



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

**Α.ΔΙ.Π.**

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ  
ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ  
ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**H.Q.A.**

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AND  
ACCREDITATION AGENCY

## EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT Mediterranean Studies

UNIVERSITY /TEI University of the Aegean (Rhodes)



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### External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Mediterranean Studies of the University/Technical Institution of the Aegean (Rhodes) consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Rector Michalis Attalides \_\_\_\_\_ (President)  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

\_\_\_\_\_ University of Nicosia \_\_\_\_\_  
(Institution of origin)

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Professor Brian D. Joseph \_\_\_\_\_  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

\_\_\_\_\_ The Ohio State University \_\_\_\_\_  
(Institution of origin)

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Professor Matthias Kappler \_\_\_\_\_  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

\_\_\_\_\_ University of Venice Ca' Foscari \_\_\_\_\_  
(Institution of origin)

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Professor Kim Shelton \_\_\_\_\_  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

\_\_\_\_\_ University of California, Berkeley \_\_\_\_\_  
(Institution of origin)

### ***Introduction***

The External Evaluation Committee for the Department of Mediterranean Studies at the University of the Aegean, located in the city of Rhodes, conducted a site visit from Monday February 24, 2014 through Wednesday February 26, 2014. We had been provided beforehand with the substantial internal report that the Department had developed, along with various accompanying documents, and came to the site visit suitably armed with a considerable amount of very useful information on curriculum, staffing, and research, and further had access to the departmental website as well. At the end of our visit we were provided also with electronic versions of the presentations that we had been treated to throughout our 48 hours in Rhodes, and lists of the people we met with. We were able to inspect an impressive display of the publications of the members of the department and bulletin boards with the posters advertising the large number of workshops, conferences, and summer schools hosted by the Department over the years.

The visit was well structured, with attention by the Department to matters of the program of studies, the quality of teaching, the nature and quality of the research, and engagement with the community at large.

The Committee met first on Monday evening with the Vice Rector of the University, Dr. Nikos Soulakellis, who provided an overview of the structure of the University and where the Department fits into the overall scheme; the whole department was in attendance at that presentation, and throughout all of the general presentations. Dr. Soulakellis was followed by Dr. Panagiotis Tsakonas, the Head of the Department, who gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation covering the School of Humanities and how the department fits into that, and giving also the department's identity and mission, its history, the faculty's current updating of the program of study, problems and challenges the department faces, and a brief overview of its teaching, research, and engagement with the local community, emphasizing the uniqueness of the program.

The next day, we heard presentations from each of the research areas, as defined first by the three "directions" (tracks/branches, Greek: κατευθύνσεις) and then by the five laboratories (Greek: εργαστήρια). There was considerable discussion as well of the curriculum and the overall design of the program of study, which has been updated since the summer of 2013.

Besides visits to two of the five departmental laboratories, the Committee was also

able to visit or see various of the related physical facilities of the University, in particular the University library and some of the planned student housing buildings (in the Old City), and had a lunch at the University Commons.

A significant component as well of the visit was a series of interviews with the faculty by research groups and with a large cross-section of students and graduates. There was also a brief opportunity to meet the three departmental clerical staff, though it did not provide us with much of a chance to hear from them.

The Committee would like to state for the record that the Department managed the local arrangements and the structure of the visit beautifully. We met with everyone we should have met with, and mostly had ample opportunities to interact with all members of the department, including faculty, staff, students and graduates. We were impressed with the Wednesday morning meeting at the City Hall with the mayor of the city, two senior representatives of the regional government, and numerous members of local civil, cultural, and community associations who have interacted with the Department and the University over the years, and with our subsequent visits to various sites in the Old City of Rhodes and the scholars and officials connected with them. Specifically, we visited first the Archaeological Library and Photographic Archive instituted during the period of Italian rule of the island, and then two key focal points for the historical cultural diversity of the island, namely the major mosque and associated library, and the local synagogue and associated museum.

