

*REPORT on*  
*Novosibirsk State University*  
*Russian Federation*  
*March 31- April 4, 2004*

# **SALZBURG SEMINAR**

**UNIVERSITIES PROJECT**  
**VISITING ADVISORS PROGRAM**



**The Universities Project of the Salzburg Seminar  
Visiting Advisors Program**

**Summary Report of the Follow-Up Visit to the  
Novosibirsk State University  
Russian Federation  
March 31 – April 4, 2004**

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This report provides a summary of the observations and experiences of the Visiting Team, as a result of a follow-up visit at the Novosibirsk State University (NSU) from March 31 to April 4, 2004. This and the first visit that occurred in September 11-16, 2000 were both carried out under the auspices of the Visiting Advisors Program (VAP) of the Salzburg Seminar. The Team Leader participated in both visits, while others on the second Team joined the group because their particular expertise related to the issues raised by NSU for further discussion.

This second group of Visiting Advisors came to NSU upon the invitation of Rector Professor Nikolai Sergeevich Dikansky. Our Team was very much impressed with the dedication and commitment of the University leadership, as well as with the cooperative and open attitude of all colleagues who participated in the meetings. Furthermore, the Team was impressed by the number and diversity of participants involved in the discussions during this re-visit. We were also delighted by the hospitality of the University; we would like to express our special thanks to all staff members at NSU who were involved in the preparation and the implementation of the visit. The Visiting Team learned a great deal over the course of the many discussions at NSU and we are glad to take the opportunity to share our views through the following comments and recommendations.

## **Brief Overview of NSU**

Three eminent Russian scientists, Lavrentiev, Sobolev and Kristianovich came to the conclusion that Siberia, with its rich natural resources, would be an ideal home for a scientific center. The first step in the process was the foundation of the Siberian Branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences near the industrial city of Novosibirsk. Akademgorodok grew rapidly as a center of science, and Novosibirsk State University was established in 1959. The first sixty graduates of NSU obtained their degrees in 1963. Since then NSU has trained more than 30 000 scholars, educators and business people.

Today, the education complex of NSU comprises higher education (NSU), STSC (secondary education), higher college of informatics (specialized secondary education) and professional education. The University enrolls a total of 6300 students, 280 post-graduate students, 500 STSC students (high school), 600 HCI students, 1000 audiences (trainees), 1500 tutors and 1500 staff. The NSU campus includes five university buildings, eleven dormitories, two sports buildings, a publishing house, a recreation department, a health center, a medical center and a practical work base.

## **Actions Taken after the First VAP Report in 2000**

The Visiting Team was pleased to note the progress made in a number of areas at NSU since the first visit in September 2000, nearly four years ago:

- A Vice Rector has been appointed to be in charge of international relations; the International Education Center was initiated, uniting several universities to work together on the international education market; resources have been provided for the development of this office; the number of international students has risen by some 18.5 percent.
- Negotiations and contracts have been signed with a number of Russian and foreign companies in order to induce them to make investments in the NSU Scientific Center.
- A Commission for Quality of Education was established to match the European system of quality control of education in the context of the Bologna Process.
- Administrative and tutorial staff have increased by 33 percent
- There is a training program for company directors, top and middle managers, including managers for “Innovational Activity in Russia.”
- Ongoing attempts are underway to establish an Advisory Council as a first step to a possible fully fledged and recognized Council or Board of Trustees to oversee the affairs of the University.
- In the improved financial climate of the Russian Federation as a whole, the education budget of NSU has doubled; tuition income has also increased.
- The non-budget income has been used for the construction of new buildings and for the renovation of existing buildings.
- Research and graduate students especially in the sciences, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology continue to be of high quality.

- The mutually beneficial relationship with the Siberian Academy of Sciences continues successfully.
- NSU has been successful in its recruitment of high quality students throughout the Regional Olympiad.
- The Rector and his Team of senior managers comprise a strong and effective leadership team.

### **Rector's Report**

The Rector appreciates the wise advice that the NSU receives from the Salzburg Seminar. Although this advice may not be entirely rooted in the realities of Russian Higher Education, he is nevertheless very interested in what the VAP Team has to say. In contrast, many in Russia are opposed to international developments like the quality ethos espoused by the Bologna Process.

The Vice Governor of Novosibirsk, Mr. Sapojnikov, stated that his department adopts a modern approach in monitoring education in the region. He apologizes for not having been part of the Salzburg Seminar process. The region has few material resources and is an industrial area; however secondary education and academic education are well developed with three branches of Russian academies (Medical, Agricultural and the Academy of Sciences) in the region. The priorities of education are quality, access, and efficiency. Attention is also being given to the education of handicapped children, notably those with visual disabilities.

