



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

ŠIAULIŲ UNIVERSITETO VEIKLOS VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT

ŠIAULIAI UNIVERSITY

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. An international expert team (hereafter “the team”) visited Šiauliai University (hereafter “SU” or “the University”) from September 17-20, 2012 to conduct an Institutional Review. The Institutional Review was organized and commissioned by the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), an Authorized Agency founded by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. The evaluation was carried out according to the “Methodology for Conducting an Institutional Review in Higher Education” (thereafter “Methodology”) determined by the Procedure for the External Review in Higher Education approved by the Resolution No 1317 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of September 22, 2010.
2. The purpose of the institutional review was “to ensure prerequisites for the improvement of the performance and the promotion of the culture of quality, also to offer recommendations for the development of the activities of higher education institutions”. By evaluating the institutional performance, the team’s main direction is towards further development of this forward-looking University, in response to external challenges. The team is aware that many of the challenges facing SU are not unique ones but are very common worldwide. Therefore, by bringing its very wide experience of reviewing institutions in many countries and by sharing views and observations, we do hope that our comments and recommendations will be relevant to the University. The team wants to lend support to SU in the process of further advancement of its operations.
3. The team considered a wide range of documentation submitted by SU including a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) with multiple Annexes, and further documentation that was provided on request of the review team. A series of meetings was conducted with the university senior administrators, representatives of governing bodies, faculty, staff members, students and stakeholders.
4. The team analyzed carefully the translated version of the SER. The team notes that it would be easier to understand the SER if it were preceded by a brief overview of the University. Further, the SER is repetitive and its contents are not well-aligned to the 30 standards of the Methodology. The SER contains excessive information on processes and activities without enough evidence of the outcomes and impact of these activities. Notably, the Rector’s Annual Report was more informative and useful to the team than the SER. The review team is aware that this is the first time that SU has taken part in the institutional review, and this is the first Self-Evaluation Report prepared for this purpose. Further, since the Methodology contains rigid standards and guidelines, it may have been difficult for the University to give a good overview of its activities. Nevertheless, the team believes that the improvement of the self-evaluation capacity is vital for the advancement of SU’s strategic planning and managing processes.
5. **The team recommends** that it would be advantageous for the University to enhance its self evaluation capacity.
6. The recommendations found throughout this report are centred on four main areas in the University’s activities: strategic management, academic studies and life-long learning, research and art activities, and impact on regional and national development. The recommendations and decisions of the review team follow a set of criteria and sub-criteria set out in the Methodology.

7. The comments and recommendations provided by the team in each section should be considered in their totality, since the four main areas under discussion are essentially linked to each other.
8. The expert team consisted of: Team Leader: Prof. David Woodhouse; team members: Dr Anne-Marie de Jonghe, Prof. Tamas Rudas, Prof. Andreas Knorr, Ms Diana Vilytė, Ms Inga Urtė Builytė; review secretary: Dr Helene Kamensky.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

9. The policy and practice of Šiauliai University is heavily affected by the substantial changes currently taking place in the Lithuanian higher education sector. The Law on Higher Education and Research of 2009 introduced systemic reforms including a new students' financing system, i.e. student baskets or higher education vouchers. As follows from the discussions with SU, the new system of students' financing is not favourable for regional universities. Further, the Law on Higher Education and Research strengthened the role of the Council as the governing body of an institution. However, in December 2011 the Lithuanian Constitutional Court declared that the governing role of the Council as prescribed in the Law contradicts to the Constitution and the Law must be amended. Subsequent actions on this were pending at the time of the team's visit. In the main, the new Law on Higher Education and Research brought challenges but also new possibilities: universities become more autonomy and are better able to chart their own directions.
10. Šiauliai University was founded in 1948 as Šiauliai Teacher Training Institute. In 1954 it was reorganized into Šiauliai Pedagogical Institute. In 1959 a branch of Kaunas Polytechnic Institute was founded in Šiauliai, and was later re-named as Šiauliai Polytechnic Faculty of Kaunas University of Technology. In 1997, by the decision of the Lithuanian Parliament, the Seimas, Šiauliai University was established incorporating Šiauliai Pedagogical Institute and Šiauliai Polytechnic Faculty of Kaunas University of Technology.
11. The principal characteristics of the University are
 - 7198 students; and 549 academic staff members
 - the program profile is based on the Bologna structure: bachelor, master and PhD level
 - 19 international study programs are taught in English
 - an organizational structure of eight faculties (Arts, Education, Humanities, Mathematics and Informatics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Social Welfare and Disability Studies, Technology), 11 research centres, and two institutes (Continuous Study Institute and European Studies Institute)
 - 140 cooperation agreements with foreign higher education institutions (HEIs) from 37 countries
 - active participation in EU projects including the 7th Framework Program; Life Long Learning Programs e.g. Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus, Comenius, Grundtvig; EUREKA, EQUER, INTERREG, LAT-LIT EU Structural Funds.
12. The University's mission
"University mission is to promote society's cultural, social and economic progress by means of research and studies; to drive cultural, social environment and economic change of the country in general and of its Northern region in particular; to create high quality science and art, producing surplus value in the priority areas of cohesive development of the country; to contribute to the free creative scientific thought and integration of Lithuanian system of

science and studies in the European and global academic area; to prepare competent specialists able to compete in labour and science market, whole human personalities, to educate an innovative, civic, competitive community, able to integrate in the regional, national, European and global market”.

13. The University’s vision

“Šiauliai University is a networking university of the European Union; the University meets the needs of the learning society by executing nationally and internationally accredited study programs of all three levels, corresponding to the high standards of science and equipped with modern experimental development technology in priority research and study area”.

14. The University’s strategic goals

- “To train researchers and artists, to increase the impact of science and studies on the progress of Lithuanian economy and culture as well as the development of a democratic civic society
- To carry out original, strategic, applied, subject related and interdisciplinary scientific research; to create and implement innovations
- To provide conditions for acquiring higher education based on scientific research and corresponding to the cultural, scientific and technological level, also to offer continuing education and refresher courses as well as opportunities to acquire new competencies
- To create and renovate the modern base for research and studies”

III. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

15. The efficiency of the University’s strategic management was explored against the criteria specified in the Methodology, i.e. the strategic plan’s fitness for purpose, publicity/outreach materials, guarantee for its implementation and management effectiveness.

