



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**Α.ΔΙ.Π.**

**H.Q.A.A.**

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

DEPARTMENT INFORMATICS

UNIVERSITY .....IONIAN.....

Version 2.0

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### External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of INFORMATICS... of the IONIAN University consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (President)  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Institution of origin)

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Institution of origin)

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Institution of origin)

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Institution of origin)

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Institution of origin)

**N.B.** The structure of the “Template” proposed for the External Evaluation Report mirrors the requirements of Law 3374/2005 and corresponds overall to the structure of the Internal Evaluation Report submitted by the Department.

The length of text in each box is free. Questions included in each box are not exclusive nor should they always be answered separately; they are meant to provide a general outline of matters that should be addressed by the Committee when formulating its comments.

## ***Introduction***

### I. The External Evaluation Procedure

- Dates and brief account of the site visit.
- Whom did the Committee meet ?
- List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.
- Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed
- Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee.

### II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

Please comment on:

- Appropriateness of sources and documentation used
- Quality and completeness of evidence reviewed and provided
- To what extent have the objectives of the internal evaluation process been met by the Department?

The Committee visited the Department of Informatics, Ionian University, Corfu between October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011. On the evening of October 10<sup>th</sup>, the Chair of the Department, Dr. Chrisikopoulos presented an overview of the Department, its programs, faculty, students and infrastructure and its strategic plan. In the morning of October 11<sup>th</sup>, the Committee was presented with overviews of the four laboratories of the department. In the afternoon of October 11<sup>th</sup>, the Committee visited the physical infrastructure of the department including the offices of the faculty and some of the laboratories. The Committee also met with the secretarial, clerical and technical staff of the Department. Following the visit, the Committee interviewed groups of faculty members and sought their views of the academic environment, the physical infrastructure, the student body, their career and their work load.

In the morning of October 12<sup>th</sup>, the Committee met with the Rector of the University in her offices and discussed the environment within which the Department of Informatics is operating. Following the meeting with the Rector and the Vice Rector of Finance, the Committee met with a group of graduate students and following with a group of undergraduate students. In the afternoon, the Committee met in camera to prepare a preliminary list of observations and findings. Following the in-camera session, the Committee met with the Chair and the faculty of the Department and presented them with the preliminary list of observations and had a short discussion. The visit was completed at 6:00 p.m. of October 12<sup>th</sup> and the Committee departed for Athens.

The evaluation of the Committee is based on: (1) the Department’s internal evaluation report updated on an annual basis, (2) self assessment documents and statistical reports, (3) the

undergraduate and graduate programs, and (4) cumulative miscellaneous reports of the research funding received by the Department, timetables of courses for the existing semester, and statistics of the number of students accepted by the department and graduated by the department. The Committee was also provided with comparative statistics of the base points of the entrance exams achieved by the students entering the Department, as well as with those of sister departments in Greece.

## **A. Curriculum**

*To be filled separately for each undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programme.*

### APPROACH

- What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?
- How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?
- Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?
- How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?
- Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?

### UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

The curriculum of the Department focuses on the broad area of informatics with two areas of specialization. Namely (a) Humanistic Informatics (HI) and (b) Information Systems (IS). The HI specialization is unique and fulfils a need that is growing, and is appropriate for the Ionian University. While the second specialization (IS) is to be found in many Informatics curricula. The curriculum comprises a set of core courses and a set of elective courses through which the student specializes in one of the two aforementioned specializations. The curriculum follows accepted international standards and the Department has consulted and based its curriculum structure on existing Greek and International examples and model curricula including the ACM Model Curriculum and Guidelines of Undergraduate Degree Programs in Information Systems (ACM IS 2002). The curriculum was established early at the inception of the Department in 2004, and it has undergone minor adjustments. There is a curriculum committee that oversees the evolution of the curriculum.

### GRADUATE PROGRAM

The Department also offers a graduate program titled “Postgraduate Diploma of Specialization in Informatics” (Μεταπτυχιακό Δίπλωμα Ειδίκευσης στην Πληροφορική).

