



THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR VISITING ADVISORS REPORT

BELGOROD STATE UNIVERSITY BELGOROD, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

May 11-16, 2002

Team Members:

Dr. Laszlo Frenyo (team leader), Professor of Immunophysiology; Dean of Faculty, Western Maryland College Budapest Program; former President, Hungarian Higher Education and Research Council

Dr. Clare Ummersen, President and Director, Office of Women in Higher Education (American Council on Education); former President, Cleveland State University

Mr. Eddie Newcomb, Registrar and Head of Administration, University of Manchester; former Registrar and Secretary of the Universities of Leeds and Essex

Dr. Alfred Ebenbauer, President, Austrian Academic Exchange Service; former Rector, University of Vienna

Dr. Helene Kamensky, Russian Program Coordinator, Universities Project, Salzburg Seminar

1. ***Introduction***

The above team from the Salzburg Seminar Universities Project visited Belgorod State University (BelSU) in Belgorod, Russian Federation, upon the invitation of the University and met with the newly appointed Rector and his Pro-Rectors, Deans and Vice-Deans of various faculties, chairs and heads of departments, administrators as well as a large group of students.

Prior to the visit of the advisors team, BelSU had identified several topics to be discussed during the consultations. Following the introductory meeting with the Rector and his team the final agenda was determined as follows:

- Academic structure and governance of the university
- University management
- University autonomy and academic freedom
- The implications of the market for research and teaching priorities
- Role of the university in the emerging civil society
- International cooperation
- Central authority of the Rector

The arrangements for the visit were greatly facilitated by the International Relations Department, whose head was in daily contact with the team, making sure that everyone obtained the maximum benefits from the mission.

The team was very much impressed by the hospitality extended by the Rector and his immediate colleagues. The administration and the staff were gracious hosts and did their best to make the visit as pleasant and productive as possible.

The sessions involved a brief introduction of the topic provided by one of the advisory team members, followed by an open discussion co-chaired by the Rector (Prof. Leonid Yakovlevich Dyatchenkko) or the first Pro-Rector (Prof. Ilya Fyodorovich Isaev) of BelSU. The team emphasized to the University leadership at the outset that the mission of the Visiting Advisors Program is far from a formal evaluation. Instead the aim was to focus on the concerns identified by the University, to share the observations and experiences of the team members and offer recommendations on the issues presented to the advisors.

All members of the Visiting Advisors team contributed to this report that has been prepared for the consideration of the BelSU leadership. The statements, comments and recommendations it contains reflect the unanimous views of the advisory group.

2. *Background of the Institution*

The foundation of the current university goes back to 1876, with the establishment of a Teacher Training Institute. Later on it was converted to a Pedagogical Institute. Following some intermediary forms, the institution became Belgorod State Pedagogical Institute in 1958. It then received a new status as Belgorod State Pedagogical University in 1994. Shortly after that, in 1996, the current format of the institution was created as Belgorod State University.

BelSU is located in Belgorod, the center of Middle Russia's region also called Belgorod region (Oblast). The fairly large university city, with a population of over 300,000, is about ten hours' drive south of Moscow. The region is rich in iron, providing a base for mining and heavy industry. The other outstanding asset of the area is agriculture. Based on the famous black-earth soil, agro industry and agribusiness add to the wealth of the region.

The current administration—especially the Governor of the region—puts great emphasis on constant development of infrastructure, is concerned about the environment, undertakes all possible efforts to create a favorable investment climate, and puts education and culture high on his agenda.

The team was fascinated by the impressive infrastructure and the clean and well-maintained environment of the new campus of BelSU. It was also understood that much of this investment was made available by the generous

support of the Governor of the region, who is especially dedicated to education.

3. *Academic Structure and Governance of the University*

Higher education is currently undergoing substantial changes in the Russian Federation. While the Federal government provides the framework, the institution itself determines the long-term strategy of an individual university, and the university needs to adapt to the rapidly changing socio-economic environment. All of these changes influence the academic structure as well as the method of governance of the particular universities. The challenges of the 21st century definitely require structural adjustments in order to make the university competitive in the national and international arena. The institution, therefore, needs to be governed by those skilled in strategic thinking, and must be run by professional management.

BelSU, as a relatively new institution based on the merger of three independent entities (Belgorod State Pedagogical University; Territorial Faculty of Finances and Economics and the Belgorod Healthcare (medical) College), has a central position in the Belgorod region. Its role has further been improved due to the formation of a university complex. The latter structure brought many other institutions close to BelSU, creating a university association.

