Prof. Panaretos: Thank you Professor Hanham for a very clear presentation of all three areas of assessment in the universities, namely teaching, research and organisation.
I think, as I pointed out at the beginning, that the best way to proceed from here is to have an informal discussion, have people put forward ideas or questions, if they want to, and exchange ideas. So, is there anyone who wants to either make a statement or ask a question? OK, well, Mr Kaldis from the British Council.

Mr Kaldis: Professor Hanham referred to professional institutions monitoring academic assessment in the subject. And I ask, could we learn a bit more about the history of it, how was it introduced and how it came about to be accepted by the academic institutions?

Prof. Sterling: Yes, I can try to answer that one as an engineer, myself. It was done very gently at first, because there was considerable worry. Remember that the professional institutions have a large number of academics in their membership. And also in the senior bodies within the institutions.
My own institution is the institution if electrical engineers. And I was on both sides of the debate. The institution was of the view that, what they had to do initially, was exploratory in collaboration with the departments. And they undertook a pilot set of visitations to departments, where they expected no problems, to be quite honest.
They went in to see, knowing the reputation of the departments, that everything would be all right. Nervousness from the departmental point of view, in that, who are the people coming along to actually tell us, the professors, how to run our departments. After all, we should know all about it.
But in fact, after the first round of these pilot studies, I think there was a belief that the process was fair. And that helps enormously. To aid with that process, they had a fair number of industrialists on the committees, as well. And they were seen as being impartial, because there were one or two examples of rival departments' professors being on the visiting panel and putting the boot-in, I think we would call it, and being excessively critical about their competition.
So I think after about two years after these pilot visits, they came-in in full and I suppose, how many are satisfactory reports, about 1 in 20 we would regard as unsatisfactory. There were others where they would say, in fact the norm was to say, yes we accredit this for a

period of, well, one year would be the shortest time, if there was going to be accredited as opposed to rejected, to five years maximum. So there was a 5-year maximum review cycle.
But they would usually say, we are accredited, but we would like to see the following things developed. Now, it might be that you didn't have sufficient industrial component within the course. An institution specified things like engineering practice as being a requirement, which was done outside in industry, professional training, and so on. *And all* of these things had to be integrated within the academic courses.
So, the accreditation was granted, subject to those things being put in place by the time the accreditation came about. And if a department had problems, you got an one year accreditation, three might have been typical and five was "absolutely no problems". Why *was that?*
The route to chart an engineer in the UK requires a certain level of professional qualifications in academic matters and in professional matters. Now, typically this would be a 3-year degree, at honours level, and, depending on the institution, it would be a first or second, a lower second. The electricals actually say they won't accept third class honours degrees. The other institutions are more liberal and accept third class degrees, because in fact all that happened was that in electrical departments third class degrees went almost out of being. Modify the academics award of degrees, but I cannot say more about it at the moment.
So what it did was, you took an accrediting course, you were effectively exempted from the professional exams, the academic component of charting engineering membership.. So, in other words, you had to assure yourselves as a profession that the academic component was of a satisfactory standard. That was the objective of the accreditation.

Prof. Hanham: Let me add something to this. This sort of accreditation started in the United States and it goes back into the 19th century, and it was concerned with exactly the point of view we are talking about.
If, in fact, the state had a licensing system and required that people go through a certain amount of training, how were they to be assured that the training was being delivered? And it was very important in a number of areas and a subject of great concern.

First of all, mechanical engineering had to be looked at, because trains were constantly coming off tracks. And civil engineers had to be looked at, because the bridges they built were constantly falling down. Pharmacists had to be looked at, because people were constantly poisoning one another. And the thing developed. And it was then taken over by the medical people and the law people, where the accreditation got into the hands of the medical schools and the law schools. That happened essentially in the 1920's in the present form. And of course then everybody else wanted to get in on it.
Now, the association of the business schools now accredits business schools, which is a peculiar way of getting a businessman's input into the business schools. I mean, they have subverted the system on behalf of the teachers, which is not a good thing.