The graduate program, as expected, mirrors the undergraduate program to some extent, in that it offers similar specializations namely (a) Informatics in Social Science, (b) Informatics Systems, and (c) Networks. These specialization areas reflect some of the classical ones expected for a graduate degree in Informatics, but it also includes the specialization of Informatics in Humanities, which is unique in Greece, very desirable, and timely. The graduate curriculum includes one semester of six core courses common to all specializations, a second semester of five elective courses for specialization areas, and it concludes with a thesis.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?
- How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?
- Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?
- Is the curriculum coherent and functional?
- Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?
- Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?

#### UNERGRADUATE PROGRAM

The curriculum is effectively implemented with clear delineation of core, specialization and elective courses. The program clearly indicates which semester a course is offered and is expected to be attended by the students. However, there are no prerequisite courses listed for each course. The Department stated that it is expected that a student will follow the order of the courses as stated in the curriculum, and the department also advises a student as to whether she/he has the appropriate prerequisite knowledge to attend a particular course. It is advisable though that a prerequisite structure be introduced as it will better facilitate the development of the curriculum, and it will enable the students to better plan the choice of their courses.

The Department has consulted with many existing and model curricula in structuring its curriculum. The curriculum covers amply all the subjects one expects to see in a modern informatics curriculum. However, there are some areas that could be improved. The curriculum for example may improve the coverage of mathematics. For example, the curriculum includes a single required calculus course that covers subjects ranging from Calculus to Fast Fourier Transforms. The Committee's opinion is that it might be difficult to cover, in a single-semester course, these subjects in enough depth. Similarly, the operating systems course as well as the computer architecture course, cover a great many subjects and by necessity not in enough depth. There is only one required course in Software Engineering covering a wide area of subjects. A second course in Software Engineering on Management of Software Systems is optional. Some of the sequencing is not ideal. For example, Operating Systems normally follow Computer Architecture while the Department's curriculum offers them concurrently.

The specialization of Informatics in the Humanities and Social Sciences does not include courses in the Humanities and or Social Sciences per se that are offered by departments in Humanities and/or Social Sciences. This is important to ensure that the students understand the subjects, methodology and thinking of these fields.

Finally, certain courses may become elective or unnecessary if the focus of the Department were to be strengthened.

#### GRADUATE PROGRAM

The graduate diploma curriculum follows the model of the undergraduate curriculum and it is effectively implemented with clear delineation of core, and specialization courses. The graduate courses advance the knowledge gained in the undergraduate curriculum and are distinct from the undergraduate courses.

One may consider cross-listing some of the advanced undergraduate courses as graduate courses (with suitable extra work e.g. advanced project) to ensure additional flexibility and breadth of the graduate program. This will accommodate graduate students with different



backgrounds. That is, it would be possible for a graduate student to take advanced undergraduate and cross-listed courses which were not part of his/her undergraduate degree.

There was less information concerning the PhD program except of the fact that there are already a number of PhD candidates who have progressed with their thesis research and several of them have published parts of their research. The Committee interviewed one doctoral candidate who was truly impressive in his accomplishments.

#### RESULTS

- How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?
- If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?
- Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?

The curriculum covers the stated specialization areas of the Department. However, as stated previously, there is room for improvement by possibly reducing somewhat its breadth, and restructuring it to align it better with the areas of specialization.

One of the concerns of the Committee and the students is that several courses include fairly broad subjects and, by necessity, lack depth in the coverage of these subjects. A related concern is the number of elective courses (20). This contributes to the perception by the students that the curriculum tries to cover a very broad spectrum of subjects and sometimes at the expense of depth. Additionally, as it will be discussed later, it contributes to the high teaching load of the faculty.

#### IMPROVEMENT

- Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?
- Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?

The Department in its brief history of seven years has introduced very good undergraduate and graduate programs with room for improvement., The Department has defined a forward looking and desirable "niche" in implementing the Informatics in the Humanities and Social Sciences specialization. Given the Department's experience with the operation of its curriculum thus far, it is now an opportune moment to re-assess the organization of the curriculum.

