



**THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR
VISITING ADVISORS REPORT**

CHUVASH STATE UNIVERSITY

CHUVASHIA, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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SECTION A - BACKGROUND

The Visiting Advisors Program (VAP) of the Salzburg Seminar is a program of intensive interactions with leaders of selected institutions of higher education in Russia and in other countries of the former Soviet Union, following their participation in a session of the Universities Project at the Salzburg Seminar. Visits by university educators and administrators from North America, Europe and other parts of the world allow participants to engage in dialogue about issues of common concern to higher education and provide an international perspective to challenges faced by universities as they redefine relationships with governments and are integrated into the global intellectual community. Members of the visiting team come to share their experience on issues related to higher education reform as those issues are identified by the host institution. The members of this team are especially grateful to the Rector, administration, faculty, students and staff of Chuvash State University (CSU) for their warm and gracious hospitality during our visit. While we did not perform an in-depth investigation of university operations, as this was not our assigned role, we did come to understand many of the more salient issues at CSU and to meet and interact with the people who study and work there. We submit this report with

the hope that our observations and recommendations will prove helpful as CSU seeks to effect change.

1. *The Development of Chuvash State University*

Chuvash Republic (CR), situated in the border zone of the middle and upper Volga River, has an area of 10,300 sq.km. The main campus of Chuvash State University (CSU) is located in Cheboksary, the state capital with a population of 463,300; 39% of the population lives in the countryside while 61% is urbanized. A third of the territory of Chuvashia is covered with forests, with 350 lakes, 40 springs and 2,550 rivers. Roads, railways and the Volga link the Republic with a network of transport corridors across the Federation and beyond

There are two state languages in the Chuvash Republic—Chuvash and Russian.

Modern Chuvashia has a competitive technological, scientific, industrial and agricultural base. Mechanical engineering, metal working, food-processing, electric power production, chemical and light industries form the core of this base. There are 4,000 small enterprises with a work force of 40,000 people. The total number of people engaged in these small enterprises number over 90,000. The food processing industry is represented by more than 70 companies.

In 2001, the foreign trade turnover of Chuvashia was over US \$155 million, representing a 35% growth over the year 2000 and a 74% growth over 1999. Chemical products, machines, electrical equipment and their components, cotton yarn and fabrics are the main export products to some 53 countries of the world.

The state lays great stress on improving school education. To this extent, state grants to school education have increased annually, salaries of teachers have doubled and each year more than ten new schools are built. Schools also seek funding from other sources; in 2001 they attracted more than 47 million rubles. Creating an independent and objective system of assessing quality of education in schools is receiving priority.

CSU, established in September 1967, functions as a non-commercial organization and operates in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation (RF), the Constitution of Chuvash Republic (CR), the law of the RF on Education, the law of the RF on higher and further professional education, normative legal papers of the Ministry of Education of the RF, the University Regulations and other legal documents of the RF.

CSU is a multi-national, multi-faceted higher educational institution training both humanitarian, natural and engineering scientists and specialists. It is licensed to conduct an educational establishment in the field of higher professional training and has a certificate in State Accrediting. The University has 18 representations

and four satellite campuses in the CR: Alatyr, Batyrev, Kanash and Novocheboksarsk. The satellites undertake educational daytime and part-time activities.

The present Rector, Prof. Dr. Lev Kurakov, was first elected by secret ballot in 1990 and re-elected in 1996 and 2001 for 5-year terms.

2. The Role of Chuvash State University

As the Chuvash Republic is not as rich in natural resources as some of its neighboring republics, the development of its skilled labor resources and its intellectual potential is crucial to the social and economic development of the region. The transition to a market economy began in the country in the early 1990s. In this milieu, it was necessary to transform the entire educational system with new approaches in order to respond to the new socio-economic conditions. "It was necessary to set up a system of education, based on principles of continuity of education, integration of educational institutions of the Republic and also on the principles of social protection of people" (The Role of the University and Civil Society—CSU). One response of CSU was to set up centers of pre-higher education to provide school pupils especially from rural areas with quality education in order to improve access and attract the best students to CSU. About 13,000 students have received such education to date. Thus, while in 1992 only 19% of university freshmen were village school leavers, by 2002 this figure had increased to 50%. In addition, the University entered into contracts with state and municipal institutions in training personnel. Consequently, 32.5% of all budget students have been admitted under these contracts. The University also has contacts with many enterprises and institutions in training highly qualified experts for industry, agriculture, economy and culture. Many outstanding scientists from the spheres of manufacturing, the economy and culture work part-time in the university. Scientific research is also carried out with experts from these enterprises.

The popularity of CSU is demonstrated by the fact that for 1,675 budget places there were 10,072 applications. These data indicate a largely unmet higher education need in the Chuvash Republic. The innovations introduced in the educational system during the last 10-12 years have resulted in high quality students being admitted to CSU. This has led to an increase in the educational potential of the Chuvash Republic and in turn has raised the status of the University in the region.

3. The University's Current Activities

A conference held at the University in November 2001 adopted the Program for University Development for the period 2001 to 2006. The subsequent session of the University Scientific Board adopted the General Plan of Development for the period 2002 to 2005. In accordance with this plan, four satellite campuses and eighteen representations were to comprise the University Complex.

The current infrastructure of the University includes training floor space, comfortable hostels, a sanatorium complex, a summer sports recreation center, a modern house of culture and a huge sports complex. We are advised that physical facility assets of the University, including equipment and machinery, stand at 285-300 million roubles. Academic activities are carried out in 22 separate buildings. In addition, the University utilizes spaces of numerous laboratories in different enterprises and companies of the Republic.