Among the outstanding strengths of BelSU, the following should especially be mentioned:

- The enthusiasm of academic staff in the various departments
- The numerous achievements of the University within a short period of time
- The creation of an excellent springboard for future development
- The expectations of change as a result of having a new rector
- The positive role of the University in improving the quality of life of the Belgorod region, as economic development emerges.

A very complex system of thirteen faculties, seventy departments, a healthcare (medical) college, two branches, five research institutes and six additional subdivisions (i.e. botanical garden, horse sports school, Montessori interuniversity center, etc.) serve all the above functions.

More than 13, 000 students study at the University, which has approximately 850 academic positions. The central library contains about 700,000 volumes. Approximately 2000 students are housed in five dormitories. Training halls and gymnasiums serve the physical fitness of the students, while cultural activities are available on campus (university concert hall) as well as in the city itself (academic drama theater, etc.). There is a second complex on campus under construction at the present time, which is going to add educational, cultural, social and sport facilities to the University.

The academic structure of the university complex, however, does not seem to have been completed. One of the burning issues is the legal status of the College, which has to be clarified at both the federal legislative level as well as the university level.

The team's understanding is that among the alternatives is to legally define the current status of the College so that it is eligible to award the appropriate degree. The other option is to introduce intensive research activity in the College, in order to meet the accreditation criteria of universities. Taking into consideration the future perspective of massification in higher education, the former solution—defining the legal status of the College within the university system—seems to be the preferable one. Under the same process, the status of the two “branches” (Alekseevsky branch, Starooskolsky branch) could be adjusted in a similar manner.

While understanding the complexity of the university system, we firmly believe that due to the high level of internal fragmentation, structural consolidation is needed. The range and organization of academic programs also ought to be reviewed. It is therefore of primary importance to determine the appropriate number of faculties (education units.) BelSU should focus its intellectual and financial capacities on fewer but very powerful areas, which would certainly place BelSU in a leading position in the region.

Having about 140 vacancies among the academic staff, the University is in a good position to hire quality academics from all over Russia and even from abroad (although the latter involves special financial considerations), in order to bring fresh, new intellectual capacity to add to the already existing high quality of BelSU.

As the University leadership adjusts the academic structure to the challenges of the region, as well as to the challenges of the common European higher education system, they should be aware of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) that provides high level mobility for the students both domestically as well as internationally. Joining such a system requires the reconsideration and proper modification of the curricula currently available at BelSU. In addition, joining the European higher education reform program called the “Bologna Process” should be of great interest to BelSU, bringing its educational system close to the European standards, increasing its competitiveness, while preserving high values of Russian higher education. An immediate pragmatic advantage of the above would be the greater recognition attached to bachelor degrees.

4. University Management

Belgorod State University has the understandable and laudable ambition of becoming a world-class university. It has already made impressive strides since its foundation. But to achieve this ambition means being first class not only in research, teaching and scholarship, but also in management. An essential ingredient of success is underpinning academic objectives with a professional, forward-looking administration.

Higher education exists in a turbulent environment; the global economy and technological change have profound implications for universities as well as for society as a whole. Universities the world over have had to come to terms with these changes which have intensified competition, not only between universities themselves but between universities and private sector providers of education. This has put a premium on managerial efficiency. Administrations in higher education today must have at least three key qualities. First, they must work in an integrated fashion so that resources—whether human, financial or physical—are harnessed in the most effective, efficient and economic manner in support of the University's academic objectives. Second, they must be flexible, ready to re-position the institution in the light of changing circumstances. Third, the management must be pro-active, ready to grasp opportunities, ready to solve problems, ready to seize the initiative. Yesterday's thinking is not necessarily suitable for today, still less for tomorrow.

Belgorod State University is at a key point of transition with the appointment of a new Rector. This provides the opportunity to re-assess what form of management structure is required to meet the challenges ahead. The paper we received in advance of our visit frankly and honestly analyzed current weaknesses in the administration of the University and the problems being faced. It is certainly the case that the ability of a university to effect change is largely determined by its organizational structure. Of course, there is no single pattern that will guarantee success.