The Department was very responsive to our suggestions regarding changes in the curriculum.

## ***B. Teaching***

### APPROACH:

Does the Department have a defined pedagogic policy with regard to teaching approach and methodology?

Please comment on :

- Teaching methods used
- Teaching staff/ student ratio
- Teacher/student collaboration
- Adequacy of means and resources
- Use of information technologies
- Examination system

The department places a heavy teaching load on its faculty. Each of the junior faculty (all faculty are junior, except the chairman) teaches approximately eleven to fourteen hours per week, which include both undergraduate and graduate courses. This practice prompted originally by the young age of the department has become more acute after the discontinuation of hiring of contract instructors under presidential regulation 407 (Π.Δ. 407/80). Nonetheless, the faculty has embraced this heavy teaching load with dedication and enthusiasm. However, this is taking a serious toll on their careers.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Please comment on:

- Quality of teaching procedures
- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.
- Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?
- Linking of research with teaching
- Mobility of academic staff and students
- Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching and (b) the course content and study material/resources

The department encourages close and direct interaction with the students and the students express appreciation for the accessibility of their instructors. It also has in place a rigorous teaching evaluation system, the results of which are examined carefully by the department. These results clearly show overall reasonably favorable scores.

The department uses dedicated electronic platforms like eclass, to provide electronic access to course material. The students interviewed mentioned that they were also able to access electronically course material for advanced courses in Informatics from top ranking CS departments in the US and Europe, such as Stanford University, and proudly stated that the instruction obtained at Ionian enabled them to follow these advanced courses and solve the associated homework problems.

**RESULTS**

Please comment on:

- Efficacy of teaching.
- Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are justified.
- Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.
- Whether the Department understands the reasons of such positive or negative results?

The teaching is very personalized and interactive. This is due to the relatively small number of students and the dedication of the faculty which is extraordinary and exemplary.

**IMPROVEMENT**

- Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?
- What initiatives does it take in this direction?

It is rare to find such a uniformly spread feeling of respect by the students for their professors. The Committee finds this to be admirable.

## **C. Research**

*For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.*

### **APPROACH**

- What is the Department's policy and main objective in research?
- Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

The department's research objective is to achieve high-quality in the core areas of Informatics as well as in the applications of Computer Science to the Humanities and Social Sciences. The chosen core areas include Security and Network Systems, Information Systems and Databases, and Computational Modelling. The department's standards in assessing research are: (1) publications in top international Journals and national and international Conference Proceedings, (2) external funding from national and European agencies, and (3) collaborations with other national and international Universities and the private sector in regional, national and international level.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- How does the Department promote and support research?
- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.
- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.

The faculty and graduate students are organized in four laboratories: (1) Informatics in Humanities and Social Sciences, (2) Computer Architecture, Security and Network Systems, (3) Information Systems and Databases, and (4) Computational Modelling. A high collegial environment promotes inter-lab collaborations. Due to limited space the faculty share their (already small) offices with the graduate students. Only one of the laboratories has a small dedicated space for the research activities of both graduate and undergraduate students. The hardware and software infrastructure is adequate; however, it needs to be renewed in the near future. The department, despite the fact that it consists of mostly junior faculty, has attracted projects worth about 1.4M€. In addition it has limited seed funds (about 50K€ per year) for supporting research activities such as funding for graduate students and travel. However, suffocating "red-tape" and unpredictable regulations from the state hamper the effective use of these funds. There is only one full-time systems administrator and one graduate student as an assistant. The number of graduate students is reasonable for the age of the department; however, it needs to increase in the near future. The number and quality of publications is commendable, despite the fact that the majority of the faculty are junior and in some cases only elected but not yet appointed. The number of collaborations with national and international research groups from academia and industry is satisfactory and increases the visibility of the department; however more emphasis needs to be placed on activities that will lead to increased external funding.

### **RESULTS**

- How successfully were the Department's research objectives implemented?
- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.
- Efficacy of research work. Applied results. Patents etc.
- Is the Department's research acknowledged and visible outside the Department?