16. In view of the multiple challenges faced by SU, internal (e.g. limited financial resources, ageing staff) and external (demographics, legal environment, economic situation, etc.), the team found that SU should define its profile more clearly. At present, SU tries to streamline its strategy and policy in accordance with the requirements of the European Higher Education Area, The Lithuanian Law on Higher Education and Research, the Regional needs and the University Statutes. In this framework, SU strives to fulfil equally well all the three parts of a classical university mission, i.e. teaching, research and service to society. However, it is necessary to make choices. The University does not have the capacity and means to play a global, national and regional role simultaneously. It is important to define strategic niches based on the University’s core competencies and a thorough exploration of regional needs, demands, and opportunities for development.

17. The team believes that a balance between the different aspects of the mission should be found based on a specific profile for the University that should be defined more clearly.

18. **The team recommends** that the University focus on its core competencies, identify strategic niche areas, and build a clear profile. An example of a profile statement would be the following: “A regional university providing high quality education to meet demand for a professional workforce in Northern Lithuania...”. Such a profile would require that SU play a more active role in forging strategic collaborations with social and business partners. The team recommends looking at the examples of collaborative agreements as put forward in the documents of the European University Association.

19. The team noted that SU's strategic documents focus mostly on planning and operational management but not on the strategic management. Thus, the submitted documentation indicates a strong emphasis on managerial tools and processes. However, strategic management differs from planning and operational management.
20. **The team recommends** that SU focus less on tools and more on strategy.
21. The University mentioned several strategic planning tools that are in use including
- Strategic development plan (2009-20)
 - Three year strategic activity plans
 - SU strategic activity plan (2006-11) (see: SER, p.2)
 - Activity development plans and related
 - The integrated development strategy (2012-16)
 - A Priority Development Plan for 2012-2013 (see: SER, p.5)
 - Strategic Action plans of faculties
 - Strategic activity plan (2010-12)

This is a large number, and numerous plans can confuse rather than bring focus. It is important to make these plans tightly interconnected. Further, their implementation across the University should be better coordinated. Overall, SU has many reports but they are not well focused. SU needs to make explicit their link to other documents. This may require collaboration between different departments.

22. The choice of strategic goals should be consistent with the SU's mission that should be defined more clearly. Strategic goals must be measured by qualitative and quantitative indicators.
23. The team believes that there is a need for a concerted effort on behalf of the University to engage faculty, staff and relevant stakeholders in the strategic planning process. At this point, few members of the faculty and staff are aware of the strategic plan. This observation is supported by comments made by a majority of staff and administration members who spoke in discussions of existing plans as of operational instruments and measures of annual achievements. The issue is even less understood by faculty members and students. This means that the planning process is a task of a narrow group of administrators, while the majority of staff, faculty and students are not involved and informed well enough. Faculty and staff should be well informed about the key performance indicators, so that they know what they aim at. In sum, it is essential to ensure that all levels of the University are involved in the strategic planning process in a meaningful way.
24. The Rector's Office and the Management Office, together with the strategic planning monitoring group, should strengthen their role in overseeing the strategic development of the University. The project department and the marketing research unit should make a concerted effort to give a relevant support to the senior leadership.
25. **The team recommends** that the Rector appoint a person who will be in charge of overseeing strategic information.
26. Taking into account significant external challenges, SU should develop and put in place an efficient change management system. Given the need to act quickly and efficiently, SU needs to invest time and resources in developing institutional capacity for change. Most importantly, change management cannot be seen separately from the strategy process. A strategy process "is" change management in a way.

27. The team found that strategic plan needs to include clear performance indicators. Although quantitative indicators are mentioned in several documents, there is no consistent specification of these indicators. Several documents provide confused indicator targets and results, and these are not easy to understand. For example, Annex 1.5, Table 5 (activities report 2011) contains different categories of numbers.
28. **The team recommends** that SU develop a balanced and robust set of quantitative performance indicators consistent with the University's profile. The senior management needs to receive regular information on key performance indicators.
29. There are currently no qualitative indicators in place and the team commends the movement towards introducing such.
30. Efficient implementation will require from SU careful monitoring of resources as well as raising money from private sources, since the decrease in the number of student affects state funding. Overall, SU needs to focus on the development of pertinent projects and related activities to enhance its revenues.
31. In terms of relevance of the monitoring procedures, the team points to the need to work on the integration of different monitoring tools (e.g. annual reports to the Council, annual income and expenditure estimates, internal audits service, etc.) into a coherent information system. At this point, it is difficult to compare figures and information for different years because the changing regulations require changes in reporting. This issue should have been clearly indicated in the submitted documentation. Lastly, a quality monitoring system must be useful, flexible and effective, and not just create an extra level of reporting.
32. The team points out that multiple, sometimes contradictory sources of information make it difficult to assess the effectiveness of process management- and decision making at SU.
33. The team recognizes that SU makes information available to founders, stakeholders and the academic community. However, the information could be better packaged and delivered.
34. **The team recommends** that SU create an efficient website to foster SU's visibility and to better communicate the University's mission, vision and strategic goals to the stakeholders and the public at large.
35. The transformative power of ICT should be further explored in terms of how to advance all aspects of the University's operations including teaching and learning (particularly, life-long learning), research and management. Notably, ICT can significantly increase e.g. learning and teaching productivity. However, it can also fall short of its potential due to organizational, technical, financial and pedagogical barriers. Therefore, ICT policy and strategy is to be aligned with the strategic direction of the University. Systemic planning for strategic integration of ICT is of paramount importance.
36. The team commends the efforts of SU to evaluate study programs regularly. At the same time, the team noticed that only seven out of 27 study programs received accreditation for the maximum possible term of six years. The rest of the study programs were accredited for only three years. This raises the question of whether there is a tension between the market needs and the academic requirements as far as program content is concerned.

