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Academic year 2012/2013

COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERT PANEL

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INTRODUCTION

Short description of the evaluated institution

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Kairos College for Public Relations and

Media Studies in Zagreb

ADDRESS: Ilica 242, 10000 Zagreb

NAME OF THE HEAD OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Doc. dr. sc. Branko Hebrang

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE: Dean's Office, teaching and support to teaching,

publishing activities and student union

LIST OF STUDY PROGRAMMES: Professional undergraduate degree programme: Public

Relations and Media Studies

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 105 full-time / 45 part-time

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 3 full-time / 13 external associates

TOTAL BUDGET: 2,966,915 HRK

OWN FUNDING: 2,936,976 HRK

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

The project of founding Kairos College for Public Relations and Media Studies was

officially undertaken in October 2007 by two legal persons, the company Kolofon and the

Association for Human Communication from Zagreb. Since 2011, the sole founder has

been Kolofon d.o.o., Zagreb. A Preliminary Permit for the functioning of Kairos College was issued by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport on 13 October 2008 for a five-year

period for purpose of undertaking of activities and implementing professional study

programme in Public Relations and Media Studies.

The Permit stated that the higher education institution fulfills all conditions and standards

in undertaking such activities, under the condition that teachers be employed in the

required numbers. Having fulfilled the stipulated conditions, on 30 November 2011 Kairos

College received a permanent permit for conducting its professional undergraduate degree programme.

Kairos College commenced with operations in the academic year 2008/2009, with the teaching of the first generation of students commencing on 15 December 2008 at the address Kruge 48. Since February 1, 2010, the Institution has been operating in the present location in the premises of the Croatian Catholic University in Ilica 242, Zagreb.

The study programme at Kairos College lasts three years (six semesters) and upon completion of the programme, a total of 180 ECTS points are acquired along with the professional title of bachelor of public relations. Following completion of the programme, the graduates may continue with schooling through specialist professional graduate degree programme, i.e. university graduate degree programme at a Croatian university or at a related study programme abroad. An important event in the work of the Kairos College was the first generation bachelor's graduation ceremony at the Institution in April 2012.

The Kairos College is a member of the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges of the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian Employers' Association.

The work of the Expert Panel

For its work the Panel drew upon the Self-Evaluation Report, prepared by the Kairos College for Public Relations and Media Studies in Zagreb. A site visit was carried out on 22nd of May 2013. During the visit to the Institution the Expert Panel held meetings with the representatives of the following groups:

- The Management;
- The Working Group that compiled the Self-Evaluation;
- The students, i.e., a self-selected set of students present at the interview;
- The Vice-Dean for Teaching and Students' Affairs, programme co-ordinators and teachers;
- Administrative staff;
- Teaching assistants and junior researchers.

The Expert Panel also had a tour of IT rooms, student register desk, and the classrooms at the Kairos College for Public Relations and Media Studies in Zagreb, where they held a brief question and answer session with the students who were present.

DETAILED ANALYSIS BASED ON STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR RE-ACCREDITATION

1. HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND OUALITY MANAGEMENT

1.1 The institution conducts systematic strategic planning in which it engages its stakeholders, and has defined its goals and vision on the basis of the understanding of its current position and in line with its mission.

The institution has a strategic plan with vision, mission and goals. The mission is implementing interdisciplinary tertiary schooling in the area of information technology and communication science, especially in the schooling those acquiring a bachelor degree in public relation.

More systematic contact with stakeholders is needed.

1.2 The institution has developed effective organizational structures and processes and has formalized them in its legal documents. A good organizational structure has been developed that effectively meets the needs of the Institution. In the Self-Assessment Report SAR Kairos demonstrate a clear decision-making structure in the Diagram 1. "Internal organization structure" on page 11. In the description of the duties of each of the elements in the structure it seems to be a useful frame for collaboration and for decisions making at Kairos where management, teachers and students are involved.

1.3 Each study programme of the institution is aligned with its mission.

Kairos College conducts one professional undergraduate degree programme: Public Relations and Media Studies. The study programme is aligned with the institutions's mission.

1.4 Kairos has a strategic plan for the development 2013-2015. The plan demonstrates awareness of the needs for reflections of the future, taking the mission and vision of Kairos in account.

Concerning the mechanisms for quality assurance, there is still a need for formalisation, but here it should be recognized and acknowleged that Kairos is a small institution, with informal contacts between teachers and students.

