

## **FIRST DAY OF THE SEMINAR**

**Prof. Lykourgiotis:** I would like to welcome you in the University of Patras. In the last years there is an increasing interest among the academics in our country concerning the new perspectives opening due to the markedly accelerated European integration. In this respect the most important aspects are the access to the higher education of an increasing number of students, the continuing education, distance learning, the open university and, of course, the improvement of the quality of research and education. These, in turn, justify the increasing interest concerning the evaluation of research and teaching in the universities which are the main subject of the present Greek-British meeting. I am sure that the British experience in this subject will be proven very useful for all of us. It is expected that the very fruitful discussion will follow its introductory presentation on the competition and co-operation among universities in quality on the development of university management, statistics and performance indicators as well as on the future developments in university evaluation.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank the British Council, in particular its Director Dr Munby for supporting whole-heartedly this meeting and Mr Kaldis as well as the former Vice-Rector of the University of Patras Professor Panaretos, chairman of the organising committee, and Mr Papathanasopoulos for the idea and the organisation of the present meeting. Moreover, I would like to thank Professor Hanham, vice-chancellor of the University of Lancaster, Dr Page, vice-chancellor of the University of Reading and Professor Sterling, vice-chancellor of Brunel University, because they have accepted the invitation of the British Council to come to our country and participate in the meeting. Finally, I thank all of you because you have accepted my invitation to come here carrying your experience and discuss with us an extremely critical subject for the development of our Universities.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a successful meeting as well as a pleasant stay in Patras. Thank you very much for your attention.

**Dr Munby:** It is a real privilege to be with you on this occasion which marks an important step in the continuing support that the British Council provides to all aspects of academic and administrative co-operation between universities in Greece and in Britain. As I think all

of you know the idea which led to this meeting of academic authorities is the theme of this meeting, evaluation of research and teaching in universities. This idea dates back to early 1991 and was talked about during a course of Greek university administrators which was jointly organised by the University of Patras and the British Council and which was attended by over 40 administrative staff from 12 Greek universities. This theme, today's theme, was warmly endorsed on a subsequent occasion, on the recommendation of Professor Panaretos, during a visit to Greece in 1991 by two British vice-chancellors Dr. David Ingram of the University of Kent and Dr William Turma of Napier University who participated in an official visit to Greek Universities on behalf of the Council for International Co-operation in Higher Education. Since that course in early 1991 the British Council has assisted Greek academic authorities with visits to Britain to find out about the evaluation regulations in practices being put to the test by their British counterparts. Professors Costas Evangelides Vice-Rector of Athens University and Professor Yiannis Panaretos the former Vice-Rector of the University of Patras visited the United Kingdom under British Council sponsorship and established contact with individuals and bodies concerned with the evaluation of research and teaching of British Universities.

The need for evaluation in Universities is clearly stated in the new Greek law of higher education. Now, we hope that the British experience in the drawing up, implementation and monitoring of the measures employed in evaluating research and teaching will be valuable to the Greek academic authorities in their attempt to establish a sound and workable set of rules and indicators for a similar exercise in this country.

In this day and age a public institution wishing to improve its performance and modernise its approach to quality services for its constituency, whether they are customers or clients, such public institutions must embrace new concepts of targeting and evaluation.

In your quest for such an approach you will not find a more sympathetic supporter than the British Council since our organisation has undergone - and is still pursuing - a policy of fundamental repositioning in the light of economic and attitudinal changes in the world today. I don't know how many of you realise that in the British Council the last six years we have had a continuing exercise to draw up performance indicators to measure how we are doing. In other words, we have been aware that we have moved from a role culture to a performance culture. And in this performance culture you cannot

assume any more that what you are doing is acceptable to the people who are paying you. And in the British Council the people who pay us are everybody from the British government to the individuals who walk through our doors for our services. And we have drawn up these measures to try to find out whether we are performing economically, efficiently and effectively. And I know from my own experience year after year having to change these measures as we discover that they don't work or that they are measuring the wrong things. That is actually a very tricky and difficult exercise, but never-the-less it is one that must be done in my organisation and we have no doubt that this process must continue.