The supply of computers and peripherals doubled from just over a thousand in 1997 to nearly 2,000 in 2001. The computers we saw were quite up-to-date. A modern Internet facility has recently been installed at CSU. Despite this, not all staff are fully computer literate. An oil company has sponsored this Internet facility at a cost of 40 million rubles. The scientific library has 1.6 million books and periodicals. We do not know the state of the library holdings in terms of currency or applicability to the current curriculum. We were convinced that more computers, textbooks and other reading materials are required at the high schools and at the University.

We were advised that the financial base of the University improved between the years 1997–2001. Federal financing increased from just over 38,152 million rubles to 94,685 million rubles while income from non-budget sources increased from 14,415 million rubles to 81,248 million rubles. At this time, student tuition fees form the largest source of non-budget funds that makes up roughly a third of the University's total budget.

A faculty comprising 110 doctors of science and professors, 470 candidates of science and assistant professors work at the University. We were told that the University scientists undertake research in the priority directions of science and engineering and conduct fundamental research. In 2002, the University scientists won three grants in the humanities and two in natural sciences provided by the Russian Ministry of Education of the RF, and nine grants from the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Research Work. We are not aware of grants from other sources.

In the last few years, the University hosted 50 conferences and symposia, of which 11 were international. In this way, the University hopes to promote the intellectual growth of its scientific staff, development of scientific research and prestige of the institution.

Regional employment markets do not need many specialists with higher education due to insufficient economic and social activities of the region. The demand for persons with higher education should increase as the region is modernized. In addition, as the Russian society becomes more mobile, more CSU graduates will seek employment beyond Chuvashia, so therefore the direction of academic training should be mindful of the demand of potential future employers.

The University has a current enrollment of 20,000 students of whom nearly 12,000 are full-time in 55 different areas of licensed specialization, and 13 fields of study.

The University has trained 55,000 specialists over a period of 35 years; among them were 3,444 graduates in 2002.

CSU pays much attention to the system of additional professional training, such as a President's Program that trains 50 managers annually.

"The strategy of the University is to make Chuvash Republic one of the most educated republics of the Russian Federation. The philosophy of the University is one of continuous education: post-secondary, undergraduate and post-graduate training."

4. University Governance

The University is governed in accordance with the Russian Federation legislation and the Regulations of the University. An elected Scientific Board of 35 members is in general control of the University. The Rector is Chair of the Scientific Board. The 10 Vice-Rectors and representatives of institutes and departments are elected for a five-year term to the Board. The Scientific Board establishes the University structure and system of its governance, discusses issues of economic and social development of the University, defines use of non-budget finances etc.

Documentation from CSU informs us that the Rector, who is elected for a five-year term and approved by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, is in 'direct control' of the University. He is responsible for the results of the University's work and appoints the heads of the academic, scientific and other structural departments and chairs.

The Rector of the University oversees a three-level organization comprising a university level (Vice Rectors), a faculty level (Deans) and a chair level (Departmental Heads.) Several new Vice-Rectors were recently appointed. It was explained that these appointments reflect an increase in student enrollments and new structures within the University complex. The University comprises the following units: 23 departments, 141 chairs, 6 scientific and research institutes, scientific and research laboratories, a scientific technological park, technological production and small businesses, a geographical station, satellites training day time and extra-mural specialists, 18 representations, 21 regional centers for secondary schools, a gymnasium for gifted children, an academy for young managers and a production-technical training center.

Trade unions, teachers and student's committees also exert a measure of control by checking and supporting those working and studying. Collective

agreements between the administration, teaching staff and students have been established.

The university regulations, collective agreements, statutes of satellites and representations, other university documents regulate relations between the university staff and the university leadership, grant independence to satellites, representations, departments and other structural units.

SECTION B

1. The Rector's Address

Rector Kurakov, in his opening address, warmly welcomed the Visiting Advisors and apologized for the fact that he had to travel the next day to Moscow to attend to urgent business. He would however ensure that we not only had a thorough look at the facilities and were briefed on the activities at the main campus of CSU but also had an opportunity to visit the satellites and branch campuses in the Republic.

The Rector sees the University as the engine for the moral and socio-economic development of the CR and also as a center of innovation, of new technologies and culture. In his view powerful universities define the image and dynamics of development of a country. The university cannot work in isolation but must be at the center of modernization of the whole educational system. Accordingly, ten years ago the university administration began working on a plan to make the CR one of the most educated and morally rich regions of the RF. In this quest they were supported by the government of the CR. The Rector was awarded the Prize of the President of the Russian Federation for his research and work in this area.

After 1990, the student enrollment at CSU doubled, buildings were renovated and refurbished, and employment prospects of CSU graduates improved. Today, we are told that CSU graduates are employed throughout the RF. To date, CSU appears to have done a good job at adding value to the education of individual students, but the administration remains concerned that the quality of CSU graduates depends to a significant extent on the quality of students admitted. Given the unsatisfactory state of school education in the CR and in the RF, CSU has taken the responsibility to upgrade high school education, especially for talented and gifted students in rural areas, in order to provide well-qualified students. Thus it provides a higher quality high school education to students across the CR and the university with a higher quality applicant base.

We were advised that both the physical and human resources at these centers are provided entirely at the expense of CSU. More than 90% of these school graduates enter CSU. Every rural area of CR has pre-high school facilities provided by CSU—1000 students in 15 classes from which 660 students

graduate each year. CSU recently participated on an experimental basis in the unified state examination for all high school students.

During the difficult years of 'perestroika' when state funds were not regularly provided, payment of salaries to the staff of CU continued as well stipends to students. Some staff received bonuses in addition to their salaries.