#### Rewards and awards.

The research results meet and exceed expectations, given the fact that this is a new department, where the faculty and students spend a lot of time on teaching (between 12 to 14 hours per week), have unusually heavy administrative load and, in some cases, support even the admissions office. There is both potential and promise for commercialization of some of the research results of the faculty and for active pursuit of Intellectual Property rights (patents); however, for that to happen, there is inadequate support within the department and almost non-existent legal, venture capital, or infrastructure support.

#### IMPROVEMENT

- Improvements in research proposed by the Department, if necessary.
- Initiatives in this direction undertaken by the Department.

Maintain and increase the current publication output, which is impressive under the current conditions (reduced funding and State red-tape) and the age of the department.

The current level of external funding needs to increase; Perhaps targeting EU sponsored grants could increase the success rate and contribute to increased international collaboration.

Strengthen the already on-going effort of attracting doctoral students who will help the faculty in increasing the publication record and in developing more successful proposals.

## ***D. All Other Services***

*For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.*

### APPROACH

- How does the Department view the various services provided to the members of the academic community (teaching staff, students).

The department is using two separate, old but renovated buildings in the main building block of the old psychiatric campus in the heart of the city. The offices of the faculty are located in a separate building close to the old city center about a kilometer away from the previously mentioned location.

Although the Department is seriously considering the provision of services to its members, unfortunately there are no resources or infrastructure for students with mobility problems (due to the aging of its premises). The same is true for the visually impaired students, although, again the Department is seeking funds for that.

- Does the Department have a policy to simplify administrative procedures? Are most procedures processed electronically?

Secretarial services are offered with professionalism, despite limited human resources. There is only one recently appointed permanent secretary, supported by two temporary employees partially funded by research or other occasional grants (soft money).

Provision of technical services is also provided by internal resources, including the faculty themselves.

It was quite impressive that the departmental infrastructure (computer & software and network) is internally deployed and supported by two qualified engineers, one recently hired as a permanent technician (working as a temporary employee for many years) and another temporary technician partially funded as well.

Related technical infrastructure and services are also provided by the Department to other entities, such as the AudioVisual Arts Department with which they share the same buildings.

It was not clear to the Committee whether electronic administrative services are provided to student and staff.

However, all faculty are actively using the e-tutoring services that is available (e.g. eclass) within their teaching activities.

- Does the Department have a policy to increase student presence on Campus?

Even though the current physical plant infrastructure seriously impacts this, the Department is trying to increase student presence on its premises, and has concrete plans for eventually putting everyone under one roof.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- Organization and infrastructure of the Department's administration (e.g. secretariat of the Department).
-

The secretariat of the Department is located in a separate building close to the main building where teaching takes place. The same building is housing some computer equipment and laboratories of the department. This building is also shared with the AudioVisual Arts Department, as is the case for the main classroom and office building.

Students may forward their requests to the Secretariat by phone, email or in person. However, the Secretariat is not located close to the Central University Authorities, but fortunately next to the department's main buildings as mentioned above.

- Form and function of academic services and infrastructure for students (e.g. library, PCs and free internet access, student counseling, athletic- cultural activity, etc.).

There are no athletic facilities available within the Department's building blocks. However, since these are located within the city, students and staff may use locally available facilities, wherever available.

A separate well-organised Library is available specifically for the Department currently in its main building. This is expected to be resettled and operate in the new Central Library currently under final preparation in another building block not far away from the aforementioned Department's premises.

The Library currently has some limited space for students and provides access either locally or remotely via VPN to the electronic resources and libraries available via the National Academic Network.

#### RESULTS

- Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?

Administrative services offered to the students appear to be adequate and functional despite the shortage of permanent staff.

- How does the Department view the particular results.

The Department is doing its best in providing these services despite the serious lack of human resources and direct funding.

#### IMPROVEMENTS

- Has the Department identified ways and methods to improve the services provided?

The Department has identified the shortage of resources and is trying to assure more permanent positions towards staffing the related services.

- Initiatives undertaken in this direction.

