

# **SALZBURG SEMINAR**



## **UNIVERSITIES PROJECT**

### **Visiting Advisors Program**

**Petrozavodsk State University**  
Republic of Karelia, Russian Federation

**April 14-22, 1999**

The Salzburg Seminar's Visiting Advisors Program  
is made possible by a generous grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

**Report of Advisor Team Visit  
to  
Petrozavodsk State University  
April 14 - 22, 1999**

---

*Advisor Team:*

Ronald D. Bleed  
Vice Chancellor for New Information Technologies  
Maricopa Community Colleges, USA

Robin H. Farquhar  
Professor of Public Administration and former President  
Carleton University, Canada

Colin B. Guard  
Program Assistant  
Universities Project Russian Program  
Salzburg Seminar, USA

Robert L. McSpadden  
President  
Gulf Coast Community College, USA

John W. Ryan, Chair  
Chancellor  
State University of New York System, USA

## II *Participants in Interviews:*

Viktor Nikolaevich Vassiliev  
Rector

Anatoly V. Voronin  
First Vice-Rector

Valery Alekseevich Gurtov  
Vice-Rector for Scientific Research

Anatoly Osipovich Lopukha  
Vice-Rector for Academic Work

Nikolai Rudolphovich Toivonen  
Vice-Rector for International Relations

Natalia Sokratovna Ruzanova  
Vice Rector for Information Technology

Andrei G. Korotkov  
Head of International Office

Svetlana S. Chekmasova  
Officer of the International Office

Mikhail Valerievich Zolotov  
Head of the Department of Science

Olga Yu. Derbenyova  
Head of the Department of Documentation  
Preparation of Regional Centre for New Informational Technologies

Tatyana V. Tikhomirova  
Head of International and Exchange Programs and Projects Service

Yulia M. Rudakova  
Director of E.U. Info-Relay

Irina V. Andrievskaya  
Interpreter

Anatoly V. Chekmasov

Interpreter

Nikolai Pavlovich Chernenko  
Deputy Governor, Republic of Karelia

Valeriy Aleksandrovich Shlyamin  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Karelia

Assistant to the President, Republic of Karelia

Members of Third Year History: English Class

### III

All team members arrived in Petrozavodsk together late evening April 14, 1999 and began work Thursday, April 15. This first meeting and subsequent group sessions occurred in Rector Vasiliev's office, although the Rector was absent until the following Sunday. Rector Vasiliev was accompanying the Karelian President on an official visit to Finland. Our visit was not adversely affected by his absence; and upon his return he gave us his full attention.

The Advisor Team received excellent support from the host institution. Our accommodation and transportation arrangements were good. University officers were very responsive to all requests for data, and made themselves available for interview and discussion. Schedules were precise but flexible to allow for ample intra-group meetings and discussion.

In spite of the manifest evidence of efforts to clarify the expectations of the University for assistance from the Advisory Group, there continued throughout our visit a problem of focus. We addressed the issues set out by the University, and also the issues identified by the Salzburg University Project. Nevertheless, the University Rector and Vice Rectors seemed to expect -- or at least hope for -- material benefit for the University and its programs more than advice.

Rector Vasiliev understands the visit to be -- at least in part -- preparatory for the Conference in Salzburg in July. For purposes of that Conference, and this report, the following over-arching factors establish the context within which the Advisor Team observations and recommendations should be considered.

1. The University is experiencing a drastic funding challenge. Since 1991, the federal funding for Petrozavodsk University has been reduced more than fivefold!

2. The University has resorted to student fee charges (tuition is not allowed by the constitution) partially to cover the funding gap.

3. The University is committed to an aggressive effort to fund programs from external sources, presently primarily international. It has enjoyed some success, especially with Nordic Council nations.