Dr. Page: Could I just add one point to this? Professor Hanham has referred to the accredited subjects. Now, I am not as vice-chancellor, just happened to be a member of the General Optical Council, which is concerned with the validation of courses in universities, which qualify people to practice as ophthalmologists and dispensing opticians.
Now, this is going to have a marked importance for the Community, because in the various professions we each of us now have to accept equivalent qualifications and training of other countries. And it is a major exercise if there is, for example next week, a Greek ophthalmologist, who wishes to come and practice in Britain. The General Optical Council, which is the registration body, has to satisfy itself that the training this ophthalmologist has had in Greece is broadly the same as the training of a British ophthalmologist.. And if it is not, then there are certain prescribed rules where you have to have this compensated. But of course, if an English ophthalmologist wishes to come and practice in Greece, you will have an organisation which has to do the same thing in reverse.

Prof. Hanham: Unfortunately, it begins by testing in Greek.

Prof. Sterling: That is one point I should add to my earlier comments, that is of course that the university autonomy is not actually undermined by the process, because it is theoretically

possible still to run an electrical engineering degree without accreditation from the institution of electrical engineers.
All that the institution is saying is that the qualification that is produced is not acceptable as exemption from the educational requirements. So, a university can still choose to continue, with the course in electrical engineering at least to a degree, which is not accredited.
So, that was a key point at the beginning of the process that institutions had to understand. It is, was, not saying to the university that you cannot run that course, it was saying we will not recognise it. That is an important difference.

Prof. Hanham: And of course that means that the students will go elsewhere.

Prof. Sterling: That is right.

Prof. Panaretos: Professor Vergados, the Rector of the University of Ioannina.

Prof. Vergados: I would like to detour the discussion from accreditation, because it really refers to minimum standards and I think it is something different than evaluation. It is much easier, I think, to set some minimum standards and say these standards are not accomplished, we are not going to do this and that. And it is much harder to really make a classification, a ranking, even among institutions that are successful.
Now, here in Greece, of course, most people view these trends with great suspicion. I would say especially since it was felt that the initiative was from the Government without discussion preceding it and without going through the process of what you've called self-evaluation, which should have been an internal matter of the university. And that it should have preceded somewhat, even though there are problems like the ones you have mentioned.
And now of course with the division, OK, education evaluation and research basically, and then for the educational part except for checking whether there are laboratories, whether there are manuals, whether there are books, whether there are libraries, etc., most people would say that teaching is successful in those rare circumstances, where it is superfluous. Most people would say that. If

you take for example the 10% that you mentioned of the successful students, somebody might say, OK. They would have done it anyhow, even if your teaching was bad.
Coming to research let us say, it is true in my institution at least, you have different views. There are groups of people, for example in the classics or people who have not been fighting for funds for research, and those people are either dis-interested or very sceptical about the process of evaluation.
Now, in the natural sciences I think people are more willing to accept this business of evaluation, because they have written proposals, they are participating in some processes and even the refereeing system being international in a way, the journals being international, people tend to be used to this a little more.
And now two questions:
a) A question of size. I think in a country or in a university you cannot expect to have a system of evaluation if the size is small. If I am going to evaluate you and you are going to evaluate me, chances are that we'll both get good grades, somehow. So you need some, let us say, large distance, so that the short correlation effects do not come into business. And be it, it seems that there has to be some evaluation system that is not going to involve the university as a whole. What I am saying is a question, even though I do not pose it as a question, it seems it will go like evaluating departments, somehow. How is the chemistry departments of various universities doing? And you may find for example, that here in the University of Patras the chemistry department is doing very well, better than in some other place.

Prof. Panaretos: Professor Lykourgiotis is the Head of the Chemistry Department.

Prof. Vergados: Well, it was intentional let us say, and the way it was evaluated was also intentional. But let us say, in another department like electrical engineering the situation may be different. And so I think a) because of this, that is various groups viewing differently the criteria and the necessity of evaluation and b) because you need some size to do this, that it will go probably outside the department and outside of the country. And it seems to us that the Common Market might play a big role, in that Europe is a good size,

like America has been, to develop some kind of objective procedures for evaluation.
Thank you.

Prof. Hanham: Could I just comment on your first point, about accreditation. Just have to be a minimal. Some of the accrediting bodies are now marking departments on a scale of 1 to 10.

Prof. Vergados: And you still call them accreditation, though?