The Vice Governor, who presented at a VAP preliminary meeting, claimed that the following areas are of fundamental importance to the region:

- The spirit of academic freedom
- Innovation
- Maintaining educational standards
- Developing students as responsible citizens of the country
- Preparing students for an open society within a market driven economy
- Retraining teachers in the disciplines of technology, economics and law to prepare for life in an open industrialized market economy
- Focusing of specialization in relation to new developments in industry
- The responsibility of the state for education

There are also challenges to be met:

- The generally low quality of private universities especially in the humanities and economics
- Integration of Russian education into the global system of education
- The convergence of the humanities and sciences with an increasing demand for tertiary education
- Challenges for higher education to provide the right type of employees

There is however no legal basis for graduating students to enter into business ventures. They have to use non-government funds through the banks for this purpose. There is also the problem of drug use by young people in Russian society. Among our global challenges are convergence issues with the

Bologna process and the World Trade Organization's views on internationalization of education.

There is good cooperation between NSU and the SB RAS in the fourteen scientific departments and forty-eight research institutes. The Rector stated that despite several attempts to transfer NSU to the SB RAS, it has not been successful. It cannot be resolved in the near future because of intractable legal obstacles. Lawyers are currently concentrating their efforts in surmounting this dilemma. In practice, NSU is very much integrated with the SB RAS; 80 percent of NSU staff work in the SB RAS; teaching constitutes between two and eight hours per week, with the remainder of their time devoted to research. In the USA, a typical faculty member teaches for some twenty hours per week, and earns 50 percent of his or her salary at the institution. Now NSU pays some share of the salary for teaching and research from non-budget sources.

NSU does not own the land on which its buildings are located and therefore it cannot expand and develop the University. In addition, neither the city nor the region finances NSU as it is a federal university (only 1 percent of the NSU budget is received from these sources). NSU now receives considerably less funding than it did under the Soviet regime. Non-budget funds raised by the University (grants, contracts, and continuing professional development courses) amounts to 160 million rubles, and total funds received amounts to 350 million rubles. The Ministry of Education underestimates NSU. Its staff to student ratio is 1:4 but it is financed at the ratio of 1:10. However the Ministry of Education finances a dozen universities (all located in Moscow) at the ratio of 1:4. Additionally, 50 percent of the federal research budget is allocated to universities in Moscow, 25 percent to universities in St Petersburg and the remaining 25 percent to the rest of the universities in the rest of Russia.

The University Conference (including representatives of administration, academic and non-academic staff, and students) elects the Rector and the University Council (Academic Senate) and makes crucial policy decisions. All other important policy decisions are made by the University Council. NSU must retain its autonomy in this regard. NSU and the SB RAS opened a department of medicine last year. It is hoped that this will increase the number of students who enroll at NSU in order to meet the demands of the market. The social role of the University's mission should also be fulfilled by providing ethical education to prepare the leadership of society.

The Ministry of Education has been trying during the last four years to implement the Unified State Examination. As a consequence, students from small towns wish to study in the capitol but have not been able to afford to do so. Transportation costs from the rural areas to the capitol are too high, and the level of education and preparedness of the students in rural areas is too low. NSU has always worked to attract talented students from good schools by enrolling the best from rural intermediate schools with modest fees and access to the best education.

The general legislative environment has helped with the integration of education and science. The Russian economy is doing well with an annual growth rate of six percent. With fifty percent of the budget provided by the government, universities are struggling to maintain autonomy and academic freedom. NSU has provided special grants for interdisciplinary work (e.g.: for the archeologists who unearthed the frozen specimen of a 2000 year old female, proven by DNA tests to have been of European origin).

Quality assurance is very important especially for those who are paying for their education often through private institutions. Paid diplomas tend to devalue university qualifications. There were 1.7 million students in universities in the Soviet Union. All graduates of secondary education tended to want to go to universities.

### **Academic Structure and Governance of the University**

The relationship between the NSU and SB RAS struck the VAP Team as being unusual. It seems abundantly clear that if the SB RAS and the NSU were integrated it would bring enormous synergies to the research enterprise, improve teaching capacity, and improve the financial status of both institutions. The peculiarities of the Russian governance system seem to defy understanding to anyone from outside the country. One approach to resolving the problem would be to appoint a small Task Team comprising a few eminent Russian educationalists and scientists with an external member (e.g.: from the European academic community) to investigate the problem and make appropriate recommendations to the Russian Ministry of Education. The lack of ownership of Akademgorodok by NSU should be part of this investigation.

It is noted that “the supreme power at the University belongs to the General Council, consisting of 300 representatives of all 13 departments. All the cardinal issues able to change the University’s structure are the responsibility of this forum.” This would appear to be a cumbersome and clumsy management and governance approach for a modern, efficiently run institution. A shared but clearly delineated governance system between the Board of Trustees (University Council), Executive Management, Senate (for academic matters) and Faculty Boards does seem infinitely preferable. Is there anything in the legislation that prevents NSU from organizing its institution along these lines?

