

**UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI
FINLAND**

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this report we will describe the various assessments of operations carried out at the University of Helsinki in the 1990s. In addition, we will discuss where these assessments have led and how the operations of the university have benefited from them, especially from the point of view of the central and faculty administrations. The University of Helsinki has long traditions in institutional assessment, such as evaluating the learning performance of students and assessing teachers in connection with the filling of teaching posts, for example when nominating professors. Throughout the history of the University research has also been assessed. Other types of assessments, however, such as the institutional assessment of the entire university, faculties or departments, are a phenomenon of the 1990s, and the present decade could well be called the breakthrough period of assessment.

There are many reasons behind this increase in assessment. A significant feature of this trend has been that the assessments have usually been started through the University's own initiative. The objective has been to improve the operation of the whole University or some part of it. The assessments have characteristically been received rather well within the University, and have been carried out by the University's own personnel. Many assessment committees have also included representatives of the student body. The assessments carried out at the University of Helsinki have been internal assessments.

Assessment activities have not been guided by any kind of overall plan; rather, the various assessments have all stemmed from some current need. The most comprehensive assessments covering the operations of the University as a whole have emerged from the wish of the administration to increase and only after they were under way did the need to cut costs emerge. Some of the assessments have stemmed from a wish to develop some specific part of University operations, such as continuing education, teaching, internationalisation or research activities.

The assessments have also not been based on any specific management models, such as the TQM or the SWOT model of management by result. Rather, the starting point has been local operational problems and the pragmatic conclusions derived from them.

In addition to the University of Helsinki, the Universities of Jyväskylä and Oulu and the Vantaa AMK Institution are participating as Finnish pilot units in the IMHE project. They have co-operated with the University of Helsinki in producing a report on the national context of institutional assessment which is to be found as an appendix to this report.

The project was carried out by collecting assessment material from the University's internal assessment procedures and from national assessments which had in some way involved the University of Helsinki or its departments. The group also arranged discussions with representatives of central administration and some faculties.

The writers of this report are personally responsible for the execution of the project at the University of Helsinki and for the opinions expressed herein.

2. THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

The University of Helsinki is the oldest university in Finland. It was founded in Turku in 1640 and transferred to Helsinki in 1828. It is the largest and most multi-disciplinary of Finland's universities, and is also the only bilingual one, with Finnish and Swedish as the languages of instruction. Some faculties in the University are as large as other entire institutions of higher education in Finland. The University has traditionally enjoyed a high degree of autonomy and tries to maintain it even in the present environment of management by result.

This report will first introduce the University of Helsinki. Then it will describe the assessments already carried out in the University. Finally, it will conclude with a discussion of what impacts the assessments have had on University operations, especially from the point of view of management and administration.

2.1. Students and degrees

In 1995 there were 31 671 students at the University of Helsinki, over 60 per cent of them women. 26 554 students were studying for basic academic degrees, 1 712 for lower academic degrees, and 3 405 for postgraduate degrees. There were 1 258 foreign students at the end of the year. In 1995, 380 lower academic degrees, 2 100 basic degrees and 434 postgraduate degrees were granted. In addition, 143 professional specialist's degrees were granted.

The various units of the University Centre for Continuing Education organised a total of over 1 100 courses in 1995, totalling 68 500 teaching hours and with nearly 31 800 students participating. Over 2 700 people participated in labour market training intended specifically for unemployed people with an academic education. 23 400 students participated in Open University courses and 1 800 students in Senior Citizen's University courses.

2.2. Faculties and departments

The University is composed of nine faculties: theology, law, medicine, arts, science, education, social sciences, agriculture and forestry, and veterinary medicine. The latter became a faculty in August of 1995, when it was incorporated within the University of Helsinki in accordance with the structural reorganisation plan of the higher education system. At the same time, the kindergarten teacher's training programme was joined to the Faculty of Education. Helsinki's Faculty of Theology is the only theology faculty in Finland whose language of instruction is Finnish. In addition, the Faculties of Agriculture and Forestry and Veterinary Medicine are the only ones of their kind in Finland. Also included in the operations of the faculties are five field stations and two research farms. Overall, the University provides teaching in approximately 270 subjects within the faculties.

The University also has more than ten independent institutes and departments operating under the supervision of the University Senate and an additional six operating under the supervision of the faculties. Some of these independent institutes and departments provide services for the entire University (such as the University Computing Centre and the University Press); others are research institutes which also serve to co-ordinate postgraduate research. The Language Centre is an independent institute providing practical language teaching for the entire University. As the rest of the University, the independent institutes and departments have been targets of further development in recent years. Adult Education provided by the University has mainly taken place in the various units of the Centre for Continuing Education, which are located in southern and south-eastern Finland. Adult education consists of continuing education, labour market training, and Open University teaching. In addition to adult education, the Centre for Continuing Education has been responsible for research and development activities. The Centre has very actively co-operated with the faculties and various interest groups.

2.3. Funding

The University of Helsinki is funded through the national budget, extra budgetary income and outside funding. In 1995, the University's gross income totalled FIM 1 954 million (325.6 million ECU), of which the national budget was FIM 1 251 million, extra budgetary income FIM 194 million and outside funding FIM 448 million. Value added tax reimbursements totalled FIM 61 million. The budget of the Centre for Continuing Education totalled FIM 134 million.

Funding for research in the University of Helsinki comes from various sources: the University's own research funds, of which approximately FIM 13 million were allocated in 1995; special University funding for Centres of Excellence, of which a total of FIM 4 million marks were allocated to four units in 1995; and outside funding for research which in 1995 totalled close to FIM 200 million, part of it coming through the EU. Based on existing agreements, research funding from the EU to the University of Helsinki will total approximately FIM 35 million over the next three years. A significant portion of research, however, is funded through the basic allocations given to faculties, which come from the national budget. At the moment, it is impossible to determine directly from the records, or without a separate analysis, what share of these basic allocations go towards supporting research. The University is, however, presently working on ways of more specifically calculating costs by operation and allocating funds towards specific performance areas. Indeed, the Ministry of Education has required that the entire higher education establishment in Finland increase its awareness of costs and cost-effectiveness.

2.4. International Relations

The University is aiming to increase international contacts and teaching in foreign languages, as well as to increase student exchanges. Finland's membership in the European Union has expanded international activities associated with adult education

Along with EU membership, interest and participation in the EU's research programmes has increased. In 1995, 32 research projects and 14 HCM projects were launched under the EU's Research and Development Framework Programme III. Fourteen projects received funding from the INTAS Organisation. Two hundred proposals were submitted for the Fourth Research and Development Framework Programme of the EU, of which 56 were granted funding. In this respect, the University of Helsinki has succeeded very well.

2.5. Bilingualism

The bilingualism of the University of Helsinki dates back to the 19th century, when Finnish became a language of instruction alongside Swedish. At present, 6 per cent (97) of the teaching posts in the University are reserved for instruction in Swedish. Approximately 7 per cent (2 200) of the students are Swedish-speaking. Over 20 per cent of Finland's Swedish-speaking students in institutions of higher education study at the University of Helsinki. By statute, in subjects where instruction in Swedish is available only at the University of Helsinki, the university must educate experts fluent in Swedish to meet the needs of the country. Tuition, information and other activities in Swedish connect the university to the Nordic community of universities and support Nordic exchanges of students, teachers and researchers. They also help to facilitate organising joint educational projects and administrative Co-operation between Nordic universities.

3. QUALITY ASSESSMENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Different types of operational assessments did not become commonplace at the University until the 1990s. Institutional evaluation of the operations of the entire University has been carried out, as well as assessment within faculties and departments. In addition, evaluations of teaching, time management, adult education, etc., are being carried out.

3.1. Internal assessment in the university of Helsinki 1992-1994

A wide-ranging internal assessment of operations was carried out at the University in 1992-94. The assessment took place at a time when in Finland as well as elsewhere, especially Great Britain and Holland, demands had been placed on universities to become more efficient in their operations. In its programme, the government had included the objective of incorporating the principles of management by result into various areas of the public sector, including institutions of higher education. In the same context, the goal was set to reduce personnel costs by 5 per cent by the year 1995. Thus, the course towards steering by results and considerable savings in personnel costs was taken before there was public awareness of the onset of the recession. When the economy started rapidly declining, the trend outlined above gained momentum.

The assessment was carried out by two committees chaired by the Vice-Rector, with members representing different areas of study as well as all the different personnel groups: teaching staff, non-academic staff and students. The committees were appointed in September 1992 and March 1994.