As we refine these measures we find that they are indeed helping us to decide whether we are giving value for money, which is what it is all about in an increasingly competitive world. And hence, this particular topic is quite dear to my heart. I know it is a very important one. Now, the purpose of this meeting is to provide an opportunity for Greek and British academic authorities to discuss freely an issue of a mutual concern and unquestionable importance. It is not intended to be a series of lectures by experts. It is an informative exchange of ideas which will enrich the experience of British and Greek academic leaders, which is of course one of the objectives of the British Council.

Thank you.

**Prof. Panaretos:** First of all I would like to thank Professor Lykourgiotis and the University of Patras for hosting this event.

I believe that the University of Patras all along has been supportive of initiatives in this direction, namely the direction of improving the University operations. I would also like to thank Professor Hanham, Dr Page and Professor Sterling for finding time to come to Greece in the middle of the winter to share with us their valuable experience on quality assessment of the universities. All three of them are experts in this particular field, the field of the topic of our meeting. Professor Hanham is not only the Vice-chancellor of the University of Lancaster but is also the Chairman of the European Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals. Dr Page, the Vice-chancellor of the University of Reading, is the Chairman of the Performance Indicators Committee of the joint Committee of the Vice-chancellors and Principals and the University Funding Council of England. And Professor Sterling, the Vice-chancellor of Brunel University, is

Chairman of the Performance Indicators Steering Committee and Chairman of the Higher Educational Statistics Agency. I would also like to express my thanks to the British Council and to Dr Munby in particular, for the willingness and the enthusiasm with which they embraced and supported the meeting. I should also like to mention and thank the people that helped in organising this meeting. Professor Evangelides the Vice-Rector of the University of Athens, who has supported and worked all along in helping of the organising of the meeting, Mr Papathanasopoulos the Registrar of the University of Patras and Mr Kaldis of the British Council.

As Dr Munby mentioned this is not the first time that the British Council supports such an activity. We had a similar successful meeting in Patras for senior university administrators and it was that time that we started thinking about the possibility of arranging a meeting like the one we are having today.

When we first discussed the idea both Professor Lykourgiotis, the Rector of the University and Dr Munby were very willing to support the idea and their support has led to today's meeting.

In thinking of how to organise this meeting we decided to keep it a strictly university affair. The reason was that, as we know, one of the most difficult problems of quality assessment and evaluation is who is going to be in charge of it. We felt that, if the universities were to take the initiative, then probably it would be possible for them to keep it.

I would not like to enter into more details on performance indicators and quality assessment because we have the experts here to talk about it. I would only like to mention that this is, I think, the result of what happened in Europe in the last decade where in almost all European countries we moved to a mass education system. We followed the path, I suppose, of the United States and this new direction brought the necessity of accountability of the universities to society. England, I think, was a pioneer country in this direction, and other European countries followed. It was France I think in 1985, then Sweden, Finland, Spain. I might say that Italy and Greece, perhaps, are the only countries now that have been left out of it and it is probably about time for us to start thinking as to what we should do.

Since we are in Greece and we know -most of us know- what our problems are, we know that one of the difficulties is politics. And, in my opinion, the quality assessment of universities must be beyond politics. To me it is not strange that it was a conservative government in England that introduced the quality assessment and it was a

socialist government in France that did that. It was a socialist government in Sweden also that decided to go the same way.

So, although there is of course politics as in any other aspect of life, the need for quality assessment is here to stay.

Another item that I would like to mention about the organisation of the meeting is the language. We thought about it. It would be more appropriate to have it in Greek and have an automatic translation. However, the limited time available made us think that, if we used the system of automatic translation then we would have only half of the time available to discuss things. So we decided to have the meeting in English and we hope that we will be able, also, to have the proceedings available.

As far as the structure of the program is concerned the idea is to have our British colleagues introduce the theme in a particular session and then, in an informal way, have the time to exchange views and ideas, listen and put forward our ideas.

Thank you very much, and I would like to ask Professor Hanham now to take the floor and introduce his theme.

**Prof. Hanham:** Thank you very much. This is a very un-greek time for starting. We are 20 minutes early.

The title that I have been given represents essentially putting together two separate themes. And it may be easier for you if I try to talk to some of the more general points first, and then talk about some more the details.