Despite the profound changes resulting in the shift from the former Soviet Union to a democratic state, it seems that Russian universities enjoy very limited autonomy and are in fact shackled by a bureaucracy with “thousands of different rules and regulations, edited by the Ministry, which the University must obey.”

### **Unified State Examination (USE)**

While the Ministry of Education through its USE claims to provide opportunities for secondary school graduates from the provinces who wish to study in universities in the nation’s capital, it has not considered their level of training and the cost of studying in Moscow (income levels in Moscow are five

times higher than in the provinces, rendering tuition fees unaffordable). The attempt by the Ministry of Education to usher in a degree of equity in funding between metropolitan and regional universities has been opposed by the former.

Even if NSU applied a variant of the USE, very few entrants would qualify to enter. Despite the opposition by many Rectors, USE now covers two thirds of Russia's regions.

The VAP Team finds it difficult to comment on the controversy of USE but feels from its perspective that it should be accepted throughout Russia that standards should be improved and become comparable over time, and that funding of universities should be equalized but that allowances be made for vastly differing cost levels in cities in comparison to the provinces.

### **Self-Assessment Report**

During a forty-four year period NSU together with the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SB RAS) has trained more than 35,000 specialists in the fields of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geology, economics, history, archeology, linguistics, sociology, philosophy and philology. As a result, some 10,000 NSU graduates are now employed in the research institutions of the SB RAS, including in the Ural and Far Eastern Branches and Colleges of Siberia, Far East and Middle Asia.

Currently NSU trains specialists in thirteen of its departments in the most important disciplines required in modern Russia. The first seven departments – mathematics and mechanics, physics, natural science, economics, humanities, geology and geophysics, and information technologies are the basis of the academic programs at NSU. The 6,000 students are trained in Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist's and Doctoral programs. NSU includes divisions offering programs in pre-university training, skill conversion, and professional development to 2,000 students.

NSU employs 1,600 academic and 1,400 administrative and support staff (staff to student ratio of 1:4). There are twenty buildings covering 100,000 sq meters. The University's cumulative budget has grown six-fold during the last four years to 300,000 million rubles. As this state budget is insufficient to meet the University's financial requirements, strategies are in place for securing additional funding. For NSU, this means changes in its system of academic training, introduction of new academic services, and development of university relations with local and federal branches of legislative and executive powers.

The VAP Team notes the following new developments reported by NSU:

- The formulation of new programs in new fields to meet the needs of the region with the concomitant raising of non-budget financing
- Establishment of a regional center for graduate studies in order to incorporate colleges in the region and to attract students from other cities, regions, and nations
- Implementation of new educational technologies, especially computer technologies (there are now over 1,000 computers on the campus)

- Increased efforts to host students' conferences, workshops, summer schools, and field works
- Organization of physics and mathematical schools attached to colleges as a significant part of pre-university training and updating school education
- Legal securing of the land and building estate for NSU and the development of university infra-structure to increase enrollment
- Construction during the period from 2003 to 2007 of dormitories for post-graduate students at a cost of 300 million rubles
- Construction of a main building and entertainment center including a culture house for youth
- Modernization of equipment (laboratories and modern telecommunications) at a cost of 500 million rubles
- Raising of salaries and other revenues for NSU academic and staff through non-budget sources in order to maintain the staff to student ratio at 1: 4
- Increase of scientific research undertaken by NSU and SB RAS in interdisciplinary research in high-priority science fields which both could address the demands of society while at the same time generating more revenue for the institution
- Further integration of fundamental science into higher education allowing chairs based in institutions, integration with large companies, the generation of foreign funds, supporting science in Russia
- The use of high technologies in innovation and enlargement of masters and doctoral programs
- Establishment, in cooperation with the SB RAS, of small high-technology enterprises and innovative businesses, generating an estimated annual income of seventy-five million rubles
- Establishment of contracts with businesses for the training of specialists thus creating another basis for investments in the University
- Establishing business-incubator projects in cooperation with foreign universities (scientific research can translate into high-technology enterprises)
- Training of specialists with knowledge of languages, cultures and economics able to work in Asia and the Pacific region in order to contribute to the development of Siberia and Russia

### **A Critique of the Self-Assessment Report**

Self-assessment in the conventional understanding of the term has a different meaning than used in the NSU documentation. It is part of the quality assurance exercise in which the institution undertakes a rigorous audit of the institution and an assessment of its program offerings. In the audit, it will evaluate how the institution is being led, managed, and administered as well as whether the infrastructure and support structures are adequate for quality program offerings. In the latter, each program would be assessed including the structure of the curriculum, the staff and their qualifications, and the assessment methods. The University would identify strengths and weaknesses. If weaknesses were present, it would propose corrective strategies and the resources required for it. The external quality assurance

body would use the institutional self-evaluation as the basis for its own audit and program accreditation exercise.