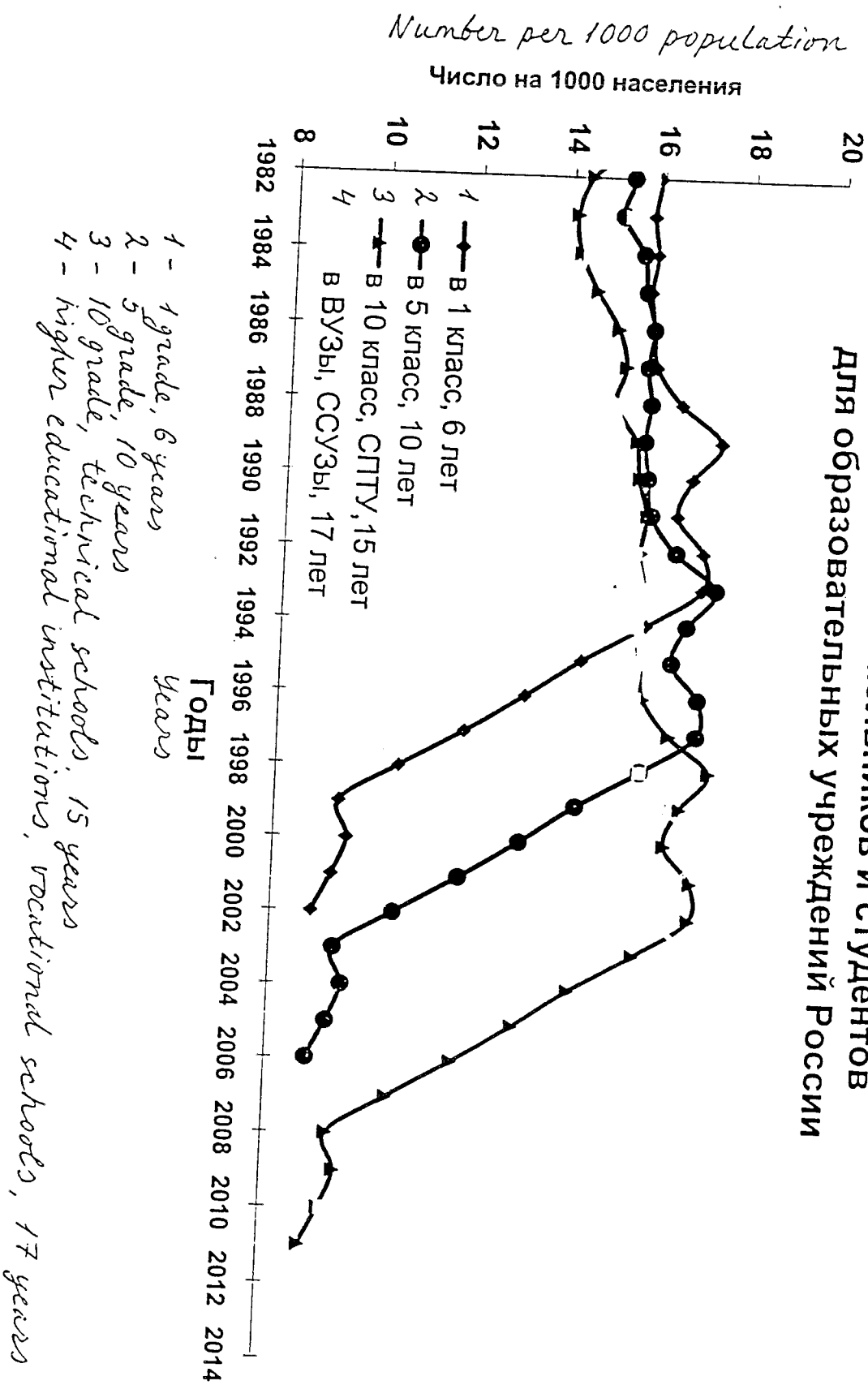
4. Karelia, as in all of Russia, faces a precipitous decline in the numbers of citizens 17 and older, beginning in 2004. This means major shifts in demand for teachers and facilities beginning in elementary grades and working through the system. (See Exhibit I)

"College going" in Russia and in Karelia is half the rate of the United States. College graduates make up approximately 25% of the U.S. adult population but just under 12% in Russia and Karelia. Thus, a precipitous decline in birth rate and consequent decline in the college age cohort may not necessarily cause a sharp reduction in the number of students ultimately admitted to Petrozavodsk University. However, the elementary and secondary systems will soon be affected, thus challenging the pedagogy programs and faculty of PetrSU. (See Exhibit II)

