same time, to instil a sense of responsibility in the student representatives toward their constituents.

5. The Team encourages ADU to work out alternative ways of meeting the challenge of rising student numbers with a nearly stagnating number of academic staff. The challenge can and must be met in a managerial and organisational way.

6. The Team strongly recommends that ADU implement more interdisciplinary courses in order to avoid an overly rigid, and eventually outdated, teaching provision.

7. Include student evaluations of teaching performance and involving positive and negative consequences as a tool for all levels of University management.

8. ADU should encourage all academic staff to be involved in some form of research, and should develop incentives and requirements for staff to do so. Concurrently, the re-organisation of teaching and research workloads should be contemplated. Research should be in line with the University's strategic plan, and monitoring should be part of the central quality assurance process.

9. The Team encourages ADU to set up a research assistance unit for exploring third-party funding, administration.

10. In order to establish mutually beneficial links with community organisations in Aydin, the Team encourages ADU to set up a community service office, paid for by money generated, in order to overcome the communication gap, which would coordinate demands from the community and service providers within the University units. ADU could invite liaison persons in Chambers of Commerce and of Industry and the University to establish stable and sustainable cooperation and to cooperate in providing various training courses for the labour market.

11. The Team urges ADU to set up a comprehensive quality assurance system under the authority of the rector or a vice-rector, and operated by a University-level quality assurance body. Building on existing quality assurance initiatives the system should, within the time-frame of the next strategic plan, involve all members of the University community.

12. In relation to University management, the Team recommends that ADU strengthen the role of its central leadership to allow it to lead the University forward in line with strategic priorities. It recommends that ADU ensure linkages between strategic goals and funding on all levels and that communication and coordination between all units, including vocational schools, and the central level are assured. The Team believes that the gradual integration of outlying units into the central campus would be advantageous for all members of the University. The Team also encourages ADU to involve students in its decision-making on all levels and as equal partners.

13. The Team encourages ADU to implement the ECTS system at all of its units and to review its educational structure and content to move them toward a learning-centred approach to teaching. It is essential to train academic staff in the new teaching methodologies.

14. Within the scope of quality assurance, the Team encourages ADU to review its student support services and to take action to improve them.

15. The Team recommends that ADU reinforce its capacity for international activities by engaging academic staff members with their contacts to establish bilateral links for student and staff mobility, and to provide budgetary support for the international office to expand ADU's international activities.

10. Concluding Remarks

The IEP Evaluation Team was impressed by the many initiatives at ADU in various aspects of teaching and learning, research and community activities. At the same time, the Team sees potential in developing ADU into a competitive and modern university through increased direction, policy-setting and coordination by the central leadership. The Team would like to note that its advice is not intended to curb the autonomy of University faculties and their units. Rather, it seeks to promote a stronger role for the central leadership for setting an overall University policy (based on a dialogue with the ADU community); for ensuring the implementation of that policy (by holding all levels of the organisation accountable for its responsibilities); and for coordinating various activities that would help the advancement of the University (by setting up central support services to avoid redundancy and create synergy).

Because of the important role ADU plays in the region of Aydin, because of the location of ADU in a region rich in resources, but also because there are many initiatives in place relating to various activities and levels within ADU, the University has the potential to develop further. Its capacity for change hinges on the actions of its leadership and the University members.