We just heard the reference to the importance of mass higher education. It has been the development of mass higher education that has really brought people in universities and governments in all countries to look at the question of audit, assessment, and so on, because very large proportions of the national income are now going into higher education, compared with the proportions of only a few years ago. Therefore governments have an interest in seeing that the money is well spent. The universities, also, have an interest in seeing that the money is well spent, but it is not the same interest and they may not wish to spend the money in the same way. So that we start from the beginning with a difficulty. That is that governments have a distinctive view of what higher education ought to be about: it should be available to as many people as possible as cheaply as possible and in as many places as possible.

Now you are pretty familiar with that theme from Greece. And that is true all over the world. In fact, as the Americans have discovered, that tends to lead to rather expensive higher education, particularly the proliferation. And so that government policy is not always an economical thing.

But you start with the assumption that there is a difference in interest between governments and universities, which I think there must be, you have got to take into account, also, the possibility that there are going to be questions for a very long time to come as to which government or which of government should be interested. Let me take an easy example. The French law of 1985 established a monitoring body which reports directly to the President of the Republic and bypasses the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance, and, in fact, everybody else. Now, that is very nice for the President. It enables him to get very good reports done and it enables him to be particularly unpleasant to ministers, because he has a better source of information than they do. Now you can imagine that that results in France in a great collection of statistics, because there are numerous people who have an interest in collecting statistics. The President needs them to use against the Minister, the Minister needs them to use against the President, the universities need them to use both against the President and the Minister and against one another.

[someone talks in the background and the speaker answers]

It is rarely the case. I am not a statistician, but it is rarely the case that statistics can be actually used for anything. They are very good to be used against things. But, anyhow, you will be talking about that sort of thing tomorrow morning.

What I am trying to make is a general point that it is not immediately obvious in political life who should be responsible for what. And some of you will know that in Turkey, the way in which the Turkish universities were reformed, was by putting them directly under the President and getting them away from the clutches of the politicians. So that we have got to remember that there are various themes here of that sort. In addition to that, during the Dutch Presidency of the Community, the Dutch Ministers proposed to the Commission, sorry to the Council of Ministers, that the Commission should investigate the possibility of establishing a Europe-wide system of quality control and assessment. It had as a footnote in the original form the creation of an inspectorate, largely of Dutchmen, because only they had much experience in how to do it. Now you can imagine that that was not

universally popular in the Community. But the question of at what level governments are going to be involved, what bits of government, seems to me one of those things that you in particular need to talk through, because different countries have gone down different routes, and the Dutch in many ways are the luckiest because they are such a small country that there is a very close relationship between the leaders of the universities, the civil service and the government. There is a small number of universities, there are great fights if there is an attempt to create new ones and normally it does not happen. Essentially it is a very tight-knit system, and in a tight-knit system in which the government thinks it controls the universities and the universities think that they control the government there is room for a fairly harmonious relationship. And for that reason the Dutch have been very successful in establishing teams to monitor subjects, particular subjects of study, particular disciplines, which have had the approval both of the universities and of the government. But it is not obvious that that is something that can be achieved in all countries, and in fact there are some countries in which it cannot be achieved at all. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany reserves all responsibility for education to the lender and the federal government has no authority and the German lender have spent a lot of time in making sure that they have different academic years, different curricula and that it is virtually impossible to have any system of credit transfer, because that would interfere with the individual responsibility of the lender.

So, I started by talking about government I would remind you that I am talking about a very complex set of relationships in which, if you have a satisfactory relationship between government and the universities as happens in the Netherlands, and, I think, it also happens in some other countries, of course it happened in a very peculiar way in Luxembourg where there is not a university, there is a sort of semi-university, but in the Community there are big differences between the relationships between government and universities. Just a final point on that. I always have to remind people that one of the strangest features of the Danish university system is that all the universities of Denmark get lump grants from the Minister of Education, except the University of Copenhagen, where each faculty gets a grant from the Minister and the Minister decides who will be in each faculty and how much money will go to each faculty. That is it is possible even in one country to have a hybrid system in which one university is treated in a different way from the others.

Now, having said this about government what I was originally asked to talk about was essentially the problem that arises when you introduce any sort of quality assessment in a context in which there is real competition. The degree to which competition exists in Europe varies dramatically. Now when I am talking about competition I am talking about a situation in which students in effect have something very like free choice of where they will go, that is where there is ideally no numerous clauses, no restrictions on admissions. Or if there is, it is within a context which still allows a lot of freedom of movement.