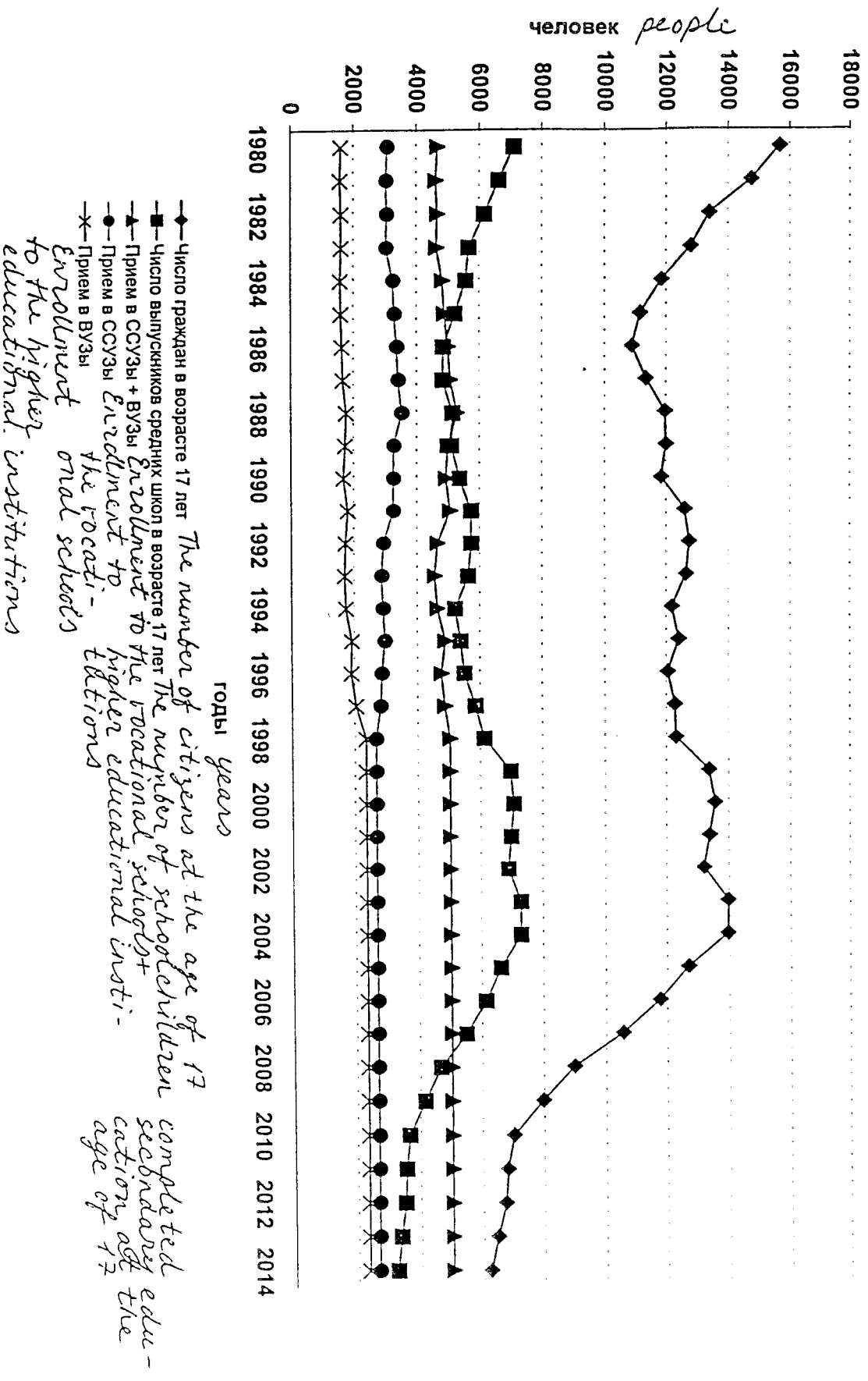
# EXHIBIT

*The prediction of the schoolchildren and students contingent for the educational institutions of Russia.*

## Прогнозирование контингента школьников и студентов для образовательных учреждений России



# The prediction of the students contingent for the educational institutions of Karelia Прогнозирование контингента студентов для образовательных учреждений Карелии



Faced with these critical considerations, the PetrSU requests advice on (A) new funding sources, (B) market impact on decisions setting curricula, teaching and research, and (C) the relevance of international projects to the strategic mission of PetrSU.

#### **A. New Funding Sources.**

(1) There is no realistic long-run solution to the financial crisis of the University that does not include substantial increase in the level of State funding. This must take the form of increasing student stipends (presently at a bare subsistence level) and provision of support for equipment, supplies and basic maintenance. At present, only salary payments are provided. Salaries for professors approximate US \$110 per month, which is seriously inadequate.

(2) It is vital to persuade the Republic of Karelia to add an important dimension to the State funding level. This could be general support for infrastructure, matching support, or categorical support for programs directly affecting Karelian growth and development. Such support is already provided to the Pedagogical University.

Some tangible support has been provided for the University by the Republic. For instance, it has recently donated two buildings to help meet critical space needs at PetrSU. It supports several scholarships, and it has made a tract of timbered land available to the institution as a revenue-producing asset. The Republic also pays for certain university programs and services of importance to it such as salary supplements for professors teaching in indigenous cultural areas, grants for some locally-oriented applied research, and contracts for projects in fisheries development, information technology, etc.

But these contributions, helpful as they are, cannot solve the University's critical need for a general revenue stream that can assist in redressing the loss in basic support from the federal government. Given the tremendous benefit the Republic derives from the University's commitment to the region, and the likelihood that the Karelian economy will grow as a direct result of work being done at PetrSU, we believe a good argument can be made for the incorporation of an annual subsidy to the University within the regular expenditure budget of the Republic. This argument could be further supported if the University were to conduct a standard economic impact analysis that identified the extent of economic activity in the region that is attributable to the operations of PetrSU, formal analysis that is common in western countries and for which an easily adapted methodology is available (we understand that the Rector has already made one such submission, and we think he should renew this effort).

Such a provision would not be without precedent, for we were informed that the Pedagogical University, another federal institution of higher education in Petrozavodsk, receives a modest annual subsidy from the Karelian government in recognition of its contribution to the education of teachers for the Republic's schools. A similar arrangement for PetrSU could certainly be justified by the argument outlined above and, in endeavoring to negotiate it, the University might seek a



specified percentage of the government's expenditure budget. Because of other budget commitments, this proportion could not be large and the amount of subsidy generated would be somewhat unpredictable, depending on the economic circumstances of the region. However, its value would grow if and when the Republic's budget grows -- a reasonable relationship in view of the University's role in the economic advancement of the Republic.

Such an arrangement would give financial substance to the concept of regionalization in Russian higher education. It would involve a mutual incentive system whereby the more successful the University's contribution is to the Republic's economic growth, the greater the amount of the University's subsidy from Karelia's budget. This provision, combined with new revenues from the various commendable entrepreneurial activities of PetrSU, would help to absorb the impact of the federal government's dramatic reduction in support to Russian universities.

(3) Rationalize the calculation and use of tuition. This may require amending the fundamental law. A tuition plan should be based on a proportion (10% perhaps) of direct instructional costs, or some other predictable basis which adjusts to inflation.

Once such a plan is in place, develop a scheme of fundraising, such as "named" scholarships and endowments to attract private funds. This may be new to the culture of Karelia, but should be tried.

(4) Continue to develop entrepreneurial activities. These will largely fund only the specific project involved, but can and should be -- as they are now -- a source of some amount of "overhead" support for institutional nondirect costs.

a) PetrSU should consider drawing on the current favorable circumstances to develop a "Software Development Center."

- Such a Center presents an opportunity for additional revenue for the University,
- A Center would enhance internal university resources in support of technology in academic and service programs,
- A Center would provide a way for PetrSU to demonstrate its technological competence to Nordic partners, who are already international leaders in such hardware development and could take advantage of the lower labor costs of Russia/Karelia,
- Thus, a Center would increase employment opportunity for young people of Karelia.

This appears to be a favorable moment for such a development because:

- Nordic countries are world-wide leaders in technology,
- They have a high labor cost; Karelia has a low labor cost,
- Karelia has young people with an aptitude for software development. The people are an asset,

- Nordic projects already use PetrSU to develop software to some extent,
- Revenue produced would be available to the University and should be shared with the programmers,
- The work of the Center would integrate projects with international programs, adding to the attractiveness of PetrSU as a partner.

Thus, the current situation seems good for such a strategic decision.