Circumstances of history, culture and tradition will influence the model adopted, as will the skills and talents immediately available. Our discussions with the Rector and his senior colleagues lead us to a range of observations which we hope will be helpful to the Rector as he considers the future structure of the University's management:

- (i) Management structures must be as lean as possible so that the maximum resources are devoted to the institution's primary activities of teaching and research (we were surprised, for example, at the number of senior officers and the different tiers of administration in an institution the size of Belgorod; there is, we suggest, considerable scope for rationalization¹).
- (ii) The administration of any higher education institution in the 21st century is so complex that professional management is required to support the Rector and his senior academic colleagues. Skills are needed not only in general management but in human resource management, in finance and facilities management as well as in the newer areas such as marketing, fundraising and intellectual property management. Universities are not like a business but they must be business-like.

¹ Following the oral presentation of our Report the new Rector announced his intention of reducing the number of Pro-Rectors.

- (iii) It is sometimes helpful to recruit staff from outside the university to help the process of cultural change; an appropriate mix of such colleagues with staff experienced in the university is a good combination. It is important, however, that all administrative personnel should have an appreciation of and sympathy with academic concerns.
- (iv) We believe that the work of the administration needs to be seen and managed as an integrated whole. In that way standards can be set for the entire administration and a "can do" culture can be established.
- (v) Finally, we suggest that a strategic plan is needed for the managerial as well as for the academic development of the University. Such a plan would set priorities for the administration, indicate the objectives, define the culture and identify the performance indicators to be used in evaluating the success of the administrative performance.

We believe these measures would greatly help the Rector to accomplish his goals. The Rector should not have to personally manage the range of administrative functions currently under his responsibility. Whatever structure is selected needs to relieve him of this burden so that he can devote more time to the strategic direction of the University. One possibility, among many others, is to establish a binary system with one Vice-Rector (or Provost) accountable to the Rector for academic policy and development and a second Vice-Rector accountable for the management and co-ordination of the entire administration.

These would be bold steps and if they were to be successful a major staff training and development policy would need to accompany them. Staff would need to be trained to take on their new responsibilities and, as part of the program, both team and individual initiative should be encouraged (as opposed to the bureaucracy involved in management by committee).

Effecting change is usually a difficult and painful process, but the new Rector has already signaled his intention to develop an open and participatory style of management and to give priority to good communication at all levels. That is to be applauded.

We were also encouraged by the expectation of many staff that Dr. Dyatchenko will initiate developments that will help the University not simply to survive in the complex environment, but to successfully flourish as a first class institution.

5. *University Autonomy and Academic Freedom*

It is a widely accepted principle—which has been the understanding of BelSU colleagues as well—that universities should and must be independent legal entities, that they should have the opportunity to establish their organizational structure, to work out and accept their own constitution, to determine their research policy, to create their own curricula, to select their students, to elect their leaders, and to decide on their international cooperation policy. It is also

necessary that university teachers should be allowed to design their courses and that students must have the opportunity to choose what and where they want to study. On the other hand, autonomy and academic freedom cannot be unfettered since universities act within a given legal framework; they are also part of and related to society, the economy and the cultural area of a region and a country.

Belgorod State University leaders were all very well aware of all the problems connected with the question of autonomy, knowing that it must be closely tied to responsibility and accountability. Based upon that premise, the leaders of BSU are seeking a higher level of autonomy combined with greater responsibility.

It is indeed very positive that BelSU now has the right to elect its Rector (who has then to be appointed by the minister) despite the fact that there are other models of selecting the leading person of a university worldwide, such as appointment by a board of governors/trustees. Another positive fact is that BelSU now has the possibility to decide—within a given margin (25%)—on its curricula, which makes it possible to establish a competitive “teaching policy” and to adapt the curricula to regional and local needs and challenges.

It is another very important signal of autonomy that BelSU is allowed to decide autonomously on the allocation of resources, undoubtedly a significant incentive to intensifying different methods of fundraising.

It seems that BelSU is on the right path to maintaining and even increasing its autonomy, its independence and its responsibility. The advisory team obviously welcomed these efforts. It was less clear, however, what further steps would be advisable at the moment in order to gain more autonomy. There were some concerns among the Belgorod colleagues about any further extension of autonomy, because of the potential disadvantages. It is indeed true that earning more autonomy leads to an increased responsibility and also to an increase of the complexity of the university, at least at the level of internal management and governance. But many benefits will flow. Any substantial changes related to autonomy are naturally dependent upon the legal conditions currently determining the Russian higher education system. It is, however, highly recommended that BelSU consider that issue as an important element of its strategic planning. Alternatives could be established to determine in which fields and to what extent BelSU wants to gain more autonomy and how it will deal with more autonomy, self-administration, academic freedom and responsibility.