There is little systematic contact with external stakeholders in order to improve study programmes. Kairos should put in additional effort to secure this contact in order to make sure and demonstrate student standard, in order to achieve competitive advantage not only with regard to the curriculum but also in this segment, which is very important to students considering tuition fees and current economic situation. This would also improve student enrolment and quality of education at this HEI.

1.5 The institution collects, analyses and uses relevant information in order to effectively manage all of its activities.

As a basis for quality control management and quality assurance various kinds of information is collected (4P Mailbox, Notice board) Also students can voice their opinions in student surveys as regards their satisfaction. Checking student attendance is recorded in the Eduneta system and in the checklists which are signed by students or are completed by teachers who roll call students during the class.

Improvements to provide feedback to students regarding their requests are recommended.

1.6 The institution has implemented formal mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of the teaching quality.

The work of teaching staff is further assessed through entrance surveys and subject surveys. Students evaluate the teaching structure and rationalization of available time, the periodicity of held classes, they evaluate the defining of the goals in teaching and expectations of students, familiarity of subject content, expertise and willingness to

respond to questions, communication skills, attitude towards the students and the availability and responsiveness during consultations.

Informal mechanisms are the possibilities to contact teachers directly or drop complaints or suggestions in the 4P Mailbox

1.6 * Not applicable

1.7 The institution has established effective mechanisms for the highest level of ethical behaviour in its teaching and research activity, and all students and staff are informed about these mechanisms and it seems that the code is followed in the daily work.

2. STUDY PROGRAMMES

2.1 Not applicable.

2.2 Kairos offer one programme in "Public relations and media studies".

The teaching staff are enthusiastic and young and there is a combination of teachers with a theoretical and practical background to make sure that the learning outcome is important in relation to the needs of the labour market. Admission quotas are in line with the assumed social and market needs and abilities of Kairos College regarding the organization of teaching quality.

- 2.3 The general admission quota for the first year of study for each academic year is determined by the Administrative Board by a decision on admission. Based on the decision on admission by the Administrative Board, the dean of Kairos College calls for candidates to enter first year of study.
- 2.4 Based on the expected competencies that a student should have after successfully completing studies, learning objectives and expected outcomes were established. Learning objectives indicate what the lecturer will cover in the subject, cover teaching and the manner of learning while preparing students for an active role in the labor

market. The learning outcomes and expected results are directed towards the students and help them understand during the course what is expected of them to successfully complete studies. The learning outcome of the programme is well described, but there is still a need to describe the learning outcome for each course, to formulate how the course contributes to the education.

- 2.5 For almost all of the courses, classes are organized in the form of lectures and tutorials. Premises for conducting teaching using computers are equipped with Internet access, video cameras and projectors. The teaching process utilizes a variety of methods: oral presentation, discussion, writing, demonstrations and practical work.
- 2.6 Upon proposal by the Deanery and the Committee for Quality Assurance at Kairos College at the commencement of the 2012/2013 academic year, reviews of the curriculum and teaching staff qualifications were conducted.
- 2.7 Given the nature of the study, it is of critical importance to establish a good balance between theory and practical work, which is something that similar institutions insist on. In other words, study programmes (which are very well-designed) should have a continuous synergistic relationship with practice, with regard to students' future careers.

However, there is the problem of passivity and poor, disappointing response of students to engage in the professional visit organised by the Institute to certain businesses, institutions and the media.

- 2.8 Each lecturer has the freedom in choosing teaching methods with regard to their own teaching style and the needs of the course. Deepening communication between students and teachers one of the well-accepted forms of work is mentoring and consultative work.
- 2.9 On the home page (www.vskairos.hr) there are clearly arranged main sections, the basic data for making contact, useful links to websites of various institutions affiliated with the Institution's work, the ISO standard symbol, news about the courses and current events at Kairos College. This is updated several times a day or a week, depending on the amount of new information to be published.

2.10 Students conduct the practice in all kinds of organizations that deal with public relations and public communications, and other institutions who as part of their business dealings conduct public relations activities. The current problems arise from inadequate cooperation with institutions in which students can undertake work practice. Given that one of the strategic goals of Kairos College is strengthening cooperation with business and community organizations, this segment of work by the Institution is expected to improve.