The University Senate assigned the first committee the task of implementing the cuts in personnel and other resources as appropriately and equitably as possible. Another objective was to find resources for developing the University despite the fact that it was impossible to obtain such funding from the national budget. The third objective set by the Senate was to develop the internal allocation of resources to better account for changes in the operations of faculties and departments, as well as corresponding changes in resource needs. Similarly, from the beginning of 1994 budgeting based on operating costs was to take effect. The committee was also asked to suggest ways of consolidating or otherwise improving the University's overall structure.

The second committee, appointed in 1994, was commissioned by the Senate to analyse the operations and resources of the University, and to propose general guidelines for the allocation of resources

based on the analysis. These guidelines covered the number of transferable posts and the principles governing the allocation of administrative personnel resources between faculties, the latter being tied to the government's demand that administrative personnel be cut by 8 per cent by the beginning of 1997 and library staff and research support personnel costs be cut by 8 per cent within the same time frame. In addition, the committee was to propose principles for overall resource allocation which would make it possible to allocate University resources internally as single blocks in 1998, with no moneys earmarked for specific purposes. The committee utilised the help of the Library Committee and also appointed a separate working group to look at cost savings in teaching and research support personnel.

3.1.1. The 1992-93 Internal Assessment

During the autumn of 1992 and spring of 1993, a round of meetings with all the departments and units of the University was conducted: the Assessment Committee conferred with different personnel groups, representatives of the various faculties and members of different units within the central administration. All in all, over 40 meetings were held. In preparation for the consultations, questionnaires were sent to the parties, along with a request for written comments and answers. A memorandum was compiled of each meeting, and these were then collected together.

The Assessment Committee attempted to maintain contact with the Council for Higher Education, which oversees on a national level the assessment of structural developments within the higher education system. Despite these close contacts, however, it was difficult to form a clear overall picture of the national policies concerning higher education. At the same time, the labour market situation in the country was confused. These open questions in the society outside the University made it more difficult for the Assessment Committee to make concrete and definite proposals.

The Assessment Committee established the following objectives as central to the development of the University: promoting a higher degree of flexibility, increasing efficiency, advancing the principle of the universities, making full use of the University's bilingualism, and establishing quality on a par with quantity as an assessment criterion. Flexibility in University operations was deemed especially necessary in times of fiscal constraint. For example, promoting new fields of research and creating the teaching posts necessary to establish them can only be achieved through internal reallocation of University resources by making some of the posts fixed-term and transferable. The Committee also suggested that the efficiency of the University could be improved by expanding Co-operation between departments within faculties as well as by developing and increasing the efficiency of the administration. Similarly, the Assessment Committee thought that efficiency should play a larger role in the allocation of resources. The Committee was also concerned about bilingualism, which it saw as a special richness and resource that was not utilised as well as it might be. The Committee noted that improving the status of the Swedish-speaking students and the Swedish language involves fostering the appropriate types of Co-operation, rather than isolating Swedish speakers from the rest. Finally, the Committee was concerned that as steering by result has made efficiency and cost-effectiveness ever more important goals, there may be a danger that quantitative criteria alone would be used as assessment tools, and this could easily lead to declining quality standards. In order to retain quality as an important assessment criterion, they proposed that periodic discipline-based quality assessments would be carried out both nationally and on a Nordic level.

Based on these objectives, the Assessment Committee made a number of concrete proposals which were grouped into four categories according to the decision-making body concerned. These were

proposals involving: 1) external bodies; 2) terms of employment within the University; 3) the University Senate as it decided upon the 1994 budget; and 4) the faculties and independent institutes. When submitting its report, the Assessment Committee emphasized that although an enormous number of evaluations had been carried out and plans had been drafted to develop the higher education system in general and the University of Helsinki in particular, very few decisions on these matters had been made at any level, including the government, the Ministry of Education, or the university itself. The Committee noted that this decision-making responsibility should no longer be shirked.

3.1.2. The 1994 Internal Assessment

The Assessment Committee appointed in 1994 set out to continue the work of the earlier committee and the development which had ensued from it. In order to carry out its task, the Committee sent a questionnaire to the departments to gather their views on issues central to the development of the University and to collect quantitative information which was otherwise not available.

The Assessment Committee mapped its duties against the background of both the international situation and the situation in Finnish society. A variety of factors rendered it necessary for the Committee to prepare proposals for cutting various personnel costs as well as for drafting new guidelines for the general allocation of resources within the University. These factors included considerable cuts in appropriations for higher education -- greater, on average, than those experienced by other sectors of the society; the relationship of the institutions of higher education to society; the processes of change taking place in higher education; and finally, the adoption of the principles of management by result.

The Committee proposed guidelines for instituting 40 transferable teaching posts; the University Senate had earlier made a decision in principle about establishing these kinds of posts. Transferable posts would help the University to increase flexibility and to use resources more efficiently. Underlying an 8 per cent cut in costs for non-academic staff were steep budget cuts which led to various economising measures and a sharp cut in operating funds. At the same time, it was decided to attempt to reallocate 5 per cent of the resources from the funding support operations to the University's areas of emphasis and another 10 per cent to basic operations. The Committee proposed that cost saving measures directed at non-academic staff would chiefly target the central administration and the independent institutes. The reallocation of resources was proposed as a way to even out disparities between faculties.

The Assessment Committee also developed proposals for general operational guidelines. These targeted the public image of the University, its relations with the surrounding community and the society at large, a student's right to choose study programmes across faculties and institutions, Open University teaching, and placement opportunities for University graduates. The Committee proposed that suggestions be made to the Ministry of Education concerning the ways that separate departments who jointly contribute to educating a Ph.D. candidate be fairly credited. It also solicited suggestions about ways of organising direct funding from the Ministry to the national units of the University. In addition, the Committee made proposals calling for concrete decisions concerning the ways costs are allocated between the different performance areas (research, teaching, and societal impact), establishing a second post of University research officer, and adopting the placement of graduates as one of the criteria for allocating resources

3.2. Assessments in the faculties

Faculties in the University of Helsinki have conducted discipline-based institutional quality assessments either out of their own desire to conduct a self-evaluation or as part of a national or international assessment in the field. Institutional assessments have often contained both departmental self-evaluations as well as faculty-level summaries. Some of the faculty assessments are introduced below.

3.2.1. Faculty of Arts

In the 1989-90 academic year the Faculty of Arts conducted an assessment of the operations of the whole unit and published the results as a book entitled *The Humanists of Tomorrow: The Present and Future of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki*. The book includes reports on each department as well as views about how the faculty might develop. The self-assessment was inspired by the anticipation of a new administrative culture as well as the challenge presented to the development of operations by rapid changes in the society. Financial and other decision-making powers are increasingly given to the faculties, which was expected to require more thorough preparation for decisions, monitoring of efficiency, and willingness to assume responsibility for functional development. Moreover, the faculty also wanted to convince outsiders of the importance of its actions. The discussions held at the various departments while preparing the reports were considered by the faculty to be the assessment's most important outcome.

The assessment process began in November 1989 with a two-day seminar held for department chairmen, who discussed the necessity and contents of the assessment. The work was continued within the individual departments. Some arranged seminars of their own, while some discussed the state of affairs in other ways. However, every department prepared a report on their current activities and future plans. The evaluation process was designed by a group nominated by the faculty, with the Dean, the Vice-Dean, the faculty secretary, the planning officer and four faculty professors as members. The planning officer produced a great deal of useful statistical material on students, teachers and other staff, degrees completed, postgraduate education and publications. The final chapter of the report contains a number of proposals for practical measures, and it also presents some guidelines and visions for the future.

The Faculty of Arts also participated in the national discipline-based evaluations held in 1993 at the initiative of the deans. One of the aims was to chart possibilities for Co-operation between universities. One positive result of this discipline-based evaluation was a clearer sense of a group of academic subjects united by their cultural significance, sharing a sense of purpose, action and important features (such as their national importance). The Faculty of Arts at this University differs from other arts faculties in that it bears a national responsibility for many research-oriented, culturally important subjects which are not taught at the other Finnish universities.

3.2.2. Faculty of Science

In May of 1993, the Faculty Board appointed an assessment committee to carry out self- and international assessments. During the autumn term of 1993, all departments conducted self-assessments following the instructions of the assessment committee, and an English language summary of them was compiled. An international peer group visited the faculty in the autumn of 1994. The self-assessment examined the state of the faculty, its strengths, obstacles to its effective

functioning as well as measures which should be taken in order to improve the faculty's efficiency and to help it meet new scientific challenges and educational needs.