Two construction companies have built a stadium and 20 apartments for teachers at a cost of 20 million rubles, without any charge to CSU. One hundred teachers have access to boarding houses in the seaside for rest and recreation, paid for by CSU. Medical treatment is also provided to students free of charge in the university sanatorium.

CSU faces numerous unresolved problems: The University has good relations with business and industry, but has yet to target them systematically for funds to support the University; in this context a 'Sponsors Council' or other means of institutional linkage should be established at CSU.

- What ideas for innovation does the University need to nurture and develop, and can the VAP team help in this regard? CSU has become stable and has shown both insight and leadership in the directions it has pursued to date. It is timely that the institution engages in additional self-study in order to plan its future.
- CSU has limited funds. It has to consider redirection of some resources and to find new sources of funding in the context of the market economy.
- Each rural area has a CSU center for pre-high school training; their expenses are paid for entirely by the University.
- There is a need for the rapid development of teacher training at CSU for young scientists.

The following points emerged from a general discussion of the Rector's address:

- The importance of improving computer literacy for both staff and students.
- The need to establish an Educational Foundation/Sponsors Council to help the University identify strategic opportunities and raise extra-budget funds.
- The importance of introducing computer-based learning.
- The need to reorganize the governance structure of the institution to include a Board of Trustees/University Council to strengthen governance and provide broad community and governmental support for CSU.
- The need for CSU to increase its exposure to EU practices, including the Bologna Process, initiated in 1999. According to the Bologna process, a European Higher Education Area is being formed and is to be completed by 2010. CSU is encouraged to consider thoroughly the most essential issues of the Bologna process such as the creation of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees; the creation of a degree system

structured in two cycles, undergraduate and graduate; the establishment of a credit system, where specific reference is made to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); the promotion of staff and student mobility by removing obstacles (joint degrees, free mover schemes, etc.); and the strengthening of European cooperation on quality assurance (by developing comparable criteria and methodologies.) It is also important to study the social dimensions of the Bologna process (student participation in governance in higher education, etc.) as well as the implications of the above for the institutional management, especially in relation to academic and curriculum policy, strategies for internationalization, processes of curriculum design, the provision of support of services for international students, and internal quality assessment arrangements. The Bologna Process is not a static process. It is moving in different directions in different countries. CSU, therefore, needs a concentrated effort to study international developments in the Bologna process as well as the relevant practices in the Russian higher education context (for instance, Moscow Peoples' Friendship University, Moscow School of Economics) with the aim to identify successful strategies for CSU.

2. *The Vice-Rector's Address*

The main mission of CSU is "to make the CR the most educated, cultural and moral region of the RF." This is quite a mission, given the constraints of funding and other limitations. The average salary of professors is \$66.00 per month. The transition to a market economy has contributed to increases in unemployment and the deterioration of housing.

At the same time as it produces scientists, CSU also wants to contribute to preserving the ethnic culture of the region. CSU wants to be a modern progressive university and forge relationships with universities across the world and civil society. CSU can contribute to the formulation of this legal framework.

The new Russian society requires a new legal framework to protect these rights and values. The economic system and some of the Soviet laws were good but they were not implemented. Contemporary laws are oriented towards modern tasks, freedoms and democratic values. CSU can make a contribution in this respect by teaching people about protecting their rights and implementing laws.

Arno Loessner of the VAP team observed that there has long been a discussion as to the appropriate role of a university in society, with a range of options from the university being a place of quiet contemplation (Thorstein Veblen) to a "social service station" (Clark Kerr). CSU should be commended for the educational and social work accomplished to date and should continue to regularly explore the continuum of outreach options so as to ensure that it is both relevant to the community and true to its educational mission. In this process, it is necessary to consider the needs of regional consumers, rural youth and private enterprises. As staff and students participate in organs of civil

society, CSU will join higher education institutions internationally that are promoting service learning—the extension of the classroom in the community—as a technique of strengthening applied research, teaching and public service.

Students should be encouraged to participate in the life of the institution and the community. Students receive stipends and bonuses. Some 8,000 student works have been published. Student groups also tour different parts of the RF. Recently, 1000 CSU students participated in helping to conduct the national census.

The University has participated in the design and conduct of a new state unified examination for high school students that has now been recommended for the RF.

Doctors from the CSU medical faculty consult patients in rural areas and refer them to the Cheboksary University Hospital for treatment of serious illnesses.

The engineering department has been working with the government of CR in devising energy saving measures.

CSU is now becoming well known both within the RF and internationally. Students from more than 20 countries are now enrolled at the University.

The Head of the Kanashsky branch pointed out the high rate of unemployment in small towns; previously 75% of the working population was involved in the building of machines; now with unemployment rife, problems with crime, alcoholism and drugs are emerging. To address these problems, CSU provides pre-high school education, computer and other skills to help people qualify for jobs.

The Director indicated that the Yadrinsky Gymnasium has been cooperating with CSU for more than 10 years through the offering of specialized courses, the publishing of teaching aids and participation in scientific conferences. Many students from these classes are admitted to CSU. One has graduated and has become a Deputy Dean.

3. Students

Our conversation with students provided an interesting forum for discussion. More than 100 students from various disciplines attended the meeting, which had been advertised on the campus:

- Students are organized into a student's council, social societies, postgraduate students society etc; the departments and residences have representation on the student's council
- Students reported that they have a well-equipped sports center as well as a cultural center.