37. The team recognizes that SU conducts regular monitoring of students' performance. However, measures/indicators of increasing quality of students' learning are absent.
38. Students' perception of courses is assessed via questionnaires after each course. As indicated by students, regular interaction with teachers is one of the advantages of studying at SU. Students' feedback leads to actions.
39. In the main, the team noticed that SU is in an advanced stage of building a quality management system. This is commendable, but the team cautions that the system must be useful, flexible and effective, i.e. not just create an extra level of reporting.
40. **The team recommends** that SU find a better balance between quality control and quality improvement in the future. The submitted materials suggest that SU's approach to quality assurance is more focused on accountability and compliance, and less on quality enhancement.
41. The structural changes aimed at fostering internal quality assurance processes with regards to the major functions of the University – teaching, research, and service - are going in the right direction. For example, the team was informed that reorganization of academic divisions and department mergers take place if necessary. Also, research centres are being set up. However, that the research centres should focus more on the strengths of the University (e.g. education, social work, technology) and the needs of the region and should be guided by the principles of interdisciplinarity, as the University has made this a major emphasis. Shaping the research centres around the interdisciplinary approach could help avoid the proliferation of small research centres that currently takes place. The team noticed that SU focuses on enhancing interdisciplinarity. This is an important orientation that should be part of the profile suggested earlier.
42. SU has a large number of strategic collaborations with external partners in response to regional needs and demands. However, this could be much more focused. Similarly, the international dimension should be further strengthened and explored. Internationalization issues will be addressed at the Academic Studies and Research sections respectively.
43. Human resource policy and management should be re-considered from a strategic perspective taking into account ageing staff, unattractive salaries, and a heavy teaching load. Promotion of mobility and competency development should be part of these policies.
44. **The team recommends** that SU consider institute a tenure system to give more stability and certainty to the core faculty.
45. It is advisable to conduct benchmarking or comparison of tenure policies with other universities.
46. SU's infrastructure is being improved. Renewing infrastructure should be continued based on priorities and funding possibilities.
47. The new library has good electronic resources, but the library facilities are underutilized. Since 2011, the library has the right to rent its premises and earn income from outreach activities. The University should take advantage of this opportunity and use the library more efficiently for strengthening SU's regional role, particularly by providing high quality programs and services to the regional community e.g. youth programs, adult and senior programs, etc. In this framework, the Faculty of Arts could play an important role and give

relevant support. It is noteworthy that these activities could help generate income. Overall, it would be beneficial for SU to establish an Outreach Department in the library to foster targeted outreach activities.

48. An ethics committee exists with appropriate procedures. The students interviewed by the team commended the effective actions taken in cases of fraud or plagiarism.
49. In the next sections the team elaborates further on the comments and recommendations suggested in the Strategic Management section.
50. **The teams' judgement on the area: Strategic Management is given negative evaluation,** since there is room for improvement in the strategy process and in view of the need to respond successfully to the challenges faced by SU.

IV. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

51. The team evaluated academic studies and life-long learning of the University against the criteria set out in the Methodology from the perspective of assessing their compliance with the requirements of Lithuanian higher education and harmonization with the principles of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
52. SU defines its strategic goals in terms of general democratic values and cultural, scientific or artistic quality. But in the part of the SER about studies, regional goals for the Northern Lithuania are presented. These strategic goals do not contradict each other but they do require clear distinctions in terms of what study programs have relevance for the country, and what are directed primarily to serve the employment needs of the region. The current educational offerings of SU contain both elements. There seems to be a 'natural' cooperation with local industry and public administration, so that their needs are reflected upon in many programs run by SU.
53. **The team recommends** that SU be more active in asking support of the local industry and public administration beyond just telling their needs. To a certain extent, this applies to the outreach activities of SU, in general. More active formulation and representation of its own needs would be useful. In its response to the first version of these comments SU described a number of activities that have been already taken place as suggested. The team believes that these activities are useful for SU and its partners and recommends further efforts in this direction.
54. The programs that are of national relevance appear to have reached this status by faculty initiative with appropriate administrative support. The levels of awarded qualifications, their specifications in the accreditation documents, including thesis requirements, based on the presented examples, are up to the European standards. Given the shrinking population in the region, it may be necessary to further develop programs that may attract students from all over the country and possibly from other countries.
55. **The team commends** SU for a strong focus on the implementation of advanced teaching and learning methodology including problem-based learning, case-study method, etc. However, it is not clear from the discussions whether study programs focus on student learning outcomes, nor whether the learning outcomes are linked to the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.

56. The team recognizes that SU is working on the implementation of ECTS. It is advisable that SU looks carefully at the experience of other European universities implementing the ECTS requirements in order to advance its current approach.
57. An important component of the life-long learning activities at SU is compulsory retraining of civil servants. When this opportunity fades out, SU will have to develop other, more diverse life-long learning activities. SU has a good infrastructure for distance and blended learning managed by competent faculty and staff. The opportunities offered by the local labour market seem to have been used by SU, as was demonstrated by examples during the site visit. However, as indicated in the Strategic Management section, strategic opportunities of ICT should be further explored. Further development of distance or blended learning models for life-long learning and continuing education may offer a relatively cost-effective entry into the national education market. This may also be an area of active cooperation with other HEIs in Šiauliai.
58. SU operates a career centre, holds job fairs and organizes internships for its students. It runs an alumni organization with annual meetings. These meetings serve the goal of strengthening identification with the University and informing alumni of the current developments. The flow of information in the other direction does not seem to be well organized, except for questionnaires to be filled after graduation.
59. The regional embeddedness of SU is excellent. The University maintains close ties with businesses, political and cultural institutions in the city and in the region. Many of the business, political and cultural leaders of the city are former graduates of SU and their relationship with the University is strong.
60. As indicated by SU graduates and students, they chose SU because of the high quality of teaching, which has the following attributes: excellent faculty, small class sizes, high attention to individual students, market-relevant curriculum. They emphasized the point that SU' programs are informed by the region's needs for qualified professionals. However, responding to these needs may not be sufficient for sustaining quality of educational programs and strengthening financial position of the University. The local needs may vary more rapidly than good programs can follow, and may require fewer graduates than financially sound operations would allow. Therefore, in its further development, SU has to be proactive and create a market for its programs and graduates. From this perspective, the current cooperation with the grammar school is strong and useful. Furthermore, there is a need to further strengthen the existing cooperation with HEIs and colleges as well as to develop strong relationships with new ones in other regions of the country.
61. **The team commends** SU for the effective participation in the pertinent international mobility programs for faculty and students. The team recognizes that these activities are managed by devoted and competent staff. Whether SU should extend its international outreach and offer joint programs or develop educational programs that are of particular relevance e.g. for Eastern Europe, should be decided on the basis of careful cost-benefit analysis.
62. The team noted that program documentation including accreditation materials and final thesis (their structure, coverage and methods) are in compliance with the EU standards. Posters, flyers and other information materials are of high quality.
63. The overall impression of the team is that University has a friendly and supportive work environment recognized and valued by faculty, staff and students.