At the beginning, the faculty board of around 30 members held a full-day seminar where the objectives of the evaluation process were discussed and execution measures were designed. The faculty board appointed a 10-member steering group, which had about ten three-hour meetings. The steering group nominated sub-groups, which contributed about half of the total amount of work. During the visit of the international peer group the faculty secretary and two project officers worked with the steering group for two days

The institutional assessment led to a number of conclusions and recommendations. It noted that since the various faculty departments were scattered across several campuses, Co-operation between departments was made more difficult, which also had a negative effect on students. It further recommended that interaction within and between departments and with other universities be increased in order to facilitate research and teaching. More specifically, it hoped that assessments of efficiency would be developed in such a way as to facilitate Co-operation. The assessment emphasized that high level research and teaching depended on maintaining close contacts and interaction with the international vanguard of research. In order to obtain resources for new fields of science and new areas of research, the faculty would need to develop research programmes within the university, as well as in Co-operation with other universities and research institutes. The assessment proposed that research programmes for material science and environmental research would be established within the faculty. It also thought that a system of incentives should be created in order to make research, teaching and studying more efficient; on the other hand, there should also be ways of dealing flexibly with inefficient operations. Finally, the faculty also wished to exert pressure on the Finnish school system to strengthen the status of mathematics and natural sciences in school education.

The assessment process had an immediate effect on faculty operations. The faculty decided to apply the insights gained in the assessment, thus demonstrating that it wants to create a research and education unit of the highest possible standard.

3.2.3. Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry

The financial and policy plan for 1990-94, prepared by the faculty in 1988, included a proposal for the development of departmental structures and administration. The overall objectives were to improve the faculty's internal functionality and to raise the efficiency of research and postgraduate education as well as of administrative and technical services. Consequently, the operations of the entire faculty and its relations with society were thoroughly reviewed. The Dean had discussions with representatives of various industries and personally visited all departments.

One result of the assessment was a structural reform which cut the number of departments down from 33 to 12. The faculty also launched a project for reallocating the administrative and technical personnel resources of the departments; this task was expected to take several years. As soon as the reductions had been decided, the fields and duties of one-third of the relevant teaching posts were redefined. New, larger departments were opened at the beginning of 1992, simultaneously with the administration reform provided by an amendment of the University Act. The new administration model required new representative organs, a Faculty Council and departmental steering groups, and the new units were able to organise themselves immediately based on this model. However, a further

reappraisal of the departmental structure will be necessary when the forestry departments are moved to Viikki in a few years' time.

3.3. Development and assessment of teaching

Teaching, learning and curricula have been evaluated in the context of general plans to develop teaching in the faculties and departments. Methods of assessment have varied from individual teachers gathering qualitative feedback to faculties administering co-ordinated structured questionnaires. Within the University, the development process includes assessing the structure and contents of degrees, student progress towards graduation (guidance, the quality of the teaching environment, graduation rates, placements, etc.) as well as the whole organisation. For example, the University Recruitment Services Unit, which was founded in 1994, co-ordinates surveys on the job placement of recent graduates, and provides faculties and departments with feedback on their teaching to help in developing individual degrees.

In November of 1992 the University Senate approved a teaching and didactic development programme for the years 1993-97. Separate annual funding was established for the programme's projects which include, for example, pedagogical instruction for teachers and teaching development projects undertaken by individual departments. More attention than ever is being paid to teaching and its development in consultations on performance between the rector and the faculties. For example, all faculties must establish a teaching development working group in 1996, if no such group already exists. Furthermore, it was also agreed that in the next year each faculty would draw up guidelines on how teaching merit would more consistently be taken into consideration when filling teaching posts.

The following sections will provide examples of different faculty development and assessment activities and their results. The university has chosen to follow the principle that the faculties are responsible for organising and planning their own assessments. The university Academic Affairs Office, in turn, supports these activities by arranging training and joint seminars.

3.3.1. Faculty of Arts

The preparatory work for the 1991-93 national evaluation of the humanities (see appendix) was done in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki. The faculty was largely unanimous in thinking that departments would be individually responsible for developing their degree structures, especially since they knew that in any case national plans to thoroughly assess degree structures had been made. In the winter of 1991 the faculty appointed a working group chaired by the Vice-Dean. The group reviewed the experiences of the degree system that resulted from the extensive reform imposed on the University in the 1970's from outside. The need of further reform was also assessed.

The degree system of the University of Helsinki Faculty of Arts was thoroughly revised. In some subjects, very radical changes were undertaken, while others were satisfied with more superficial reforms. Only two degree programmes remained unchanged -- speech therapy and psychology -- the latter's degree programme being governed by its own decree.

In recent years, the faculty has been developing a number of multi-disciplinary study modules, which can be incorporated into degrees as minors. These study modules are often focused around different regional or cultural themes, and respond to the needs of working life and minor subject students.

3.3.2. Faculty of Science

The report of the committee which conducted the institutional assessment of the faculty in 1993 also contained many proposals aimed at developing teaching. For instance, the assessment committee presumed that the organisation of teaching would be facilitated when the faculty's new facilities were completed. The committee also felt that co-operation within and between departments should be expanded. For the evaluation of results, methods should be developed which would also support co-operation. Curricula should be planned in such a way that the responsibility and resources for basic teaching in each field would be given to the corresponding departments, irrespective of departmental or faculty divisions. Basic teaching should also be taken into consideration in the assessment of departmental efficiency. The assessment committee noted that a well-functioning system of incentives is needed to improve the efficiency of research, teaching and studies.

In 1995, a standardised course evaluation form was put into use in the Faculty of Science. This assessment method, developed by the faculty's Teaching Development Committee, is an adaptation of the teaching evaluation method (KOLA) developed at the technical institutes and colleges in Finland, which includes a database of assessment questions and a computer programme for analysing the answers. The evaluation form includes standardised faculty questions, and departments may also add questions tailored to their specific needs. The Teaching Development Committee has also been asked to develop a system of incentives rewarding teaching merit, along with ways of assessing teaching.

3.3.3. Faculty of Medicine

In the early 1990s, a lively discussion on the need to reform teaching practices took place within the faculty. As the teaching staff followed international developments in the field, they noticed that unless they made a strong commitment to revising their curricula, they could not maintain the quality of their teaching at an international standard. A reform of basic teaching in medicine was launched in the Autumn of 1994, when all incoming students began their studies following a revised integrated pre-clinical curriculum. In addition, a new teaching method was introduced, which uses hands-on learning (in the form of early patient contact) to facilitate the acquisition of the skills and attitudes necessary for a medical practitioner. One of the reform's central philosophies was developing problem-centred teaching: there are now fewer lectures, and the students study more independently and autonomously. The role of the teacher has also changed, and this change has been supported through teacher-training arranged by the faculty. As part of the reform, a group of students began their studies on a so-called parallel study line. In this study line, all the teaching takes places in small groups and according to the principles of problem-centred learning. The faculty will conduct a follow-up assessment of these parallel teaching methods, and will also use the assessment to document and analyse the reform processes taking place within the faculty.

Since 1994 all faculty departments have used a standardised course evaluation form to assess the quality of teaching. Feedback from students has been used as one of the criteria in allocating the faculty's resources to the various departments. Publicised awards are given to the best study units, and the departments are provided with detailed accounts of their teaching evaluations, along with the averages for the whole faculty. Teaching activity is used as a basis for the allocation of 10 per cent of the faculty's operating budget. In addition to incentives based on course evaluations, the money is used to reward the best teachers chosen by the students.

3.3.4. Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry

As part of the faculty's structural reform and as a response to discussions about future visions, the fields of all teaching posts were reviewed in 1994. The result from this was that all teaching fields and duties were carefully redefined. Another major challenge in the development of educational programmes is presented by the network of new polytechnics in the country. The organisation of higher vocational education forces university faculties to analyse the essential characteristics of university education on the one hand and to investigate the demand for this education on the other. The faculty has joined the NOVA co-operation project (Nordic Forestry, Veterinary & Agricultural University); one of its aims is to chart the possibilities and resources of Nordic co-operation in education.

The faculty set up a committee for the improvement of teaching in 1995. The committee has already organised several one-day sessions for teachers and students. The committee does not wish to suggest that a unified, all-faculty system of teaching evaluation should be created. Instead it encourages departments and teachers to judge their teaching and learning results with more varying and more individual methods than just traditional questionnaires. The committee has also been able to allocate some funds to departmental development projects that are considered useful.

