

REPORT BASED ON QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSES

-CASE OF SERBIA-

In total 37 questionnaires were filled in:

- 18 from University in Novi Sad (8 lecturers, 3 students, 2 department heads, 1 dean, and 1 representative of administrative staff¹)
- 12 from University in Belgrade (3 advisors/consultants, 2 lecturers, 2 department heads, 2 vice-deans, 1 student vice-rector, 1 president of students representative body and 1 representative of administrative staff)
- 6 from Commission for accreditation and quality control²
- 1 from Ministry of education and science

On a scale from 0 to 5, participants rated following features of university in a following way:

<i>Features</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Support (%)*</i>
1. Comprehensiveness	3.62	1.31	62.9
2. Autonomy	4.27	0.69	86.4
3. Being integrated	3.65	0.98	64.8
4. Quality of research and teaching	4.73	0.56	94.6
5. Right to award PhD degrees	4.80	0.52	94.4
6. Being non-profit	3.24	1.23	54.0
7. Responsiveness to social needs	4.65	0.59	94.6
8. Accessibility	4.46	0.77	89.2
9. Strong partnership with the 3rd sector	4.50	0.64	92.9

*percent of rates 4 and 5 counted together

Most valued principles are:

- *Quality assurance and improvement, external evaluation and accreditation are all areas of Regional importance to higher education institutions (M = 4.89)*

¹ 3 persons omitted information regarding their position.

² It should be mentioned that some participants were both members of CAQC and University.

- *The development of higher education should be informed by a strategic and long-term vision (M = 4.82)*

The least valued principles are:

- *An adequate distance between higher education institutions and ministries have to be made through neutral expert intermediary bodies (M = 2.89)*
- *New models for financially autonomous, professionally governed and managed non-state higher education institutions and bodies have to be introduced, e.g. foundation owned HEIs and bodies (M = 3.40)*
- *Higher education institutions must have freedom of action if they are to respond effectively to increasing domestic and international competition (M = 3.56)*

56.8% of the participants believe that autonomy should be on both university and faculty level, whereas 40.5% believe it should be on university level and one person – on faculty level. Regarding legal status, 56.8% believe it should be associated to university, while 43.2% state it should be associated to both university and faculty.

Regarding the functions that should be assigned to University, Faculty or both, participants responded in following way:

<i>Functions</i>	<i>Percentages</i>		
	<i>University</i>	<i>Faculty</i>	<i>Both</i>
1. Enrolling students	37.9	43.2	18.9
2. Employing staff	35.1	21.6	43.2
3. Deciding on the content of study programmes	40.6	13.5	45.9
4. Issuing diplomas/degrees	78.4	2.7	18.9
5. Negotiating with government for funding	81.1	/	18.9
6. Having development fund	59.5	5.4	35.1
7. Having international relations office	83.3	/	16.7
8. Having quality assurance office	54.1	2.7	43.2
9. Having student support services	10.8	40.5	48.6
10. Having information system	51.4	/	48.6
11. Having students organizations	24.3	5.4	70.3
12. Creating proposals of the content of study programmes	3.6	57.1	39.3
13. Approving the content of study programmes	42.9	10.7	46.4

In the following table it could be observed that participants are dissatisfied with university administrative staff and especially with university information system in the country. Discrepancy between desired and current state is high.

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Importance that key members of university administrative staff have MA/PhD in relevant areas	4.35	0.72
Level of satisfaction with university administrative staff	3.00	0.94
Importance that university has an efficient and comprehensive information system	4.81	0.46
Level of satisfaction with university information system	2.44	1.34

Regarding the weak points of university administrative staff, participants highlighted that it is inefficient, slow, uninformed and unmotivated for professional development, sometimes arrogant and unkind and that there is, in general, lack of people engaged in administration.

44.4% of the participants think university information system should be central, whereas 33.3% - that it should be coupled network of faculty information systems and 22.2% - something else.

Regarding non-state own income that should be allowed to university, participants answered affirmatively for:

- tuition fees – 70.3%
- administrative fees – 40.5%
- consultancy fees – 67.6%
- earnings from their own assets – 73.0%
- interest from financial investments – 43.2%
- donations – 94.6%
- publishing – 83.8%
- commissioned projects – 89.2%
- other party funding – 13.9%

In the following table results regarding importance of FEATURES of an INTEGRATED university are presented:

<i>Features</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Support (%)</i>
1. To have central information system	4.81	0.40	100.0
2. To have central services	4.53	0.65	97.2
3. University being only legal entity	3.41	1.75	58.3
4. Rector being appointed by advert and having full power	4.00	1.31	87.5
5. Deans being appointed by rector	3.00	1.41	37.5
6. AS being well qualified and competent	4.66	0.64	91.4
7. AS playing important role in decision making	3.00	0.67	20.0
8. Students unions - single university legal entity	3.75	0.89	50.0
9. Students services - part of central university services	4.40	0.91	85.7
10. Central management with the recourses	4.06	1.07	72.2
11. Financial and ownership autonomy	4.33	0.71	88.8
12. Rector has effective decision power	4.15	0.77	77.7
13. Centralized university decision making	3.52	1.45	59.2
14. Central developmental fund	4.08	0.93	72.2

On the scale of 0 to 5, majority of participants rated the level of universities in their countries being integrated with 1 (43.2%), followed by 21.6% who rated it with 3 and 16.2% who rated it with 2. What is missing for better integration is unreadiness of university and its parts for real integration and impreciseness of state policy papers.