3. STUDENTS

- 3.1 The students structure based on completed high school education was homogeneous in the academic year 2010/2011, where heterogeneity increased in the next two academic years. In doing so, the ratio of classical high schools to vocational high schools was in favor of vocational schooling.
- 3.2 The institution strongly supports students in their extracurricular activities.
- 3.3 As an aid in solving important life questions, such as the question of career, learning and integrity, Kairos College operates the Kairos Counseling Center for Students and the Kairos Counseling Center for Parents. Assistance is provided to students in order that they resolve their student and other existential commitments with greater ease and achieve inner satisfaction. Another form of support to students at Kairos are the Head of Academic Years (tutors). They help students to resolve all issues related to student rights and obligations during the first year of study.
- 3.4 Kairos College is not just an educational institute, but also seeks to provide students with quality content and in their free time. The school is a subscriber to the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, and every year takes 10 theater subscription for students (theater, ballet and the opera). Also, students are free and encouraged to attend exhibitions in Lauba the house for people and the arts. In addition

to cultural events, Kairos organizes charity events, lectures and trips to professional conferences in the area of public relations and media for teachers and students.

- 3.5 Kairos publish the methods and procedures used for student's assessment.
- 3.6 Information about successes, employment and other activities on Kairos' graduates is collected through individual contacts, and published on the website and in the Kairos College Newsletter. However, the panel have found no official statistics on employment rate.
- 3.7 An analysis of courses surveys also showed that most of the students were satisfied in regards to their interactions with teaching staff members. The students have appropriate opportunities to participate in decision making procedures both in the formal structure and in more informal discussions with the teachers. Students have good possibilities to express their opinion and proposals for improvement. Teaching staff are informed of these problems in a meeting held with the dean and the teaching coordinator for classes at the beginning of the academic year.
- 3.8 All information is available to prospective students on the website (www.vskairos.hr) and social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Kairos College from its very founding, has had a presence in the University of Zagreb Review, at exhibitions and conferences, both in Zagreb and other cities in Croatia, and in neighboring countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- 3.9 Students can voice their opinions about the student-professor relationships in student surveys for the subjects. The Expert Panel believe that motivation is one of the most important prerequisites for academic success, as well as for future excellence. There are different forms of motivation, but the best one is to involve students in improving study programmes as much as possible.

The Expert Panel recommend increasing the number of seminars and interactive lectures, including student presentations.

3.10 The institution should inform the students on activities of Student Union and Student Ombudsman - if there is one - and future international cooperation. Inform the students on the student survey results and on steps that are taken on the basis of their comments and suggestions.

Importantly, there is a need for more international collaboration and student's exchange.

The students would like to have courses in English to prepare them for an international labour market and the panel agrees wholeheartedly with this..

The Expert Panel recommend Kairos to create an alumni organisation, this will be a good possibility to pick up knowledge of changes in the media sector and learn more about how the education at Kairos fulfil the needs of the labour market.

4. TEACHERS

4.1 The number of full time employed teaching staff is 3 teachers fully employed and 13 external associates (almost in all areas – exception economics). Looking at Kairos caretaking of the composition of the teaching staff, the Expert Panel realised that there recently have been engaged more qualified fulltime teachers.

The Expert Panel could accept the actual composition of the teaching staff due to the commitment of the staff, but a policy has to be developed and the number of full time academics has to be increased.

4.2 The Expert Panel realised that there was developed policies for teaching staff to ensure their development to advance the mission of Kairos as the institution has shown some initiatives in encouraging their staff to continue their study and financially support two members of staff undertaking PhD studies.

On the other hand much have to be done concerning human development policy and to support the development of the staff also in internationalisation.

- 4.3 Although the staff comes from both academia and professional backgrounds which is their strong point, the analysis of number of full-time teachers shows the lack of them in order to ensure the quality and continuity of teaching and learning. The Expert Panel points out that Kairos should fulfil the minimum requirement concerning the composition and development of the teaching staff. To be sustainable more concern is needed here, therefore we will recommend a conditions accreditation on this point, and ask Kairos to report on their progress in one or two years.
- 4.4 The student / staff ratio doesn't exceed 1:30, but still the number of full-time teachers should be increased.
- 4.5 Kairos College in terms of the Project for the Professional Training of Teaching Staff at Karios College provides various forms of professional training.
- 4.6 The work of teaching staff is assessed through entrance surveys and subject surveys but the institution should develop better policies for assessing the qualifications and expertise of the teaching staff.
- 4.7 A total of 960 teaching hours, 310 hours (32%) is conducted by permanent full-time teaching staff, while 650 teaching hours (68%) of classes are conducted by external associates. External engagement of teaching staff permanently employed at Kairos College requires approval of the Institution and is regulated by the employment contract. Full-time teachers should be conducting larger proportion of total number of teaching hours.

5. RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

5.1 Kairos College, as an institution of higher professional study, encourages primarily professional and also scientific work including personal scientific and professional training of teaching staff. As institution has no formally adopted guidelines for existing and planned research and professional activities the Expert Panel strongly encourages the institution to develop such policy.

5.2 The research activity is until now very limited, but there is a growing interest at Kairos to increase it. One way of achieving this could be through increasing cooperation with Croatian and foreign HEIs, companies and other institutions, in order to ensure additional training and expertise of teachers and students.

5.3 Additional efforts are needed in two directions; the first being cooperation with similar Croatian and foreign institutions, with the aim of sharing knowledge and experience in the teaching process and making new contacts; the second is alignment of knowledge taught with professional expertise of renowned companies and individuals.

5.4 The institution supports professional activity but the monitoring of evidence of that is still lacking. The Expert Panel realised that Scientific and professional activity is not applicable at Kairos.

Kairos is a college. In many countries polytechnics and colleges are not expected to do scientific work, even if the European development is going in the direction that more and more polytechnics have some activity in science.

The Expert Panel should not and cannot say that Kairos is fulfilling minimum requirements in Science and is not expected to do it.

6. MOBILITY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

6.1 As part of the strengthening of international cooperation at Kairos College, the Center for International Cooperation was recently established. The Center coordinates the implementation of international cooperation and other activities relating to the international exchange of students and teachers but it is still in its infancy. Its effectiveness is restricted by the lack of English language provision at Kairos.

6.2 Given that Kairos College for now is not running specialist professional graduate study programme, its graduates are encouraged to continue their education at other related institutions. Each year, students complete questionnaires on continuing

education after graduating from Kairos College, on the basis of which they are guided and informed of further study in related graduate study programmes.

6.3 Kairos College for now lacks an active and effective international cooperation, apart from the individual teaching staff collaboration in publishing papers in the proceedings of international conferences.

In order to attain the desired level of excellence, improve its strategic advantage and be on par with other HEIs, it is very important to establish more international cooperation for the mutual benefit for the staff and for the benefit of students who desire more from their student experience. With regard to this, it is necessary to join Erasmus programme and establish cooperation with foreign employers in order to enable the possibility of international internships, as well as with foreign higher education institutions in order to enable teacher and student mobility.

6.4 Kairos College recently joined The European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA). The Institution's teaching staff participated in the EUPRERA surveys concerning the future of communications management and trends in public relations, and research results are published on the website of the Institution.

6.5 According to self-evaluation report the current state of international cooperation is not entirely satisfactory, more teaching staff and associates, and consequently the students will need to join the activities of the Centre for International Cooperation. The Expert Panel strongly recommend Kairos to increase the efforts to be able to have student exchange with and have collaboration with more universities and polytechnic also in English spoken programmes. In order to achieve that, English courses both concerning media and some courses for students are necessary at Kairos to increase students' ability to study in English.

6.6 Kairos College in its efforts in terms of achieving international cooperation – the Center for International Cooperation, the seeking of potential partners, preparatory negotiations and signing the competition for acquiring the Erasmus University Charter, will endeavor to ensure favorable conditions for students for going on study trips

abroad. The Expert Panel find that Kairos fulfil the minimum requirements for accreditation in internationalisation, due to the fact that there is regional collaboration, and some limited European.

The Expert Panel recommend strongly Kairos to develop more activities in English to create more possibilities for the students and staff.

7. RESOURCES

7.1 Given the current situation with limited space, HEI should consider introducing additional, adequately equipped lecture halls either locally or at some other location. It is recommended to provide students with an adequate library and learning space within HEI's premises, in order to facilitate learning and extracurricular activities. The library should contain the publication of the teaching staff (textbooks, articles, etc.).

7.2 The Expert Panel acknowledge the agreement that Kairos has with the National and University Library on students access to that library and it is the opinion of the Expert Panel that Kairos is too small to be able to create a real scientific library.

Even if Kairos provide the students with sufficient equipment, specialization of infrastructure should be considered, parts of courses could be carried out in the existing lecture rooms, but for certain aspects (depending on the syllabus and the course) it would be recommended to relocate to a more adequate location. For example, it would be didactically justifiable for course in basic principles of video production to be carried out at a production studio, etc. Of course, in this context, Kairos should have specific arrangements with other institutions for this kind of 'field classes'. Such an approach to teaching process has many benefits and is cost-effective for students; among others, it exposes students to the very nature of the work as it is carried out in a professional institution, and affirms in the best possible way the principle of synergy between theoretical and practical expertise, which is the basis of teaching process.