The objective of the internal process was to offer an historical and current description of the programs and of the Department, and this objective was met well by the work of the Department. The result of our visit showed us that the information that we had been provided with was accurate and appropriate even though it went up only through end of the academic year 2012; additional information was provided electronically, updating us with developments since 2012. From what we learned at the relevant presentation on the last day, the Department has effectively used this process to develop a clear Strategic Plan; the Department thus went beyond the objectives by providing an internal examination that has resulted in a very thoughtful and well-rounded strategic plan for the future, charting the course along with the department wants to develop in the coming years.

## ***A. Curriculum***

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

### **1. Undergraduate**

The Committee heard often during its visit that the goals of the Department, reflecting the three departmental directions and given as part of the legal formation of the department in 1997, are:

- Combination of knowledge about the region of the Mediterranean
- Specialization in three distinctive scientific disciplines -- archaeology, linguistics, and international relations – as applied to the Southeastern Mediterranean and to the three linguistic and cultural areas in the region (Arabic, Hebrew, and Turkish, as well, of course, as Greek).

These specific goals reflect larger overarching goals of achieving both interdisciplinarity and an area studies focus. The program of study at the undergraduate level reflects these specific goals well, and is responsive to the requirements of the various constituents that make up the local communities. The curriculum is discussed on a yearly basis by the faculty at large and is adjusted according to the needs of the department. We note in particular that several not insignificant changes took place in the summer of 2013 as a result of these annual discussions.

The Department's goals are effectively served through the curriculum. The structure includes required core classes (μαθήματα κορμού) followed in the typical case – students can skip around if they desire -- by specific disciplinary studies (μαθήματα κατεύθυνσης). The core courses intrinsically incorporate all areas of the Department's mission statement and serve the departmental goals of achieving interdisciplinarity and fostering areal studies, so that it is truly a department of Mediterranean Studies. The disciplinary-specific courses provide a solid formation in the respective field of study. All of this is complemented by language classes in regional languages (as specified above), with a semester as well of academic English, and by the option of an internship (πρακτική άσκηση), to which could be added, if finances permit their restoration, the teaching of Western Mediterranean languages such as French, Spanish, and Italian.

Although the Department achieves all of this in their curriculum, it also achieves something more, in that the students who graduate are comparable in their individual disciplines to those who graduate (elsewhere), but with the advantage of their studies

having been enriched by an areal focus, including study of one or more of the languages of the region. Thus, a linguist emerging from the department not only will have training in linguistics but will also have the further credentials of significant language skills; an archaeologist who wants to work in Egyptology or on Classical excavations in the Arab world (e.g. in Jordan) will have skills in Arabic, which will facilitate work in situ and provide access to some of the relevant specialized literature; and, an international relations graduate will have not only the appropriate conceptual framework but a command of one or more of the key languages of the region as well.

This last point highlights something unique about the Department and its program of studies in comparison with accepted disciplinary standards. In a sense, there are no relevant disciplinary standards because the Department of Mediterranean Studies at the University of the Aegean stands alone in its foci and goals. That is, there really is no other program of study – in Greece or Europe or North America – that blends archaeology, linguistics, and international relations in the way that the Rhodes department does or that focuses on the Southeastern Mediterranean and associated cultures, histories, nations, and languages. The uniqueness of the Rhodes program is a strength, and its carefully planned out mix of subdisciplines and of core-versus-specialized courses makes for a compelling plan. The recent revision to the curriculum gives a greater balance to a student's individual course of study, though a given program may well entail a student taking a large number of classes, even with the reduction in overall hours that the revision has brought.

The staff of the Department are able to achieve successful training of their students but the program suffers from the effects of various national decisions and local circumstances, so that not all of the necessary resources are available. This is especially evident in the area of language instruction, as the Turkish instructor left in recent years and it has not proved possible to replace him. The implementation of the curriculum thus does achieve the predetermined goals of the department except where there are gaps in instructional coverage due to retirements and resignations, along with the nationally mandated restrictions on the hiring of new faculty and of contract instructors.

The curriculum could be enriched by more courses or by added content in some of the courses, covering for instance such topics as religion, literature, economics, or sociology, but this would come only at the expense of more being asked of students and more instructional staff being needed. Expanding the staff would be an important step that could have very positive ramifications for development in other areas (see below regarding the Master's Program).