In contrast to this interpretation, NSU's self-assessment describes the achievements and current status of the institution. In addition it outlines a sequence of initiatives it would like to undertake in order to offer new programs, expand existing programs, establish relationships with businesses and foreign universities, and generate non-budget income in order to rejuvenate the institution. These are noble intentions but should be part of the Strategic Plan of the institution and not part of the self-assessment exercise. In the section of the recommendation, the core elements of a self-assessment exercise and a strategic plan are outlined.

### **System for Education Quality Control at NSU**

The Vice Rector for Educational Matters stated, "NSU's main goal is training researchers, academicians and specialists for SB RAS, all colleges of the region, and high-tech enterprises and businesses." This could be an ideal mission statement for NSU.

The Quality Control System comprises the following as outlined by the Vice Rector for Educational Matters:

- Monitoring of exercises, essays, abstracts, examinations, course papers and final assessment of examinations and a thesis; and
- Control through three blocks – admission, education and graduation
  - Admission: Students gain admission through access and specialized courses, summer schools, secondary schools, and the academic Olympiad. The matriculant's capability to use gained knowledge is the main criterion for selection.
  - Education: Motivation, learning capability, and ambitions of students; capability of tutors to deliver knowledge through modern technologies and research activity; optimum infrastructure and administration of curriculum, examinations
  - Graduation: quality of thesis, specialist training and requirements of employers and center of recruiting

In the outline provided by the Vice Rector, all major areas of the educational enterprise were covered. What is not clear is by what criteria each of the components were assessed, what the outcomes were, and what steps were taken to correct weaknesses of the system should they be found. QAS's are still evolving but it appears that more precision in evaluating quality and adopting a development trajectory would be useful for the promotion of quality within the institution.

### **Strategic Planning**

We note that little progress has been made in the formulation of a strategic plan since the last visit of the VAP Team. Strategic planning will enable NSU to establish priorities and allow the choice between alternative courses of action. It sends an important signal to both its internal constituents and external stakeholders that it has embarked on a definite course of action and

is not simply drifting along. This is not to say that such plans are cast in concrete, but rather will be periodically reviewed and fine-tuned in the light of rapid changes in its environment which impact on the institution.

A strategic planning exercise could well be overwhelmed with attention to detail and a comprehensive range of questions. Confining the exercise to ten key priority questions will make such a plan realistic, implementable and manageable.

1. Where does the University wish to be strategically in 5-10 years time?
2. What are the University's particular strengths?
3. In what areas is there a strong demand for its programs?
4. Can the quality of teaching and learning be improved without great expense?
5. Should the student mix be different in terms of gender, place of origin, age or parental occupation?
6. Do the University's research strengths match its overall strategy (e.g. to meet the development needs of the region or local community)?
7. Do the present management structures and cultures help the University in achieving its objectives?
8. How can the University get the best from its present people?
9. How do the present physical facilities need to change?
10. Has the scope for improving operational efficiency and reducing support costs been fully explored?

The vision, mission, and goals of the institution underpin such a plan.

Strategic plans that are derived through consultative processes, have the support of the major players in the institution, are well understood and implemented in a systematic way with the support of the rector, and have a much better chance of successful outcomes. Should strategic planning be a top down or bottom up process? One approach is to devise a strategic plan through a small group (e.g. the Planning Committee of Council/Board) and to distribute it for consideration by the whole university community. In contrast to this top down approach, an open process invites input from all constituent parts of the institution. This bottom up approach demands more time and requires skillful management. Submissions may come in writing from many parts of the institution (faculty, students, unions, or open forums). Once a draft plan has been drawn up it should be subjected to critique from as wide an audience as is possible. Eventually such a plan would have to be accepted even with a degree of opposition as would be expected especially from those who have vested interests in not having a strategic plan.

A good strategic plan will never evolve in an organization characterized by a lack of trust. Collegial interactions, which are essential to the development of a good strategic plan, provide an excellent means of building that interpersonal trust.

In practice, the plans cover the core and non-core business of the University and as result members of general staff play an important role in the development and implementation of the strategic plan.

## Financial Matters

- Financial Trends: There have been some interesting trends in the finances of NSU over the past five years. In 1999 about 70 percent of the budget was funded with federal support. That fraction declined to about 46 percent in 2001. It has remained at 46 percent since 2001 even though the total budget for the University almost doubled over that three year period. Since 1999 the fraction of the budget supported with tuition paying students and other non-governmental sources has almost doubled. In nominal rubles those revenue sources have approximately tripled. We did not have a good sense of how these numbers looked in inflation adjusted terms.
  - We were pleased to see the increase in state funds, although we recognize that there are many components of NSU that are significantly under funded.
  - We were also pleased and impressed to note that the University has made great progress in diversifying its revenue base and shifting its support to non-federal sources. This is a remarkable achievement in five years.
- Other Positive Developments Since the Prior Visit: The debt owed by the University has now been paid back, which is no small accomplishment in what continues to be a difficult financial environment. There have been wage increases for staff. Facilities renovations have occurred, notably with the continued development of the sports complex and the renovation of large lecture rooms. Given its limited resource base it was impressive to the Team that NSU operates as it does on \$17 million a year.
- The Need for Further Investment: The many gains made by NSU over these past several years are significant, but further investment in the University is necessary. Wage increases, facilities expansion and renovation, academic program and investment, and enhancement of the capacity of the University to expand its contacts outside of the Akademgorodok are critical.