6. *The Implications of the Market for Research and Teaching Priorities*

The market economy has already had a major and continuing influence on universities in the USA and Western Europe, and it is evident that the same factors are beginning to affect higher education in Russia. The experience of the west shows that there are many opportunities for universities but there are dangers as well. Our colleagues in Belgorod were eager to learn from members of the visiting team and we were able to describe developments in

the USA and the United Kingdom in some detail, pointing out both the successes achieved and the mistakes made.

In the UK, for example, governmental policy helped push universities towards the market. Decisions to allocate research funds on a much more selective basis and to institute a periodic assessment of the quality of research in every department in every university have a major impact. Universities became more competitive with each other and many staff whose active research careers were over, left higher education. Simultaneously, universities intensified their efforts to attract funding from industry and commerce. The opportunities and benefits were considerable: entrepreneurial activity was stimulated, spin off companies were formed, joint ventures with private sector companies increased, and new emphasis was placed on the exploitation of intellectual property. Much the same trends have occurred in the USA.

In our discussions we noted the pitfalls that could face universities in bringing their research to the market. First, a balance must be preserved between curiosity-led research (pure research) and market-driven research. Research strategies should not be driven solely by those who can earn, valuable though they are. Second, commercial activity needs to be managed professionally: universities need experts in contract negotiation, in the management of intellectual property, in the setting up of companies. Often this will involve re-visiting university rules and procedures to provide the flexibility required, there will need to be decisions on how much time members of staff can spend on entrepreneurial activity and how any income arising from such activity is to be divided between the individual, the Faculty and the University centrally.

Experience in the west has offered a particular lesson for medium sized universities like Belgorod. Such universities have had to concentrate their research efforts into relatively small number of areas to build up critical mass to enable them to compete with larger universities.

Our discussions made it clear that colleagues in Belgorod are already developing market orientation in a number of ways. We encourage these trends but advise that the University should proceed carefully, taking account of the points made above. In this context we discussed how best the University should move forward and noted two particular models: first, building on existing continuing education programs and, second, appointing a task force of excellent researchers with interests in the market. We wish the University well in its endeavors in this area.

With regard to teaching, our discussions concentrated on three major areas: first, the development of specialist courses for commerce and industry, second, the role of the international and graduate students, and, finally, the impact of globalization with particular reference to distance learning. Our Belgorad colleagues agreed that all three are important, and all three offer the prospect both of enhancing the quality of teaching and of increasing income.

Many universities have increased the provision of specialist courses for commerce and industry, sometimes delivered in the institution and sometimes

in the work place. We noted that this required considerable flexibility of approach to meet the demands of the customers; teaching might well be required in the evenings or at weekends, for example. The benefits of such activity will need to be clearly demonstrated to academic colleagues if they are to participate with enthusiasm. Those paying for such specialized teaching expect a very high quality service and the market will be lost to competing organizations if this condition cannot be met. Our colleagues at Belgorod showed they were fully aware of these issues.

So far as the international and postgraduate market is concerned, BelSU has already developed an excellent base, and in section 8 “International Cooperation” of our report, we comment on the impressive successes that have been achieved. There is enormous potential here for increasing the numbers of international students and both enriching the university community and its finances. Providing specialist postgraduate courses at the Masters level offers further opportunities. In particular, the warm and strong relationship that exists between the Regional Authority and the University could lead to many exciting possibilities, including courses that would contribute significantly to regional development, not only in economic terms but also in social and cultural terms. We comment elsewhere in this report on other aspects of university-regional relations. In this area, as in others, a strategic and focused approach will need to be taken.

Information Technology (IT)

In our meetings with the professoriate and the rectorate, we considered the impact and implications of technological change for both teaching and management. We had fascinating discussions about the choices open to the University and the potential pitfalls ahead. The new Rector is rightly convinced of the important contribution that IT can make. Wisely, the University is taking a careful approach. Our recommendation is to create an information systems strategy that should embrace both academic and managerial developments in a co-coordinated and coherent fashion. As the BelSU staff acknowledged, it will need skilled project management, investment in staff training and careful interaction with the suppliers of hardware and software.