The teaching staff is aware of where the Department's classes stand in respect to others offered elsewhere in Greece; for instance, the use of language data from the Department's target languages in the courses on general linguistics was identified as innovative, as opposed to the wide use of Greek and English data elsewhere. Even with such successes and even with its careful planning relevant to the curriculum, the Department acknowledges areas in which there is room for improvement. They already have adapted to some of these issues through their recent streamlining of their curriculum based on their current conditions. Moreover, in its Strategic vision, the Department stated that the departmental Committee for the oversight of the curriculum will now work continuously on the further development of the curriculum, and their vision includes the consideration of the introduction of courses with a high degree of current relevance and of a program of studies using English as the medium.

## **2. Master's Program**

There is a single postgraduate program in the Department, a Master's program in Political, Economic, and International Relations in the Mediterranean.

The goals of this program, as enunciated in the Internal Evaluation, are:

- to offer a high level of theoretical and methodological education
- to highlight specialized knowledge of the complex political, social, economic, and geopolitical realities of the Mediterranean area

all with the ultimate aim of equipping graduates for success in the domestic and/or international professional and academic arenas.

This is a two-year program, with seminars and compulsory research time serving the purpose of examining the Mediterranean as a subsystem in relation to the European and broader international context and the role of Greece in the Mediterranean. This graduate program accepts only students with a sufficient background in international relations or a related discipline (political science, economics, law, etc.) and is an effective program for the continuation of such studies, with a focus on the Mediterranean.

As is the case with the undergraduate program, the graduate program too is unique as to its Mediterranean focus, so that comparison with other programs according to

accepted standards is not really possible. We note, though, that the requirements of the program, both as to admissions and as to curriculum, are what they should be (with obligatory advanced courses and a required thesis) and are clearly articulated. Students in this specialized program come to it with a strong background in relevant disciplinary studies so that they can move quickly into advanced work in their field.

The current staffing seems to be adequate to the task of developing graduates with suitable advanced training; indeed, from our meeting with some of the graduates of this program who work locally, it was clear that they at least had furthered their professional qualifications through their postgraduate studies.

As stated in the Strategic Plan, the Department is looking to develop further the post-graduate dimension of its overall programming. The faculty hopes to internationalize the existing course of study by bringing in a broader international representation of students, recognizing that this would entail developing classes using English as the medium of instruction. Most significantly, they want to develop other post-graduate programs, specifically in Linguistics and in Archaeology, but such development has to wait till after the evaluation exercise, just as English-language instruction must await changes in the relevant national law.

The Committee endorses the Department's views here and strongly recommends the courses of action they outline.

### **3. Doctoral**

The doctoral program exists in all three areas that make up the Department. It is a research-only track for which, as is customary in Europe but not in North America, there is no prescribed program of coursework. Students must have an M.A. degree to be admitted, so that they enter with a certain level of expertise. Students have a three-person committee guiding their work, though, unlike doctoral programs in at least some parts of Europe, they are unable to benefit from the presence of foreign members on their committees due to the particulars of Greek national law governing such studies. We note that in its Strategic Plan, the Department states its desire to be able to include foreign members on doctoral committees, and to implement the possibility of writing dissertations in English, and we strongly endorse these recommendations.

## ***B. Teaching***

In general, the mission of the department is reflected well in the ways in which its courses are taught. Up-to-date information technologies are employed in teaching, e-learning is in progress, materials are available on-line, and, most important of all in our estimation, the quality of teaching is very high to judge from both our interviews with students and the evaluations that students provide at the end of each course. Overall the ratio of students to instructional staff is far higher than it should be, though from a practical standpoint, it is not as bad as it might be as there are many students who do not attend classes at all, in part for economic reasons connected with coming to and living in Rhodes.

The Department gives emphasis to alternative methods of assessment, such as papers, portfolios, and presentation in class, that go beyond the traditional examinations at the end of a term, although examinations still dominate the means of assessment of students. Assessment of instruction by students is done by anonymous electronic evaluations after each course; the number of students participating in these evaluations is low, however, due at least in part to the fact that they are done electronically.