Prof. Hanham: Yes. Because what has happened is that the process of evaluation that we have been talking about, the sort that you are talking about also, has gradually filtered into the professional bodies. And we have just recently had a mechanical engineering one visit and they have given a report on the basis of how they are doing on a whole range of areas, including teaching. And that is a relatively new thing.
But on your general point about subjects, I mean, that is the only way in which you can do research, because people simply cannot understand research outside their own neighbouring areas, as it were.
The question of teaching is complex, because there is a large number of persons in this world, who are known in America as educationists or educators, who believe that there is something called education, which is separate from any other sort of activity, and that creates a difficulty. That is, they believe that there is a tangible something you can measure. Though I am sceptical as to whether that entity exists, and I am inclined to think that many of those people have been teaching a subject that does not really exist in any intellectual sense. But still, that is my view and I suspect that chemists share it.

Prof. Panaretos: Professor Levendakis, the Vice-Rector of the Athens University of Economics.

Prof. Leventakis: I read in the British press that there is a report regarding the ranking of the British universities. For example the London School of Economics is only higher than the Department of Economics in Cambridge, and so on. And the question is, who makes this assessment. I mean, there is a public organisation that evaluates

the British universities? And on what criteria we have this evaluation of the universities? For example, it takes into account the market value of the students who graduate from this particular university, the publications of the academic staff, the contribution in general terms of the university to the society? On what criteria?

Dr Page: Could I just say, please, do not believe any ranking that you read in any newspaper. They are totally spurious, they are written in order to sell newspapers, and it is unwise to place any reliance upon them at all. The reason for this is they tend to rank an institution in accordance with some criteria that they have dreamed up.

Now, we all know that universities are multi-faceted. Many of our activities contribute to a good university or perhaps to a bad university. To reduce all of those factors to one number relies upon weighing the different facets in a way which so far has never been justified, even by the person who dreamed up the weighing.

However, to proceed to answer the question in a more specific way, on the research exercise, as Professor Hanham said, the range of activity was split into, was it 72 different groups. For each of those 72 groups the University Funding Council selected experts, obviously in the main of different universities, and formed a panel for each of these 72. The panels were, in fact, able to take an external view, if there was some sub-area which was not represented and they needed to get some assistance. Those panels, they sent out of the room any member of the panel, while his particular institution was being examined. And the others formed a view of the rank, and only then let him back into the room and told him, in an attempt to get some fairness into the exercise.

In practice, membership of that panel would on average increase its grade of each institution in that department by about a half. We looked at these figures and that is just what happened. It is perhaps surprising it was not more. Though that is the way it was done, we I think would say that most of the rankings were about right. But all of us, in every university I am sure, have at least one glaring example in our own institution, where the ranking has been wrong. I have certainly three, one is too high and two are too low.

Prof. Hanham: You asked a specific question about economics. There were 8 departments of economics that were ranked 5, that was

the highest possible number, and they include the London School of Economics, Cambridge and Oxford.

Prof. Sterling: Gentlemen, I can show you some transparencies, if you are set to do that, that actually go through the process. Or I can leave it until Saturday, whichever you prefer.

Prof. Panaretos: Shall we leave it for Saturday, perhaps? Tomorrow, yes, OK. Just one second. Dr Page's remark carries a certain weight, because he was Treasurer of the Royal Statistical Society of London. So, the way he interprets the number or numbers in general, we can be sure that he is very careful.
Professor Evangelides, the Vice-Rector of the University of Athens, has asked to make a comment.

Prof. Evangelides: [not clear]
My point is that once we have found the models, what do we do about it.
My other question is how do we try to assure at the point of entry that they are good teachers, if there is such a way.

Prof. Hanham: But of course, these are some of the fundamental questions that are constantly being asked and they are involved in this question of teaching.
First of all, it is not my belief that teachers are born as teachers. I mean people are good as teachers by teaching successfully. So they have to be taught how to do it. Now, there are various ways of doing that.
It follows that somebody, who has had no experience in teaching, and when you are appoint him at the beginning it is very difficult indeed to expect them to be good. And part of the business of inducting them into the university in the first few years does involve helping them. I mean, the commonest fault with the young is you cannot hear them. And when you see old men who you cannot hear, you know that they had been inaudible since they were young men. Because people did not get at them and tell them what they ought to do to be heard. I mean, that is the commonest single cause.
Now, there are a lot of simple things like that, but you have also got to work on the assumption that there is going to be a distribution of gifts. Some people will be gifted for research and find teaching very

difficult and you ought to encourage them to spend more time on research. Some people will be gifted as teachers and perhaps become better as they get older and they ought to be encouraged to spend more time on it.
There are always going to be failures in every institution. The failures as teachers and the failures as researchers both are technically in Britain in breech of their contracts, which require them to do successful teaching and research. The difficulty is to formulate a case that will stand up in the law-courts.. But theoretically you should be able to get rid of them. We are trying to get rid of somebody at the moment, who the department has been trying to get rid of for a very long time. But it is a mathematics department. And they are absolutely incapable of a clear statement.