- Students believe that CSU is doing what it can, yet they remain concerned at the inadequate provision of computers and IT facilities.
- Many students want to work in part-time jobs, but said there are few openings (there are too few jobs in the CR as compared to Moscow, for instance) and they have little information about job vacancies.
- Students publish their own newspaper.
- The students asked many questions—so many that the session with them was extended by 90 minutes. They wanted to know about conditions for students in other cultures, especially students in the USA. One question concerned student scholarships for sports achievements.
- More than 105 different working specialties are recognized in the CR; the question is whether they are ready to participate in the market economy; they believe that since CSU offers them a very good education they stand a better chance of finding a job.
- The students seemed patient with University efforts for reform, though expressing a sense of urgency for improvements. For example, they feel the library has a reasonable collection of books but their numbers could be greatly increased and other teaching aids on new and modern developments should be introduced.
- Many students are studying foreign languages and wish to cooperate with students from foreign universities
- A few students used the meeting to express frustration with specific issues of their educational program. One student reported an engineering class that has one practical class per week, which he believes is not enough.

The students left the Visiting Advisors with the general impression of being responsible, motivated, supportive and approving of the quality of education being received at CSU.

4. Technologies

The University administration and faculty realize that modern technologies, including information technology and communication, have penetrated all fields; accordingly, increased efforts are directed to improving information technology. There are fifteen different programs in information systems, which enable the provision of an increased number of computer and laboratory classes. The University itself produces some of the software. They have now moved to a modular curriculum. Student self-study guides are provided in every department and faculty. Students also have the opportunity of undertaking scientific research through the use of computer facilities. Staff is now using the new technologies in their teaching, and students prefer teachers who use such technologies. Discussion with the Visiting Advisors included methods of placing lectures on the web to provide more time for lecturers to interact with students, however one must not exaggerate the use of computers beyond supplementary aids to enhance teaching. The personal contact between the teacher and student is still very important.

Another method to be explored is the use of videotaped lectures that could be used repeatedly. Teaching languages with the appropriate feedback via appropriate technology is extremely useful. Despite the fact that there are few computers, both staff and students accept the circumstances in the short run and remain motivated to work with sophisticated computers.

There are 141 computers for the faculty, and every teacher has access to one. Some have personal computers at home. Students have the use of computers with a ratio of 1 computer for every 8-10 students. Some students also have their own computers. Computer training courses are offered free of charge to students. There are 350 computers in the Internet Center and two servers for Internet access, giving CSU a growing telecommunications capacity.

5. Distance Learning

CSU is keen to launch its distance education program in order to improve access to rural students, but has little experience or resources to accomplish this.

The Visiting Advisors recommended the use of Intranet, CD-ROM and other relatively low cost approaches. Some distance education programs are expensive to produce, at least in the early stages. CSU would be wise to consult other institutions for information and possibly assistance in getting started with video-streamed lectures supported with Power Point. Efforts via television, such as the Open University in the United Kingdom, which has considerable experience in the field, are another option for CSU to explore. Success will be determined by the production of high quality learning materials, the use of appropriate technology to disseminate the materials and the development of a network of learning centers.

6. Fee Paying Students

CSU currently receives about one third of its non-budget funds from the payment of tuition fees by students. The VAP advised that while this was a good model to supplement funds, the proportions of the two groups of students needs to be kept in balance between fee paying and state funded students. We caution against allowing ability to pay to override academic ability as a criterion for admission.

7. Fund Raising

There are many specific suggestions that can be offered to build the administrative and volunteer networks required to achieve a successful fund development program for CSU. Before doing so, it is perhaps helpful to put the funding development program in the proper context to best suggest ways to help make the institution highly competitive for gifts and grants.

In organizing a program of university advancement, it is important to remember that fundraising should be done to “put the icing on the cake.” Fundraising should be a net additive to core institutional support, for the primary purpose of building institutional excellence and providing educational opportunity, not to meet needs that are usually met by basic budget support. The latter should come from regular recurring sources such as state support, research revenue, tuition and fees, etc. If this is accepted as the philosophy, it follows that the support requested is to help attain and sustain a position of excellence with opportunity for study irrespective of the financial ability of students and their families to pay tuition. In other words, while start-up support may be received initially, a program designed for the longer term should be aware that most donors prefer to give to build strength, not to fix something that is weak or broken.

In thinking about the funding development program, it is advisable to select goals that are in line with a focused institutional mission. CSU is heavily committed to many important goals and objectives. Our team heard several times that CSU seeks excellence, prestige, and national and international recognition. There is no limit to the amount of money the institution could spend to attain these goals. It is important to now move from these broader goals to some very specific objectives that include both bricks and mortar and program opportunities for investment in a university that knows where it is going.

A clear institutional strategy is needed. Such a strategy requires the University to identify proposed pinnacles of excellence, as described elsewhere in our report. Beyond these, the University will have other areas that are to be well done, but perhaps not expected to be world class. Still other programs will not be started or will be dropped, because they are not central to the long-term plan. The approach we suggest calls for a strategic planning process that is ongoing and directed toward preparing the institutional “case statement” for core support and special funding for purposes that are a net additive and intended to fulfill the list of pinnacles of excellence. A strategic plan with a five-year revision schedule will not be sufficient to meet this need.

Institutional advancement will evolve at CSU. At the present stage of development, we suggest retaining central administrative and coordinating control. This strategy puts the institution forward in a coherent way, and while it encourages open competition among faculties on the basis of the quality of ideas, it avoids competing interests within the University, negating overall effectiveness. Professional fund development staff may be assigned from central offices to individual faculties to promote fundraising throughout the University. These staff members may join with students, staff, faculty, and academic leaders in making a case for approaching identified potential donors for gifts, but the decision as to which units go forward with requests to which donors should be made at the central university level for the foreseeable future.

It is important for the overall university advancement organization to be very straightforward, with clear lines of reporting, communication, and decision-

making. It is also important to manage university advancement carefully, indeed strategically.