- b) The advanced state of Karelia-Nordic collaboration offers another potential for revenue producing programs. The pristine nature of the forests and lakes of the region, centering on northern Karelia, offers prime possibilities for development of eco-tourism activities and its related tourism attraction. This is augmented by the growing interest of ethnic groups in North America in travel to ancestral lands. Costa Rica has already demonstrated the huge revenue potential of eco-tourism even without the added impact of the "emigrant" re-visit impulse. The University could take the lead in bringing together the business, civic and academic elements within Karelia to launch such a venture, and could use its current contacts in Norway, Sweden and Finland to make it a region-wide venture. Such a combination should be the foundation for obtaining interest internationally for start-up financing. As a partner, the University should benefit from revenue generated by the enterprise.
- c) Tourism itself, again in partnership with Nordic entrepreneurs, is a potential source of economic benefit to Karelia and revenue to PetrSU. Considerable investment in infrastructure and training of hospitality specialists will be required.
- d) Revenue increase is obtainable by increasing the number of "special fee" students, i.e. foreign students interested in Russian studies generally, or special areas such as archeology, forestry, etc. Tapping into the international market would require a formal marketing plan and capital investment in facilities. As few as five hundred students per year at a reasonable (by US standards) fee could produce two million US dollars or more, all available for discretionary use since the present student faculty ratio of 8:1 would seem to be adequate to accommodate such an increase.
- e) The student-faculty ratio at 8:1 is more generous than for the typical US public university. There seems to be no incentive to reduce the staff, since federal funding covers only salaries, and there is no assurance that such funds could be shifted, if saved, to other categories of expenditure.
- f) The University is hard at work on another area with potential for revenue, the development of an "incubator" for international programs. Already, facilities have been renovated and made available for use by institutions seeking a venue for summer short courses and by the secretariats of regional and international programs. Such facilities, it is hoped, will attract private venture capital drawn to the potential of the market in North European Russia as well

as the region.

- g) Construction of a new campus was halted by the financial problems facing Russia. Two buildings stand partially completed amidst two hundred hectares of land on the edge of Petrozavodsk. The Rector has great desire to complete one of the structures as a “technopolis”, i.e. a technology park which would attract commercial development beneficial to the Republic functions and relate synergistically to the training and research of the University. He believes that two million US dollars would fund the completion, and is searching for a source, including revenue bond finance.

## **B. Market Influence on Setting Curricula, Teaching and Research**

Petrozavodsk University leadership sees its role as being a leading partner in the economic, cultural and intellectual development of the Republic and the nation. This “land-grant type” character for PetrSU is the appropriate response, and several possibilities should be considered.

(1) The University will produce graduates seeking careers in private business. The University should increase the visibility of the role by using the internationally recognized nomenclature such as “Faculty of Business Administration.”

(2) Furthermore, the University should consider a separate Faculty of Public Management/Administration which would facilitate relationships with cognate institutions in the Nordic Region and beyond. It would also focus the activities of PetrSU in service to local and regional government entities.

(3) The particular role for the University beyond special education or training, namely research and analysis, would be advanced by creation of a Center or Institute for Public Policy Analysis. In this capacity the University would offer assistance to government in basic policy areas, such as health, environment, education, economic development, etc.

(4) Technology and its employment on University activities is perhaps the clearest example of current market impact on traditional University functions. Thus, two current initiatives are relevant responses and are based on availability of technology: distance learning and Branch Campus Development.

### **a) Distance Learning Guidelines**

Importance of distance learning:

- PetrSU must deal with long distances between population centers in providing programs throughout Karelia,
- The geographic dispersion exacerbates the already extreme financial situation of the University,

- Distance learning practices and technology are feasible, applicable approaches which should reduce the financial costs. Distance learning can be a very cost-effective and instructionally sound method of serving Karelia,
- Distance learning can assist lower school students to prepare for University study,
- Students enjoy learning on a computer.

financial

Thus, distance learning is a potential solution to important service and problems facing PetrSU.

Guidelines for the use of distance learning

- Create a standard set of policies for all faculties,
- Develop courseware using instruction design best practices,
- Reward faculty for their work in development of applications,
- Program courseware with common software tools for all faculties,
- Model after other successful uses by colleges,
- Analyze competitive forces, choose a niche,
- Provide personal support for students in distance learning with "helpdesks," mentors, and assistants,
- Link as much as possible to other sources of information.

- b) The Branch Campus system under development, recognizes the demographic facts of life in Karelia and European North Russia. Technology offers major benefits to this branch development and can facilitate cohesion with decentralization.

### C. Relevance of International Projects to the Strategic Mission of PetrSU

(1) The University defines its strategy as to become a regional University with multiple partners. The International Project initiatives are relevant -- even indispensable to this mission. Moreover, they cover an appropriately broad scope so as to involve every strength of the University.

(2) The present existing pattern of partnerships may merit review to confirm in each case and overall the completeness of the “match” of the partner to the strategic needs of the University. Some additional types of partners may be desirable.

(3) Expand partnerships where new funding can be obtained from government, private corporations, foundations.

#### **D. University Administration and Finance**

(1) Funding for the University is grossly inadequate. The federal budget provides only salary payments and student stipends; nothing for all other costs of the institution. For 1999, education is allocated Roubles 21 billion, or 3.6% of the total federal budget of Roubles 575 billion. (See Exhibit III)

The result is that facilities are in deplorable condition. Lack of space and equipment inhibit new program development. There is stark contrast where special grant funds (SOROS) have provided computer equipment and renovation, and where space and furnishings are in severe state of decay.

The dilapidated condition of space, and the unhygienic state of quarters will discourage foreign students and faculty.