Department's faculty will manage the new Career's office, which is under preparation for the provision of related services to all University students.

### **Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations**

Please, comment on quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives.

The department takes advantage of its unique environment of the Ionian islands and the humanities-oriented nature of the other departments in the University to reach out to the local social, educational, and cultural institutions and entities of Corfu and beyond.

### ***E. Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential Inhibiting Factors***

*For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.*

Please, comment on the Department's:

- Potential inhibiting factors at State, Institutional and Departmental level, and proposals on ways to overcome them.
- Short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit
- Long-term actions proposed by the Department.

The department along with the rest of the academic units and the universities in the country, operates within a highly constrained environment due to state control that is often counterproductive, inhibits growth and academic development and has a negative impact on the educational and research activities. The Committee, given its experience, strongly believes that a higher degree of autonomy by the university and less state control is absolutely necessary. However, like in most top universities abroad, there has to be a healthy set of checks and balances within the university to ensure that no department can abuse its degrees of freedom.

The Committee believes that the new education law, provides a reasonable framework for the transition to a less restricting and bureaucratic State control that will ensure the healthy development and competitiveness of all universities in Greece.

Within the University, the department enjoys support and good relations with the central administration and reaches out to its sister departments with which it may have a strong potential for collaboration.

The department has a very good vision for its future development at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as its research activities and direction. Its strategic plan has a detailed and healthy mix of goals and objectives at the qualitative level. Quantitative measures need to be identified so that they can be used to assess the department's progress towards the realization of its goals and objectives.

The short-term plan of the department includes the acquisition of one new classroom and



additional office space and a concrete transition plan towards an eventual consolidation of its facilities within a single building. The space issue has been a serious challenge for this young department, since, from the start, it has been using partially vacated buildings from a hospital which are still under renovation to become a university facility exclusively. This has required heroic efforts by the Department's faculty, who have actually helped the physical conversion of the buildings to become suitable for a CS department, including the installation of communication cables, network nodes, and other equipment.

The Committee applauds the efforts of the University Administration to consolidate and centrally schedule classrooms. This will provide a more efficient utilization of space to the benefit of the students.

The Department's plan also includes the addition of one position for secretarial support in view of the recent discontinuation of contract-based personnel. More importantly, it includes the addition of several new faculty positions, including two at the Associate Professor level.

Care should be taken so that the areas these new faculty positions cover, are congruent with, and strengthen the stated areas of activities including Informatics in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Finally, it includes adjustments to the assignments of duties to junior faculty and creative ways of supplementing their efforts in view of the continuing cutbacks and reductions in resources

For the long term, the department has initiated a commendable and appropriate transition towards a somewhat differentiated identity with the other CS departments in Greece. This novel identity includes in addition to the focus on the basic core fields and technologies of computer science, a special emphasis on the applications and interactions of CS to the humanities and social sciences. In the networks area it includes social networking and "green" information/communication technologies. This strategic selection and focus is timeless, innovative and highly appropriate for the Ionian University which, due to its location and academic composition, has an emphasis and orientation towards art, history and social science.

## ***F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC***

*For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.*

Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:

- the development of the Department to this date and its present situation, including explicit comments on good practices and weaknesses identified through the External Evaluation process and recommendations for improvement
- the Department's readiness and capability to change/improve
- the Department's quality assurance.

The Committee was impressed by the overall quality of the Department and the excellent progress it has achieved during its short history, especially considering the limited resources available..

The strengths of the Department are:

- An extremely motivated and talented group of young faculty who are working very hard and productively. They are working as a group and their morale is high, despite the difficult situation the State and the Nation are facing today.
- An inspiring, dexterous, ambitious, and respected leadership by the chairman of the department. He has created, almost singlehandedly, a vibrant and promising new department.
- An excellent record of accomplishments by the faculty in terms of publications, funding--given the young age of its faculty, professional activities, national and international collaborations and visibility.
- An excellent group of students who have displayed unusual maturity, morale, and perseverance.
- The identification of the area of Social and Humanistic aspects of Computer Science as an education and research "niche" for the department, it provides a unique and appropriate identity that differentiates it from others.
- A highly unusual accessibility and attention by the faculty to the students and their needs.
- Commitment to quality procedures and continuous improvement efforts (committee for internal evaluation, self assessment processes for all courses, etc.)
- A commendable effort to reach out to the community and make it aware of the department's activities, including visits to high schools and presentation of its "green" laboratory.