The British system is really the most open in this respect because it assumes that virtually all students, at least in the older universities but the case is true in the newer ones, that virtually all students will go away from home for higher education and be supported by the government while they are doing so. That has the double advantage of giving freedom to parents and removing a considerable expense from them. So, of course, it is very attractive to those people who do not like having children at their feet, particularly middle class parents. It does not appeal so much to working class parents, who have a strange desire to keep their children at home, whether they like the noise or the company I am not sure. But if you have a system in which students can choose, and the British system has a very strong element of that, and of course the German one does, you have something rather like, in theory at least, the medieval university system, that is one in which students were free to move about to where they wanted to go.

Most people forget that in the middle ages the universities were in fact operating something very like a free market. The students could move, the teachers could move and the teachers moved to where the pay was best. And the aim of an enterprising town was to acquire good teachers who would bring students to the town and the students would bring money with them. So that having a university was a form of economic development. Now, we have heard about that in recent times. But it existed in the middle ages and universities for the most part could not function unless they had students from other countries and they certainly could not rely on their local students, that certainly were not enough of them.

Now, if we assume that that might be the model of the future and until recently the Danish government has been advocating that all students in the Community should be funded by their own governments to go to any country in the Community they chose to go



to. And the Finish government has taken up a broader view of very much the same sort.

As soon as you introduce a notion of students moving about, of real competition, then questions of quality become of interest to large numbers of people, virtually everybody in the universities, because they are in the position of having to sell themselves to a mobile student body.

Now here I will pause and say it is in the interest of government everywhere that students stay at home and not be paid for by government and go to the local university.

So that there is a clear economic conflict in a way between the two views I have been talking about. The view in which the students should be free to move and the one in which they are essentially confined to their home base.

But if we stick with the sort of the medieval free market that I was talking about I think you get a better sense of the sort of problem that we are talking about. We are talking about a situation in which everybody has an interest in seeing that at least some sort of minimal standards are achieved. In the middle ages this was attempted by a combination of the church and secular rulers. We have now got an absence of a European-wide system, except in the Community. But the Community is beginning to talk the language of the medieval church. That is that certain minimal standards will have to be laid down. So that it is possible for students to move from country to country and not be de-frauded, that is not going to a place and find that the quality of the work is inferior.

Now, in that context universities all over Europe have begun to ask themselves questions about how they should police themselves. And I am going to talk about the assessment methods in Britain in a moment. But in most countries there have been these discussions going on. Because everybody sees that if they do not do it themselves, either Brussels or the nation-states will.

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**Prof. Hanham (cont.):** ... and that is something that most university people do not think immediately as one of their own responsibilities. But in the Netherlands, the cities and the universities work very closely together for that problem, so that they can actually attract students. They have got enough trouble having to make the students learn Dutch. They are increasingly, by the way, now teaching in

English and the bigger Dutch universities now offer complete degree schemes in English, as well as degrees that are taught in Dutch, because they recognise this competitive market that I am talking about. What they are trying to do is to argue that there must be a guarantee for outsiders that certain minimum standards are there. That the students will not become ill because of rain coming through the roofs of their lodgings, that there is a basic health service, and that the whole range of those things, that are not academic at all in the way we normally think of them, but which, if you are thinking of the students moving, are of fundamental importance.

The search light is not being on those things. It is being on the attempts by the particular states to set up new systems. The centre of all the new systems is that institutions should engage in self-evaluation. And you will find that the European Community will eventually, I am sure, recommend that the one thing that is compulsory in Europe is that institutions should publish self-evaluations.

Now, self-evaluation is rather like an auto-biography, that is it may be more fiction than truth, because you are trying to present yourself in a favourable light. How to develop self-evaluations that are helpful to the self, while one still is alive and at a full height of one's career. How you do that, so it is helpful to you and also enables outsiders to understand what you are talking about. That is a major problem. And if you talk to the experts on this subject, and there are now, particularly in the Netherlands, quite a number of them, all of them will say that the single, most difficult thing to do is to persuade people to think about what they are doing and to write it down.