64. The team's judgement on the area: Academic Studies and Life-Long Learning is given positive evaluation

V. RESEARCH AND ART

65. The team explored and assessed SU's research and art activities with reference to the criteria set out in the Methodology and evaluated their relevance, international links and harmonization with the provisions of the European Research Area.
66. Postgraduate studies. At the time of the review, 79 doctoral students were enrolled. 37 of them study at SU, and the remaining 42 study at other universities. 13 out of 42 doctoral students are fully or partly financed by SU. The total number reflects a decrease of doctoral students in the period of 2006-2011, i.e. from 98 in 2006 (including 44 studying in SU) to 79 in 2011. In 2011, 18 doctoral students started their studies in 4 areas: Education (11), Management and Administration (3), Economics (2), and Philology (1). The number of successfully defended dissertations was 15 in 2011, in increase from 6 in 2006, although the numbers have stabilized at this level in recent years. According to the SER, the number of academic staff members (lectures and researchers) who are engaged in research activities and the arts is 535 and 47 respectively, in 2011. This means that the number has decreased from 618 and 78 in 2006. 239 hold currently a scientific degree in their field and 21 are recognized artists.
67. Publications. Based on the information submitted by SU which was confirmed during the site visit, the University currently publishes 14 academic journals, 13 of which are available in international databases e.g. Web of Science. All the 14 journals are peer-reviewed.
68. In 2011, SU's research output in terms of the number of scientific publications was 3 monographs and scientific studies (2006-2011 total: 30; negative overall trend); 28 articles in the refereed and having citation index journals in the ISI Web of Science data bases (2006-2011 total: 40, steep increase until 2008, steep decline ever since); 280 in articles in the refereed journals in the international databases (2006-2011 total: 1594; negative trend since 2008); 267 articles in other refereed scientific publications (2006-2011 total: 1602; negative trend since 2006); 70 articles in other scientific outlets (2006-2011 total: 350 positive trend); and 46 textbooks and other teaching aids (2006-2011 total: 432; negative trend). The number of international patents was 2 during the reporting period. The University should make a concerted effort to reverse these negative trends.
69. Publication output in the period of 2006-2011 differs significantly among faculties, with Social Sciences (1909; a positive trend) and the Humanities (932; a negative trend) representing over 83% of the total, and Technology ranking third (65 publications; 7,7%; a positive trend). The vast majority of SU's research was published in Lithuanian or Eastern European journals and/or was presented at scientific conferences in these countries.
70. Contracts. A large number of contract research projects were completed or are being conducted between 2006 and 2011 on behalf of and in cooperation with social partners. Most were commissioned by the Lithuanian Ministries and other government agencies; in the area of technology research the percentage of research funded by the private sector was slightly higher. In addition, SU teams actively participated as consortium partners in joint research projects, e.g. the 6th and the 7th Framework Programs of the EU.

71. Arts. In the arts, the output of SU's recognized artists in terms of artworks has doubled per head since 2006, though it has been declining in the past 3 years, while total output has shown a very similar trend. In particular, artistic activities at the international level have grown since 2006, while their absolute numbers in Lithuania have declined in the past 3-4 years.
72. Mission. The team explored the relevance of SU's research activities to its mission and strategy. The team noted that the Strategic Plan 2009-2020 puts a strong emphasis on the enhancement of research activities. The Plan also contains an objective internal assessment of SU's current strengths and weaknesses in this field.
73. According to the Strategic Plan, the University's research mission is to promote "cultural, social and economic progress of society, as well as change in the social environment, cultural and economic life of the country in general and the Northern Lithuania in particular; to develop high quality research and art, adding surplus value to the priority areas of cohesive development of the country, to contribute to the free creative scientific thought and integration of Lithuanian system of science and studies in the European and global academic area". To achieve these objectives, SU has defined three focus areas: (a) the international dissemination of SU's research results; (b) interdisciplinary research in the areas of importance to the region and to the country conducted in the "Centres of Excellence" according to the "politically approved research priorities of the country" (including participation in the EU research programs); and (c) the promotion of doctoral studies, including the introduction of doctoral study programs and active participation of SU's doctoral students in the international networks of doctoral study programs.
74. In the main, the University's research and art activities are compliant with the strategic objectives delineated above. Particularly, the team commends the University for taking an interdisciplinary approach to research and study programs. However, the team identified a number of weaknesses that need to be addressed urgently by SU in order to advance institutional capability to achieve the strategic research objectives, especially with respect to improving the international dimension of its research. The team found that the existing performance indicators of research outputs are comprehensive and general, referring to all research areas. While this is valuable, SU also needs more specific indicators to provide the necessary focus that will permit differentiation between performance in different areas.
75. **The team recommends** that the existing set of performance indicators for research be evaluated in terms of both its informative quality and its relevance for the preparation, implementation and continuous quality assessment of SU's research strategy.
76. The number of collaborative research (and art) projects with social partners is adequate for an institution of SU's size, especially in the areas of technology and social and disability studies. However, the team believes that the University's full potential has not yet been realized in this respect. Thus, many of the SU's infrastructures could be better shared with social partners to conduct joint projects. This approach could help increase SU's regional impact and at the same time, generate revenues for the University which could compensate for the negative trend in the government funding.
77. **The team recommends** that the University investigate whether it would be beneficial to establish a Science Park (jointly financed and administered with social partners).
78. To that end, it would be relevant to review experience of other universities. The Science Park could promote the creation of spin-offs as well as market the University's research

results through well managed cooperation with local businesses and local government. The 'Science Park' could combine elements of both, 'incubator' and 'business angels' concepts. In case of success, this approach could contribute to the improvement of the labour market conditions, discourage qualified graduates from the emigration and generate additional revenues for SU.

79. In technology and natural science research, national and international patent activity is an important vehicle for knowledge transfer from universities to the private sector and community at large. At the same time, it is an increasingly important source of funding for many universities worldwide.
80. **The team recommends** that SU enhance its current patent output. This will require the development of an adequate intellectual property rights policy which does not currently exist at SU. In order to advance patenting activities of scientists, SU needs to strengthen the incentives which are weak and partly non-existent in terms of promotions and bonus payments for successful researchers.
81. According to the SER and the interviews on site, the University tries to comply with the provisions of the European Research Area in three ways. First, SU strives to align a substantial share of their research activities with the priorities of the EU research programs. This has led to the active participation of SU's researchers as partners in the EU 6th and 7th Framework Program. Second, SU focuses on promoting exchange of academic staff within its existing networks of international partner universities as well as by developing pertinent research projects. Third, SU strives to increase the number of PhD programs and to become integrated in the national and international networks of PhD studies.
82. Academic activities occur within a broad network of international research institutions, including a number of partners from Western Europe and North America. SU investigated systematically and thoroughly the obstacles facing its staff members by exploiting existing options for international mobility both, for research and teaching purposes. The team acknowledges that a lack of internal funding is one of the impediments, and SU should further strengthen its activities in attracting external funding from national and international sources, including research foundations.
83. While the team found that the research activities indicated above are making good progress, further efforts, and especially a more integrated approach to fostering strategic collaborations with international partner universities are needed. It is important that by establishing international collaborative research networks quality should prevail over quantity. A more rigorous selection of partner institutions based on the research priorities of the Strategic Plan is advisable. The strategic choice of international partners is particularly advisable for those areas where SU has already demonstrated good quality research and which could form the basis for 'Centres of Excellence'.
84. Since SU has strong traditional ties with HEIs in Eastern Europe, it would be relevant to foster partnerships and collaborations with HEIs in Western Europe and North America in order to enhance SU's visibility in these parts of the world and to help improve the reception of its research output in relevant scientific communities and disciplines.
85. **The team recommends** that SU focus its research activities and bundle its resources around a limited number of interdisciplinary 'Centres of Excellence' in those research areas that currently exist in Lithuania and beyond e.g. social and disability studies. This would