3.4. Assessment of research

Scholars at the University of Helsinki produce over 30 per cent of the research done at Finnish institutions of higher education, and nearly 70 per cent of their publications appear in international journals.

Universities and similar institutions have always valued research. Indeed, the main criteria for filling professor, associate professor and assistant posts has been academic qualifications. It has only been in the recent past that there has been discussion about considering teaching qualifications in filling permanent posts as well.

Since the middle of the 1980's, the University of Helsinki has allocated funding specifically channelled towards supporting research. Applications for funding are judged by their academic merit. The name of the University committee drafting the proposal for the appropriation of research funding has varied over the years, and the decision-making body has also changed. The committee has been responsible for preparing a list of general principles about the use of research funding for the University Senate, and also for submitting proposals to the Rector about the allocation of funds.

In 1993 the research funding committee submitted a list of measures for improving the conditions for research. The committee first evaluated the quality of and the conditions for research activity, and then made numerous proposals for continued development. These proposals had to do, for example, with the criteria for filling permanent posts, with the allocation of research grants and other research funding, and with ways of developing the criteria used to assess research.

One central way of encouraging a high level of research has been the creation and funding of so-called Centres of Excellence, through which the University attempts to guarantee funding for the best research proposals with its own research funds. Such efforts, however, also call for the continued development of the criteria used to assess research activity. The Academy of Finland presents the Ministry of Education with a list of the research Centres of Excellence operating in institutions of higher academic education, and the Ministry in turn financially supports these

institutions. In 1994 the Academy named 12 Centres of Excellence, 5 of which came from the University of Helsinki.

The goal of the University of Helsinki is that the research done here would be of national and international importance, of a high quality, and productive. One means of achieving the goal of improving the university's competitiveness is by attracting the most qualified and innovative researchers. In addition to considering research performance, the assessment of Centres of Excellence also focuses on the unit's future potential as well as on what it can bring to the University. The most important selection criteria are the centre's international standing in its own field and its ability to organise postgraduate study. It is an advantage if the project has received funding from outside the university. Centres of Excellence are named for a period of five years, and can receive funding for a maximum of two five-year terms.

In 1995, the University Senate established a research working group to investigate ways of supporting research. At the beginning of 1996 the Senate considered the working group's suggestions, which included detailed proposals on reforming the structure of permanent posts in order to promote quality in research, on developing the education of researchers and assessment of research, and on reorganising the administration.

The Senate's decision emphasized that the University needs to pay more attention than before to evaluating the quality of research. Among other things, this involves taking into consideration the research work's theoretical significance, its innovation and dynamicism, the relevance of the research within its own field and within the society, how active the research group is in pursuing outside and/or joint projects, as well as the strength of the research group's contribution to educating young scholars. The university hopes that the assessment of research and teaching would become a normal part of the operations of the university within the Senate, the faculties, and the departments. It has been suggested that one of the University Vice-Rectors be given overall responsibility for research-related matters, including assessment. Scientific Boards would also be set up under the administration of the Vice-Rector, the faculties, and the larger departments.

3.5. Departmental efficiency: the model of the department of economics

When management by result became a topic of discussion in the universities in the early 1990s, some departments started experimenting with the model in their decision-making. One of these departments was the Department of Economics. One reason the decision was made to start a practice of departmental evaluations was that the University had adopted the practice of comparing departments by how much money they spent relative to the number of basic and postgraduate degrees they granted. The Department of Economics felt that the University's criteria were flawed, since it was based on a simple equation of dividing the sum total of the teaching staff salaries with the number of students earning their degrees annually.

The Department wanted especially to assess personnel time management, since although nearly all the operating costs of the University's departments are tied to personnel and teaching/work hours, they are nevertheless poorly known and understood. For the purposes of internal budgeting, the department wished to know, for example, how salaries were distributed between teaching on the one hand and research on the other.

Data concerning personnel time management was gathered in 1992-94. For follow-up and evaluation, a computer programme was created which greatly facilitated the compilation and analysis of the data.

The follow-up of time management was grouped into the following categories: 1) basic education, 2) postgraduate education, 3) research, 4) personal study, 5) expertise duties, 6) supplementary education, 7) departmental administration, development and assessment, and 8) paid time off. The results showed, for instance, that personnel spent an average of 55 per cent of their time preparing for and teaching at the basic and postgraduate levels and doing research. Differences in time management between different professional groups (*i.e.* professors, senior and junior lecturers) were large.

One of the assessment's greatest benefits has been a better understanding of the department's different operations, their classification, the resources tied to them and their results. The department felt that the analysis of duties other than teaching and research was especially important. Placing these so-called support activities alongside teaching and research activities when evaluating departmental efficiency gives a more realistic basis for comparisons if the operations of different institutions of higher education, faculties and departments are to be understood and their achievements assessed.

The department's model for time management evaluation and follow-up and the publication of the assessment results attracted widespread interest within the University. The results were also noticed in the media, since concurrently with the assessment there had been a spirited public discussion about the time management and effectiveness of university professors.

3.6. Assessment of international operations

Internationalisation was chosen as one of the three priority areas in the financial and policy plan of the University for 1994-97. With this in mind, the University's international activities were assessed in the early 1990s, and a strategy for the development of its international functions was prepared in 1993 by the international affairs committee.

Internationalisation was taken to include:

- co-operation across national boundaries, aiming at mutual advantages to all parties;
- provision for the mobility of students, teachers and researchers, and preparedness for the exchange of research results and incentives;
- the understanding of different cultures and cultural values, and openness to them;
- provision for facilitating the adaptation of foreign students, teachers and researchers to life in Finland and to study at the University;
- willingness and ability to understand, speak and write foreign languages and to communicate with foreigners.

According to the new development strategy of international affairs for 1996-2005, approved in August 1996, most of the recommendations listed above have been put into practice. The 1993 document recommended that the faculties should design their own internationalisation strategies, which two faculties have also done. The others have included the objectives of their international affairs in their overall financial and policy plans. Another recommendation not fully carried out yet was that international postgraduate programmes should be developed in conjunction with the centres of excellence in particular.

The new development strategy emphasizes the same principles as the previous plan did. According to the document, international contacts are a means of maintaining high standards and competitiveness in education and research. Through international co-operation the University can also promote the objective laid down by the University Act, namely, educating students to serve humanity. The new strategy also contains recommendations, some of which -- such as teacher exchange -- are already being carried out in practice.

Simultaneously with the preparations of the new international affairs strategy, the University of Helsinki participated in the pilot project entitled "The Development of an Internationalisation Quality Review process at the level of Higher Education Institutions (IQRP)". The project does not aim at developing a model for comparing universities with each other but rather at designing some tools for the development of their international functions. This project is a joint venture of OECD/IMHE (Institutional Management of Higher Education) and ACA (Academic Co-operation Association). The assessment model was first tested at the University of Helsinki. The two other pilot institutions were Bentley College in the United States and Monash University in Australia.

Before the visit of the international peer review team (PRT), a self-assessment team (SAT) appointed by the Director of Administration reviewed the University's international functions. The team was chaired by one of the two Vice-Rectors. The self-assessment process focusing on international functions included discussions with the representatives of each faculty. The report prepared on this process served as background material during the visit of the foreign peer review team in September 1996.

Apart from the extensive assessment projects, international functions are assessed by departmental, faculty and central administration as well as by student organisations as part of routine administration. For example, each year exchange students returning from overseas are asked for feedback which will be used for improving the support systems of exchange programmes. Furthermore, the Student Union recently launched a special project to investigate the adaptation problems of foreign students.

3.7. Assessment of co-operation between institutions of higher education

Expanding regional co-operation and developing the division of labour between different institutions of higher education, other research organisations and AMK institutions are mentioned as goals under the performance area societal impact agreed upon by the University and the Ministry of Education in their consultations on performance for the period 1996-1999. Achieving these goals required that parallel operations within the University and between institutions of higher education would be reduced or eliminated, departmental structures would be developed, and services rationalised in such a way that by the end of 1996 the University could demonstrate concrete savings. Indeed, the two previous performance agreements included provisions for inter-university co-operation for creating joint services between all the Helsinki area institutions as a way of reducing costs.