Once you have got some degree of self-evaluation and in discussion with others you have talked about what it all means, you have the basis on which you can begin to arrive at a series of understandings. The difficulty is to avoid the self-evaluation being too closely tied to government intervention, because it is obvious that the government has interests in this process. When I am talking about self-evaluation there are a lot of areas in which the government's interests and the institutional interests are the same. They both, for instance, want honest statistics.

Ever since I have been in Lancaster I have tried to persuade my colleagues to issue one set of statistics telling how many students we have. After seven years I have still not succeeded. Different offices publish different accounts as to how many students we have at the same time and sometimes in the same report.

Now, the thing is that you have to keep statistics for different purposes. For instance, the basic set of statistics in a British university that is of most use is how many people have paid money and what is it. But many of the students who have paid money are actually doing courses in America or Russia or France or what-have-you, particularly foreign language students. where they pay their fees at home and are away. So that because they pay it does not mean that they are there. So you start with a basic confusion, that is that your accounts, based on the number of people who pay are wrong, for any other purpose. How does it count part time students? It is particularly difficult. If you know that they are part time students living away it is much easier. But if I am asked by the Town Council in Lancaster how many of my students live in Lancaster, I am really very hard pressed to tell them, because from their point of view every part time student is a full-time resident of Lancaster and, anyhow, my colleagues will talk about this sort of complication, I am sure. But you recognise that the returns that we make to the government and to the various statistical offices may not be much use to us. They certainly do not correspond to the number of people who pay fees. They are devised for a set of purposes which were no doubt admirable and they vary from time to time, but they are quite simple difficulties about knowing how big the university is.

Now, you may think that this is small going. But if you are talking about a university, which says that it has 150.000 students, you are entitled to ask, how do you know! And there are countries, notably Italy, in which being a student is a matter of a particular social status. It entitles you to reduced transport costs, to subsidised food and, in some cases, to subsidised housing. And being a student, therefore, has nothing to do with going to the university. All you have to do is to put your name on a list and somebody has to sign it that you are a student.

There have been professors, who claim to have had 10.000 students in their classes. You find them lecturing in a room that will with difficulty hold 200. And the 200 are not there. In other words, I mean there are quite simple things about how big universities are that there are very-very difficult to sort out. Because what is a student is not something that can be easily answered. And part of the business of self-evaluation in this context I am talking about is trying to arrive at a rational means of discourse.

I am quite sure that no British definition of a student corresponds to any Greek one. Certainly it does not correspond to anybody else's

definition of a student. It was devised for perfectly good reasons, among them extreme honesty. Now, that was connected with the particular structure for funding universities. Government grants for students are audited and if you got caught you might be in trouble. And so that you have got, you know, carefully audited numbers. But that does not apply in many other countries.

Now, you will begin, I hope, when you see me talking about these things, to realise that in matters like student numbers it is in the interest of the government to have very large numbers and in the interest of the universities to have very small ones. It is, therefore, in the interest of both to cheat. There is nothing more enjoyable than to teach in the university where there are 2.000 students and get paid for 100.000. I mean, can you imagine anything more delightful?

But the problem is how do you avoid teaching yourself. And most systems of self-evaluation are designed to enable people to ask questions which they can give honest answers to. Now, the most difficult questions to give honest answers to, are. Are your faculty members any good? Of course, it is in their interest to say that they are wonderful. It is in your interest, as university Rectors and so on, to say to the government that they are wonderful. It is in the interest of government every now and then to find out whether they are wonderful or not.

It is much better if we all agree in advance. And that is why so much of the recent discussion in Europe has been about measuring research. A lot of money in many countries, but not all, has gone into research. Our government is getting value for money, where is the research good, and so on. Now in Britain that has led to three research assessment exercises. The last one done in Britain was done in 1992 and was done in 72 subject areas. Panels were appointed to review each subject and their reports have been published. The system is the one we have now got used to. The Dutch do it in a different way. They function on the basis of a cycle of reviews by panels that visit subject by subject. But essentially they are producing the same sort of result. The Netherlands being a small country they have much more non-Dutch input than is the case in Britain, which is larger, but it would, I think, be wiser if we in Britain had more non-British input. The interesting thing about those exercises has been not the people who complained about them, because, of course, they complain because it involves work, but that they have produced so little in the way of conflict.