improve SU's competitiveness among Lithuanian HEIs and research institutes as well as advance SU's visibility in the international scientific community.

86. Given the massive demographic challenges in Lithuania, particularly in the Northern region, **the team recommends** that SU consider establishing a 'Centre of Excellence' focused on applied research in the field of "Demographics and regional development in the Northern Lithuania". This should be done in close cooperation with the local governmental agencies and businesses with the aim of harnessing expertise and developing pertinent strategies to meet the challenge. As far as the team knows, there is no such research centre either in Lithuania or in neighbouring countries. Taking into account that demographic change is a crucial issue for many EU member states, and EU increases funding for research in this field, the establishment of such a Centre would be beneficial for the country and at the same time, could foster international reputation of the University.
87. SU's doctoral study programs should not only be increased by number. Rather, these programs should be closely aligned with both, the proposed 'Centres of Excellence' and with high-calibre international partners (e.g. through joint PhD programs). Such collaboration would go beyond the status quo of occasional visits of foreign high-calibre academics and their offering of short-term methodology courses. Most importantly, it could help SU's PhD candidates to interact closely with leading international academics on joint research and publication projects and might eventually lead to publishing in leading academic journals worldwide.
88. Given the low number of doctoral students at SU, it would be beneficial for SU to involve more bachelor and master students in research activities. The integration of research and education can essentially enrich students' learning experience.
89. **The team's judgement on the area: Research and Art is given positive evaluation**

VI. IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

90. The team analyzed the University's impact on the regional and national development following the criteria set out in the Methodology and from the perspective of effectiveness and relevance of its contributions to the economic, cultural, social and environmental development.
91. There is no doubt that SU is very active in serving the national and regional needs. As indicated in the previous sections of this report, SU demonstrates strong regional embeddedness and many of its activities derive from efficient connections with the local government, businesses and public authorities. SU's faculty and staff are actively engaged in community affairs. Six SU staff members were named honorary citizens of Šiauliai. Overall, interviews with the University's social partners indicate that SU is seen as a catalyst for socio-economic and cultural development in Šiauliai and the region. However, the team found that indicators for impact are not laid out.
92. Since SU lacks a system for measuring its economic, social and cultural impact in the region and countrywide, it is difficult for the team to estimate the impact and effectiveness of the University's operations in the region and in the country, although external stakeholders met by the team were positive about SU's external involvement.

93. The team recognizes that SU faces considerable challenges including demographics, mass emigration and the consequences of the world economic crisis. In this context, the University's market research needs further advancement. Although SU regularly conducts market needs analyses at different levels, the changes in the University's academic programs are not attuned to the dynamics of the market.
94. **The team recommends** that SU conduct an intensive and systematic market research of needs and possibilities and make relevant adjustments to the academic programs.
95. SU tries to tailor bachelor's degree programs to the needs of employers in the region and in the country. To that end, SU developed collaborative programs with external partners e.g. with the Šiauliai municipality.
96. The team believes that SU should be more integrated in the strategic decision making process at the regional level. The team has an impression that some external stakeholders are not fully aware of SU's mission, strategic goals and financial needs.
97. **The team recommends** that social partners, the University board and alumni become more actively engaged in the University affairs.
98. **Team's judgement on the area: Impact on Regional and National Development is given positive evaluation**

VII. GOOD PRACTICE AND ENHANCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

May also include part of recommendations for authorities (Ministry, etc.) for improvement

Positive features

- Interdisciplinary approach to the development of study programs
- Focus on the implementation of the advanced teaching and learning methodology
- Appreciation of the University by external stakeholders
- Committed and engaged faculty members and competent staff in many service areas
- Strong middle management team (e.g. management of studies, international relations)
- Well-established relationship with regional partners

Summary of recommendations

- The team recommends that it would be advantageous for the University to enhance its self evaluation capacity (paragraph 5).
- The team recommends that the University focus on its core competencies, identify strategic niche areas, and build a clear profile. An example of a profile statement would be the following: "A regional university providing high quality education to meet the needs for professional workforce in Northern Region of Lithuania...". Such a profile would require that SU play a more active role in forging strategic collaborations with social and business partners. The team recommends look at the examples of collaborative agreements as put forward in documents of the European University Association (paragraph 18).
- The team recommends that SU focus less on tools and more on strategy (paragraph 20).
- The team recommends that the Rector appoint a person who will be in charge of overseeing strategic information (paragraph 25).