One implication of IT is distance learning, in which BelSU has already taken some steps by providing courses for the Regional Authority. During our discussions we recognized many of the difficulties involved in taking forward major distance learning developments: the initial capital investment required, the need for expert help to translate teaching materials into an appropriate distance learning format, and the importance of establishing that there is a market for the product concerned. These difficulties, plus the need to update on-line material constantly, have led some universities to spread the risk by forming a partnership with a commercial enterprise, usually a large publishing house. This may offer a model for Belgorod but it is a highly competitive area, which has to be treated with care. Our Belgorod colleagues were very realistic as far as this component of the market is concerned. We share their caution and we wish them well.

7. *Role of the University in the Emerging Civil Society*

Belgorod State University has the opportunity to achieve excellence in meeting its goals of preparing students for leadership in a civil society, of expanding its mission by focusing its teaching and research capacities in areas important to the region, and of reaching out to improve the life and minds of the residents through its service activities.

The University is already carrying out in numerous ways the preparation of students to participate in a civic society, by instilling in its graduates moral values, understanding of the principles of a democratic society and the need for them to be of service to their community and region. Belgorod's students are living and learning about these ideals on this campus. They are accomplishing this by developing a strong sense of pride in their culture, by participating in student activities that give life to their curricular learning and by taking part in student governance in preparation for roles later in government management, especially at the local and regional level. Even more important is their ability to make informed decisions about socially significant issues.

On campus, students are participating in the work of the scholarship commissions, managing hostel issues and initiating student groups. Off campus they are volunteering their time to work with children in the region and in summer camps across Russia. Some students are already playing an active role on Belgorod's Municipal Student Council and on the Governor's Youth Council. We believe that such students would benefit from more emphasis on leadership training with purposeful opportunities outside the university to practice these skills and to discuss with faculty the important characteristics of different leadership styles and the importance of such issues as good communication, team building and other important aspects of leadership. The education of leaders is important because society needs caring leaders at all levels if we are going to be successful in living together in peace and unity. With minimal effort this component could be added to Belgorod's current excellent programs. The University also should think about reaching out into the community to create a leadership program that brings together young emerging leaders to assist them in learning skills that will make them successful as they take on leadership roles within the region. Such groups might include several strong leaders from the University. Perhaps the main University campus could also coordinate such a program for all the participants of the university complex.

The University also must assume a pivotal role in the preparation of the workforce for the Belgorod region. Since many of its students remain in the region after graduation, continuing professional education also must be an important focus. Belgorod is involved already in producing the teaching force for the schools in the region and in providing continuing studies for teachers. Furthermore, school quality is improved when its graduate students carry out important teaching and learning research.

A number of other examples in law, the environment and medicine demonstrate the University's commitment to outreach in providing important

services. There is evidence from our materials that the University has already begun to focus on research important to the area. Given the current size of the University and the limited funds available, Belgorod should consider seriously focusing its research capacity in three or four key problem areas for the region. Either alone or in partnership with other universities, corporations and/or government agencies, a research plan should be developed for each area. Some suggestions would be studying how Belgorod State University can assist the region in preserving its environment for future generations, or using its strengths from several departments—possibly geography, history, sociology to start—to aid the region in urban planning and controlled development. Given the positive relationship with the present Governor, it may be possible for Belgorod to become the repository for the regional data on all of the data elements necessary to construct a geographic information system (GIS) that is a critical component for regional planning. If Belgorod had such a database—composed of information on population, land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, industry base, education level of the workforce, etc.—then, of necessity, Belgorod would be an essential partner in all such activity. Information of this sort will assist government agencies in making informed decisions and will provide students with a skill set in GIS that will be in demand worldwide.

Belgorod State University has a singular opportunity as the only public university in the region to become one of a few Russian universities with a mission focused on the economic and civic success of its region. Using its current resources wisely and working to garner additional resources will assure an exciting future and will transform this University from a good university to a great university.

8. *International Cooperation*

The discussion with Belgorod's enthusiastic students evidenced a high degree of interest in international exchanges. They expressed concerns about requirements for such programs, the length of programs and the cost. The development of clear exchange agreements with several universities in different countries can best address these kinds of questions. Given the command of the English and German languages that Belgorod's students have demonstrated (we conducted our meeting with them in these two languages), the University should consider a semester or a summer abroad program for them.

The International Office should begin to develop such concrete agreements which will include answers to the concerns that students raised and this information should then be made available to them in easily understood language. In addition to assisting Belgorod's own students, the International Office should expand its capacity to interact with international students by making use of student interns trained by its excellent language faculty. Furthermore, Belgorod should market its impressive facilities to international students and should begin to create and teach some of its courses in English and/or German that would attract international students and simultaneously benefit Belgorod students.