The observed weaknesses of the Department are the following:

- The department suffers along with all academic units in Greek Universities a severe stranglehold of bureaucratic supervision and unnecessary but damaging constraints imposed by the State. Unless they are lifted soon, they will continue to be an

impediment to the progress and competitiveness of all Greek Universities and departments.

- Despite the efforts by the department to fill the positions it needs or promote the existing faculty, the extremely long delays between election and appointment have hindered their successful completion and have delayed the meeting of the department's needs.
- Due to the delays in staffing, the current faculty is seriously overloaded with unusual administrative and teaching loads. They are currently struggling to cover their broad and ambitious curriculum.
- Due to the above misfortunes, the faculty's efforts for external funding, although quite successful, have not reached their potential. This is especially true in terms of the department's success in European Union projects. The success in the pursuit of the latter will benefit from the existence of research groups and, possibly, Centers that include postdoctoral fellows, doctoral students and networking with international research groups that are larger and more mature.
- The fragmented nature of the physical resources and facilities, i.e., the shortage of space for teaching and laboratories and their distribution over different buildings has a negative impact on the herculean efforts to maintain and improve the ,nonetheless, seamless operation and the fulfillment of the department's mission by the chairman, faculty, students and staff.
- The presented strategic plan of the department, although it includes commendable qualitative and ambitious goals, lacks quantitative measures, which would permit the proper assessment of their progress. Such quantitative planning is not usually done in most Greek Universities and departments so far, but it is commonly done in most universities in the US and many in Europe.

The Committee also identified some key threats that are at the same time opportunities for the department's progress and development.

- The current state of the Greek economy poses an especially serious threat to the very existence and competitiveness of all Greek universities.
- Similarly, the recent new law that now governs the operations of the academic institutions presents a golden opportunity to cure many of the ills and weaknesses that have plagued the Greek universities in the past. At the same time, if it is not implemented correctly and does not ensure the competitiveness and autonomy of the universities, it may present a serious danger and jeopardize their future.

In view of the above the Committee makes the following recommendations

- The department should take a leadership role in the development of the internal plan of organization of the university that the new law requires.
- The department should enhance its strategic plan through a vigorous and ambitious addition of quantifiable goals, timetables and measures. Such a plan can be a serious driver for steering the University's new plan of organization in the right direction.
- The department should consider revising or restructuring its curriculum so that the academic focus on its chosen orientation can be sharpened with an eye towards

reducing the teaching load of its young faculty without jeopardizing its integrity and required depth and breadth.

- The department should continue its efforts towards accelerating the process of hiring and appointing additional faculty (if possible in the rank of Associate Professor) to strengthen its critical mass in all areas of endeavor including adequate coverage of its focus on the humanistic and social aspects of computer science and the successful pursuit of major funding from European Union sources.
- To the degree possible, the department should lighten the administrative and teaching loads of its young faculty and explore the possibility of research and equipment startup packages for them in order to accelerate their professional development.
- Within the boundaries of the new law, the department should consider giving incentives and rewards based on merit (e.g., monetary, reduced teaching, early promotion, etc. This is commonplace in all Universities in the US and most universities in Europe.
- The department should strengthen its outreach activities to promote the awareness of its activities in the local and national communities as well as globally.

IONIAN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATICS

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1) <i>Dr Ephremides Antony University of Maryland, USA</i>	
2) <i>Dr. Metaxas Dimitris Rutgers University, USA</i>	
3) <i>Dr. Dimopoulos Nikitas, University of Victoria Canada</i>	
4) <i>Dr. Dalianis Paraskevas, Expert Greece</i>	
5) <i>Dr. Chrisochoides Nikos, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, USA</i>	