## Recommendations

For some members of this Visitors Advisors Team, it is the second visit to Novosibirsk State University (NSU) and one of a number of visits to a range of universities in the Russian Federation. The more one visits this country, the more one increasingly realizes its vastness and its complexities. Our reflections and advice must therefore be tempered by these realities. We also recognize that the Russian Federation, as it transforms from the former Soviet Union into a modern democratic state, is bound to experiment and change. The members of the VAP Team also emerge from different backgrounds, from different countries, and from different contexts. What we recommend may either be inappropriate or may have to be modified to suit your particular realities.

As a society in transition, the Russian Federation is undergoing profound and dramatic changes in every aspect of its social, economic and cultural life. Some of these broader changes will undoubtedly have an impact on education and in particular universities and higher education. In a context of competing resources and a development trajectory, higher education may not receive the support and resources it rightly deserves. The upside of such a volatile situation is that attitudes and views are usually not deeply entrenched, which provides the space and opportunities for reform and transformation.

### 1. Strategic Plan

We highly recommend that NSU considers formulating a clear, directive Strategic Plan. Such a Strategic Plan will include

- a vision and mission statement,
- realizable goals and measurable objectives, and
- a reassessment every three to five years to adapt the institution to changing circumstances and realities.

A strategic plan informs the University as to where it is in 2004, where it wishes to be in say 2009, how it will get there, and what are the resource requirements it requires to realize its mission. Among issues for consideration under the strategic plan are staff and student numbers, buildings and infrastructure, finance, research and postgraduate students, new programs, removal of out-dated programs, new campuses.

### 2. Size of the Institution

With a student enrollment of 6,500, NSU is considered a high-quality elite research university. It has a very favorable staff to student ratio of 1: 4. The cost per student will therefore be high and, in the modern world, may be unsustainable in the long run. Elite highly regarded universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, Stanford, Harvard and the Sorbonne have student numbers ranging from 15,000 to 40,000 students. In these institutions, student numbers both for tuition fees and state income are strong determinants of the financial income.

NSU should consider expansion of the institution along the following lines:

- Increase the number of part-time students. Many of these will be from the business/corporate sector and suitable tailored courses to meet their particular requirements should be provided (business studies, computer science, master of business administration, etc).
- Establish a city campus with easy access for these students especially during the evenings and weekends.
- Provide quality distance learning programs using modern state-of-the-art technologies (fax, e-mail, interactive video-conferencing, etc.). The constitution of learning centers to provide tuition for these distance students is an essential part of quality distance education provision. The Commonwealth of Learning based in Vancouver, Canada; The Open University in Walton Hall, United Kingdom; and Indira Gandhi Open University in New Delhi, India are good examples of quality distance education provision. NSU would benefit by contact with these centers.

- Achieve a small but steady increase in students on the main NSU campus supported by the state budget.
- Increase the number of international students at the postgraduate level. NSU is a high-quality research institution, especially in the sciences, and can attract increasing numbers of students from developing countries. Furthermore, the programs could be offered at competitive rates in comparison to many western countries. It would be a distinct advantage to provide these courses in the English language. As these postgraduate programs are largely research oriented, implementation of this should not pose a significant problem.

A steady increase in student numbers of approximately 10 percent per year with the staff to student ratio increasing from the current 1: 4 to between 1: 8 and 1:10 will, in the long run, not only provide quality education to increasing numbers of Russian students, but will result in a financially more viable institution. The staff to student ratio of 1:10 would still be very favorable by modern standards where the staff to student ratio is usually of the order of between 1: 15 and 1:20.

### 3. Board of Trustees/Councils

The VAP Team is aware that, despite efforts, it has not as yet been possible to set up an Advisory Council as a possible forerunner to a legally established Board of Trustees or Council. We urge NSU to try again and in fact keep trying, because it is our experience and in fact the experience in a host of countries that such bodies are absolutely essential for the autonomy, academic freedom and general well being of higher education institutions.

The composition of such councils is very broad indeed. It may comprise some or all of the following constituencies and stakeholders: from the institution—the Rector and several of his senior managers as well as representatives of faculty, staff, and students; from outside the institution—representatives of the alumni, donors to the institution, local, state, and national governments, the business community, professional organizations, labor unions, religious organizations, and other credible civil-society organizations. The total number will be in the region of between twenty and twenty-five. The external members should be in the clear majority.

