

UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY
SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ICHTHYOLOGY AND AQUATIC
ENVIRONMENT

Evaluation Committee
Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment

INTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT
Academic semesters: winter 2009/'10 – spring 2009/'10

September 2010

Volos

CONCLUSIONS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment continues its development at the 8th year of its establishment. During the academic year 2009-2010 the high rates of staff recruitment were maintained as five (5) new staff members (Δ.Ε.Π.) and one technical staff (Ε.Τ.Ε.Π.) were appointed, while two more staff members are to be appointed in future. The Departmental recruitment still follows a well organised policy that aims to initially cover all areas of its specialisation. This policy is fully accepted by Departmental staff members. In addition, in 2009-2010 the inflow of research programmes was satisfactory despite the economic crisis at a national level. These research programmes fulfilled departmental research goals as well as provided laboratory equipment and research consumables. The Department maintained the high rate of modernization of teaching and research infrastructure and stabilises its position to the local and national society. It improved its organization in educational and administrative level, took decisions that will solve problems that were identified in the previous evaluation, formed committees to deal with the rationalism of budget allocation regarding equipment and consumables as well as research planning. Furthermore, its graduates are being accepted for postgraduate studies in other national and international universities.

On the other hand, students are marginally satisfied with the Undergraduate Programme of Study and Departmental administration. In addition, the Department faces problems such as the lack of technical staff, the disproportionate research activities in some and not all research axes, the unequal distribution of funds from research programmes among the Department's research axes and the ever-increasing number of entrants at the Department.

Table 1 presents the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and strategic planning of the Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment for the academic year 2009-2010.

Table 1. Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats and Strategic planning of the Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment.

Internal Environment – Strengths

Department

Evaluation report's results for the academic year 2009-2010 have confirmed the positive points and strengths of the previous Internal Evaluation Report (2008-2009).

- The Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment is still the unique Greek higher education institute with five years of study, which awards a degree (Bachelor's Degree) in the Science of Ichthyology. In addition, it is the unique Department that provides *homonymous* degree in Ichthyology and certified *relevance* by the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP) in the specialization of Ichthyologist.
- Improvements in career opportunities in a governmental decision level.
- Maintaining high rates of appointment of new staff.
- Staff members are satisfied with up to date Departmental policy in appointing of new staff
- Modern, flexible, and effective Undergraduate Programme of Study with updated curriculum in taught courses.
- Students are satisfied by the Undergraduate Programme of Study and believe that the Programme will help them in their future professional duties.
- Students' interest for the Undergraduate Programme of Study is high and is getting increased during studies.
- Decreased number, compared to previous academic years, of contract staff according to the Presidential Decree 407/80.
- Still increasing number of candidates for attending the Postgraduate Programme Study
- Modern departmental objectives in agreement with those that have been assigned in its establishment.
- No need of departmental goal revision.
- Adequacy of laboratories and classrooms.
- Adequacy of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
- Despite the decrease in research programmes maintains a satisfactory rate of consolidation of the Department's inflows.

- Rational utilisation of its infrastructure
- Large extent of use of the Department's durable equipment by the academic community.
- Large number of publications per staff member every year.
- High recognition of research projects carried out by the Department's staff members.
- Participation of the Department's staff members in Organizations of the private and public sector, assuming an Advisory or Administrative/Executive role.
- Active participation of the Department's research staff in all conferences related to its academic disciplines.
- Continues the cooperation with the student alumni.
- Perfect cooperation with the central administration of the University of Thessaly.
- Human resources and administrative services meeting the requirements of the Department to a satisfactory degree.
- Exceptionally good infrastructure and communal spaces.
- Implementation of an exemplary budget management policy in order to cover research and teaching priorities.
- Solid cooperation with social, cultural, and other productive organizations.
- Participation in various local cultural, educational and developmental meetings and exhibitions
- Studies are connected with practise through the Programme of student's practical training
- Modern computer-lab suitable for teaching.
- Satisfactory number of courses is using e-class.
- Clear goals of the Postgraduate Programme of Study
- In the academic year 2009-2010, the discontinuities and sequence of teaching material of the Postgraduate Programme of Study were rationalised
- Satisfactory update of the course material in the Postgraduate Programme of Study
- Staff members are satisfied with the quality of the classrooms.
- High utilisation of research infrastructure

Students

- A considerable number of students place the Department among their first five choices

when filling in the special form for taking part in the Panhellenic Examinations (for entrance into higher education).