One method of raising funds is through the provision of short vocational courses and professional courses for life-long learning. Many in the community would take courses for social, educational and cultural reasons. The updating of professional knowledge among the various professions is an important role for the CSU. All of this could provide useful additional revenue for the University (*Thorstein Veblen, 1957*)

8. University Governance

In universities, everything depends on organizational structures for effective governance of the institution. The chairs/leaders are elected on a competitive basis by secret ballot for the academic council of the University and for the councils of faculties for a period of five years. The chairman of the Academic Council is the Rector. The deans of faculties and departmental heads are also elected by secret ballot. Their appointment is then approved by the Academic Council. There is also a labor collective at CSU.

Arno Loessner described the role and composition of the governing board in US universities. There are 4,182 higher education institutions in the USA and there is considerable variation in the structure of their governing boards. Such boards in general comprise the senior executives of the University and various representatives of civil society—business, labor, welfare and professional organizations etc. The numbers could vary from five to thirty members. They have four functions:

- Advisory
- Control – financial
- Support – funding
- Bridge between the university and community

The board of trustees carries out much of its work through various sub-committees. It hires its president and protects the autonomy and academic freedom of the institution.

9. Minister of Education of the Chuvash Republic

The Minister, Galina Petrovna Chernova, welcomed contact with the Visiting Advisors and mentioned that CSU was the largest multi-profile institution in the Republic. It occupies a leading place in the society, has enormous scientific potential, and plays a key role in the socio-economic development of the CR. CSU and the government of the CR function as partners. The research carried out at CSU is important for scientific development. The University learned how to survive and operate during the difficult period of the perestroika. During these difficult periods CSU has remained a stable institution, and the staff of CSU play an important role in social life and in the corporations in the CR through

partnerships. 80% of the specialists are trained at CSU in agreement with the CR as to the kinds of specialists that need to be trained. The Russian economy is unstable and long-term forecasts are therefore unreliable. The present demand is for training engineers, lawyers and economists.

The Republic has noted that Moscow and St. Petersburg universities are opening branches in the CR.

The CR values the work undertaken by CSU in the Lyceums where high school students receive their education prior to entering universities. CSU has taken this initiative on its own and the CR is ready to help the University in this regard. Provincial and local authorities function independently in the RF.

10. The Library

A special computer service is provided for the library with fourteen dedicated computers. It has taken two years to create a web site for the library where all book acquisitions could now be accessed.

11. International Relations

There is cooperation between CSU and 25 countries on various educational issues; among them are Sweden, Norway, India, and Nepal. There is research cooperation and student exchange with 20 countries. Many of the foreign exchange students are enrolled for masters or doctoral programs. There are some 150 foreign students at CSU, mostly at the postgraduate level including two students from Africa.

SECTION C

Recommendations

Universities are complex organizations and even under the most favorable conditions are resistant to change. We live in a time of rapid change and for the RF this is particularly so, given that it has moved from an authoritarian communist state to a democratic one and a free market economy in a brief period of just over a decade. Universities are not immune from the influence of such profound shifts. The Visiting Advisors team from the Salzburg Seminar has had just five days at Chuvash University and will not have had time to be fully informed of all its activities nor it would have been in a position to fully comprehend its ethos and functions.

These recommendations are therefore made in the light of these considerations and limitations. Furthermore, they enjoy the unanimous support of all members of the team.

First, we congratulate CSU on the impressive results achieved in providing the people of the CR and the RF with higher education, outreach activities and high

school education in a short period of time with meager resources. In particular we commend CSU:

- In managing the institution efficiently during the difficult period of the perestroika
- In attracting a dedicated cadre of teaching, administrative and support staff
- For the outreach activities, we had the privilege of visiting three such centers and witnessed at first hand the difference made to these communities in providing education, skills and job opportunities.

Mention must be made of the role of the Rector, Lev Kurakov in these achievements. While he had repeatedly reminded us that these achievements were the result of a cohesive team effort, in our view his particular role has been quite outstanding. He is a man of immense stature, of great generosity, who with single minded dedication and deep commitment to the people of the CR has inspired the staff and students to realize these impressive results.

On Sunday, October 13, the day of our arrival in Cheboksary, we had the privilege of planting a number of trees on the grounds of the sports complex of the University. In time these trees will grow and flourish and contribute to providing the grounds with pleasant and environmentally friendly surroundings. In providing advice, the Visiting Advisors would like to sow some seeds in the form of ideas that in time will hopefully germinate and CSU may be in a position to reap its harvest.

Great leaders and rectors come and go, staff and faculty will change and so too will students. But institutions like CSU, like the great universities of the world whether they are Bologna, the Sorbonne, Oxford or Harvard must and will endure for a long time, if not for centuries. How then do we ensure and contribute to the building of these institutions? The provision of enlightened and visionary leadership and institution building must be at the heart of the transformation of the university of the 21st century. Our recommendations are premised on these concepts.

1. Mission

Although the many responsibilities of Chuvash University are outlined in a number of documents, it is necessary to crystallize this into a crisp, well thought out and meaningful institutional mission statement that may be reinforced with complimentary mission statements developed for and by subordinate units. Such mission statements serve a valuable function in establishing openness and legitimacy and help make clear the core purposes of the University. Some argue that the process of developing the mission statement is, like the process of planning, as important as the statement or plan that energizes from the process. Universities in other parts of the world have used such mission statements to very good effect—in building staff morale, in marketing the institution, in the recruitment of staff and students, in raising funds etc. The

Visiting Advisors, in their verbal report, provided an example of a generalized mission statement for Chuvash University to which relevant subsections would be added, as deemed appropriate:

To provide quality higher education in order to meet the economic and development needs of region and nation and to meet the social aspirations of its people.