Prof. Lykourgiotis: Is that possible for a mathematician?

Prof. Hanham: They cannot be persuaded that, if they say this man is incapable, it does anything other than support him, because his defence is "I cannot teach because I am incapable. I have an illness". The fact that he had the illness when he was first appointed is irrelevant. The question is, has he obeyed the orders of his department head? But the mathematics department does not want to have orders from its department head and, therefore, is not willing to use that line of argument.
Anyhow, I mean, this is a big, complicated issue.

Dr Page: Could I just say though we ought to draw a distinction between the assessment of individuals and the assessment of departments. And in the main, we have been talking about, Professor Hanham has been talking about, the assessment of departments. And what happens as a consequence is that incompetent individuals, who write in newspapers, gather together the figures on the assessment of departments in an arbitrary way to produce an assessment of an institution. My suggestion to you is that assessment of a department is a feasible and attainable objective. The assessment of an institution is very-very much more difficult.

Prof. Lykourgiotis: Yes, I agree with you that the assessment of department is much easier and more correct than the assessment of the whole university. And I agree with Professor Hanham that there

are many difficulties concerning the measuring of teaching, of research and the evaluation of the organisation of the university.
But now my interest is focused on the relative contribution of each of the three parameters -namely teaching, research and organisation- to the whole department assessment. And my question is if there is a .... [end of tape]

Dr Page: And indeed over the last year, when Britain all of a sudden has nearly doubled its numbers of universities, what we have done is to change the meaning of the word university..
The older universities, all of them, worked on the principle that a university was a place where teaching was undertaken in the context of people adding to knowledge. That is, of professors and lecturers doing research, of their being research students.
On new universities in the main, not entirely but in the main, were intended to be teaching institutions. So they were formed.
And as a consequence now, in the older universities the situation is, as Professor Hanham mentioned, that members of staff have contracts which require them to teach and to do research. In the newer universities there will be many-many people who will have no requirement in their contract to do research. And I do believe that even in the older universities we shall be getting an increasing number of people who are required only to teach and to do some *administration* perhaps, but the requirement to do research will for some individuals no longer be made.

Prof. Hanham: By the way, we already have considerable numbers of people, by considerable I do not mean very large but some over up to about twenty, who are teaching only for one reason or another. And that arises from the fact that we have the need for a number of people in professional subjects to bring professional skills to bear and they come from industry and they cannot be expected to do *research* and it is ridiculous to give them contracts which require them to do research, which they cannot be expected to produce. We similarly have a number, quite a large number, of people who have *research-only* contracts. And you can have one or the other.
Now, that raises, in a very acute form, the problem that you are talking about. I mean then the organisation of the institution needs to be a key issue. Is the university capable of getting this mix right? And that is a very interesting question, but it will be a different question

really for different types of institutions. Because what we will do in the way of a mix is likely to be quite different from that of some other universities. Because our subject mix is different.

Prof. Sterling: Gentlemen, it is also fair to say that governments are increasingly interested in how we deploy our research money rather than just be given it, in relation to the score in this activity exercise, they would like to know how that money is being deployed right down to individual level. And there are nasty rumours about time-sheets being required.
Now, various institutions are trying to find other mechanisms, other than asking to fill-in the time-sheet every day and adding up the results. We think we have one, I can say more about it later if you wish. But there is definitely pressure to get down to an individual level and look at their contribution in research or in teaching.

Dr Munby: Can I go back to self-evaluation? I cannot help but thinking that self-evaluation as a concept is always bound to be regarded with suspicion by the authorities who provide the money. So, could I ask why, in your otherwise admirable and eloquent address, you didn't mention the magic words customers and clients? What about this next question of how you get satisfaction ratings by the customers and the clients of the teaching. I think that it really has to be addressed.