The number of these cooperative agreements should be manageable and should include several components: faculty exchanges, student exchanges, research collaboration, perhaps even partnership activities. These types of agreements are sustainable over time and of great value to a university. Building these agreements in depth with a manageable number of universities results in a stronger international program and one worthy of a university of the caliber of Belgorod.

9. *Central Authority of the Rector*

At the beginning of our discussion on the role and authority of the Rector, the advisors briefly outlined the current practice in Central East Europe, Austria, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Following the democratic changes in the Central East European region beginning in 1990, the concept of a “strong” academic senate (the ultimate decision-making body of the university) and a “weak” rector was widely accepted and introduced in order to ensure proper democratic control over university leadership. While the system is certainly highly democratic, it also turns out to be quite inefficient. It is often a very difficult task for the Rector to have any substantial—though essentially important—changes accepted by the Senate, due to its resistance.

In Austria, however, the very conservative nature of university governance has recently changed. The Rector has gained more authority and acts somewhat like a director of a company (called university) for the benefit of the university, while he/she must report to the Board (a group of non-university people) that has authority over the Rector.

The UK and US systems are substantially different from the European ones. The rector-equivalent leader (Vice-Chancellor, President) is generally hired by a Board, which consists either wholly or largely of non-university people. Although there is a great variety in the composition and function of the above boards, there is an obvious distinction between university governance (lay boards) and academic leadership (academic senate, academic council), having the rector-equivalent person in the middle, empowered by the Board with authority.

Under the current system of higher education of the Russian Federation, the power of the Rector is relatively strong within the given legal framework. The Rector has a fairly extended executive power delegated to the position by the University Council.

The very ambitious new Rector of BelSU is aware of the great responsibility given to him by his appointment. He is also ready for changes, and wants to introduce a new system of governance and management. He understands the necessity of professionalism in managing large operations, such as BelSU. He has learned, however, from his predecessors and wants to preserve the values accumulated by BelSU so far. His absolute priority is to put the

students' needs into focus. He also would like to introduce a vertical system of task allocation, delegating authority to key individuals whose responsibilities are to coordinate and further delegate tasks.

He also plans what he calls a linear system, which would allow him to communicate with virtually all of his colleagues. In order to achieve that goal, he is prepared to meet individuals once each day outside his office. While such a commitment and activity is to be commended, it may create fragmentation of time and energy, and ultimately may reduce the opportunity to focus on the most important strategic issues. (See also Section 4, University Management).

In conclusion, the advisors feel that under the given circumstances, a well-balanced relationship among the different power players is expected at BelSU in order to meet the needs of a constantly emerging democracy, while at the same time serving the community as a modern, highly competitive institution that seeks a growing international recognition. The Rector is undoubtedly a determining actor in that process, with great opportunities and tremendous responsibility.

10. *Concluding Remarks*

The dramatic political transformation of the Eastern hemisphere—including the Russian Federation—over the last decade has created a brand new socio-economic environment. Moreover, globalization resulted in a sequence of changes including the revolutionary breakthroughs in the field of information and telecommunication technologies, the liberalization of world trade, the emergence of larger regional economic blocks, the increased mobility of people worldwide, to mention only a few characteristics of that process. The changes determine the opportunities and limitations of any sector including higher education. The new challenges of the 21st century, including the intensification of competition, also generated new phenomena in higher education. The increasing enrollment demand (massification), the dramatic changes in the funding structure of higher education (emergence of private, corporate, foundation based, etc. higher education institutions), the non traditional ways of providing knowledge (open distance learning, virtual university, e-learning, etc.), the growing needs for quality assurance mechanisms are some of those issues a forward-looking university must recognize in order to become not only a survivor but rather a leader.

Belgorod State University, as a very ambitious, rapidly developing higher education establishment, has already proved to be a leading actor in the Belgorod region. The impressive new campus offers a unique opportunity to attract students and faculty, and become a center of new trends. BelSU, however, needs some substantial changes in the academic structure and in the current practice of university management.