- Selection of the Department is not determined by the students' gender or origin (urban, rural, insular etc.).
- Ever-increasing number of entrants at the Department.
- Students are satisfied by the curriculum of Undergraduate Programme of Study
- Students' interest for the Undergraduate Programme of Study is getting increased during studies.
- Positive response of the students to the books and notes provided to them.
- Positive response of the students to the teaching effectiveness of academic staff.
- Duration of graduation is short.
- Fairly high average grade of degree.
- Updated course material in the Postgraduate Programme of Study
- Discontinuities in the teaching material of Postgraduate Programme of Study that were observed in previous years were resolved.
- Students believe that Departmental goals are successful.
- Undergraduate dissertations and postgraduate thesis are in a good level.
- A committee established for the support of weak and working students.

Internal Environment – Weaknesses

Department

- Inadequate and insufficient support by the technical staff of the Department's laboratories and need for further recruitment
- Low mobility of staff members and students to institutes and research organizations both in Greece and abroad.
- Lack of adequately equipped amphitheatre.
- Small number of core courses taught during the first years of studies by professors.
- Shortages in laboratory and hardware/technical equipment.
- Lack of adequately equipped Aquaculture Station (freshwater and seawater) for multiple research and teaching purposes.
- Unequal distribution of funds from research programmes between the Department's research axes.

- Lack of adequate financing (regular budget).
- Lack of clear Departmental research policy
- Decrease of funding from research programmes compared to earlier academic years
- Funding for infrastructure and durable equipment is mainly covered by the Departmental Regular Budget
- Need for stronger relation with the Local Community
- Need for further improvements in secretarial services
- Need for improvements in library services.
- Low international profile of Undergraduate Programme of Study.

Students

- A small number of students make the Department their first choice when filling in the special form of Panhellenic Examinations.
- Continuous increase in the number of entrants over the past year, through decision of the Hellenic Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs (ΥΠ.Ε.Π.Θ.) without a parallel increase in financing.
- Large number of entrants who had followed the Technology Direction in their secondary education.
- Marginal satisfaction of students to the departmental studies.
- Students believe that departmental goals are marginally fulfilled.
- Low acceptance of the “prerequisite course system”.
- Exhausting time-table of the Undergraduate Programme of Study.
- Medium satisfaction of students regarding the structure of the Undergraduate Programme of Study.
- Medium satisfaction of students regarding the transparency of their evaluation.
- Necessity of choosing the suitable time during the academic year for carrying out a practical training.
- Low satisfaction from services provided by the section of the University library, located at the School of Agricultural Sciences.
- Low student satisfaction from teaching material (notes and books) and the system of distribution.
- Marginal satisfaction for the availability of classrooms.

- Marginal satisfaction for their access to the laboratories.
- Both undergraduate and postgraduate students do not spent adequate time for studying.

External Environment – Opportunities & Threats

Both opportunities and threats of the Department have not changed during the academic year 2009-2010 and are described in detail in the previous Internal Evaluation Report (2008-2009). An additional threat is that of the national economic crisis that has resulted in departmental budget cuts and operational difficulties.

Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential

Inhibiting Factors

The following points are additional to those described in the previous Internal Evaluation Report:

- Investigation of why students were unsatisfied with the fulfillment of departmental goals through the Programme of Undergraduate Studies
- Investigation of why the Programme of Undergraduate Studies did not satisfy the initial expectations of students before entering the course
- Investigation of the differences found in some satisfactory indexes between students and members (Δ.Ε.Π.)
- Rewarding those students that complete successfully all courses of a semester
- Implementation of new teaching methods in order to enhance student's interest and attendance in lectureships
- Organising scientific seminars, meetings etc. on a more regular base for the better tutoring of students
- Actions for the acquisition of new research equipment