- The team recommends that SU develop a balanced and robust set of quantitative performance indicators consistent with the University's profile. The senior management needs to receive regular information on key performance indicators (paragraph 28).
- The team recommends that SU create an efficient website to foster SU's visibility and to better communicate the University's mission, vision and strategic goals to the stakeholders and the public at large (paragraph 34).
- The team recommends that SU find a better balance between quality control and quality improvement in the future. The submitted materials suggest that SU's approach to quality assurance is more focused on accountability and compliance, and less on quality enhancement (paragraph 40).
- The team recommends that SU consider institute a tenure system to give more stability and certainty to the core faculty (paragraph 44).
- The team recommends that SU be more active in asking support of the local industry and public administration beyond just telling their needs. To a certain extent, this applies to the outreach activities of SU, in general. More active formulation and representation of its own needs would be useful. In its response to the first version of these comments SU described a number of activities that have been already taken place as suggested. The team believes that these activities are useful for SU and its partners and recommends further efforts in this direction (paragraph 53).
- The team recommends that the existing set of performance indicators for research be evaluated in terms of both its informative quality and its relevance for the preparation, implementation and continuous quality assessment of SU's research strategy (paragraph 75).
- The team recommends that the University investigate whether it would be beneficial to establish a Science Park (jointly financed and administered with social partners) (paragraph 77).
- The team recommends that SU enhance its current patent output. This will require the development of an adequate intellectual property rights policy which does not currently exist at SU. In order to advance patenting activities of scientists, SU needs to strengthen the incentives which are weak and partly non-existent in terms of promotions and bonus payments for successful researchers (paragraph 80).
- The team recommends that SU focus its research activities and bundle its resources around a limited number of interdisciplinary 'Centres of Excellence' in those research areas that currently exist in Lithuania and beyond e.g. social and disability studies. This would improve SU's competitiveness among Lithuanian HEIs and research institutes as well as advance SU's visibility in the international scientific community (paragraph 85).
- Given the massive demographic challenges in Lithuania, particularly in the Northern region, the team recommends that SU consider establishing a 'Centre of Excellence' focused on applied research in the field of "Demographics and regional development in the Northern Lithuania". This should be done in close cooperation with the local governmental agencies and businesses with the aim of harnessing expertise and developing pertinent strategies to meet the challenge. As far as the team knows, there is no such research centre either in Lithuania or in neighbouring countries. Taking into account that demographic change is a crucial issue for many EU member states, and EU increases funding for research in this field, the establishment of such a Centre would be beneficial for the country and at the same time, could foster international reputation of the University (paragraph 86).
- The team recommends that SU conduct an intensive and systematic market research of needs and possibilities and make relevant adjustments to the academic programs (paragraph 94).
- The team recommends that social partners, the University board and alumni become more actively engaged in the University affairs (97).

VIII. JUDGEMENT

Šiauliai University is given **negative** evaluation.

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Prof. David Woodhouse
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Dr Anne-Marie De Jonghe Prof. Tamas Rudas Prof. Andreas Knorr Ms Diana Vilytė Ms Inga Urtė Builytė
Vertinimo sekretorius: Review secretary:	Dr Helene Kamensky

ANNEX. ŠIAULIAI UNIVERSITY RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW REPORT

We thank the experts for the work carried out as well as for valuable recommendations and remarks presented. After getting acquainted with the detailed project of the report and high value recommendations for further development of ŠU, we present detailed information and additional comments.

in. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Comment to Paragraph 16 *On equivalence of the mission components (studies, research, impact on the society).*

Šiauliai University must (what is especially highly emphasised in the policy of Lithuanian higher education too) carry out activities in three areas: research, studies and the impact on the society, and these three should match with each other. All the activities mentioned must meet the policy of EU and Lithuanian higher education as much as possible and ensure implementation of major documented procedures; therefore, we think that the documents and activities of the institution meet the guidelines of the higher education space and will meet them in future despite the limiting factors. **Comment to Paragraphs 19-21.**

On strategic management in Šiauliai University. Performance of Šiauliai University over the period 2006-2011 was based on strategic documents of two types which corresponded to the requirements of the state level (Ministries): Šiauliai University Strategic Performance Plans for a period of three years and Šiauliai University Strategic Plan for Development in the Period of 2009-2020. In 2006-2011, strategic planning of the University was based on the programme principle, and the strategic plans were prepared with regard to the Order approved by the Minister of Finances (on 6 February 2006, No. 1K-048).

Šiauliai University has neither ⁴A five-year strategic activity plan (2006-11)' nor the 'Priority development plan (2012-13)' mentioned in the Paragraph 21.

Comment to Paragraph 31. **On diversity of Šiauliai University monitoring reports**

Each year, the results of Šiauliai University performance are presented in Šiauliai University Annual Report on Activities in a generalised form. However, reports on particular activities (income/expenditure accounting, science, international studies, planned audit etc.) are presented according to the needs of the interested parties and in a set order (e.g. to Ministries, funds, social partners etc.).

Specification to Paragraphs 39 and 40. **On implementation of the quality monitoring system in Šiauliai University.**

We would like to specify that presently the University is creating and implementing not the monitoring system but the QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM which embraces not only a specific and unique to this University conception of quality but also strict requirements to University activities ensuring their planning, implementation, monitoring and perfection in the context of integration of various processes.

Comment to Paragraph 47. On effective utilisation of the library infrastructure in strengthening the role of ŠU in the region.

According to the recent Law on Higher Education and Studies, ŠU just in 2011 became a public enterprise by its status, after approving ŠU Statute, therefore, the library was given the right to rent its premises, organise various activities and earn income from such activities only since 2011. **Comment to Paragraphs 30, 44, 47. On Šiauliai University performance development aiming at the increase of its income, utilisation of the premises.** Within the period from 2006 to 2011, Šiauliai University acted according to Šiauliai University Statute approved on 15 July 2004 by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Decree No. IX-2391. Šiauliai University held the juridical status of a state budgetary institution with strictly limited possibilities for performance (studies and research activities were allowed to be performed only). Other activities enabling the increase the income of the University were forbidden to Šiauliai University. The Decree on 21 December 2010 of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, No. XI-1241 approved other Šiauliai University Statute. The possibility to carry out new activities giving the right to increase the income by using the obtained research and studies potential was awarded to Šiauliai University only since 21 December 2010, when the Decree of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, No. XI-1241, approved a new Šiauliai University Statute and on 3 March 2011 Šiauliai University obtained a new juridical status - that of a public enterprise. In the period of Šiauliai University performance in 2006-2011 under assessment by the experts, Šiauliai University had no legal

possibilities to use its own research and studies potential in development of various activities (except research and studies) which would enable the increase of Šiauliai University income. Because of this reason, Šiauliai University possibilities to utilise own material base (library, faculties' premises, technical facilities), to provide services of scientific research with regard to the region's and state's needs were limited.

IV. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Specification to Paragraph 52. *On distinction of study programmes relevant to the country's and region's labour market.* According to the legal acts presently valid in the Republic of Lithuania, those who work out new study programmes must see the demand of the programme on the scale of the entire country, therefore, to draw a distinction between the programmes to be delivered in the region of population under one million and in the entire country should be the solution of the state. When preparing study programmes, Šiauliai University sees them in the context of the whole Lithuania, orients towards the market of the Republic of Lithuania and, recently even broader, to the global market. Study programmes having a wider content and deep traditions of scientific application in the fields, e.g. Lithuanian Philology, History, Economics, Physics, Mathematics, Fine Art, Music, Education, Management etc., no doubt, are dedicated to the labour market of the Northern and Western Lithuania because other institutions of higher education in Southern and Eastern Lithuania have academic programmes bearing such titles; therefore, when perfecting them, the demand on the local labour market is being investigated too. The regional labour market needs a great diversity, specialists who have a systematic vision in the field of studies. On the other hand, exceptionality of the programmes mentioned achieved through the deepening in the study field in specialisations, through links with other study fields, methods for achievement of learning outcomes usually attract students from other regions as well. Those programmes that are unique in Šiauliai University, e.g. Optometry, Decorative Gardening, Stage Art, Creative Technologies, Management of Natural Systems etc., are designed when focusing on the labour market in a broad sense, assessing the context of the entire Republic of Lithuania.