2. Strategic Plan

The formulation of such a mission statement, calls immediately for the construction of a strategic plan. A strategic plan can perhaps be best illustrated by way of a metaphor. The Visiting Advisors had the pleasure of spending some two hours on one of the longest and most picturesque rivers of the Russian Federation, the Volga. If a ship or boat anchored on that river is to have a purpose and a destiny it must:

- know where it is going
- know why it is headed in a particular direction
- know how long will it take to reach its destination
- have a competent well trained crew
- have adequate fuel
- know what obstacles lie in its path

Using similar reasoning, Chuvash University should begin by analyzing its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by seeing how expected or developed opportunities might compliment strengths and how weaknesses might be shored up to avoid external or internal threats. Such an analysis is often referred to a SWOT analysis. As a result of such an analysis CSU could then devise strategies and plans:

- an enrollment plan that will spell out the number of students to be admitted in the course of the next 3-5 years; how many of these are to be budget and how many non-budget students; at what levels such courses would be offered for undergraduate or postgraduates and in what disciplines would such students be admitted
- discarding outdated courses and disciplines and introducing new ones
- a human resources plan setting out what academic faculty, management, administrative and support staff will be required
- a financial plan identifying the sources and uses of financial resources to support such a plan
- a fund-development plan identifying how and where such resources are to be acquired
- capital and operating budget plans identifying priorities for infra-structure—classrooms, laboratories, computer hardware, libraries etc.—and operating support.

Targets, goals and objectives should be set for achieving the elements of an on-going strategic planning process. The process should be flexible and be subject to regular reviews in a systematic way referred to as “environmental scanning,” so that it can be adjusted to changing circumstances, updated, and shortcomings overcome. The mission statement and strategic plan would only have a chance of success if it is arrived at after intense discussion and dialogue among the senior administration comprising the Rector and his Vice-Rectors, the faculty and the students and external advisors. At some point in its development, an input from civil society would serve to strengthen the mission statement and strategic plan. Such a process is vital if there is to be allegiance, loyalty and “ownership” of the plan by the whole university community, including its external constituencies.

3. The University and Civil Society

Our understanding of civil society is that as a minimum it should comprise the University itself, the communities in which it is located, and its wider catchment area, labor organizations, professional organizations such as teachers and health care organizations, religious organizations of all denominations and welfare organizations. In countries of rapid transition such as the RF, the role of civil society is crucial in sustaining and nurturing the democratic reforms that have been achieved. The university as a publicly funded and privileged institution should be the pivot around which other organs of civil society could rally.

Given its present status and context, CSU should explore as a matter of urgency the notion of what Rector Kurakov has termed in his opening address a “Sponsors Council.” In many countries, e.g. a Board of Trustees in the United States, a Council in the Anglo-Saxon tradition is an analogous body to that envisaged by the Rector. Such bodies have four essential functions with respect to a university:

- an advisory function
- a supportive role
- a controlling function and
- acting as bridge between the university and the community

Such an Advisory or Sponsors Council may comprise the Rector, Vice-Rectors, faculty and student representatives, representatives of business and industry, past graduates of the University, members of the public of good standing, representatives of local and provincial governments and any of the civil society organizations mentioned above. Our discussions with the Minister of Education of the CR and with the Mayor of the City of Cheboksary indicated that there is much good will for the University and support will be forthcoming for its development. In particular it was heartening to hear that the Head of the School of Architecture of Chuvash University is also the Chief Architect of the city. The mayor also indicated that there are employment opportunities for graduates of the University as well as possibilities for graduates for establishing small

business with interest free-loans. As small businesses the world over are one of the few areas in which employment is being created and as small businesses are a thriving sector in Cheboksary, CSU should exploit these opportunities to its maximum.

While the above Council may be difficult to implement in the present legislative environment for CSU, the Sponsors/Advisory Council could subsume at least three of the above functions:

- first, representatives of business and industry could serve an advisory function by, for example, commenting on and redirecting teaching, curriculum and research so as to make its graduates more employable
- a supportive role by devising strategies for fund raising from various sources
- a bridging role by listening to signals from the community as to their educational and other needs while simultaneously keeping them informed of the work of the University.

A further dimension of this initiative would be to provide students internships, practical experience and jobs with the help of the local government and CR. Our discussions with the Mayor of Cheboksary and the CR Minister of Education were encouraging in this regard. Industry and the business sector should become partners in these centers. The University should play its part by providing students with part-time jobs such as manning the library and the computer center especially after normal working hours, during the holidays and weekends.

4. Centers of Excellent/Areas of Focus

The work of the modern university is so complex and broad that no single institution can excel in every area. While it is important that CSU strive to do the best it can with the resources available to it, and while CSU leaders must constantly challenge themselves to improve, CSU must obtain a strategic perspective if it is to effectively marshal investments and capacities. We conclude that there is a need to better focus on the potential strengths of the institution, in order to create a few areas of national and international distinction.

CSU will probably make its long-term reputation on the basis of a number of exceptionally strong programs and institutional advantages. But certainly not everything can be strong simultaneously without watering down the overall investment. Achieving this focus is important, not only in making resource allocations among the faculties, but also in determining the level of student satisfaction in which the institution will invest: student residences, enhancing aspects of student life, supporting study abroad, and so on.

There are several strategic options that are evident and close at hand. Most of these can be organized around the theme of “centers of excellence.”

The quality of an institution depends on the creativity and dedication of its faculty. The investment in quality should be seen in this light. There is, in our view, a need for CSU leaders to pursue a clear strategy, and not just favor the accumulation of individual ideas, especially when increasing outside demands multiply and require focused attention. The mix of national and institutional cultures in Russia, personalities, and structures will always yield a complex and unpredictable set of demands.