Student-teacher relations are excellent, and the students we spoke with to a person loved their teachers and sang their praises. These admittedly were the most active and engaged students, but their enthusiasm for the level of instruction in the Department was striking. These students clearly benefit from their interactions with their instructors, both as to consultation on research papers (e.g. regarding relevant bibliography) and as to participation in faculty research projects.

Required textbooks must, by law, be in Greek, and non-Greek materials cannot be required, again by law; these mandates constitute a problem in some of the specialized subject areas where many useful materials are not available in Greek. The library situation is most unfortunate, and is a weakness, not of the Department but of the University as a whole. There are serious issues with the unavailability of relevant bibliography, with a lack of money for new book purchases, and with very limited hours of access, all of which are problems that can be traced directly to austerity measures on the national level that affect the University as a whole. Interlibrary loan with other campuses of the University of the Aegean helps somewhat, though the three-day wait for books seems overly long, and the cost to order a book from other universities in Greece – a cost borne by students – is too high in our estimation. Some help as well comes through electronic access to materials through the HEAL-Link system.

Language instruction is seen by students and by faculty as an important part of the program. We feel that the language teaching is done exceptionally well despite the difficult situation due to under-staffing; one of the languages – that most frequently chosen by students -- lacks a regular faculty member altogether and there is essentially just one instructor per language, limiting the availability of higher-level classes, e.g. in literature and translation. The methodological approach is different for each language but is consistent with current practices elsewhere. Students would benefit from being able to undertake language study in a relevant foreign country, but we note that only a relatively small number of students take advantage of the several available Erasmus agreements with universities in Turkey for the study of Turkish. More generally, Erasmus mobility – and here the instructional staff can be included – is lower than is desirable. Concerning in-coming Erasmus mobility, which is also low, adoption of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) is essential to effecting an increase, as is the development of English-language-medium classes.

While the Department has taken advantage of natural ties to link linguistics with archaeology in course material and similarly to link international relations with linguistics, there is more that can be done to wed the different topics and approaches that are less well allied; in particular, a linkage in teaching between international relations and archaeology could be achieved by a recognition of what archaeology can contribute to the understanding of cultural heritage, a matter of considerable policy importance in the Mediterranean in the present day.

In the Strategic Plan, instruction was given due attention, as the Department outlined several measures directed at maintaining and extending the high level of instructional performance. In particular, the Department proposes to encourage the development of further alternative teaching and assessment methods, to implement further the design and development of e-teaching materials, and to engage in training in methods and techniques of adult education. Moreover, the Department is looking for ways to involve students more in the evaluation of classes.

### ***C. Research***

The Department of Mediterranean Studies is a research-active department, with each of the three areas contributing to the research profile. There is both a local Greek and an international dimension to the content of their research and the venues in which publication takes place, though the majority of the Department's publications appear in Greek outlets or in conference proceedings.

The Department has well articulated objectives for its research, with general goals that hold for all three areas it comprises as well as specific ones for each area. For instance, all areas are expected to produce new scientific knowledge, methods, tools and related educational materials in accordance with international standards for excellence, and all are expected to contribute to the interdisciplinary mission and to focus on the Mediterranean and especially the Southeastern Mediterranean region in its research. Moreover, the Department members recognize the need for rigorous internal assessment of research, though at present there are no explicit means in place for such assessment of faculty research.

The Department itself promotes the research of its members, and has expectations of significant contributions by each regular member. There seems to be little support, however, in the way of money and facilities coming centrally from the University, so finding support for research activities has meant looking to outside sources. To that end, the members have been very successful in their attempts to find support for research, in terms of funding for projects, for conference travel, and for hosting of conferences. Moreover, Department members are involved internationally in various projects; the internal report mentions 21 different projects between 2006 and 2011 involving collaborations with scholars elsewhere in Europe and even North America, not to mention links with other scholars in Greece.

The Department has been very active in hosting research conferences and developing summer programs. This activity is laudable but admittedly is a two-edged sword. Such conferences and summer schools and workshops promote the program, increase visibility, and can give individual members an opportunity to present their research and learn from others, but they require a considerable amount of organizational work that takes time away from productive research efforts. There seems to have been an increase in such activity in the last two years, which can be both good and bad. Still, if the benefits outweigh the costs, both financial and temporal, there can be compelling reasons for putting in the work involved.