(2) Student fee charges (tuition is not allowed) are prohibitive for 30 - 40% of students due to their own financial condition. The stipend for students (paid from federal budget) amounts to US 8 dollars per month. Thus, no real revenue potential can be seen in fee increases.

(3) The administration is vigorous, strategic thinking and forward looking. Insofar as our brief encounters with students could reveal, the morale is good.

(4) Faculty teaching loads are approximately sixteen hours per week, meeting classes six days. Students typically attend six hours daily, thus thirty-six class hours per week. Shortage of class space requires many classes. The 8:1 ratio is generous for a public, largely undergraduate institution.

#### **(5) Telecommunications as an Administrative Strategy**

PetrSU has made a very good start on utilizing modern telecommunications technology in its work. A modern SOROS grant has provided equipment sufficient for allowing broad access by students to computers, to constructing individual Web pages, to use of e-mail. Students love it and use it.

Telecommunications literacy is an important goal of the University. Its importance cannot be overstated:

- The world economy is being built on technology,

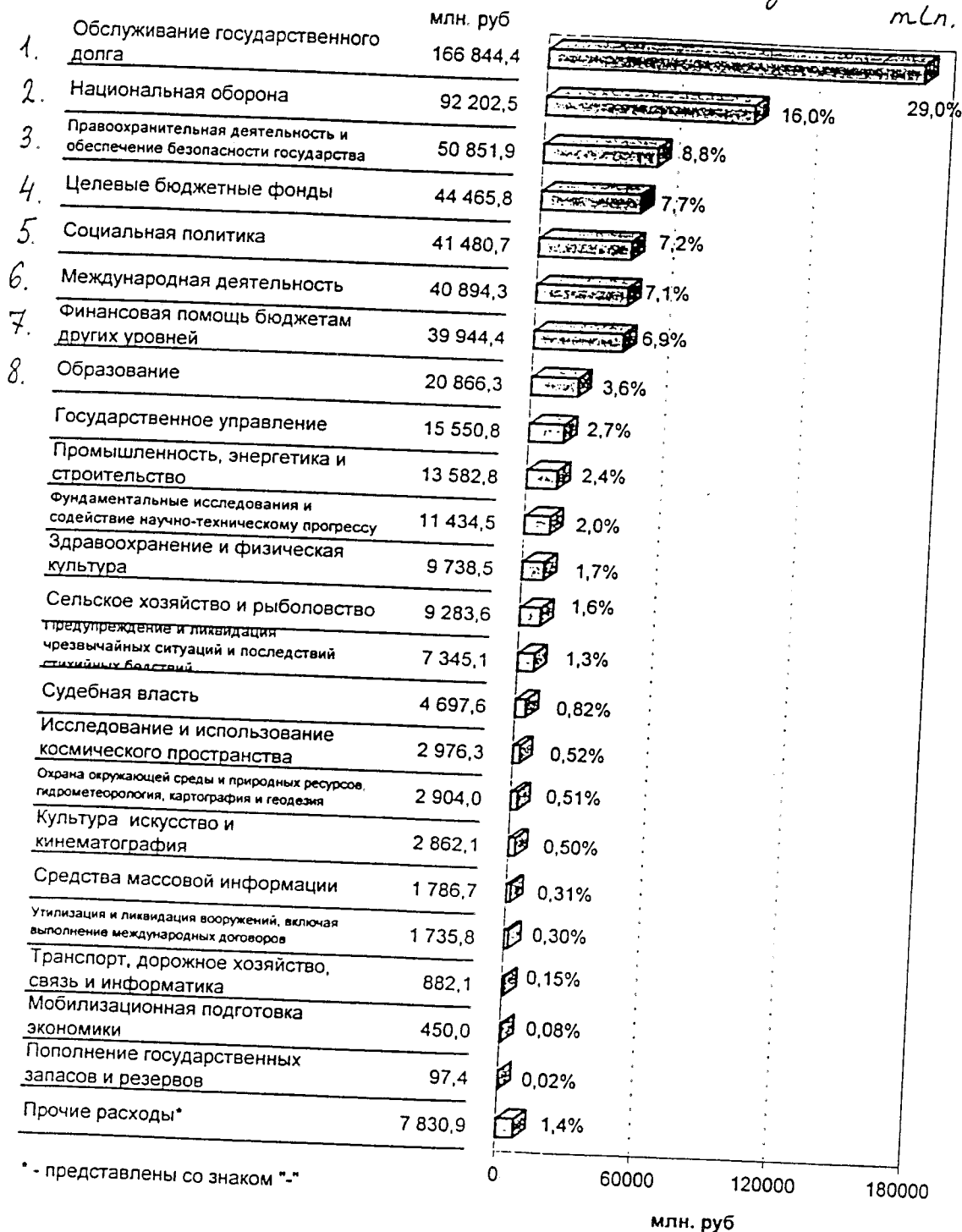
# Structure of the expenses part of the budget of Russia in 1999

## Структура расходной части бюджета (project)

### Российской Федерации в 1999 году (проект)

Сумма расходов в проекте федерального бюджета составляет 575 046,6 млн. руб

The sum of expenses in the project of federal budget is 575 046,6 mln. rouble.



\* - представлены со знаком "-"

1. Supplying the state debt
2. National defence
3. Legal defence activity and securing the state
4. Special purpose budget funds
5. Social policy
6. International activity
7. Financial aid for the budgets of other levels.
8. Education

- Universities need to have technology for research, education programs and administrative purposes,
- PetrSU students demonstrate that they like to use technology, and seem to have high aptitude for it,
- “Open universities” require use of telecommunications, and its availability places PetrSU in position to interact internationally student to student, research professor to counterpart.