Because one of the problems when you are talking about faculty members is how can you give them targets. If you give them a target, which is that they can get better and you can help them, then you have the way for making things better. And in fact there is a cynical interpretation possible it is my view that research is got better and that more people have been doing effective monitored research since the assessment exercise started than was the case before. I mean, I know that this is the case in my own university where a considerable number of people who, according to the books, ought to have been intellectually dead, that is they had not published anything for ten years, have suddenly started to publish in reputable refereed journals work of very high quality.

Now when I was young I was told that that was impossible for people in their 40s and 50s. But they have done it. And a considerable number of people have done it. Now, of course, whether it can work for everybody depends on what their style of life is. And, if, as is the case in some parts of Europe, professors are essentially part-timers who earn most of their income outside the university then you have special problems.

The measurement of teaching is a much more difficult thing to do. And I think it is fair to say that that there is not at the moment in Europe any effective system for the measurement of teaching. Considerable numbers of people are trying to develop one. In Britain we have just started on the first of a set of studies of individual subjects, and the four subjects to be done this year, are mechanical engineering, history, chemistry and law.

But if you think that there are 72 subjects in the research assessment exercise it will take 18 years before the subjects are all got through, there will be an 18-year cycle. But the plan for the moment it is to do four subjects a year and whether it is 18 years or 10 years, I mean a cycle like that is too long. A 5-year cycle is tolerable, a 10-year cycle is conceivable, but obviously foolish, because if in any system with a turnover of people there are going to be big changes in that period, so that I would of said that a cycle anything less than 5 years is going to be extremely difficult for anybody to believe in. But if you do it in 5 years there is a real risk that everybody will be visiting everybody else, so that nobody will be teaching. So that there is a set of built-in difficulties that we should not overlook.

In the old days the assumption was that you allowed an inspector to wander in and out and make more or less casual reports. Now the advantage of that system was that it was cheap. It was developed for

elementary schools and it reached its highest points at the point where there were easily measurable things. And the inspector went into each school and did some measurements. Now, he counted the number of desks, the number of pupil there, he checked the attendance record to see whether it was plausible and then he asked the students in the classroom a number of things that they were supposed to know. And if they did not know the teacher's salary was reduced. Now, that is a good, simple system. The difficulty is that all of us know that it would work in a very uncertain way once you had complicated tests. Simple tests of reading, writing and arithmetic people can just tolerate, because they can all understand what they are about. How do you know what is good teaching in mathematics. Now all of us have encountered what we think of as bad teaching in mathematics. I, in fact, have encountered rather a lot of it. But that was apparently because I was not very good at mathematics, because other people seem to have benefited from it extraordinarily. So, there are clearly difficulties when you are pushing things into the higher intellectual spheres.

It is obvious that there are problems about science subjects, like chemistry, where graduate students form part of a team around a teacher who in many cases funds them through research grants. There are many difficulties in sorting out what that is about. We do not have at the moment an accepted language to describe what it is about. Unless you have an accepted language it is very difficult to do this sort of thing.

Now, I believe that what is happening in the first tests of these four subjects in Britain is that an attempt is being made to develop a language. I cannot believe that you can develop a new language in a very short time. I mean, it seems to me that languages take quite a long time to develop if they have to be complicated. So that we are going to have a lot of trouble about the business of evaluating teaching, simply because the nature of the process is extremely complex. You are not measuring a single thing and you need reports essentially which explain what the progress is of the very best students and you will not know that in many cases for 10 to 15 years after the class. And you want to know what the progress is of the less good students.

Now the interest in government in teaching is much greater than the interest of the institutions. Because the institutions understand that teaching is part of a complex, involving research and a whole range

of things, providing a context in which students can be developed, and so on.

Governments have a vital interest in the evaluation of teaching, because they are faced with problems. The Italian government, for instance, has to confront the fact that 65% of the students it funds, do not get any qualifications at all. And the fact that many of them never enter a classroom does not make it any easier for them. But that is the problem. The French have a failure rate in the first year in humanities of often 60%. Engineering classes in the University of Aachen have a failure rate of 70%. The students at Aachen who fail engineering then go on to do science. If they fail that they go on to the humanities and if they fail that they go on to the social sciences. Germans are not expected to enter the labour market until the age of 27, that is what the law is. And so they have plenty of time to switch. In countries with a very small span of years devoted to their subjects, such as Britain, it is not so easy.