The research activities are organized according to the departmental tracks, further facilitated by the existence of five laboratories that serve as important focal points for various projects and lines of inquiry. They make available resources to all concerned and focus research energies in a concentrated way. The impressive Information Technology Laboratory, moreover, has the potential to connect with the different areas of the Department in ways that would be mutually beneficial; the stated interest in legal language, for instance, could have interesting connections with the work of the Laboratory for Mediterranean Policy. We visited two of the laboratories, and

based on what we saw and from discussions we had with those responsible for the other laboratories, we see a need for considerable updating of equipment and for technical support. The Information Technology Laboratory, for instance, was set up entirely by the faculty member in charge, with no help from a technician, and contains machines that are ten years old. Most of the laboratories, moreover, lack specialized personnel, beyond their directors. We noted too the overall lack of computer equipment, including laptops, routers for wireless internet access, and stable classroom projection facilities, for faculty, and see this lack as having a definite negative impact on productivity. Problems with the University library also hamper the research effort, though we note that the presence in the Old City of specialized libraries and collections offers unique opportunities for further research engagement.

A significant aspect to any department's research activity is doctoral research. Here the Department has a large number of doctoral students, with 43 active dissertations and 13 others in limbo (but technically in progress). There is a fair distribution of dissertations across the three areas in terms of numbers. The range of topics covered by the dissertations reflects the interests and expertise of the faculty members, which is a reasonable and in fact expected development found universally in doctoral programs in Greece, Europe, and North America. The approaches taken in the dissertations appear to be current both in theme and methodology. This part of the departmental research effort is both substantial and well conceived. We were impressed that doctoral candidates are required to present progress reports to the whole department on an annual basis, a model for assessment of research that other programs could follow. These assessments probably play a role in the fine record of years-to-completion on the part of the doctoral students, an enviable average of 5 years.

In its Strategic Plan the Department mentions overtly the need to expand the international range of the venues in which the members publish, with particular attention to increasing their representation in refereed, peer-reviewed journals, both as to the number and scope of the journals to which papers are submitted. We endorse this goal and feel that it is essential to increasing the Department's research profile. Moreover, given the uniqueness of the overall program, and its tripartite nature, the visibility that comes from publication in internationally recognized major journals is a vital part of the plan to move the Department forward and to attract new graduate-level students and faculty as the Department realizes its goals for the future.

The Department has indicated new potential sources of funding, such as Horizon 2020 with its focus on the Mediterranean, and will continue to look to local sponsors. Further collaborations on a national and international scale are planned. We encourage all of this activity.

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

There are several aspects of the Department's relation to other academically related services about which we have little direct information, though some inferences are possible. For instance, we were not told of any efforts on the part of the Department to simplify administrative procedures, but such must have been the case in recent times as all record-keeping is now done electronically.

Similarly, we were not made aware of any overt departmental policy regarding ways of keeping students on campus, but that seems to be more an issue that needs to be addressed at the University level or at the level of the School. Still, it was clear that the Department was concerned about increasing the student presence and enriching student life. We note that a lack of housing has a serious negative effect on attendance in classes, at the very least, as it places students from outside of Rhodes at a disadvantage for relocating to the city. We thus were encouraged by the University's planned development of student housing in the Old City, and saw the existence of a Commons for meals as a positive force as well. Although it is not our place, perhaps, to make suggestions about the content of particular classes, it can be said that changes in the nature of classwork, say by requiring more in-class projects of a small-group nature, could increase student presence in classes. As the testimony of the students themselves indicates, the faculty make themselves available to students, both on and off campus, which contributes to student engagement and surely to student success as well.

The departmental secretariat consists of three staff members, serving a population of some 900 students, as well as the instructional staff. The ratio of clerical staff to those served is thus very high. We met briefly with the clerical staff, and they seem to be happy with their role in contributing to the Department's success. Faculty felt that they are well served by the staff, though a few of the students that we interviewed voiced concerns over their access to the clerical staff and difficulties they had with communicating with them, one student even worrying – surely needlessly – that reporting problems might lead to possible detrimental effects on the completion of his/her program.