PetrSU response to this essential aspect of new technology is forward-looking:

- It is promulgated as a major strategic direction,
- PetrSU participates in a national network for Russian universities,
- PetrSU is the hub of the network for Republic of Karelia.

It is our recommendation that:

- PetrSU continue to invest in its telecommunications network,
- PetrSU train and inform its faculty on best uses,
- PetrSU ensure that all disciplines and faculties have access to telecommunications  
 -- currently, the beneficiaries are programs or special projects. This is perhaps unavoidable because of the necessity of funding the equipment and other requirements from grants for special purposes. However, the University must bring all functions and faculties into use of the telecommunications facilities. All student learning can be enhanced. Video conferencing is a good first step; continue to build that use. Use databases to exchange information among faculties and branches and centers.

#### (6) Administrative Strategic Plan for Internet

- PetrSU is developing and supporting Web pages for the Republic of Karelia,
- Web pages (Internet) are the market of future economics, thus it is important for PetrSU to pave the way for the business establishment of Karelia to compete in the new environment. There is even revenue potential for the University in this service.
- Russia is building RUNET, a strong backbone network; PetrSU needs to be positioned to participate.



#### Recommendations:

- PetrSU should develop Web pages that have information about PetrSU for international students and universities,
- These Web pages should include links, key words so that Internet search engines can index the site,
- Students thus will be able to find information about PetrSU. This is the best way of communicating with the students of today,
- PetrSU should announce on the Web investment opportunities in Karelia, joint research project possibilities with the University,
- PetrSU should extend its access to Internet to small businesses and local residents. It should be an aggressive “ISP” (Internet Service Provider) -- another needed service with revenue potential.

#### **E. Petrozavodsk University: Role in Emerging Democratic Society**

It is apparent that PetrSU is engaged at significant levels, not only with its immediate community, but also as a regional and (to a limited extent) an international player. Leaders articulate a vision to become the “educational and cultural center” of the region.

It seems to the Advisor Group that to be the “educational and Cultural Center,” PetrSU must more fully engage the community it serves in the life of the University.

The University is the largest educational enterprise of its kind in the Republic of Karelia and has multiple contracts and agreements with various educational enterprises. During interviews, it was noted that among the activities related to engaging the communities it serves was the support of a conservatory, writing guilds and activities to support professional writers, book presentations, faculties of the University conducting ecological studies, and setting up an area of the University to study philosophy and an area to begin collecting and cataloging folklore. PetrSU is engaged in what we would call intercollegiate athletics and has a music program with a choral group that performs locally and in other parts of Europe.

The Social Marketing Director is assigned the task of making money for the University through extending the intellectual resources of the University. Major projects associated in this area include the Taiga Model Forest, under which the University has the control of 25 hectares (a hectare equals approximately 2.5 acres) which it can rent for 25 years. As part of this project, the University is studying how to use the unlimited forest lands Russia controls in a rational way. Additional activities in which they are engaged include the development of a business incubator, relationships with social and civic clubs, a network to secondary schools in the region with some hope that it will become involved in preparing students for the University, a library system that is linked with other libraries in the region, personal computer training and lifelong learning, and the capability of having interactive A/V

conferences by satellite.

### Becoming the Community's Space

Though the declared goal of the university is to become the educational and cultural center of the region, it was apparent to the visiting advisors that much additional work would have to be done in developing the University as the community's space. This is a particularly difficult area to review in that the University has a huge "debt" and is fundamentally unable to pay its current bills, including utilities and maintenance. It currently finds itself in the position of having to be forgiven for much of its debt by the local government. PetrSU is very much in a survival mode, even to the point of University employees on occasion not being paid their monthly salaries. Students report that stipends at 200 Roubles (\$8 per month) are terribly inadequate. Given those circumstances, the leadership of Petrozavodsk State University has to ask why would they move further to become the community's space and if so, what would it look like. The optimistic response to the question is that, in the future, the University and the region will not be as poor as they currently are. That same response refers to the circumstances in which the college might ask for help from various philanthropic organizations.

Becoming even more of the community's space might involve developing programs for the future University by working with all existing occupations that involve licensing. The current thinking in Russia is that Universities will be assigned training regions for lifelong learning activities, and it will be important that the University develop a plan to engage in the process of lifelong learning. The continuation of efforts with a business incubator could be important in beginning the process of lifting the region out of its economic dilemmas. One of the areas to be reviewed in the future is PetrSU's creating a "training school for boys and girls for entrance into the University," and this could definitely lead to a strengthening of the enrollment base. The development of a Citizen Leadership Council could perhaps be a fundamental part of the institution's efforts to maintain and improve its status among the leadership of the various governments of the region.

An effort that could be productive in the development of Petrozavodsk in this region of Russia that would add little to infrastructure costs, but could create a profit center, would be the development of target programming in areas related to ecotourism. The country of Costa Rica has been particularly effective in making huge profits from establishing ecotourism. Karelia has all of the natural assets—indeed all of Russia has the natural assets—to attract large numbers of ecotourists to explore the forests, waterways, and natural habitat.

There are certain things to which the University must direct its immediate attention prior to inviting others to visit the University. Those relate to fundamental, basic human needs related to health and sanitation. As the institution plans for its future, envisioning itself as the educational and cultural center of the region, it must first repair its sanitation facilities; turn on the air conditioning systems (both heating and cooling); light its hallways and classrooms; and, of course, expand its computer capabilities, not only for students, but for employees. These health and human sanitation areas are so absolutely critical that they must be addressed before PetrSU can begin to consider itself as the coming leader for this region of

Russia.