Such Boards/Councils may meet three to six times a year. Among its functions would be to

- oversee the general well being of the University;
- in particular to see that its finances are managed with integrity and for the purposes to which it is intended (approve the budget);
- appoint the Rector and his senior managers, evaluate their performance, and reappoint them when appropriate;
- assist in fund raising campaigns;
- protect the autonomy and academic freedom of the institution;
- ensure that programs and courses of study provided serve the public and national interest;
- communicate to the University the perceptions of the wider community, and in turn communicate to the public the work of the University.

It should be made crystal clear that it is not the role of the Board/Council to lead, manage or administer the institution; that is the role of the Rector and his or her staff. However the Board/Council can hold the Rector and his managers accountable for their performance or lack of performance.

The VAP Team realizes that the concept of Boards of Trustees/Councils is unfamiliar to the Russian tradition. It is thus unlikely to become a reality unless championed and legitimized by the Russian Government and Russian Ministry of Education. However NSU can take a small step in this direction in establishing an Advisory Council with limited membership and functions as a prototype for the Boards of Trustees/Councils.

#### 4. Quality Assurance

Many countries have in recent years introduced quality assurance systems to improve the quality of their programs and provide students and employers with indicators of the value of the graduates of higher education institutions. Governments across the world have been exerting pressures for increased accountability of the way in which these institutions are expending their resources. Are they getting value for money and are they responding to the social and economic imperatives of the country? Growing competition from private sector providers of higher education is an additional reason for the introduction of quality assurance mechanisms. There are also fears that the expansion of higher education and the concomitant reduction in the unit of resource is threatening the quality of higher education.

In a recently held conference of the International Association of Quality Assurance in Higher Education, some fifty-two countries were represented and the network has over a hundred members.

Although the nature of quality assurance systems varies from country to country, they in general include certain core features.

- Most systems begin with a self-evaluation process.
- This is followed by a site visit, comprised of peers and lasting from one to three days.
- Following scrutiny of the documents provided in the self evaluation, interviews and inspection of the facilities during the site visit, a written report is prepared.
- The report following comments by the institution visited is published.

An important aspect of the report is to point out the shortcomings, if any, and to suggest the necessary corrective procedures. In some systems, rewards and sanctions are part of the quality assessment exercise.

An independent body comprised of a council or board together with an executive office and the necessary staff coordinate and oversee the quality assurance system.

As quality assurance systems vary greatly, higher education institutions within the Russian Federation will construct a system suited to their particular contexts. NSU may wish to begin its quality assurance exercise by establishing a small unit under the direction of one of the Vice Rectors. Periodic evaluation of the administrative structures, support structures, and

programs should be undertaken. Self-evaluation should be central to such assessments and the inclusion of peers from other institutions as well as from outside the country will add credibly to the system. Outcomes should not result in punitive actions but rather the system should be improvement oriented.

The problems associated with a quality assurance system should not be underestimated. It is costly and time consuming. The definition of quality itself is a contentious matter. It has been described variously as excellence, value for money, fitness for purpose, fitness of purpose, transformation, etc. The bureaucracy involved in its management and implementation can detract from the routine work of academic staff. The evidence that quality assurance systems inevitably improve quality especially of the research output is not convincing. The quality and consistency of the report itself may be suspect. In such cases ranking of institutions creates the wrong public perceptions about the quality of higher education institutions. On balance, however, strong forces across nations including international developments within UNESCO and the Bologna process support the adoption of quality assurance systems.

## 5. Financial Matters

We have several suggestions for the proactive leadership of NSU.

- Fund Raising – Continue to develop your grant making and development capacities. This effort has obviously already begun, but needs to continue. The creation of a university-wide board of trustees would be a major step culturally and traditionally, but we believe it has significant long term potential. In addition, the creation of departmentally based advisory boards would serve to bring into the University people who are more focused and interested in the activities of a particular department or program. Other universities, notably in the United States, use such advisory boards in fund raising and in developing new programs. Finally, we encourage you to look ahead to the approaching 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the University and begin to develop fund raising plans around that significant event.
- Foreign Students – We believe the numbers of tuition paying foreign students can be increased and the price charged to them can be increased. This assumes, of course, that the University has the space to house and support those students. We did not get a good sense of that capacity, given the short nature of our visit. We also suggest you consider English as the language of instruction for some fraction of your foreign students. Many students today do learn English in their home countries, and such action would expand the market for foreign students. We are not clear whether NSU has the teaching staff to conduct such classes in English but we suspect it does.
- Student to Staff Ratio – While we appreciate the desire of the University to provide an education of the highest quality, the uncommonly low student to staff ratio has the potential to slow further development of NSU. Comparable ratios among the best and wealthiest universities in the rest of the world are twice this level and there is no clear reason to us why that ratio cannot increase. The one

constraint we could see as problematic is student housing. However, we are not clear on whether there is available housing or whether additional housing could be built. The other less attractive alternative is to reduce the size of the academic staff over time through attrition. We do not recommend this course as it will weaken your programs, but it will free up money for other purposes.