But universities have to find a way of satisfying governments on this subject. There was a report by one of the audit officers in Britain this week on further education and on six forms, that is the area between the regular schooling and the universities. And there was quite a high failure rate, mainly because people enter for subjects and then find that they were in the wrong subjects. But of course the teachers go on being paid. Now, if the government discovers that 40% of the pupil in those classes, as they have, do not get any qualification, they *naturally conclude* that 40% of the money spent is wasted. I mean, they can allow may be a 10% wasted rate, but they cannot allow a 40% wasted rate. The British assumption is that all students will get through unless they go up their heads. And that has not been a general European assumption, but I am just waiting the question as part of the business of quality assessment and audit and all the rest.

You can see there in this business of teaching, where the universities have a clear interest in knowing whether, in fact, the teaching is good. That is part of the general business of having a satisfactory and well-run institution. The problem is that we have not got an agreement yet on how we will define that, we did not gradually get that. But our definition is not necessarily going to be the same as that of government. And we may find that we have to have two ways of looking at the problem. And we got to accept that that is the case and that will lead to compromises and uncomfortable situations.

The third area in which quality has been looked at is that essentially of whether the universities are well-run. Now, in Britain this is being

done essentially by the universities themselves through a unit they have set up. We recently have been audited mainly to see whether we have got structures in billing so that we know what is happening to the students, that we have reasonable administrative processes and that there are not too many holes through which problems escape.

Now, we have spent a lot of time on that since 1989 and I think we are at a point of having quite an interesting system. But you keep on discovering new horrors every year. One of the things we discovered, for instance, was that some four years ago we introduced transcripts showing all the marks received by students and gave them to the students at the end of the year. Being new, suppose I can see the students never looked at them. They have now began to look at them and they keep on discovering the departments have left out marks. It makes me furious. It is clear that we have got a hole in the system that we have got to put right.

We have course assessment taken into account in final exams. Therefore, there are very large numbers of marks to take into account. Every essay, every bit of lab work and so on, will be looked at by somebody in some sort of marks kept. As soon as you have a system like that, in which hundreds of people are involved in keeping separate records you have got room for trouble.

Now, just looking at that problem has been very good for us, I mean we have learned a great deal about which of our colleagues are incompetent. I dare to say that so far they have been the ones we already expected to be incompetent. That is there are certain classes of human beings who are never any good at anything practical. And when it comes to keeping things like marks for their students they are in no better at that than they are remembering to turn-up. You have some people who are just disorganised, and what you have to do is to build in checks and we ought to know about that. And that is actually the important part of self-assessment. And I found that the audit process was actual extremely helpful. I mean, they are rather kind to us in that they actually understand what we are trying to do, and commend us for it, and point out that we are not there yet. Now, we all knew that, but it is rather nice to have outsiders understanding in what we are trying to do.

Now, that is a bit of self-assessment that has gone well. Because we have set ourselves to develop new, well, it began with developing new faculties in which I said to all the people of the university. Look, this is a university that has never had faculties. When I arrived, 37



departments reported direct to me. That meant, they did not report to anybody. So I said, let us have some faculties. They all said no, of course. But gradually people decided that there were ingenious ways of inventing faculties that suited them and they have become the owners of the faculties. And they are trying to make them work better. And although each faculty now has a teaching associate dean and a research associate dean, people who are putting in a lot of work on developing research policy, working with their colleague, and so on. Now that is an area in which when an outsider comes through and says, look tell me what you have been trying to do and we will help you to see whether you have got there or not, people like me are very pleased. And if they say favourable things about the right people, that is people who really are efficient, rather than the people who say they are, then that is a success.

Now I am arguing, therefore, that in this area, research, there is a sense in which you have to do it by peer review from outside, in teaching there are big question marks. But organisation is an area in which it is actually possible to get help from outsiders to enable you to think about whether you can do things better than the way you are now doing them.