### Those Who Can Help You Get There

There are a number of agencies in the United States that can be of assistance to Petrozavodsk State University as it plans for its future. The Kettering Foundation of Dayton, Ohio, is not a source for money, but has a wealth of information concerning how institutions can participate more actively in their communities. A letter to the foundation would, we believe, result in a significant amount of information being provided that the University can study and use to its advantage.

A second organization, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, is occasionally a source of money for various leadership projects. The Kellogg Foundation spends literally millions of dollars on multiple programs to assist people in becoming citizen leaders and becoming the center of their community. An inquiry to the Kellogg Foundation in Battle Creek, Michigan, would elicit information on which the University could then act.

A third area that has been mentioned (and is mentioned again for emphasis) is the pursuit of target programming including that of ecotourism. It is the opinion of the Visiting Advisors Program that sister institutions within Russia can be a source of information and assistance as the university coordinates educational efforts for Northwest Russia.

One subject that we could not get a particularly good understanding of—the university's relations with alumni or others who have left Russia altogether and have succeeded economically in other parts of the world. It would seem that some contact with successful graduates and their families could result in future assistance for the university. One has to assume that Russia, with its abundance of natural resources, will not always be poor and that by developing alumni contacts and a database at the present time, perhaps those resources can be used to strengthen the University in the future.

Finally, the Salzburg Universities Project is a continuing source of good information from colleagues around the world to assist as any of these activities might begin to be developed. There is a wealth of information available and a great many people who are willing to share what they know.

### **F. Regionalization**

The federal government's continuing reduction of support for state universities in Russia seems to be accompanied by a vague hope that regional jurisdiction will help "fill the gap." They are unlikely to do so until and unless their own economic circumstances improve and, even then, such support will depend on whether or not their leaders can be convinced to view universities as regional resources rather than federal presences. Persuading them of this is the universities' task, and words will not suffice; regional commitments must become evident in actions that demonstrate a change in institutional self-concept from aloof agent of national planning to engaged engine of local development. This shift must be reflected in the priorities by which academic administrators choose the teaching, research, and service

activities that are undertaken.

Petrozavodsk State University can be among those that will succeed in this regard. Its current leadership team appears united in a strong view that its competitive advantage derives from its Karelian roots, that its unique mission arises from the distinctive nature and location of its region, and that its own progress will be shaped by its role as a leading partner in the advancement of the Republic. The University's strength as a contributor to the Russian Federation and as a player in the international domain is recognized as integrally related to its place as a regional "driver."

Numerous initiatives have been launched to assure such a place for PetrSU. Most of the academic programs in which it specializes are oriented to the particular human resource needs of Karelia, and its many international endeavors are focused upon the North European setting of the Republic. Its research thrusts are largely of an applied nature, concentrating on the generation of knowledge needed to solve problems and generate improvements that will benefit the industry, economy, culture, and civil society of the region. And its many service enterprises are directed to meeting Karelian needs by such means as creating branch campuses and study centers to foster educational improvement and community development in remote regions, importing resources and ideas from other countries and international agencies, enhancing the provision and distribution of medical services throughout the Republic, convening conferences on issues of concern to local government authorities, supplying Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other data to support the Karelian government's economic planning and development functions, recording and preserving the region's indigenous cultural expressions, establishing the technology for regional Internet access, and providing continuing education opportunities for teachers and others (including local government officials). Clearly, PetrSU has dedicated itself to advancing the culture and economy of Karelia; indeed, a new university policy calls for each faculty to take responsibility for planning and implementing programs of assistance in two regions of the Republic.

The University's importance was confirmed by the Karelian officials with whom we met and is recognized in the various representations it is offered on government bodies. Each month senior leaders of the University meet with officials of the Republic to discuss future progress and mutual cooperation in areas like industrial development and public administration.

Students seem to be generally satisfied with the quality of education at the University, although they recognize variances among disciplines with a tendency for the older "more traditional" faculties to be better and for certain "employment-related" fields to be "out of sync" with today's job market. Similarly, they believe that faculty members respect students and that their teaching performance is satisfactory, subject to some individual exceptions. Likewise, students recognize certain members of the administration as being less interested than others in their concerns. These perceptions are typical in universities around the world, and our conclusion is that the students of PetrSU find its academic standards acceptable. It should be noted, however, that the students we met said they felt well prepared for their university studies and were not finding them difficult -- but this may have been a particularly bright class of students.

## G. Students

In an effort to discern the students' perspective on the state and prospects of PetrSU, members of the Visiting Advisors Team met with the leader of the students' trade union (a proudly independent organization established to represent student interests in both university and government policy arenas and to help students satisfy personal, social, financial and recreational needs that the University cannot meet) and with a group of current students (a third-year English class in the Faculty of History). There was considerable consistency in the messages we heard.

We were interested to learn that a major review of each faculty member's performance is conducted every five years, but that little use is made of student input in these evaluations. Our experience has been that, as long as it is only one of several approaches to appraisal, student evaluation of teachers' performance can be useful for administrative purposes (like periodic reviews for salary, tenure, and promotion decisions) and helpful for formative purposes by indicating areas of weakness that a professor could address to improve effectiveness as a teacher. As an example of such an approach that is supported by students, faculty and administrators, we append to this report a simple "Teaching Evaluation Questionnaire" that has been used successfully for many years at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. (See Exhibit IV) At the end of each course, after the teacher has left, a student distributes this form to all students who complete it on a confidential basis and return it to the student distributor who then takes the responses to the department head office. The forms from all classes in the department are forwarded to the Dean's office where they are machine-read and the scores on each question are calculated and then aggregated for each department and for the faculty as a whole. Total scores for each course are computed and ranked, and then rankings are provided to departmental, faculty, and University administrators for consideration in conjunction with other indicators of teaching effectiveness. After the students' grades for a course are "finalized," all the evaluation forms from that class are delivered to the teacher, along with a summary sheet indicating the ranking on each question (at both the departmental and faculty levels) by underlining the scores from his or her class without any other designation of which scores came from which classes. Teachers with low rankings are encouraged to seek assistance in their areas of weakness from the University's Teaching and Learning Resource Centre.