- Non-Traditional Study Programs – We recommend that NSU continue to find ways to expand its training programs and other non-traditional non-degree-granting programs. Continuing the efforts to develop relationships with local and regional industry to meet their training needs seemed to us to be a good way to generate additional income without significant investment. Further, given the strong internet capabilities now present at NSU we believe many of these programs can be delivered electronically and remotely. We encourage the University to seek outside funding to explore these opportunities creatively and to develop business plans.
- Ministry of Finance Restrictions – We were troubled by reports of the restrictions placed on the University by the Ministry of Finance. It seems to us that more autonomy would be a good thing, particularly in terms of holding any unspent budget allocations or interest on balances, etc. We are not familiar with all of the restrictions, but providing more flexibility would give the University some additional financial capacity within which to operate.

## 6. Systemic Issues

It is clear that it is beyond the power of NSU to introduce a number of critically important and highly desirable changes to the Russian Higher Education System. Among these are

- the relationship between NSU and the SB RAS;
- the ownership of the land of Akademgorodok on which the buildings and infrastructure of NSU are located;
- the skewed financing of Russian research with 50 percent allocated to universities in Moscow, 25 percent to universities in St Petersburg and the remaining 25 percent to the rest of universities in the Russian Federation;
- the granting of substantive autonomy to universities so that they may appoint their own controlling boards, manage, lead and administer their institutions as they see appropriate while remaining accountable to the national government;
- the rationalization of universities so as to create a smaller number of multi-discipline, efficient, quality institutions across the country; and
- the institution of a national quality assurance system for both public and private institutions.

It is hoped that these weighty but vitally important issues would be discussed at the Salzburg Seminar when educationalists from different parts of the world, their Russian counterparts and the Russian Ministry of Education meet.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The VAP Team wishes to place on record its sincere gratitude for the manner in which the Team was received and for the organization of the visit. The information provided by the University was comprehensive and valuable. The logistical arrangements (transport, accommodation, etc) facilitated the visit. The warmth, hospitality, lunches and dinners and the considerable time that the Rector and his staff spent with the VAP Team is deeply appreciated.

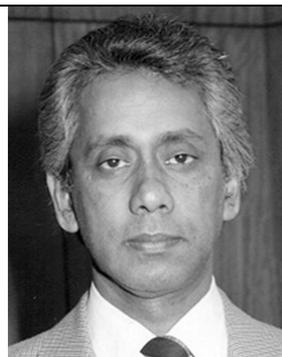
We commend the leadership and staff of NSU for their considerable progress over the past several years. NSU already has a well deserved reputation for quality around the world. The achievements of the past few years certainly help to build on that reputation. However, many challenges remain, and NSU must, of course, be in a state of continuous improvement in order to compete with other institutions in the Russian Federation and worldwide. We are hopeful that some of the changes suggested above will contribute toward the continuation of that excellence.

NSU is a university endowed with considerable physical and human resources. Its complimentary activities with the Siberian Academy of Sciences are an added advantage to NSU. Its strategic location in the center of Siberia places it in a position of having a profound influence on the socio-economic trajectory of the developing Russian Federation. We trust that the central government would value this rich resource and would provide it with the necessary resources in order for it carry out its mission and make its rightful contribution to the future of the Russian Federation. Finally we trust that the development strategy for NSU-SB RAS, which is being discussed by the Russian Government, is a radical and far reaching one, which will harness the considerable resources of both institutions for the rapid development of the large Siberian region in particular, but for the Russian Federation as well.

**Visiting Advisors:**

**Jairam REDDY, South Africa (Team Leader)**

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 University 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, Dr. Reddy 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. He is currently involved with the Ministry of Education on the mergers of higher education institutions and is also a member of the Higher Education Quality Committee of South Africa.



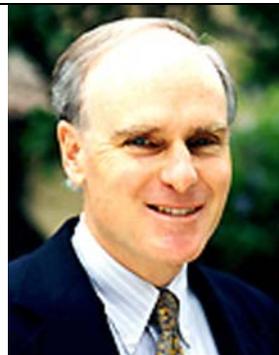
**Victor CHISTOKHVALOV, Russian Federation**

Victor Chistokhvalov is chair of the University Academic Affairs Department at the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow; and also director of the Center for Comparative Educational Policy of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation. A specialist in physical chemistry, computer simulation, and educational management and policy, Dr. Chistokhvalov has taught at the university since 1982, and has held a variety of positions including senior lecturer in the Department of Environmental Protection; associate professor in the Faculty of Physics, Mathematics, and Natural Sciences; and deputy head of the Department of Physical and Colloid Chemistry. Dr. Chistokhvalov is a member of the Steering Committee on Higher Education and Research of the Council of Europe, the Bologna Follow-up Group of the Council of Europe, and the American Educational Research Association. He holds an M.S. and a Ph.D. in chemistry from the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow; and is an alumnus of several Universities Project and Russian Higher Education Project Symposia.