Infrastructural matters with regard to students and the Department more generally deserve special mention. The campus has been recently renovated, and the «March 7th» building has been recently reopened. The Department is now housed in that building, with most faculty offices located there, though most of the laboratories and

classrooms are still in different buildings; this makes a big difference to faculty cohesion and surely has a positive effect on the students as well as they can see and interact with faculty more easily and more readily. It has not completely solved a University-wide problem with a lack of classroom space, as the three Departments (τμήματα) on campus all compete for the same classrooms, making scheduling for each department into a nightmarish scenario; something needs to be done about that but it needs to be solved at the University level as there is only so much a department can do on its own. We do not know the extent of general access for students on campus to computers and other computationally related facilities such as free internet access, and note that the few computers in the library are restricted to library-related work only. The library, as mentioned above, does not serve the students well, though again those issues need to be solved at a level higher than the Department itself.

Electronic communication is the norm, and the Department's website is a key piece of that communicative function, moreover offering great visibility to departmental programs. Some parts of the website, e.g. the home pages for each of the laboratories, could be better populated, and on-going website development is part of the Department's future plans. Included in those plans is the development of web materials in the Department's three target languages, a move which would not only serve a symbolic value in promoting these languages but would also increase visibility in some parts of the world and possibly have a positive effect on attracting international students.

Regarding collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations, we found the Department's efforts on these fronts overall to be most impressive. The meeting the Committee had on Wednesday morning with members of the local community who are engaged and involved with the University and the Department revealed a deep affection for the University and a deep sense of it as a positive force for the economic, cultural, and intellectual well-being of the island. The Department's apparent attention to continuing education and to older and returning students has contributed to this sense, as has the fact that many locals who are placed in positions of importance in the community at large and in local service organizations are graduates of the Department or have other connections to it, such as welcoming students for practical training; this is the case, for example, with the International Center for Writers and Translators.

There is great potential for on-going collaboration between the Department and the community and for on-going contributions on the part of the Department. We note for instance that the Department is the only place in Greece where Modern Israeli Hebrew is taught and, importantly, there is a significant touristic presence from Israel in Rhodes; thus graduates of the Department with expertise in Hebrew may well be

in a position to contribute to the touristic economy of the island.

The same can be said for the archaeological side of the Department. Department members enjoy close collaboration with the local archaeological authorities in their active research projects and in the practical training that students receive. There is also strong support from the local and regional government in the creation of project areas and there are local cultural societies to support the research projects as well; we heard very positive words, for instance, from the President of the Friends of Kimisala, one of the Department's excavation projects, at our meeting at the Mayor's Office.

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

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

Throughout the report at several points already, we have referred to aspects of the Department's Strategic Plan document, which we had the opportunity to examine to some extent in the Internal Report but which was elaborated upon in the presentation we were treated to on Wednesday morning. Overall, this review process has had a clear positive effect on the Department, affording it the opportunity to undergo a serious self-examination, which has led to a very sensible and rich strategic plan to go forward.

The Department's Plan identifies both strong points to continue to develop and weak points to remedy.

The strong points included the following:

- uniqueness of the overall program of the Department in the context of the Greek educational system and farther afield
- interdisciplinarity of approach in teaching and research and the excellent synergy they produce
- geographic positioning in regard to the historical and (multi-)cultural character of Rhodes
- the arrangement of the buildings in a united campus
- the strong teaching and research personnel

- the wider professional application of developed knowledge and experience
- the multi-level connection with the local and wider communities
- increasing Greek and international interest in the Mediterranean and Mediterranean Studies.

We as a Committee agree with all of these and note, as the Department did, that several of these afford interesting opportunities for the future. We would add as well that the Department seems to constitute a cohesive unit in which the members as a group appear to work well together and to share a common vision of what the Department can be.

Among the weak points were the following:

- the reduction in funding at the University, School, and Department levels
- the restricted number of teaching personnel in relation to the demands of the program and of the academic activities
- the lack of specialized teaching personnel for the teaching of the languages of the area, specifically Turkish and Arabic
- the understaffing of administrative and technical personnel
- the unsatisfactory size and functioning of the library
- the lack of technological equipment in the building installations
- restricted cooperation at the teaching level with other departments of the School
- the low level of student participation in the evaluation of teaching
- the uncertain and changing institutional legal framework which makes long-term planning difficult if not impossible.