Prof. Hanham: Well, first of all most universities now have quite extensive systems for evaluation of teaching by students, And our students for years have published reports on teaching. Many of them much more uncomplimentary than the unfortunate teachers really deserve. But you know it is an annual penance to read what they say about you. And the people who mysteriously go from being villains for five years to be heroes for five years, know that sooner or later they will go back as villains.
But there is also a good deal of very careful evaluation of that sort of thing. I think that the reason all of us are concerned about not overdoing that element, is that students come in young essentially knowing nothing about universities. And more interested in growing up than in learning. At least that is what seems to have always been the case with students. The way they choose universities seems to be amateurish in the extreme. If I thought that their parents had really

chosen them for them, I would be very pleased, because that would involve a rational choice. But students are not frightfully good at rational choices. So that you have to worry initially about what that is about. My guess is that until we have got a better knowledge base than we have, we are going to have a real difficulty with that.

Now in America there are large numbers of very good evaluations of colleges in terms of what sort of environment they provide. Quite big books, and you can buy them quite cheaply because they only cost about $20.00 for, you know, 1200 pages or something like that. And both parents and students pour over these things and go and investigate, jointly usually, what the colleges are like. But I was 17 years in America before I went to Lancaster, so that I am familiar with this process.

Now I think that this is going to happen in Britain, where the first signs of a commercial market is developing. But the American experience is that to get it right is very difficult and you've got to get statistics which are rather hard to get hold of. But you really want to do a whole range of things in terms of cost and the sort of quality and the sort of students who go there and what the students say about it. It has to be filtered in a careful way.

Now we have not got that sort of thing at the moment. So that the market at the early stage is extremely imperfect.

In addition to that we've got the terrible problem that all of us know from self-experience, the effects of different teaching styles. Now I confronted this in my first year as an undergraduate in the form of *two people* who had wildly different reputations as teachers.

There was one man who delivered immaculately prepared lectures wonderfully delivered. I subsequently discovered by going to the library, because I was suspicious about then, he actually had them typed out of the book written by somebody else. But he delivered them very nicely and was thought to be a great teacher. His colleague, who also delivered lectures, had difficulty in remembering what the subject was, had great difficulty in keeping to the point, and delivered his lectures in a nervous and uncomfortable way, though he was still a nice man. The funny thing was that at the end of the year you totally had forgotten everything that the splendid teacher said and you remembered the strong bits of the man whose delivery was appalling and who would lecture you on a subject which he was not supposed to be lecturing you on. But you actually realise afterwards that he could see a connection that none of you could at the time, but it actually made sense.

Now I mean that is one of the difficulties. How do you protect the really gifted?

Dr. Munby: I accept that. I certainly do not know the answer to the teacher, I am thinking more of research where the product of the research is often, or should be, aimed at people outside the university, especially in subjects where the research is clearly applied. Then it ought to be possible to find some form of satisfaction rating from the recipients in, for example, the community at large or the industry, etc., for that research. What are we doing about it now is my question.

Prof. Hanham: I think that that is not really a problem, because they don't come back if you don't give satisfaction. And there is quite a well-developed market there.
I think the real problem in research is that to research so many markets and, you know, there are various things that we do that I would hesitate to call research that are very valuable to industry. I mean we do testing of rods used in nuclear power plants, because we haven't had the equipment and so on. That is extremely useful and we give great satisfaction. I wonder sometimes what happens to our insurance policies if the rods don't work when they are in the reactor. But that is such low-grade work that I refuse to count it as research.. I put it in the company and treat it as a commercial transaction.
And you move up through various degrees of that sort to the people who, you know, I always say that one of the great troubles about certain classes of people, and I single out normally mathematicians, philosophers and theologians, is that they don't know how they think and they don't normally have an audience in mind. Now, there are real problems there. I mean, the audience in the case of theologians are presumably to be God, but he does not seem to be listening or has rather bad taste to judge by many of the results.
There are gradations and the advantage of doing things by departments that we are talking about or by disciplines that you got to recognise that disciplines change, is that there tends over the years to be a filter there that gets rid of most crockery, not all of it, and most of the charlatans are discovered. And most of the good work is recognised at least within the 150 years.