**Timothy WARNER, USA**

Timothy Warner is vice provost for budget and auxiliaries management at Stanford University, California, where he is responsible, under the provost, for directing the development of Stanford's operating and capital budgets and for major auxiliary operations, including student housing and dining and elements of the athletic department. Mr. Warner is the Stanford representative to the Consortium on Financing Higher Education, treasurer of the Stanford Faculty Club, and a member of a national study group to determine a methodology for developing the cost of an undergraduate education. He serves as a consultant for several universities and higher education institutions in the USA and for various elements of the higher education system in Hungary, including The World Bank, the Ministry of Education, the Hungarian Rectors Conference, and numerous universities. Mr. Warner holds an M.B.A. with an emphasis on finance from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business.



**Brigitte WINKLEHNER, Austria**

Brigitte Winklehner is President of the Eurasia-Pacific Uninet, an international network in the European, East and Central Asian and Pacific regions for Austrian universities, universities for applied sciences and other educational institutions, which she organized in 2000 on behalf of the Austrian Ministry for Education, Science, and Culture. She is vice president of the Advisory Board for Austrian Universities of Applied Sciences, chair of the National Socrates/Erasmus Advisory Council, member of the Board of Trustees of the Austrian Broadcasting Company and head of the Higher Education Policy Council for the federal province of Salzburg. She holds a Ph.D. in romance languages and literature from the University of Innsbruck. Dr. Winklehner is a frequent participant of Salzburg Seminar Universities Project symposia.



**Helene KAMENSKY, Austria**

Helene Kamensky is director of Russian Higher Education Programs at the Salzburg Seminar, where she is responsible for the development and direction of academic programs on Russian higher education. Before joining the Salzburg Seminar, Dr. Kamensky served as an adjunct professor of philosophy and Russian studies at the Institutes of Philosophy at the University of Salzburg and the University of Vienna. Previously, Dr. Kamensky was research fellow at the Institute of Scientific Theory at the Salzburg International Research Center. From 1985 to 1989 she was dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University in the Russian Federation, where she previously served as associate professor and senior lecturer in the department of philosophy. Dr. Kamensky's area of research interest is higher education policy and management. 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.



**Schedule:**

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>NSU participants</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>Wednesday, March 31</b>			
9:00-13:00		Arrivals	
14:00		Lunch	
15:00	Rector, Vice Rectors, invited NSU staff	Introductory Meeting and Working Group  <i>Chair:</i> Rector N.S.Dikansky	Academic Structure and Governance within the University
16:00		Coffee Break	
16:20 – 17:30	Rector, Vice Rectors, invited NSU staff	Discussion	
18:00		Welcome Reception	
<b>Thursday, April 1</b>			
10:00	Rector, Vice Rectors, invited NSU staff	Working Group  <i>Chair:</i> V. Radchenko	University Administration and Finance
11:30		Coffee Break	
12:00	Rector, Vice Rectors, invited NSU staff	Discussion	
14:00		Lunch	
15:00		Visit to Siberian Branch of Russian Academy of Science; Tour of Akademgorodok, museums	
18:00		Cultural Program	<i>Traviata</i> , opera at the Opera and Ballet House
<b>Friday, April 2</b>			
10:00-11:30	Rector, Vice Rectors, invited NSU staff	Working Group  <i>Chair:</i> N.V. Dulepova	Improvement of the Quality of Education in a Research University
11:30		Coffee Break	
12:00	Rector, Vice Rectors, invited NSU staff	Discussion	
14:00		Lunch	
15:00-17:00	Rector, Vice Rectors, invited NSU staff	Summarizing meeting	
17:00		Press-Conference	
18:00		Farewell Reception	
<b>Saturday, April 3</b>			
11:00		Cultural Program	Tour of Novosibirsk, shopping
<b>Sunday, April 4</b>			
		Departures	

## **THE UNIVERSITIES PROJECT OF THE SALZBURG SEMINAR**

Universities throughout the world are undergoing systemic changes in their governance, academic design, structure, and mission. From 1998 to 2003, the Salzburg Seminar's Universities Project focused on higher education reform in Central and East Europe, Russia, and the Newly Independent States as universities in these regions redefined their relationships with governments and try to become more integrated into the global intellectual community.

The Universities Project was 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 focused 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 aimed 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 the VAP, 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 2004, more than seventy VAP visits will have taken place to universities in East and Central Europe and Russia. The addition of the Visiting Advisors Program brought to the Universities Project an applied aspect and served to enhance institutional and personal relationships begun in Salzburg.

The Salzburg Seminar acknowledges with gratitude the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which provided funding for the Universities Project, the Visiting Advisors Program, and the extension of the VAP in Russia, respectively.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information regarding Salzburg Seminar programs, please contact one of the Seminar's offices below.

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