In a competitive globalized economy, no university can expect to have world-class 'Centers of Excellence' in all areas of its operations. It is for this reason that while retaining the budget for areas that the Rectorate and Academic Council believe should constitute the University, they should at the same time begin building a few areas of excellence within the University. To the extent possible such centers should encourage an interdisciplinary approach and give freedom and flexibility for management and change. The Center should develop a spirit of positive competition among the selected areas and be organized in ways that will support the entire University. Thus no discipline should feel deprived of resources or undermined because of the development of such centers. The selected areas are given an opportunity to achieve excellence in terms of international standards. Expectations should be clear, guidelines formulated and periodic evaluations undertaken to permit leaders of the chosen areas to chart and change their courses.

By way of example only, such Centers might include the following:

- Center for Economic and Social Analysis. This would include faculty from economics, mathematics and mathematical modeling, operations research and social sciences, as well as political science, sociology and public administration who would join together in interdisciplinary teaching and research teams.
- Center for Communications—might comprise the fields of journalism, the media (television, radio and the press), modern languages and literature.
- Center for Environmental Studies—might encompass faculty from physics, chemistry, biology and genetics, and plant and soil sciences.

Such Centers would benefit from visiting teams comprised of representatives of western faculty and of private labs and the private sector to help guide activities, conduct ongoing environmental scanning, strategic management and quality assessment and to provide the necessary technology.

5. Organization and governance

The proposals we are suggesting would necessitate some changes in the governance structure of the University. By comparison with other universities with similar numbers of students, it seems to us that an administration with ten Vice-Rectors, whose functions and portfolios are not clearly delineated, is somewhat confusing and top-heavy. We suggest a more streamlined

administration with fewer Vice-Rectors redeployed under the following portfolios:

- Academic activities
- Administration and finance
- Outreach activities including international relations
- Human resources
- Information technology, the library and other support services

The other aspects of organizational governance comprising the Academic Council, Faculty Councils, Deans and Heads of Departments seem to be consistent with international norms. However, the extent to which decision-making has been devolved within these structures is not clear to our team. A devolved model of decision-making could provide advantages at the level of academic, financial and administrative decision making, with cost centers established for each entity such as faculties, information technology, the library etc. Once accounting controls and administrative rules are established, allocations are made to such entities, which are then given freedom and flexibility to achieve stated goals. We stress the need for an established framework and accountability norms of the University that help the central administration steer instead of row.

It is important to include student advisory representation in many of the structures. Our brief meeting with the students reinforced this notion. Their dialogue and discussion with us indicated a remarkable degree of maturity, responsibility and constructive approach to the challenges and problems facing the institution.

6. Outreach Activities

In addition to the four satellite campuses, the University also provides secondary school education to rural, talented and gifted children in 18 locations across the CR. We visited three of these centers during our brief visit and were deeply impressed and moved by what we saw. There is no question that the University is meeting hard-pressed education and training needs throughout the province. The budgets for these centers are being met entirely by the University. Staff and administrators travel long distances from the main campus of CSU in order to meet these needs.

We were informed by the Chuvash Minister of Education that the administrative and financial responsibility for universities lays entirely within the ambit of the RF. Equally, secondary high school education is the responsibility of the Republic. If this is the case, we would expect greater financial support for these satellite campuses from the Chuvash Minister of Education. It is clear that in the immediate future, CSU will have to carry most of the load to provide high school education for talented students, but at the same time it must make it clear to the Minister of Education that CSU expects financial assistance to provide this high quality education for high school children. In the longer term the CR Education

Minister should assume entire responsibility for such education. As the quality of the high school education improves, so too must the quality of CSU, a reality that must be made clear to the Minister, otherwise, ironically, the very students whose high school education has been enhanced will find their state university inadequate to their expectations for further study. So it makes sense for there to be a new partnership between CSU and the Ministry to begin now so that the transition of respective responsibilities for excellence in education will be as smooth and effective as possible.

7. Quality Assurance

The Visiting Advisors were advised that some 20 flats are being constructed for staff at a cost of one million rubles. The University also generously provides seaside vacations for staff as a way of rewarding staff and providing incentives for them.

There are alternative approaches of rewarding and providing incentives for staff. In any institution there are staff that are productive, do research and publish. Others are teachers with a deep interest in their students and a commitment to excellence in teaching. Some excel in both areas while still others excel in neither.

A comprehensive Quality Assurance System (QAS) that is being developed in many countries will be helpful in this regard. Such a system of QA has three essential components:

- Institutional Assessment
- Program Accreditation
- Quality Improvement

In Institutional Assessment (IA) all systems that support the academic enterprise are evaluated. This includes administrative, financial, information technology, the library, the laboratories, classrooms etc.

In Program Accreditation (PA), each of the programs are assessed and accredited, such as engineering, the humanities, and medicine, as well as the number and qualifications of teachers, the quality of teaching, and the performance of students.

On the basis of the findings of IA and PA, suggestions are made as to how quality is to be improved in the institution. The Quality Assurance exercise usually begins with a rigorous and critical self-evaluation undertaken by the institution itself, followed by a site visit and external validation of the self-evaluation by peers from other comparable institutions. Such validators may include assessors from universities outside the country so that international comparisons can be made. The visit is followed by a written report in which the results of the QA exercise are published. The report includes proposals for Quality Improvement (QI) that many consider to be the most important aspect of

QA. Such a developmental trajectory for QA is recommended for institutions undergoing transformative changes, as is the case in the RF. In some countries rewards are provided for outstanding achievement while grants will also be made to provide for improvements in weaker institutions.