The Visiting Advisors team therefore reemphasizes some of the statements and recommendations already made in this report:

- It is necessary to streamlining the complex academic structure, including the clarification of the legal status of the colleges.
- BelSU should be more focused; fewer but rather powerful fields should be emphasized in order to strengthen its leading position in the region.
- Efforts should be made to understand and adopt the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), as well as to join the so-called “Bologna Process” in order to eventually become a part of the common European higher education system.
- In order to make BelSU more competitive and efficient, a professional management system is required. Intensive staff training is a necessary part of that process.
- The Rector should be protected from the numerous administrative functions with which he currently directly deals, so that he can devote himself more to the strategic issues of the University.
- The market-oriented mentality at BelSU should be maintained and even improved. Special emphasis should be placed in the fields where BelSU already has been successful, such as continuing education, and selected research groups with high market sensitivity.
- Specialist training as well as distance learning should be developed further for commerce and industry.
- More emphasis should be given to foreign language based training of international students.
- Establishing an Information Systems strategy is highly recommended, which should include academic and managerial requirements in a coherent fashion.
- The already laudable efforts of BelSU in establishing a good educational background for functioning in or contributing to a civil society should be maintained and further developed. BelSU should reach out into the community to create a leadership program for the wider society. In addition, BelSU can assist the region in preserving the environment and help the region with responsible urban planning.
- Emphasis should be placed on improving language skills of all students (those not majoring in foreign languages) and staff, in order to enhance and extend BelSU’s existing international co-operation activities. Parallel to that, BelSU should establish courses in English and/or German, attracting international students and creating an even livelier multicultural environment.

The Visiting Advisors are aware of the difficulties that will arise regarding the acceptance and implementation of the above recommendations. We firmly believe, however, that the enlightened approach of the University leadership, and their determination to convert BelSU to a regionally and internationally recognized establishment of higher education will provide enough strength to realize this goal. A special leverage in stimulating the above process is the outstanding support given to BelSU by the administration of the Oblast, run by an open-minded Governor.

The advisors greatly appreciated the hospitality of BelSU, and were impressed by the openness and cooperative nature of the Rector, Vice-Rector and their colleagues to discuss any aspect of the activity of the institution. The team

members also learned a great deal during the visit and are ready to assist BelSU in any way they can.

We would also like to express our thanks to the interpreters, the caterers and many others who contributed to making our visit successful as well as very pleasant.

Visiting Advisors

László Frenyó (Team Leader) Hungary

László V. Frenyó is president of the Strategic Committee of Higher Education and Research Council and professor of immunophysiology of the Szent Istvan University, Budapest, serves as Dean of Faculty for the Western Maryland College Budapest Program, and is the director of the Academic and Institutional Development of College International. Dr. Frenyó is also involved in the higher education restructuring project by UNESCO-CEPES within the framework of the *Task Force Education and Youth (within the Stability Pact for SEE)*. He served as president of the Hungarian Higher Education and Research Council from 1997 to 2000 and was head of the task team responsible for the Higher Education Reform Project of Hungary from 1995 to 1998. Dr. Frenyó was the president of the Hungarian Rectors Conference from 1995 to 1997, and served as chairman of its International Committee from 1991 to 1995. He also served as rector of the University of Veterinary Science in Budapest from 1990 to 1997, the same institution from which he earned both D.V.M. and Ph.D. degrees. Dr. Frenyó is a member of the Universities Project Advisory Committee, an alumnus of many Universities Project symposia, and has participated in consultant visits by the Visiting Advisors Program to Central and East Europe and the Russian Federation.



Claire Van Ummersen USA

Claire Van Ummersen is vice president and director of the Office of Women in Higher Education at the American Council on Education, Washington, DC, where she is responsible for leadership development programs for women, setting national agendas to support the advancement of women leaders, and state networks that operate to identify emerging leaders. She was president of Cleveland State University, Ohio, for 8 years, and served as chancellor of the University System of New Hampshire for six years. Dr. Van Ummersen was previously with the Massachusetts Board of Regents of Higher Education, where she held the posts of vice chancellor for management systems and telecommunications, and of associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. She has consulted with colleges and universities nationally and internationally and chaired numerous accreditations. Her areas of expertise include leadership, strategic planning, program innovation and development, and assessment. Dr. Van Ummersen holds a Ph.D. in biology from Tufts University, Somerville, Massachusetts. She is an alumna of the Universities Project 19th Symposium, *Placing Universities in a Social Context*, in 2001.