Since the directive from the Ministry of Education included the provision that institutions of higher education would independently set the criteria for assessing their co-operation, the University of Helsinki developed an experimental assessment procedure for evaluating efficiency in co-operation for use in Finland. Economic efficiency as well as the quality of the co-operative efforts were used as criteria for assessing their effectiveness. Economic efficiency included a) cutting costs, b) limiting the growth of expenditure, and c) finding ways to use current resources more efficiently. Quality

assessments in evaluating co-operation rated a) increases in choice, b) the best use of expertise, and c) being at the vanguard of development. A theoretical evaluation of quality assessment was not undertaken in this context, and in practice the assessment was carried out via a questionnaire, which recipients answered based on their own personal experiences.

The assessment procedure was experimented within the context of gathering information about 1995 operations. Faculties, departments, independent institutes and the University central administration were asked to answer the questionnaire. The responses covered about half of the university, the respondents being representatives of the departments and disciplines. The result was significantly better than it had been a year before when no specially designed questionnaire was available. Questionnaires applying the given model and covering 545 projects were returned. In 74 per cent of the cases the respondents indicated that the co-operation process had led to a more efficient use of existing resources. Expertise and know-how were regarded as the best part of co-operation in 67 per cent of the projects, and in over half of the cases (59 per cent) the respondents cited being in the vanguard of development as one obtained result. Cutting expenses or limiting their growth had also been considered a significant result (32 per cent and 29 per cent of projects), although qualitative improvement was less often cited.

The assessment procedure for evaluating co-operation seemed workable and the classification of criteria for efficiency successful. In addition, the procedure proved to work equally well with the departments and the administration. Co-operation on the departmental level most often seemed to involve research. Teaching and education form another clearly differentiated area of co-operation. Postgraduate education forms an area of co-operation which ties together research and teaching

The assessment results provided information not only about the quality and cost-effectiveness of co-operation within the University, but also about its extent. It turned out that the University has co-operation projects with every other Finnish institution of higher education. Thus, the significance of regional co-operation does not seem to be very pronounced, since the benefits of and the incentives for co-operation arise from other considerations. Looking at the entire higher education system, a picture of efficient and functioning networks emerged. Co-operating partners were also found among different kinds of research institutions, business enterprises, various areas of the public sector, as well as organisations and foundations.

3.8. Developing administration and management

All through the 1990s the university administration has been exploring ways of improving and streamlining its operations. As early as 1988 a working group was established to clarify the role and duties of the Rector's Office. A new organisational model was adopted at the beginning of 1991, with the goals of removing parallel duties and unnecessary boundaries between different units, clarifying issues of responsibility and creating responsible units. The reform was implemented even though it was known that a new law and statute governing the University would come into effect at the beginning of 1992. It was noted afterwards that the 1991 reform failed to meet expectations. Its preparation had been carried out too much as an internal affair of the Administrative Office; faculties and other concerned parties were not sufficiently consulted; and the reform was not tied to operations in other administrative levels. Furthermore, administrators had not adequately foreseen all of the changes in duties and responsibilities brought about by the 1992 reform. One objective of all the efforts to develop the administration has been moving from administration per se to providing services and understanding the significance of the internal client/service relationship. In salaries and

accounting, for instance, the results of a simulation game helped administrators consolidate a fragmented division of labour into a client-based groupwork-like approach.

3.8.1. 1992 Administrative reform

A new Government law, statute and regulations governing the university as well as new University procedures regulating the Administrative Office came into effect at the beginning of 1992. These aimed at streamlining operations, partly by delegating authority. For example, some decision-making authority was delegated to the faculty level, especially in personnel matters (appointments, regulations, complaints), but also in matters of teaching and student selection. In practice, delegating decision-making authority meant abandoning parallel handling of matters on several different levels and transferring the duties connected with the implementation of decisions to the faculties. The number of matters to be decided by the University Senate and the Administrative Office was also correspondingly reduced.

One component of the administrative reform was the creation of new collegial departmental steering committees, whose duties include preparing for and making decisions about departmental policies. Also adopted with the reform was a “presentation system,” in which a “presenting official” has a clearly defined legal responsibility to prepare for and present a matter for decision, inform others about any decisions reached, and finally, oversee their implementation. This procedure has improved the quality of the way matters are handled and the dissemination of information concerning them. However, the adoption of the presentation system has also increased the workload of administrators, and implementing the system with all its hierarchies of responsibility has not been without its problems. More work needs to be done, especially regarding the dissemination of information and the responsibilities for implementation.

After the administrative reform, the University's administration consists of:

- central administration, faculty administration and departmental administration;
- democratically-elected administrative bodies (expert bodies) as well as civil service administrators on all the levels of administration mentioned above; and
- directors and boards administering the independent institutes.

The most practical division of labour between the different levels of administration is still being sought, with the aim of avoiding overlapping administration.

3.8.2. Departmental administration

Public comments concerning the administrative reform at the University of Helsinki have been predominantly positive, since it was viewed as bringing all the members of the academic community into the decision-making process. The effects of the reform are most clearly seen in the changes of the administrative model of the departments, since they had previously not had statutory steering committees. In 1993, the Student Union interviewed the student representatives of the department steering committees in order to find out how the new administrative model was working and especially how students had been able to get their voice heard in departmental affairs.

The report of the Student Union found the present administrative model too rigid and formal to effectively attract student participation in the development of the University. The model has not been drafted with the development of a department or a faculty in mind, but to serve centralised administration. More efficient, goal-oriented and committed operations should be the objective of administrative development. Departments and faculties should involve students in the development of teaching and other measures important to them.

3.8.3. 1995 Organisational reform of the Administrative Office

In their report entitled *Universitas Renovata*, published in the Spring of 1993, the University's Internal Assessment Committee made several proposals concerning University administration. The same spring, the Rector appointed a working group to investigate ways of improving the Administrative Office, though excluding the Technical Department, for which a separate working group was appointed to develop it into a service unit operating on the basis of real accountability. This time around, the Administrative Office Reform Group also included faculty and departmental representatives as well as representatives of staff organisations and students; they asked representatives of important client groups, including faculty administrative staff and departmental representatives, to assess in various ways the services of the Administrative Office. Individual Administrative Office units were also asked which functions they thought they could give up, about possible overlapping of duties with other units, and what kind of rationalisation plans they had for themselves.

At the same time as the Administrative Office Reform Group worked, many other development projects which had started earlier still continued, and the group's efforts were thus seen as one part of an ongoing process to develop University internal administration. The final stages of the group's work also coincided with the first ever Ministry-university consultations on performance, which form an integral part of the steering by result method of institutional planning. In contrast to earlier models of internal administration, the group advocated decentralisation, with authority over decision-making, duties and staff delegated to the faculties and departments. A proposal for a new personnel policy development programme was also completed at the end of 1993.

In addition, the Reform Group recommended that planning and development, as well as so-called practical tasks, would be decentralised wherever practical and economical. This decentralisation fits the principles of management by result very well, since these principles emphasize the importance of an accountable unit's own initiative in developing its operations. Such initiative, in turn, calls for sufficient resources and well-functioning information systems, and preparations were thus made for reallocating resources between different administrative levels. Performance and cost-effectiveness criteria also call for increasing the size of departments and developing co-operation between them. In recent years, many faculties have been moving towards larger departments in order to achieve synergy benefits. The Reform Group also noted that in the future the division of labour between faculties and departments, as well as administrative efficiency as a whole, should be studied.

The Administrative Office should emphasize a consultative approach, in keeping with its nature as a service unit. As a part of the organisational reform, all personnel matters were transferred to a new Personnel Office, and a new Head of Personnel Services post was created by reshuffling posts within the administration. An Office of Strategic Planning and Development was set up to deal with issues related to planning, assessment and operational performance, along with reporting and information services, international relations and research services. The post of a University Research Officer was

created. The payment of salaries was transferred to the Personnel Office, leaving the Finance Office responsible for financial planning and accounting. An Academic Affairs Office was created to deal with teaching and studies; this unit also includes the Sports Services Office. Data Processing and the Public Relations and Press Office remained as staff units, and General Administration was turned into one. The University Museum was turned into an independent unit operating under the Director of Administration.

The post of Controller, working directly under the Director of Administration, was created in order to support steering by result and to provide guidance in the operation of the increasingly decentralised administration. The Controller's duties thus include ensuring the legality of university operations and the proper management of financial planning, as well as a preventive element, which includes participating in development projects and the follow-up of operational processes.

The Administrative Office has operated under this new ORGANISATIONAL model since the beginning of 1995, although it will only be in effect until the end of 1996; the ORGANISATION can then be adjusted based on the pilot phase experiences. Work developing the university administration will continue. Impact of the assessments.