Such a program would be easily adaptable to PetrSU and would serve to increase the students' sense of engagement in their own education. This could be valuable because the opportunities for students to exchange views with faculty members on an individual basis are severely limited by several resource-related constraints. For example, teaching faculty do not have offices in which to conduct such discussions. Moreover, the lack of textbooks requires teachers to spend a large amount of their time in lecturing to classes rather than meeting with individual students. And what little time may remain must often be devoted to other activities in order to supplement the teachers' inadequate salaries.

There seems to be little interest in or support for any student evaluation process on the part of University academic leaders. Faculty assessment, it seems, is an obligation of the Chairs and the Deans. It is done by them at regular periods coinciding with contract renewal

consideration.

Nevertheless, this suggestion does not negate our conclusion that the students at PetrSU are generally satisfied with the academic quality of their programs. They did, however, express several concerns about other features impinging upon the learning environment, most of which are historically based or result from resource limitations. For example, students must choose an area of academic specialization upon entry to the University and, once admitted, their course of study is heavily standardized with severe restrictions on the number and range of elective courses available for them to pursue in response to intellectual interests that arise during their voyage of learning through the University. They would appreciate a reduction in this constraint and an opportunity to pursue a somewhat more “liberal” education. Such a change might be facilitated by introducing a credit system, and we were pleased to learn that the Rector of PetrSU is playing a leading role in exploring this possibility at the federal level. This system, incidentally, could also enhance the University’s capacity to engage in student exchange programs with universities in other countries, an aspiration that has been accorded a commendably high priority at PetrSU.

Finally, the students we met expressed several concerns about the University’s physical infrastructure and support services -- again, problems that are regrettably resource-related. We heard (and/or saw) that the buildings can be cold and dirty (indeed we experienced this ourselves -- especially in the lavatories), that the supply of heat and hot water to the dormitories is unreliable, that the availability of books and computers is insufficient (although in the latter respect we believe substantial progress is being made with access to information technology on campus), that classroom furnishings (e.g., blackboards, desks and chairs) are inadequate, and that more study spaces are needed. We also gained the impression that the University is ill-equipped to respond to the social, psychological, cultural, medical, recreational, financial and other personal needs of students. The latter area of concern (support services) is being addressed directly by the students’ trade union, and the former (physical infrastructure) is not likely to be resolved until the University obtains sufficient resources to develop and occupy its “new campus.”

Unfortunately, until these issues of student concern are resolved, the University is unlikely to achieve its commendable and appropriate objective of becoming significantly active in the arena of international mobility for students (and faculty). Its obstacles, as we have noted, are largely resource-based; and the PetrSU leadership has become dramatically entrepreneurial in challenging them. But it needs (and deserves) government help -- soon.

#### IV A Final Word

This report of an advisory visit to Petrozavodsk University provides responses to three key interests of the leaders of the institution; A) possible new funding sources, B) market influences relevant to decisions on curriculum, teaching and research, and C) relevance of international initiatives of the University to its strategic mission.

In addition, specific recommendations are offered by the advisors in several areas affecting faculty, administration, and students.

**Arts and Social Sciences  
Teaching Evaluation Questionnaire  
(Approved by JCAA)**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide information that will both help in the evaluation of the instructor and help the instructor improve the course.

### General Information

Course Number:

Please do not write  
your name on this  
sheet

**Instructor's Name:**

**Please list the following information: (Please print using block, capital letters.)**

a) Your Faculty:

[illegible]

b) Your major subject:

[illegible]

c) Your average grade at Carleton so far: (Shade in the appropriate bubble.)

☐ "A"   ☐ "B"   ☐ "C"   ☐ "D"   ☐ "F"

d) Percentage of classes you attended in this course (Shade in the appropriate bubble.)

☐ 0% - 25%   ☐ 26% - 50%   ☐ 51% 75%   ☐ 76% - 100%

Please answer all of the following questions, by shading in the appropriate bubble. (N/A = Not Applicable)

A. How do you assess your instructor's performance?

1. in making clear the objectives of the course?

2. in organizing the course so as to meet the objectives?

3. in imparting the course materials in his/her role as lecturer/seminar leader/tutorial leader/workshop leader/language instructor?

4. in answering questions and/or solving problems related to the course material?

5. in assigning readings, essays, seminar topics, etc., which are relevant to the course?

6. in assigning a workload related to the course objectives?

7. in marking and commenting on assignments and tests fairly?

8. in returning tests and assignments promptly?

9. in being available for out-of-class consultation?

10. in speaking audibly and clearly?

11. in beginning and ending classes promptly?

12. in meeting classes regularly as scheduled, and in missing or cancelling classes only for adequate reasons?

8. How do you evaluate the instructor?

[illegible]

www.wlw.wlw.wlw

PLEASE WRITE COMMENTS ON REVERSE SIDE

The Advisors appreciate the wholehearted support received from the University. All requests for information and for access to individuals were met as fully and as quickly as circumstances permitted. Hospitality and consideration for the comfort of the visiting advisors was exceptional.

The advisors hope their observations, ideas, experiences and recommendations prove helpful to the University as it struggles with the immediate problems and prepares for the long range future.