When asked to rate the level of integration of an university with following features: *single legal entity; rector office has effective power; ministry negotiate with rectors office only concerning university funding; no proper information system in place; no proper central services, no qualified administrative staff supporting central services.* 41.7% answered with rate 3, then 25.0% - with rate 1 and 16.7% with 0 (meaning totally disintegrated).³

³ It should be pointed out that this result is based on the statistical analyses of responses of only 12 participants, which makes it less reliable than those results made after analyses of the whole sample.

Importance of listed FEATURES of university AUTONOMY:

<i>Features</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Support (%)</i>
1. Right to restructure themselves internally as they see fit	4.47	0.65	91.7
2. Right to negotiate common positions, projects and programmes with sister institutions, nationally and internationally.	4.81	0.40	100
3. Right to employ their own staff	4.44	0.65	91.7
4. Right to vary salary scales and similar remuneration according to institutional needs	4.08	0.84	80.5
5. Right to retain earnings from their own assets or from donations	4.17	0.77	77.8
6. Right to have predictable long term funding framework with multi-year financial planning	4.46	0.65	91.4
7. Right to set up holding companies (alone or with external partners)	3.89	1.13	68.6
8. Right to have diversified funding and particularly access to private funding	4.11	0.98	75.0
9. Right to have budgetary autonomy	4.20	1.11	80.0
10. Right to have ownership autonomy	3.36	1.38	60.0
11. Right to have access to private funding	3.33	1.58	44.4
12. Right to withdraw from the state status if they want to	2.51	1.54	28.5
13. Right to define their own strategic and long-term vision	4.69	0.52	97.2
14. Right to respond effectively to increasing domestic and international competition	4.77	0.42	100.0
15. Right to decide about curricula	4.75	0.44	100.0
16. Right to decide about research subjects	4.78	0.42	100.0
17. Right to determine tuition fees	3.65	0.94	65.4
18. Right to have its own developmental fund	4.11	1.01	77.7
19. Right to have classified internal information	3.78	1.01	59.2

Concerning the appointment of university leadership, members of university boards and staff, the participants' preferences are:

- university personnel should be hired by a body appointed by rector/dean (81.8%)

- posts and tenures in the university should come under legislation on labor contracts (90.0%)
- the board of trustee/governors should be chaired by rector (62.5%)⁴

50% of the participants stated that they are familiar with the concept of buffer bodies. In the table evaluated functions of buffer bodies are presented:

<i>Buffer bodies could</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Support (%)</i>
Provide detailed steering of HE system, broad policy framework	3.56	0.87	64.0
Facilitate strategic development of the HE sector	3.80	0.96	60.0
Safeguard and promote university autonomy	3.32	1.25	44.0
Provide for a separation of functions	3.87	0.95	58.3
Safeguard and promote academic standards	4.00	0.98	70.8
Limit bureaucratic control and micro management	3.92	1.02	62.5
Limit direct political involvement in HEIs	4.04	1.30	75.0
Prevent inappropriate use of power	4.00	1.30	71.4

Professional potential of HEA with no permanent staff was estimated as low ($M = 2.69$). Mean value for the question “whether there is conflict of interests if all HEA members are academics employed at HEIs” was $M = 2.63$ (0 meaning “clear conflict of interest” and 5 “no conflict of interest”)

Almost all the participants believe that regional cooperation offers possibilities for further professionalization and could enhance internal structural reform, and 92.3% believe that „creation of various and simultaneous cross-border institutionalized frameworks for regional cooperation could help in further convergence to EHEA“ and that “cultural diversity in a region could be used to speed up the European convergence”.

⁴ It should be pointed out that this result is based on the statistical analyses of responses of only 11 participants, which makes it less reliable than those results made after analyses of the whole sample.

One third of the participants believe that private HEIs are typical for Western European countries, 29.6% think they are common in Western Balkan countries and 22.2% - in countries with long lasting experience in market economy.

All the participants believe that the title/name of university should be legally protected. Regarding interior organization of private university, it should be decided by the owner (53.8%) or the law (46.2%). For two thirds private HEI means for-profit HEI. Interior organization of private university should be established by law, in opinion of 54.3% of participants, by owner (31.4%) or governing body (14.3%).

Half of the participants believe that it will be possible to maintain and further develop HE without increasingly involved private financing, and half of them believe it will not be possible because “the country is in economic crisis and universities don’t have enough funds for investing in research”.

The highest level of trust participants have toward state universities ($M = 4.71$), then toward not-for-profit universities ($M = 2.71$) and for-profit universities ($M = 2.29$). Accordingly, majority expressed preference for university of excellence (50.0%) and state university (38.2%).

Regarding the concept Foundation-owned universities, 56.7% of the participant stated they were familiar with that concept.

Half of the participants believe it would be advisable to introduce further instruments for QA of private universities apart from accreditation. Slightly less than a half (40.6%) would support implementation of non-state agencies/bodies with advisory powers throughout the higher education sector. 46.9% would support introducing non-state professional accreditation/QA agencies/bodies in the higher education system. They would have most trust in professional non-state and non-profit agencies ($M = 3.91$), comparing to professional for-profit ($M = 3.09$) and non-professional state ($M = 2.45$) agencies/bodies.

Regarding certificates that could provide more confidence concerning the quality of HEI, majority of participants would opt for appearance in any of influential global rankings of HEIs (72.7%) and international accreditation certificate (61.8%). Majority (72.7%) would support usage of rankings of HEIs for helping to decide how to allocate financial resources.