Comment to Paragraph 53. *On activeness of ŠU in asking for support from local industry and public administration.*

Šiauliai University works in this direction. Support received by ŠU from local industry, business or public administration institutions, i.e. social partners, increases each year, just we still do not convert this usually non-material support (lectures on practical placement in a work place, supervision of practical placements, equipped laboratories in companies, free excursions to enterprises, support of events by own production or services) into the financial expression, even though it makes the impact on ŠU studies, development of research and art, self-expression of students. The financial support also increases:

1. In 2012, comparing with 2010, the support to students' encouragement, stimulation from business institutions increased by 70 per cent.
2. The number of trilateral agreements (student-ŠU-enterprise) according to which a business or production company invests into student's studies at ŠU increased 3 times.
3. Continuous collaboration with local industry companies (e.g. PSC "Saida", PSC "Baltik vairas") is continued; they benefit not only by issuing scholarships to students but also invest financial means into laboratory equipment, software in the University, this way stimulating collaboration between science and business, benefiting to various scientific research needed to the local industry.

Comment to Paragraph 55. *On the link between learning outcomes and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.*

The transition to the unified ECTS systems of credits in Lithuanian higher education according to the legal acts of the state took place on 1 September 2011; adjustment of academic programmes to the European Qualifications Framework took place in 2010-2011. When perfecting academic programmes, there is a constant regard of the recent legal acts. Having a strong school of education scientists (until 1997, ŠU was Šiauliai Pedagogical Institute), the restructuring of academic programmes proceeds constantly, with regard to both the recent legal acts and the tendencies that answered the purpose in European higher education, the interest which especially increased since 1999 when Lithuania started participating in programmes of international mobility. Therefore, the transition to the learning paradigm in the pedagogical process being carried out by single teachers has happened earlier, and presently the students cannot even notice the changes in the study process.

Šiauliai University, understanding that students should be not only the participants of the study process but also those perceiving the new opportunities available through the ECTS and the unified European Qualifications Framework, at the moment pays more attention to broader explanation of the ECTS system. In August 2012, Šiauliai University Students Representation Office organised a camp of students-mentors, the camp for first-year students in Balsiai, feedback during meetings of students with supervisors of study programmes - this is a part of the measures that are taken. All study programmes' groups for monitoring of studies quality forecasted to monitor the volume of independent work for students, its correspondence to the learning outcomes to be achieved, the gaining the competences set in the qualifications framework etc.

Comment to Paragraph 56. ***On implementation of the review of experience of European universities regarding implementation of the ECTS.***

Šiauliai University, being an open institution, already in 1999 started implementing elements of the ECTS because this was required after joining the programmes of international mobility (Comenius, Erasmus etc.). Also, ŠU is permanently interested in experiences of other European universities in their transition to the ECTS; these activities became more pronounced when preparing for the restructuring of all study programmes in 2011. This is evidenced by approved *Guidelines*, seminars organised for teaching staff (invited speakers - educationalists on the higher education institution from ŠU, other universities of the Republic of Lithuania) in the issues related to the restructuring of academic programmes, demonstrative classes in the frameworks of projects being carried out (UNIWIŁ, UNIQMAS, PROMOK, SOMID, INTERMAG etc.) as well as good experience visits to European universities are held. The subdivisions that got involved in preparation of opportunities cases for joint programmes with European universities (from Check Republic, Poland, Latvia, the Ukraine) gained good experience because they had to coordinate the issues of the ECTS transfer too.

Comment to Paragraph 57. ***On further development of distance and blended studies models in ŠU.***

Since 2012-2013, Šiauliai University starts delivering a study programme in a blended distance mode:

1. Management (Master's programme), implemented by the Faculty of Social Science in cooperation with the Distance Studies Centre (extract of the minutes of the sitting of the Department of Management 2012- 09-25 No. SMVKP-1).

2. The Distance Studies Centre announces the opportunities to all who wish to study subjects in a distance mode - these would benefit to the increase of the society's entrepreneurship abilities (titles of the subjects: *23 Pieces of Advice to Business Novices; Marketing and Advertising via the Internet; Analysis of Financial Markets; Preparation and Management of the EU Projects*), preparation to study at the institution of higher education (*Preparatory Course for Pupils in Mathematics*), would strengthen scientific research competences (*Academic English, Academic German, Academic French*), artistic self- expression (*Digital Photography, Processes of the Video Systems for Teaching*).

Comment to Paragraph 61. ***On development of international activities of ŠU in working out and delivery of joint study programmes.***

Since 22 October 2012, the financial support was allocated to the following Šiauliai University projects in which through preparation of new joint study programmes with foreign universities the mobility of teaching staff and students will become more active: 2nd cycle joint study programmes Social Work prepared and to be implemented with in collaboration with the university "The Ukraine" (SOCNET) (2,991,325.00 LTL), 2nd cycle international joint study programme Regional Socio-Economical Policy and Management (JOINTREGION) (1,737,416.00 LTL), preparation and implementation of the 1st cycle international joint study programme Sustainable Business Economy (JUSPA) (2,434,249.00 LTL). When applying for joint programmes with other countries' universities it is a must to submit the opportunities studies compulsorily including analysis of expenditure-profit. Besides these programmes that won the support, more studies of opportunities have been carried out - they will be useful for broader research on the market (Annex 2.22 to ŠU Self-Assessment Report).