The great trouble with all forms of assessment is that money is involved one way or another. And the interests of various parties are different. The reports being introduced by the Liaison Committee of the Community say, that evaluation and money should be separate. I don't think that that is possible. I just don't think it possible. They say they will not get an efficient evaluation of the system, if people are tempted by money to distort it. I think on the whole that, if you can get the money right, it is a good way of distorting a system in the direction of efficiency. The problem is to make sure you get it right.

Now, one of the features of the British research assessment exercise this time is that the groups, that were put in, are rated on the scale from 1 to 5. If you get a 1, you get no research money. And the others, you subtract 1 from the number, so that you get a multiplier of 4, 3 or 2. Is that right? Or 1, yes. But you have got a simple multiplier system, that is, there is built-in a re-distribution of research money.

Now, if you do moderately well, that is very gratifying. If you see your whole institution slipping, that is a reason for taking action. The difficulty about saying anything very clear about the funding side of the exercise is that the volume of research is still a major factor. And in, by so, an institution, a large institution, may do relatively badly in the assessment and still get more money, because there is built into

the system a net movement of money from small institutions to large ones.

Now, we all represent relatively small institutions and so that we all think of ourselves as victims, although it doesn't look much like a victim at the moment, but essentially you have got a lot of big sites funded by the research councils. The problem of the dual support system, which I can talk about, is that it twists things. So that this is not a simple multiplier system that I am describing. And you don't need to know all the details of what the system is. But you should realise that when I say that there is money attached, there are various things other than simple quality assessment, that decide the money.

The original intent in teaching, when the mechanism for teaching reviews was set up, the original intent by the Government, not yet changed but for the moment subdued, is that, in adding one of these assessments, something like 5% of departments would get more money, because they were good at teaching, and roughly 5% would be closed, because they were bad at teaching.

Now, whether that will happen we don't know. It depends on whether anybody believes in the quality of the reviews. I mean, if there is a general belief that the review is gone well, it may be easier.

Now, in the case of mechanical engineering, which is one of the subjects I was talking about, there is already an accreditation system run by the mechanical engineers, so that there is a parallel mechanism already in being, and you can check the results. Because people are going around looking at the quality of teaching on behalf of the professional engineering body.

There are other areas in which that is much more difficult. I suspect that all systems .....[end of tape]

**Prof. Hanham (cont.):** ..... institutions are being used to that for a long time.

And what I wanted to say, finally, and I have gone longer than I intended, what I want to say finally is that in America there is an accreditation system which is national, either subdivided into regions for general purposes or subject by subject. And in some subjects like law, where there are a lot of law schools, there are also regional arrangements.

American universities are classified by the accrediting bodies in a variety of ways, starting with research universities at the top and

going down to 2-year colleges at the bottom. Each of them have different salary scales, each of them recruits a different type of staff, each of them is evaluated in a different way, each of them is expected to have a different degree of financial strength. And the monitoring is largely concerned with the financial strength of the institution, whether they are buying enough books for their libraries, and so on, establishing a basic structure.

Now I think that in Europe we are going to have to go in much the same way, that is, we are going to have to decide what institutions are for. It is extremely difficult to evaluate, if you haven't had set out at the beginning what it is you are evaluating.

And the process of self-evaluation, which all the experts talk about as being so important, is part of the business of institutions distinguishing themselves from other institutions.

That seems to me to be European-wide process that has started some time ago and is now going on. And that, one has to be clear that for instance in the French system, where they for the most part have chopped-up their universities into art's universities and law universities and science universities and so on. They have already reached the point that they know they are looking at different things. And they don't expect them to behave in the same way.

That is very like what American accrediting bodies do. They look across the board at particular types of institution and say, what have we here.

The fascinating thing about America is that most of the work of the regional accrediting bodies is concerned not with old institutions but new ones. In America there are hundreds and hundreds of new colleges, there always have been. In the 19th century thousands were created. Most of them died. And a large proportion of organisations that are accredited at the moment will probably die, too. For instance, most of the big companies have been able to set up *degree* awarding colleges attached to their firms. Most hospitals of any size have thought, or have already established, medical colleges attached to them, and do quite good work.

Now, a large proportion of those organisations are going to die. Now it is my expectation that we have got to get used in Europe to the notion that more universities will die, and it will probably be a very good thing.

On that cheating note, I stop.