7.3 Although the institution encourages and supports the professional development of students and teachers it appears that the institution should work on developing policies for further professional development of non-teaching staff.

7.4 Not applicable.

7.5 Kairos College in a continual lease has two classrooms that are so far entirely adequate for the physical and technical criteria of teaching. Due to the increase in the number of students enrolled in the 2012/2013 academic year, there appears a problem of lack of space, and the Institution can temporarily solve this by temporarily leasing additional rooms.

7.6 Not applicable.

- 7.7 Given the current situation with limited space, HEI should consider introducing additional, adequately equipped lecture halls either locally or at some other location, as well as securing some other source of income other than tuitions.
- 7.8. Institution's own funds apparently are used to raise the quality of teaching and scientific activity.

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE EXPERT PANEL FOR THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

ADVANTAGES (STRONG POINTS)

- 1. One of the first institutions that offers a comprehensive PR and media studies programme
- 2. Uniqueness of individual courses that provides a competitive advantage for students (courses such as Fundamentals of Theory of Promotion, Business Intelligence etc.)
- 3. Kairos recognizes the needs of the society by offering a study programme with a strong focus on media subjects and subjects related to public relations
- 4. Creatively designed syllabi of some courses, based on considerations of actual needs and the skills that students will need in their future careers
- 5. There are efforts to overcome the limitations of library facilities by having an agreement that their students have access to another Universities facilities ...
- 6. Teaching staff coming from both academia and business sector, which indicates a better didactic platform and facilitated learning
- 7. Alignment with European system of higher education
- 8. Strategically positive attitude towards teachers, in terms of their additional training
- 9. Co-financing of postgraduate studies for teaching staff
- 10. Student and parents counselling, Centre for Academic Writing

DISADVANTAGES (WEAK POINTS)

- 1. Issue of full-time teachers with necessary qualifications for the delivery of planned syllabus and learning outcome
- 2. Problems of being such a small scale institution unable to reap the economies of scale of a bigger operator
- 3. Current inability to achieve adequate international cooperation, even within the Erasmus Programme
- 4. Limited possibilities for development, with regard to the capacity of current infrastructure
- 5. No subsidies with regard to student standard

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 1. The institution should consider to employ more teachers who would cover core disciplines
- 2. Full-time teachers should be conducting larger proportion of total number of teaching hours
- 3. There is a need for more international collaboration and student's exchange. The students would like to have courses in English to prepare them for an international labour market.
- 4. If the institution really wants their teachers and students to go abroad it has to expand teaching in English
- 5. Increasing the number of seminars and interactive lectures, including student presentations
- 6. In order to attain the desired level of excellence, improve its strategic advantage and be on par with other HEIs, it is very important to establish more international cooperation for the mutual benefit for the staff and for the benefit of students who desire more from their student experience. With regard to this, it is necessary to join Erasmus programme and establish cooperation with foreign employers in order to enable the possibility of international internships, as well as with foreign higher education institutions in order to enable teacher and student mobility
- 7. Institution should develop more precise research policy
- 8. Institution should consider introducing additional, adequately equipped lecture halls either locally or at some other location, as well as securing some other source of income other than tuitions
- 9. The institution should develop better policies for assessing the qualifications and expertise of the teaching staff
- 10. Develop official statistics on employment rate
- 11. Create an alumni organisation, this will be a good possibility to pick up knowledge of changes in the media sector and learn more about how the education at Kairos fulfil the needs of the labour market
- 12. The institution should inform the students on activities of student union and student ombudsman if there is one and future international cooperation
- 13. The institution should work on developing policies for further professional development of non-teaching staff

CONCLUSION:

Altogether the expert panel finds that Kairos fulfils the minimum requirerements for reaccreditation. In one field-teachers- this has to be subject to a condition: namely, Kairos should submit a report in 2015 explaining the improvements in the composition of teaching staff and human resources to alleviate the current concerns of the panel.

The Expert Panel is aware that some of the problems and disadvatages facing Kairos are, by their very nature, strongly associated with the small scale of the institution and the restrictive limitations this imposes on the institution.

While we recognise that increasing research output is desirable, the practicalities of achieving this in such a small institute are formidable.

While the Panel understand and respect that the focus of Kairose is on the 'national' we feel that more emphasise might be given to the 'international' arena ...hence the comments on suggesting English courses, foreign exchange and international co-operation. Again, we recognise that opportunities are limited by the scale of the institution but strongly advise that Kairos pursues this internationalisation direction.