3.9. Impact on the university as a whole

The two assessment committees conducting the internal institutional assessment made a total of 69 concrete proposals involving external bodies or the University as a whole. When the University was preparing for its annual consultation on performance with the Ministry of Education in early 1996, a summary of the implementation of these proposals was made, which showed that 26 of the proposals had been fully implemented and the implementation of an additional 34 proposals had begun.

The proposals involving external bodies led, for example, to negotiations concerning the funding of national units being included in the Ministry-university consultations. In connection with structural development objectives, it was agreed that the degree programme in health care at the University of Helsinki be discontinued and one of the research farms be shut down.

In order to facilitate flexible operational development, 28 transferable fixed-term professorships and 30 transferable fixed-term posts for other teaching staff have been created through an internal reallocation of posts. The first five combined research/teaching lectureships have been established and are currently being filled. These measures are part of an overall reform of the personnel policies governing teaching and research staff, which also includes efforts to reform the salary system and to solve questions of the teaching staff's working time requirements. In order to promote job rotation among staff and to facilitate necessary relocation, a system of pooling posts has been created.

Proposals made by the assessment committees launched a process of organisational reform at the Administrative Office, which was described in detail in section 3.1. This process and the accompanying effort to develop the entire university administrative structure is still continuing with its various effects.

In order to support internationalisation, bonus money is being granted to the faculties based on their numbers of foreign exchange students. Top level research is being supported with special five-year funding; the application process includes a two-stage assessment procedure. Also, many of the proposals involving internal structural reorganisation of the university have been carried out.

Reforms which have been started and are presently under way can be found in all categories: personnel policy issues; structural development; increasing the flexibility of study options; funding; developing contacts with the society at large; and administrative duties. All in all, the institutional assessment launched wide-ranging operational development, even though it happened to coincide with an extremely difficult phase in the nation's economy. The process has also called for wide-ranging commitment and much hard work at all levels of the university. It cannot be said that a commitment and willingness for reform have taken over the entire university, but certainly the greater part of it.

However, the reforms undertaken -- some already concluded and others still under way -- and an atmosphere favourable to change have not been enough to bring with them a systematic method of assessing either teaching, research or administration.

One principle emerging from the institutional assessment was the goal of reinforcing contacts with the non-academic community. This goal has been met very successfully, for example by strengthening ties to the alumni association and by specifically developing alumni activities. Recruiting services have been established to serve society, the students and the university graduates, and the job placement of graduates is being followed more closely than before.

3.10. Impact on the faculties and departments

Although a number of the internal assessment committee's proposals regarding faculties applied to all of them, proposals specific to the development of each faculty were also made. In the round of consultations preparing for 1996 operations, the faculties were asked to present reports on the impact of the assessment committee's proposals, and their implementation.

The answers given in the reports were rather varied. Some of the reports clearly listed actions taken on the basis of the proposals and their results, but in others the answers were "hidden" among general descriptions of the faculty's operations. In order to encourage efficient steering by result and sensible administrative practices, all the faculties had been asked to reduce the number of departments by combining them into larger units, which most of them had indeed done.

3.10.1. Faculty of Science

During the years 1991-1995, four separate assessments of the Faculty of Science were conducted: a national discipline-based assessment; the university's internal institutional assessment; the faculty's self-evaluation followed by an international peer group assessment; and an assessment by a Ministry of Education official, who also made proposals for the fields of natural science and technology.

The national discipline-based evaluation of natural sciences was carried out in a more department-centred way than the corresponding evaluation of the humanities. Both evaluations, however, resulted in degree system reforms. The assessments have also led to changes in departmental structures, as in combining departments into larger units.

The faculty's 1993 self-evaluation and the international assessment which followed it were especially instrumental in encouraging new thinking and changing the general atmosphere at the faculty. Seeking consensus and being committed to common objectives is the new norm. The faculty's strategic guidelines have become more goal-oriented. For example, specific areas of emphasis,

environmental research and material science, are being developed, with teaching and research in these areas supported with the dean's discretionary funds. The faculty's commitment to high quality teaching and research is reflected in its naming of outstanding teaching and research units. In addition, the establishment of graduate schools within the faculty has led to numerous evaluations of the quality of research and the effectiveness of co-operation.

A memorandum by the Ministry of Education official, entitled "A Centre of Excellence is not Founded, but Develops: Suggestions for the Development and Reform of Teaching and Research in Natural Sciences and Allied Technological Subjects within Institutions of Higher Education," directs relatively harsh criticism at the faculty's performance. The Faculty of Science, however, does not consider the memorandum and its conclusions to be worth the time and effort that went into it.

The Faculty of Science is satisfied with its new atmosphere of development. The faculty thinks that discipline-based evaluations should be carried out roughly every three years, and notes that in some fields even the first round of discipline-based evaluations have still not been conducted.

3.10.2. Faculty of Arts

The most important result of the self-assessment carried out by the Faculty of Arts in 1990 was not considered to be the actual published report, but the discussion which took place among the departments while the report was being drafted. When the process was evaluated about six years later, it was concluded that The Humanists of Tomorrow project helped the faculty to better understand the significance of critical self-assessment and to realise how important it is to raise the faculty's profile and self-esteem. The most concrete manifestation of these insights was later seen in reforms of departmental and faculty finance and policy plans, which were also influenced by the departmental self-evaluations connected with the national discipline-based evaluations.

Policy and finance plans have been developed to take into account the wide variety of departmental operations, and their objectives are more realistic. In addition to providing quantitative information, they can also in some cases help give an idea about the quality of the operations. The best planning reports even contain self-criticism and astute analyses of the state of the department, demonstrating that these departments have understood that such reports can be used to improve departmental operations, and that this is indeed their primary purpose. In addition, the fact that the reports are public and are used as a basis for consultations on performance within the faculty has facilitated their development as documents supporting the steering process.

3.10.3. Faculty of Medicine

Assessments have influenced Faculty of Medicine operations more, and for a longer period of time, than in any other faculty. Departmental structure and administration have been radically developed, a wide-ranging curriculum reform has been carried out, and for ten years a portion of the funding has been allocated based on performance criteria. Criteria used in allocating funds include publications, doctoral theses, teaching merit and success in obtaining outside funding. In addition, the faculty has allocated funds directly to research projects. Of the operating funds (excluding salaries) at the faculty's disposal, two thirds are allocated based on performance criteria.

In 1993, the Faculty of Medicine's departmental structure was still rather incoherent, with 42 departments. The faculty has decisively been moving away from fragmentation towards larger

departments. Indeed, by the middle of 1996 there were 16 departments, and the consolidation is still continuing, since the clinical departments are still somewhat fragmented. Alongside the development of faculty departmental structures, administration has been rationalised to meet changing demands.

One result of the faculty curriculum reform, and the continuing assessment process tied to it, is that teachers have become considerably more willing to participate in pedagogical training in university-level teaching. For some years now, the faculty has been organising for its teachers several types of training aimed at improving the quality of teaching.

As the curriculum reform goes forward, there are new pressures on the faculty to create ways of assessing academic teaching staff in general, and the teaching merit of applicants for academic posts. Traditionally, Finnish academia has not valued teaching and pedagogical skill as highly as research merits. As assessments of teaching increase, however, the situation is going to change, since assessments help in developing new methods of obtaining reliable information about teaching and the professional skills of academic teaching staff. It is already evident that in a number of job searches teaching merit has been given more consideration than before, and it has even been a deciding factor in some cases. Also, a teacher's overall workload has been surveyed in more detail, since one of the weaknesses of the faculty's assessment procedures was thought to be that a teacher's workload was too narrowly seen as only consisting of actual teaching hours. However, teachers also put considerable time into the planning and preparation of teaching as well as into individual student counselling. The results of these surveys will be used to develop further the assessment of teaching in the faculty.

3.10.4. Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry

Owing to the thorough discussions of objectives and means, the decision-makers of the faculty now have a very clear idea of its standing and importance. The processes leading to the defined objectives are time-consuming and require the application of many reform management methods. The faculty is still going through this phase, although the assessments have already led to several concrete results.

The evaluation and envisioning processes have made the management of the faculty more conscious of its own performance than before. The structural reform and the cutback in the departmental overheads allocations made it easier to introduce a system of profitability monitoring. From 1992 the structural reform has also had an impact on teaching programmes, as departments have become responsible for new combinations of disciplines. Departments have increasingly arranged courses jointly, which is one means of achieving savings in resources.