Eddie Newcomb United Kingdom

Eddie Newcomb is registrar and head of administration at the University of Manchester, and previously held similar posts at the Universities of Leeds and Essex. Mr. Newcomb is currently chair of the Association of Heads of University Administration in the UK. He is director of the Higher Education Staff Development Agency and chair of its Members Advisory Group. Mr. Newcomb is a graduate of the University of Durham, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He was Fellow of the Salzburg Seminar Session 185, "Continuing Education" in 1978 and is an alumnus of the Universities Project 16th Symposium, *Social and Civic Responsibilities of the University*, in 2001.



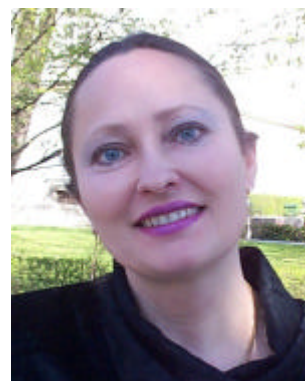
Alfred Ebenbauer Austria

Alfred Ebenbauer served for three terms as rector and one as pro rector at the University of Vienna. He is president of the Austrian Academic Exchange Service and the Viennese Eco-Social Forum, and member of the board of the Sigmund Freud Society. He has been named honorary senator of the University of Vienna, and recently concluded a visiting professorship at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. Dr. Ebenbauer holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Tirana, Albania, and a Ph.D. in German and history from the University of Vienna. He is an alumnus of the Universities Project 19th Symposium, *Placing Universities in a Social Context*, in 2001 and the 20th Symposium, *The Meanings of Autonomy: University Governance Reconsidered*, in 2002.



Helene Kamensky Austria

Helene Kamensky is Russian program coordinator for the Universities Project of the Salzburg Seminar. In addition to her work with the Universities Project, she is lecturer in philosophy and Russian studies at the Universities of Salzburg and Vienna. Previously, Dr. Kamensky was research fellow at the Institute of Scientific Theory, Salzburg International Research Center. From 1985 to 1989 she was dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University, Russian Federation. Earlier, she served that same institution as associate professor and senior lecturer in the department of philosophy. She holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from the department of logic and epistemology at the Russian Academy of Sciences, which was authenticated by the University of Salzburg, Austria in 1993.



THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR

Universities throughout the world are undergoing systemic changes in their governance, academic design, structure, and mission. The Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project focuses on higher education reform in Central and East Europe, Russia, and the Newly Independent States as universities in these regions redefine their relationships with governments and try to become more integrated into the global intellectual community.

The Universities Project is a multi-year series of conferences and symposia convening senior representatives of higher education from the designated regions with their counterparts from North America and West Europe. Discussion in the Project's programs focuses on the following themes:

- University Administration and Finance
- Academic Structure and Governance within the University
- Meeting Students' Needs, and the Role of Students in Institutional Affairs
- Technology in Higher Education
- The University and Civil Society

OBJECTIVES

Universities and other institutions of higher learning are seeking to reshape themselves in ways that will prepare them more fully for the twenty-first century. Even as these institutions are considering extensive systemic changes in their academic design, structure, and mission, all desire autonomy in governance and in their intellectual life. Accordingly, the Universities Project aims to promote the higher education reform process by inviting senior administrators to participate in conferences and symposia concerning issues of university management, administration, finance, and governance.

THE VISITING ADVISORS PROGRAM (VAP)

The Salzburg Seminar launched this enhanced aspect of the Universities Project in the autumn of 1998. Under this program, teams of university presidents and higher education experts visit universities in Central and East Europe and Russia at the host institutions' request to assist in the process of institutional self-assessment and change. By the end of 2001, more than thirty VAP visits will have taken place to universities in East and Central Europe and Russia. A full schedule of visits is planned for 2002 and beyond. The addition of the Visiting Advisors Program brings to the Universities Project an applied aspect and serves to enhance institutional and personal relationships begun in Salzburg.

The Salzburg Seminar acknowledges with gratitude the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which are funding the Universities Project and the Visiting Advisors Program respectively.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information regarding the Salzburg Seminar's Visiting Advisors Program, the Universities Project, and Salzburg Seminar programs, please contact one of the Seminar's offices below.

Salzburg Seminar
Schloss Leopoldskron
Box 129
A-5010 Salzburg, Austria

Telephone: +43 662 83983
Fax: +43 662 839837

Salzburg Seminar
The Marble Works
P.O. Box 886
Middlebury, VT 05753 USA

Telephone: +1 802 388 0007
Fax: +1 802 388 1030

Salzburg Seminar website: www.salzburgseminar.org