If CSU wishes to be an institution of excellence with national and international recognition, it cannot delay the process of the development of system of QA any longer. There is a growing literature on the subject as well as many useful manuals and books. The Salzburg Seminar is in a position to assist with this development. A final word is that CSU should develop its own policy and practice for QA while learning from the lessons of national and international experience.

8. *An Alumni Association*

We were informed that to date CSU has graduated some 55,000 students. Many of these graduates are mostly likely occupying prominent positions in business, industry and government in the RF. Still others may well be holding such positions outside the country. In general these graduates leave with fond memories of their institution and would like to be informed of developments and activities of their 'alma mater.' It is in this context that CSU should consider the formation of an Alumni Association. CSU would have to initially provide some resources and nurture its growth. One could begin by setting up a modest office on the main campus and employ a part-time administrative officer under the guidance of the Vice-Rector for University Relations. It would undertake the following:

- Keep an address list of all graduates leaving the University
- Prepare materials such as brochures outlining the main developments and activities of the University
- Attempt to trace the addresses of past graduates of the University and begin informing them about the institution
- Start a fund raising campaign among the alumni
- Constitute an alumni association
- Form local alumni chapters, beginning in Moscow and Cheboksary—the Rector could address these chapters during his visits to Moscow

The purpose of an Alumni Association is to support the University. While there will be opportunities to benefit the alumni directly through networking, continuing education, association, and travel, the overall intent is to build a group that will support the University in the attainment of its mission.

In the United States, an alumna/us is often a person who has attended the institution for at least one year and either continued to graduation or left the institution in good standing. The definition to be used at CSU may be informed by European traditions and standards.

Leadership is important to the success of the Alumni Association. The Rector and the president of the Alumni Association must be able to work together for the benefit of the University, since the purpose is to advance the University. The persons staffing the Association within the University must be gregarious and excited about the institution and willing to extend themselves in ways that build a level of enthusiasm and commitment about the work of the University and its role in the Chuvash Republic and beyond.

We suggest that CSU consult the Council for the Advancement & Support of Education (CASE) for ideas ranging from alumni programming to software packages that support the Association. A visit to an American university might also be a way to select and reject program approaches that best fit.

Once these chapters and the association are well developed, they could form an important support base for the institution as well as a useful source of funds. CSU should however be aware that this is a long-term project and benefits should not be expected overnight. Alumni associations have a long tradition and are well developed in a number of institutions in the USA. The Visiting Advisors would be very willing to facilitate contacts with such alumni associations.

9. Additional Ideas

- The provision of distance/open/computer based learning using a variety of media including the state of the art technologies
- The provision of higher education for non-traditional students—adult learners, working students, women who have had to delay their education to raise a family, students with various handicaps
- The provision of new graduates with supplementary qualifications in order to make them more employable such as in business administration, modern languages, state of the art technologies, inter-cultural orientation
- The provision of life long learning opportunities for existing graduates. Such courses could be a useful source of income generation to supplement the non-budget sources of income
- The development of a culture of 'entrepreneurship' within the entire institution

CONCLUDING REMARKS

A student summarized our final impression during our discussions. He said that despite formidable problems and challenges faced, the institution and the country are young and they have hope. Indeed CSU is a relatively young institution having been in existence for some 35 years. However the institution has an outstanding leader in the current Rector, a dedicated faculty, a responsible and mature group of students who are motivated to learn and a

resourceful people in the CR. The Visiting Advisors are therefore confident that CSU will succeed, and wishes it well in the exciting and challenging period at the beginning of the 21st century.

The hospitality provided by CSU has been overwhelming from the moment the VAP team stepped off the train in Cheboksary on Sunday, 13 October. The hosts have given generously of their time, made excellent arrangements for the visit, provided comfortable accommodation and excellent cuisine. For all of this and for the warmth and compassion, the VAP team wishes to thank the Rector and staff of CSU most sincerely for a fruitful and productive meeting and a memorable time in Cheboksary.

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Jairam Reddy is an associate research fellow in higher education at the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria. Dr. Reddy was appointed by the secretary general of the United Nations to serve on the Council of the United Nations in Tokyo, Japan, from 1998 to 2004. He has been elected to chair the Council for a two-year term beginning in January 2000. He was vice chancellor of the University of Durban-Westville from 1990 to 1994. In January 1995, he was appointed chair of the National Commission on Higher Education of South Africa, on which much of the report of the White Paper on Higher Education and the Higher Education Act was based. Dr. Reddy is a graduate of the University of Birmingham; holds the degree of master of science from the University of Manitoba, Canada; and earned a Ph.D. from the University of Western Cape. He is an alumnus of several Universities Project symposia and Salzburg Seminar sessions on higher education, and has participated in consultant visits by Visiting Advisors Program teams to the Russian Federation.



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Arno Loessner is a senior policy fellow in the Institute for Public Administration and the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Delaware, Newark. He is former vice president and secretary of the University, where he currently teaches public finance, comparative public administration, and non-profit management and governance. Dr. Loessner is director of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) at the University of Delaware, for which he served as Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1978 to 2000. He consults with agencies of The World Bank, the United Nations, and the US State Department, and is currently working with the Institute for Local Government Studies in Accra, Ghana to strengthen educational programs there. Dr. Loessner holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. He is an alumnus of Salzburg Seminar Session 172, *Growth, Land Use and Urban Planning* in 1977 and Session 330, *Building and Sustaining Democracies* in 1995. He is a multiple-time alumnus of the Universities Project and was team leader of the consultant visit by the Visiting Advisors Program to Tallinn, Estonia in 1999.



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 2002, more than fifty VAP visits will have taken place to universities in East and Central Europe and Russia. A full schedule of visits is planned for 2003. 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.

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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.

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