3.11. Development trends in the 1990s from the administrative point of view

The assessment and development activities carried out at the University of Helsinki in the 1990s have a number of characteristic features. The starting point was not the adoption of any given management theory or model, such as Total Quality Management (TQM) or management by result. In fact, even though management by result was commonplace within the State administration at the time, it entered University discussions only after the reform process had already begun, and even then was not coherently applied within the University. So, rather than proceeding from a set model, University administrative reform efforts stemmed from a variety of considerations. One of these was the Government's demand for a general improvement in cost-effectiveness. Within the University itself, the real starting point was that the newly-appointed university leadership, along with the

democratically-elected University Senate established by a new law, wished to develop University operations. The objectives and contents of the reform process took shape only gradually through the work of the assessment committees. All development efforts have been characterised by a strong administrative commitment to the process. Despite many difficulties and setbacks, the university administration has determinedly continued to use assessments as a key component of its development strategies, and after three years it shows no signs of giving up.

A comprehensive internal evaluation process at the University of Helsinki was launched in 1992 at the initiative of its highest administrative authority, the University Senate. The starting point was the great perceived need -- even enthusiasm -- for developing all University operations. Thus, from the administrative point of view, the evaluation was internal, in that the impetus came from the University administration. From the faculty point of view, by contrast, the evaluation was external, in that the initiative came from outside the faculties and the assessment committee represented what they considered an outside body.

A five person committee was appointed to complete the evaluation; the committee was chaired by the University Vice-Rector, and included a professor, a docent, a representative of one of the independent institutes, and a student. A notable feature of the committee, and one which considerably influenced its work, was that none of its members represented any specific interest group; for example, none were employee representatives of a specific personnel group. Rather, they were all chosen on the basis of their expertise.

At first, the committee's objectives were to improve the quality of University operations and to develop its profile to better meet modern demands. As the committee worked, however, the worsening government economic situation necessitated including among the committee's duties the creation of permanent cost-saving measures.

The University Senate's decision to launch the evaluation and to develop University operations, along with the work of the committee, can in many respects be viewed as revolutionary: for example, in addition to creating a new atmosphere of dialogue within the University, they also influenced the relationship between the central administration and the faculties, between the University and the Ministry of Education, and between the University and the non-academic community. Naturally many other factors have influenced administrative reform, such as the Ministry's efforts to delegate accountability and adopt new funding criteria, and the advent of the culture of management by result. The following discussion will examine these developments from the point of view of the central administration.

3.11.1. The Relationship between the Central Administration and the Faculties

Administrative authority has been delegated from the central administration to the faculties and departments. A good example of the effects of this change is that in the past a University Senate agenda might include as many as a couple of hundred items, whereas today a typical agenda includes only about ten items. The Senate is thus able to concentrate on larger strategy issues.

The central administration's role is becoming more consultative. Whereas previously there was a mentality of issuing guidelines and regulations, there has now been a shift towards negotiating and guiding. The administration has begun to emphasize the significance of an internal client/service relationship.

After the evaluation process was launched in 1993, many departments and some faculties have undertaken vigorous development efforts, really taking advantage of the information provided by the evaluations. It has been interesting to note that the Faculty of Medicine, which has had to face the most severe funding cuts, has also been the most active in developing both its education and its administration.

As a result of the central administration's changing role, the role of the department heads has strengthened. For example, the flexible handling of financial matters has been facilitated. Different departments display widely differing levels of interest in development. From the point of view of the central administration, it has seemed that the professors most strongly opposed to the development efforts have been those who are least familiar with management by result.

3.11.2. The relationship between the central administration and the ministry of Education

During the past three years, the University's relationship with the Ministry of Education has changed in important ways. The new administrative culture includes dialogue between the university and the Ministry. Policy aims and performance objectives are agreed upon in consultations, though financial realities limit what can be agreed upon. The Ministry hopes to minimise direct lobbying, preferring instead that all the issues concerning the University could be agreed upon in the consultations.

The Ministry's policies sometimes conflict with one another. For example, even as the Ministry delegates decision-making power, it has in fact sought to steer operations by increasing its control over results.

The Ministry of Education has delegated decision-making power in the areas of finance, teaching and both the establishing and filling of posts. On the other hand, it attempts to steer universities through performance objectives. That is, the universities receive an increasing part of their national budget funding based on different kinds of performance criteria. For instance, the universities receive specific bonus money for the number of masters and doctorate degrees granted. Similarly, bonus money has been awarded to top level research units, for quality in education, for the amount of adult education provided, etc. In this way, the Ministry has attempted to steer the universities' strategic policy-making in its preferred directions.

3.11.3. The Role of the Rectors

When the internal evaluation process started, the role of the University Rector had already fundamentally changed as a result of the University of Helsinki Act of 1992. A Rector increasingly needs to be an expert in national higher education policy and financial administration. If the Rector does not know the fundamentals of university finances, the university stands to lose considerable sums in the Ministry-university consultations and while planning performance criteria. Real power lies in the mastery of financial issues.

Deans and department heads face similar new requirements. In addition, the personal qualifications required of academic leaders have also changed. For example, they now need the ability to comprehend and master the big picture, to interact skilfully with others, to create new visions, and they also need to possess the skills and authority to influence the direction of development efforts.

During the internal evaluation and development process, the Rector has taken a more assertive stand on leading the University in certain directions. In addition, there has been an investment in internal communication and the flow of information, for example by founding a periodical on personnel affairs and by developing and expanding electronic information services. It must be said, however, that much remains to be done in improving the flow of information. At all stages, it has been important to be able to justify why things should be done in a new way. Since management by result remains an anathema to many within the University, the advantages brought by development have to be laid out clearly.

Changes in administrative procedures have been significantly influenced by the introduction of the presentation system in the University Senate and in the faculty board meetings. Unlike the past, these decision-making bodies now include representatives not only of the professors, but of other personnel groups and students. Student representatives, for example, have steered the discussion more towards issues concerned with the development of teaching.

3.11.4. The Relationship with the non-academic community

At the same time as the Rector's duties have become more pronounced within the University, leadership outside the University is becoming increasingly more important. Cost-saving measures in the national budget have increasingly led to attempts to seek outside funding. Research and funding co-operation with outside organisations has therefore increased. Finland's joining the EU has also improved the University's potential to obtain outside funding.

The delegation of decision-making power to the universities in recent years has been accompanied by an increase in national assessments and follow-up. These increasingly steer university operations, and it might be said that in many respects, the universities have become increasingly dependent on the non-academic communities surrounding them.

New evaluative criteria also reflect the University's increasing focus on its relationship with the community. In national evaluations, for example, job placement has taken its place next to the number of basic and postgraduate degrees granted and the time taken to complete degree requirements. Universities are now being compared using these criteria, and the results of such comparisons are published in newspapers, for example. Assessment procedures focusing on these criteria have changed the way University personnel view students, and the supervision of postgraduate students, for example, has been significantly improved in many departments.

According to the estimates of the University leadership, these public evaluations have led the universities to become less arrogant and have also increased their willingness to participate in public discourse. One clearly visible goal has been to raise the profile of the universities. In addition, the question of university autonomy has been widely discussed.

4. EVALUATING THE RESULTS AND A LOOK TOWARDS THE FUTURE

For the over 350 year old University of Helsinki, the 1990s have been a period of strong development. This report has examined the evaluations carried out at the University in the 1990s in the context of that development. The starting point has been to describe all the various things done under the heading of evaluation. Secondly, the report describes the benefits of these evaluations, mainly from the point of view of administering the University. On the other hand, no attempt has been made to include a discussion on the concrete changes that have taken place in curricula or at the departmental level. Whether the assessments have really led to an improvement in the quality of research or teaching, for instance, does not belong within the scope of this report.

The evaluations carried out at the University of Helsinki have focused on the quality of teaching, conditions for and the quality of research, and the administration. The evaluations have thus focused on the most central issues. On the basis of the evaluations, many practical measures have been planned and implemented, and these seem to be of great practical significance, at least in terms of improving the framework of University operations. For example, methods of assessing the quality of teaching have been developed and put into use. Wide-ranging personnel development programmes have been planned based on the feedback obtained in these assessments. Assessments of the quality of teaching have also been reflected in the sometimes far-reaching curriculum reforms.