While we agree with these weak points, many of them are infrastructural issues that need to be addressed at higher levels than the Department itself. The current economic crisis is certainly responsible for many of these problems, though in some instances it has not created them but rather has exacerbated existing problems in the governance and structure of the Greek educational system.

For instance, the slow process of election and appointment of teaching and research faculty ( $\Delta\text{EII}$ ) has long been a problem but has been made even worse in the current economic climate. The inability of the Department to hire contract instructors similarly has had a negative effect on programming and teaching, and is directly attributable to the dire economic straits in which Greece is currently situated.

The members of the Department share several central goals as they move ahead in the post-assessment period:

- solidify its presence as an area studies program and strengthen its contribution to Mediterranean Studies
- produce scientists with a deep knowledge of the history and international developments in Southeastern Mediterranean region, as well as of the languages and the cultures of the peoples of the region
- develop further interdisciplinary study of the area through the utilization of new technologies.

Some of the short-term goals as far as the curriculum is concerned have already been addressed through the reforms that the Department enacted in 2013. These larger and longer-range goals are all quite reasonable ones that are eminently achievable given the right level of support and the right legal institutional framework.

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

The Committee endorses all of the suggestions that have been made throughout the report that pertain to the improvement and advancement of the Department, while at the same time emphasizing that this is a high-quality Department that is in very good shape, filled with young and energetic faculty who are capable of leading the programs into a promising position in the future.

The suggestions can be summarized as follows:

- enrich the curriculum by adding more courses or by added content in some of the courses, covering for instance such topics as religion, literature, economics, or sociology
- internationalize existing course of post-graduate study by bringing in a broader

international representation of students and developing classes using English as the medium of instruction

- develop other post-graduate programs, specifically in Linguistics and in Archaeology
- include foreign members on doctoral committees
- implement the possibility of writing dissertations in English
- fix problems with the access to and functioning of the library
- remedy the lack of a regular faculty member (ΕΕΔΙΠ) for certain of the languages
- encourage more Erasmus mobility for both faculty and students
- develop further alternative teaching and assessment methods
- implement further the design and development of e-teaching materials
- engage in training in methods and techniques of adult education
- do more to wed in teaching the different topics and approaches in the Department's sections, e.g. linking international relations and archaeology through common examination of cultural heritage
- implement a plan for rigorous internal assessment of research
- think carefully before undertaking the hosting of conferences as to whether the benefits outweigh the costs, both financial and temporal, of the organizational work
- update equipment in and provide technical support for labs
- provide faculty with computer equipment, including laptops, routers for wireless internet access, and stable classroom projection facilities
- expand the international range of the venues in which departmental members publish, with particular attention to increasing representation in refereed, peer-reviewed journals, both as to the number and scope of the journals to which papers are submitted
- identify and explore new potential sources of funding, such as Horizon 2020
- continue to develop relations with local sponsors
- expand collaborations on a national and international scale
- encourage the University's planned development of student housing in the Old City
- create additional classroom space
- add computational facilities for students

The Department is positioned well to effect the changes and improvements that are

called for. Its well conceived Strategic Plan gives it a blueprint for moving forward. Moreover, it has already exhibited a high degree of willingness to change and improve itself, as is especially evident through its recent updating and adapting of the undergraduate program to the changing circumstances of the department, and through the existence of two departmental committees, one to oversee the curriculum and one to carry out the internal evaluations.

Members of the Committee

**UNIVERSITY OF THE AEGEAN**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES**

Name and Surname

Signature

**Prof. Michalis Attalides**

Rector, University of Nicosia, Nicosia, Cyprus

**Prof. Brian D. Joseph**

Professor of Linguistics, The Ohio State University, Ohio, U.S.A.

**Dr. Matthias Kappler**

Associate Professor, Universita Ca' Foscari Venezia, Venice, Italy

**Dr. Kim S. Shelton**

Associate Professor & Classics Director, University of California, Berkeley,  
California, U.S.A.