V. RESEARCH AND ART

Comment to Paragraph 68. ***On a low number of international patents***

Besides shortage of financial means and possibilities to finance international patents from the budget of ŠU, even a bigger problem of the change of national documents remains: in December 2010, the Patent Law of a new edition was approved, this is already the third in the history of Lithuania (the first was approved in 1928). It aims at supplementation and amendment of requirements of separate articles of the Patent Law of 1994, with regard to the regulations of the Patent Law Agreement which must be implemented in the national law, when the state is becoming a member state of the Patents Law Agreement. On 1 July 2012, the law ratifying the Patents Law Agreement became valid in Lithuania. The most important innovation of the Patents Law Agreement is related to unification of procedural requirements of provisions of the national law. This way it is aimed at avoiding the cases when due to not obeying different procedural requirements the rights related to application for a patent and the patent are lost and, respectively, to diminish the costs of patenting. With regard to the changes legal, economical and social conditions, the new edition Patent Law aims at regulation of legal relations concerning the legal protection of inventions and the changing of the procedures for patenting inventions and actions related to them, this way providing easier conditions for applicants for patents. Therefore, the new edition Patent Law which is valid since the beginning of 2012 includes many innovations useful to inventors, but, again, it should be admitted that the Patent Law came into the force in 2012 only. ***Specification to Paragraph 69. On the number of publication in the Humanities***

and Social Sciences. Part 3 Annex 3.5 of the Self-Assessment Report presents not the number of publications in faculties, but the number of publications in the Humanities and Social Sciences areas. Šiauliai University runs 3 faculties scientific publications of which are attributed to the area of Social Sciences (the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Social Welfare and Disability Studies, the Faculty of Education). Moreover, some researchers of the Faculty of Humanities are Doctors of Social Sciences, and their publications (e.g. the monograph in 2011) are affiliated to Social Sciences in Table 2 in the Self- Assessment Report Annex 3.5. if we regard the number of researchers in the Faculty of Humanities and the faculties in Social Sciences area (the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Social Welfare and Disability Studies, the Faculty of Education), the amount of publications per person in the Faculty of Humanities is much higher than that in the case of the Social Sciences field faculties (in the Humanities 19.8; in Social Sciences 16.6).

Comment to Paragraph 80. ***On the system of strengthening of the incentives for successful researchers.***

Until 2009, incentive of researchers was covered from the budget of the University; however, after the Ministry diminished the financing, such possibility was lost. However, even though there is no system of strengthening the incentive for researchers being implemented, nevertheless elements of such a system have been implemented and are valid, e.g. researchers are encouraged to participate in project activities, by submitting application to the Research Council of Lithuania, international activities of researchers are being encouraged by financing from ŠU Fund for International Secondments. Since 2012, from the means of the FP7 project HELENA even 19 ŠU researchers women will be awarded grants (56,000 EUR per year) for carrying out research production in scientific research in the area of Engineering. We agree with the experts' opinion that the system of incentive in the University should be created and supported. **Specification to Paragraph 81. *On ŠU participation in the 7th Framework Programme as a lead partner and partner.***

ŠU as a lead partner/applicant is involved in the following FP7 projects:

HELENA *Higher Education Leading to Engineering And scientific careers*, No. 230376, sub-programme *Capacities*. 2009-2011; and INTEGER *INstitutional Transformation for Effecting Gender Equality in Research*, No. 266638. sub-programme *Capacities*. 2011-2014.

Comment to Paragraph 85. ***On absence of "Centres of Excellence" at Šiauliai University.***

Research centres run by ŠU completely meet the requirements of "Centres of Excellence", e.g. the Special Education Research Centre is valued by the Ministry of Education and Science but has no recognition as a "Centre of Excellence". Production and experience of ŠU research centres are sufficient and acknowledge in the national space, but still there is no implementation of the created national "Centres of Excellence" strategy. Doctoral, Master's and Bachelor's students are also involved into the research centres, international, interdisciplinary research works are being mutually carried out. **Comment to Paragraph 88. *On the low number of Doctoral students in ŠU.***

Because Doctoral studies places are distributed on the national scale and universities of Lithuania have no autonomy to set the number of Doctoral students in delivered Doctoral studies themselves, as this number is set by the Ministry of Education and Science, therefore, the number of Doctoral students in our institution every year until 2011 seemed to the experts as low. Since its establishment, ŠU had a strong position in the area of Education Science, in terms of both human resources and fields of Education research, therefore, exactly this predetermined old traditions of Doctoral studies in the area of Education, however, when the opportunities appeared, ŠU became integrated into national consortia and expanded its fields in Doctoral studies (in 2011, Doctoral studies are delivered in 4 fields: Education, Economics, Management and Administration, Philology).

VI. IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Comment to Paragraph 92. ***On creation of ŠU system for measurement of its own economic, social and cultural impact on development of the region and the entire country.***

Until now there was not required on the state level to measure University's economic, social and cultural influence on development of the region and the country; therefore it is obvious that Šiauliai University has no experience in this field. Šiauliai University must form the system of impact of Šiauliai University on development of regions and the entire Lithuania, to clearly define in it the indices of the impact. **Comment to Paragraph 94. *On the recommendation to conduct intensive and systematic research on the market demands and possibilities.***

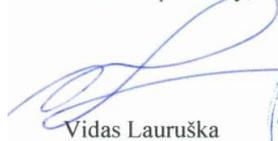
In Lithuania, under the order of the Ministry of Education and Science, since 2010 "A Map of Prognoses for the Specialists' Qualifications and Competences Demand until 2016" was being worked out and had to be finished by the 3rd quarter of 2012; it had to help institutions of higher education to objectively assess the demands of the labour market and to benefit to objective systematic and intensive research of the specialists' market demand. This instrument was started being prepared, the prognoses still are not announced. At the moment, every institution of higher education, when submitting new academic

programmes and participating in the process of perfection of study programmes, on the level of a single programme, carries out wider or narrower research of the market or uses the material published. This is a responsible activity requiring much financial and human resources, therefore, ŠU employs Master's works for that purpose, collaborates with other institutions of higher education. On the national level, research on prognostication of the demand for specialists, by inputting human resources, has always been supported by ŠU, therefore, presently it also shares the opinion that market research conducted by the endeavours of a single institution of higher education are needed striving to see the today's tendencies, and the prognoses for 10 years in the future should be carried out in collaboration of institutions of higher education and on the state level.

Specification to Paragraph 95. *On provision of conditions for apprenticeship and traineeship for S U students.*

In the Self-Assessment Report of Šiauliai University, the part dedicated to studies and lifelong learning, several times it was mentioned about one of the strengths of ŠU - the relation between theory and practice in the process of studies (Paragraphs 35, 42, 54, Annex 2.70), during the assessment visit acknowledgement letters of social partners for developed relations in solution of problems of single enterprises, estimating possibilities for development of organisations by employing research conducted by students, the graduation theses have been presented. Šiauliai University is outstanding for the diversity of practical placements, studies that are focused on practical performance, the model for practical placements UNIWIL has already been created and implemented.

Yours respectfully,



Vidas Lauruška

Rector of Šiauliai University