4.1. New financial and human resources have also been mobilised in order to develop high quality research.

The benefits of the evaluations can also be seen in many areas of strategic planning, such as in the formation of the University's objectives and general policy aims and in its research policy. Thus, we can conclude that nearly all of the evaluation projects described in this report have been followed by reforms in the corresponding areas. In January of 1996 the University Senate discussed a report on its future entitled "The University in 2015," which outlined visions and strategies for the future; another report addressed issues such as improving the conditions for research, and strategies for communications, computer and data-processing technologies, adult education, bilingualism and internationalisation. Most of the strategies are being developed further.

4.2. Characterising the evaluations

Many factors have characterised the evaluations. First of all, the University has been relatively self-sufficient in carrying out the assessments. Most of them were conducted as self-evaluations, and outside experts have been used very little. For example, the institutional assessments of the University have completely relied on the expertise of the university staff. Although it may be that such an inward focus creates its own set of blinders, the University leadership believes that the assessments have provided much information which is useful as a basis for future development. Indeed, the procedure has helped, and sometimes even forced, University leadership to commit itself to the development projects and also to utilise the information provided by the evaluations, as is reflected in the future strategy plans described in the second part of this section. As opposed to this inner focus, however, the self-evaluations have usually also included relatively far-reaching analyses of the changes taking place in the non-academic community around the university.

The institutional self-evaluations were strongly supported by the national discipline-based evaluations carried out at around the same time. These have influenced the development of curricula and teaching practices.

Another characteristic feature of the evaluations has been the participation of students in the assessment work. Although student organisations have not invariably been satisfied with the degree and forms of participation they have been offered, the experiences have been predominantly positive from the point of view of the University leadership and other administrative levels. For example, there have been very few actual conflicts of interest between the students and University personnel -- rather, there has been an understanding that both sides are working together to develop a common University. The student representatives have also been motivated to invest much time in the various projects.

It is characteristic of academic studies in Finland that students often have had work experiences of some kind before they enter the university or that they work intermittently during their studies. Finnish university students for the most part also lead independent lives as adults who have already left their childhood homes. Many of them establish families during their study years. For these and other reasons, graduates of Finnish universities tend to be older than in many other European countries. A positive side of this situation is that the students bring their often mature and wide-ranging experience along with them to the development of the academic community. In the University Senate, the faculty councils and department steering committees, where the students have a quarter of the seats, they have often found it easier than other personnel groups to take a wider, university-level view on the matters being decided upon.

A third characteristic feature of the evaluations has been their subjective and holistic nature. The evaluations have usually not been guided by any clearly-defined theoretical views, but rather the subjective experiences and views of the evaluators have steered the choice of the focus of the evaluation and the method for gathering information about it. For example, the classification of areas of assessment used in Holland and in Great Britain has not been used here.

A fourth characteristic feature of the evaluations conducted at the University of Helsinki is that many of them have been used specifically as tools for administrative and development processes. The university administration has wished to collect information to use as a basis for its own decision-making. Since the evaluations have mostly emerged from the internal development needs of the University, their influence has also been significantly greater than could have been otherwise.

Most of the evaluation and development projects, both those covering the whole university as well as the faculty-level projects, seem to have led to practical outcomes as well. The commitment and authority of administrative leaders at various levels seems to have been of crucial importance in this respect. Different faculties have used the results of the evaluations to widely different degrees, however. The view expressed by university leadership that the faculties which have had to face the most severe funding cuts are also the ones most actively developing their operations is very interesting.

A certain arbitrariness can be considered a weakness of the evaluations, since even the University leadership has not always had a clear idea of all the information it needs to make decisions. The choice of fields to be evaluated has risen from the problems at hand, and the evaluations have then been used to solve the problems. The institutional assessment of the university was perhaps the one evaluation which had the clearest objective from the outset, namely the general development of the

University, but the objects of the more focused evaluations have emerged during the evaluation process.

Due to the mainly subjective nature of the evaluations, all the available quantitative information on student flow, finances, etc. has not been fully utilised. In the future it would probably be advisable to utilise these so-called hard facts as well, for statistical data can help in evaluating operational efficiency as well as the relationship of costs to results. In order for the University to analyse such data and produce its performance reports, University leadership must clearly and continuously present its information requirements.

4.3. Future outlook

In the future, a philosophy of evaluation will be central to the operations, research and teaching activities and administration of the academic community. Critical assessment of one's own activities as well as those of others, and the giving and receiving of feedback will form a natural part of this way of thinking.

In recent years, a number of significant policy changes have taken place within the University. Traditionally, different departments and faculties have been treated equally in matters like resource allocation. A few years ago, performance and quality have been added to the allocation criteria, and this fact has steered the development of assessment procedures. Indicators for identifying centres of excellence in research and for rewarding departments and individuals providing high quality teaching have been developed. Support for outstanding achievement seems to be emphasized in future strategy planning as well.

Support for outstanding achievement is displayed, for example, in the University identifying its research strengths, and then actively supporting these areas with different administrative measures such as directing resources towards them. Efforts are also being made to make basic and postgraduate studies more efficient, for example by better integrating research and teaching, by improving the quality of teaching, by developing the learning environment, etc. All of these measures also emphasize the importance of developing assessment.

The policy of rewarding outstanding achievement has also been criticised, however. Some critics think that the University should also evaluate why, in addition to outstanding and average departments, it also has sub-par ones. It would be prudent to analyse the mechanisms which lead some departments into a situation where improvement is difficult. This would help in figuring out ways to support these departments, assuming that they have the potential to improve the quality and efficiency of their performance.

One of the future trends is the University's increasing openness towards the non-academic community. The University is increasingly interested in student job placement after graduation, in increasing co-operation with other organisations, and in finding new sources of funding. The University is also interested in its image in the eyes of the students, its personnel and the non-academic community. This opening up also has an influence on the kinds of information the University will be seeking through assessments.

Although self-evaluation will continue to have an important role for the University, external evaluation is also needed. A central task of the University is long-term research work which is being continuously assessed by the international scientific community, as is stated in the finance and policy

plan of the University of Helsinki for the years 1997-2000. Domestic evaluations of the quality of scientific research and education carried out by the Academy of Finland, as well as periodic international discipline-based evaluations are already known to be taking place.

It is a generally accepted principle that university teaching should be closely tied to research, and it is hoped that this principle would be used as one of the evaluation criteria. The University of Helsinki is also attempting to develop its evaluation processes in this direction, although difficulties have been encountered in practice. In any case, the University's main objective for the end of the 1990s is to ensure that its teaching and research are of a high international standard. This objective should also govern evaluation processes. For instance, one of the University's long-term objectives is to develop systems for rewarding successful research, and this presents a real challenge to evaluation procedures.

Attempts to assess whether university teaching is of an internationally high standard also provide interesting challenges when thinking about ways to develop evaluations. Efforts have been made to find methods suitable for evaluating teaching merit in connection with filling posts. Administrative decisions to take teaching merit into account when filling posts have already been made in most of the faculties, but the real challenge lies in developing practical evaluation methods and solving problems related to the documentation of teaching merit. Only by doing so, however, can the University solidify its position as one of the top research and teaching institutions of higher education in Finland. Furthermore, the ability to assess teaching, and apply those assessments wisely, would also positively influence the University's goal of improving the job placement of its graduates.

Administrative assessments have thus far only targeted part of the administration at a time. An evaluation has been carried out on the relationship and division of labour between the central administration and the faculty-level administrations. On the other hand, a thorough assessment of the relationship between faculty administration and departmental administration and on the ways to clarify the division of labour between them has not yet been carried out. The campus administration system now being introduced is going to add another dimension to the administrative picture. In the future, an evaluation process which targets all administrative levels is thus going to be needed. A concrete focus for evaluation is provided by the recently emphasized view of administration as a support activity providing expert services. This makes it possible to evaluate how effectively and how well the administration succeeds in supporting the basic activities -- teaching and research -- of the University. Following the trends revealed by an analysis of cost accounting provides a useful tool for facilitating evaluation. Administrative development needs should be viewed as a whole rather than attempting individual fixes.

As a summary of the evaluations carried out at the University of Helsinki in the 1990s, it can be said that a relatively positive evaluation atmosphere which solidly supports the development of the University has emerged. The goal is that supporting evaluation processes taking place in various parts of the University and developing effective tools for evaluation would lead to a situation where evaluations form a normal part of University operations. When the results of evaluations are presented as reports to the department heads, deans and the university's central administration, the evaluations will become a management tool in addition to being part of the internal development work of the various units. At the moment when the University has the courage required to look at whether all its carefully-planned strategic objectives have been met, we can conclude that the University of Helsinki will have established a culture of assessment.

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