

**UNIVERSITY OF LILLE III-CHARLES DE GAULLE
FRANCE**

FROM PRACTICES TO PERSPECTIVES*

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Universities are finding themselves increasingly beset by pressures from the outside world.

They are having to contend with a considerable increase in student enrolment, and this large number of students arriving at the University is being further accentuated by the economic crisis. With increasing unemployment, students are enrolling for university in ever-increasing numbers and are following everlengthening courses; this is prompting the establishment of new degrees, a demand also articulated by employers seeking to professionalise certain streams so that they can meet their needs more effectively. In order to adapt to these changes, lawmakers have laid down rules that the University has to comply with, and the institution then determines its policy within the terms of the regulation and the agreed contractual policy. In this setting, evaluation practices are developed in response to State impetus, and they are being given increasingly serious consideration in institutions where evaluation may be seen as a permanent tool with which to attain desired objectives.

The OECD/IMHE project involves an examination of the effects of quality assessment on management and decision-making. This is where the paradox arises: the notion of quality is located in a 'liberal' setting (the need to reconcile a marketing approach and a concern with rationalising costs), yet it also embraces the State University's need to maintain, or even further develop, its public service role, even if this means importing some ('controlled') liberal methods.

For reasons examined below, the link of direct causality contained in the OECD/IMHE project can be turned on its head. The study conducted at Lille III aims to examine not only the effect of quality assessment on management and decision-making, but also, and simultaneously, the relations of reciprocal causality linking issues of quality, management and decisions.

1. THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

1.1. Lille III, an ancient university contending with the phenomenon of an increase in student numbers

The Charles de Gaulle University of Human Sciences, Letters and the Arts is a remote descendant of the Faculty of Letters and Arts founded by Philip II at Douai in 1562. The University was established in Lille at the end of the 19th century but, following an increase in student numbers, transferred to Villeneuve d'Ascq in 1974.

*. Opinions expressed in this document are the responsibility of the authors only.

When the University began to run out of space again in 1996, it purchased the building previously occupied by the Law Faculty, thereby doubling the area at its disposal.

The explosion in student numbers, which had been encouraged not only by improved standards of living and a higher birth-rate but also by a powerful political will to democratise education,¹ was a factor that characterised the 1980s.

Between 1980 and 1987, overall student numbers at Lille III rose from 10 018 to 17 139, an increase of 71 per cent (average annual increase of 8 per cent) compared with an average of 36 per cent for all universities in the '*académie*' (the regional administrative area for education. Part of the explanation for this lay in the large increase in *bacheliers* (students who had passed the leaving certificate called *baccalauréat*) in the '*académie*' during this period; the figure rose by 49.7 per cent between 1982 and 1987, as against an increase of 24.4 per cent nationally. The University now has 23 000 students distributed among 16 departments of education and research.

The economic crisis has simply accentuated this phenomenon with young people following longer and longer courses.

The Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region lagged behind the rest of France in respect of long-term higher education, and the regional university system then found itself over-subscribed.

Faced with this increase in student enrolment, an ever-increasing diversity of people attending the University and a shortage of premises and staff, Lille III and the three other regional universities urged trade unions, economic and social actors, regional and national elected representatives to acknowledge the exceptional effort that was necessary if the Region was to have a university system enabling it to catch up and give the maximum number of young people the good quality higher education that the Region needed to promote new development.

1.2. Higher education in the region, a dynamic ingredient

Since the 19th century, our University has been guided by a number of factors that have structured its identity as far as the development of its teaching and research is concerned:

- **a concern to follow traditions:** a university of this type has to organise itself around the key subjects of philosophy, literature, and history with its specific areas of archaeology and history of art;
- **a particular opening to languages,** which is clearly linked not only to the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region's geographical position in Europe (*i.e.* the use of such languages as English, German and Dutch), but also to successive waves of immigration (*e.g.* Italian, Spanish, Polish, Serbo-Croat, Czech and Arabic) and temporary requirements (*e.g.* Chinese and Japanese);
- **the inclusion of more recent subjects:** these include psychology, sociology, information, communication and documentation sciences, and education sciences; these are central to more recent training and research courses;

- **the emergence of vocationally focused departments such as Economic and Social Administration and Applied Foreign Languages.**

The reason for the importance of the Departments of Distance Learning and Permanent Continuing Education is the specificity of the Region and its socio-cultural handicaps, together with the effects of the crisis affecting key economic sectors.

In order to confront the economic crisis that the Region was painfully undergoing, the main economic pillars of iron and steel, coal and textiles having collapsed, the need to develop new areas of training, open up new streams, help to re-skill people and re-direct research policy was the University's vital contribution to restoring dynamism to the Region.

1.2.1. Universities open up new campuses

In 1987, a number of agreements were signed with local and regional authorities, towns where the new campuses were located, General Councils and Regional Councils in an upsurge of regional consultation aimed at increasing the number of university sites. The local and regional authorities provided premises and staff, and also contributed towards funding.

Thus, "the University of Lille III serving the Region [of Nord-Pas-de-Calais] makes a number of these courses available to people living in the area, by opening up access while at the same time maintaining the quality of its teaching". However, the University believes that closer links with social, economic and cultural affairs are also beneficial as they make the fruits of its research better known and ensure that problems are listened to. Accordingly, in agreement with local partners, priority was given to developing on-site education schemes that coincided with young people's expectations and responded to economic reality in the Region.²

Examples included an Applied Foreign Languages DEUG³ section that was opened in Boulogne and Dunkerque in 1987 and then in Cambrai in 1990, an Economic and Social Administration DEUG section in Dunkerque in 1987, a History DEUG section in Cambrai in 1988 (followed by two more in Arras in 1989 and Boulogne in 1991), and a Modern Foreign Languages section in Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Gradually the university spread in the Region, with solid support coming from local socio-economic actors and elected representatives who wanted to bring planning to the area and introduce a new dynamic spirit.

The University of Artois (Arras) and the University of Littoral (incorporating the Boulogne, Calais and Dunkerque sites) were founded on 14 November 1991 by public decree in the Official Journal. A provisional organisation was established, and in 1993 the University's governing board reached a decision on the future of the Cambrai branch, whereby administrative arrangements were handled by the University of Hainaut-Cambrésis and the University of Lille III's teaching responsibilities were carried over for three years (1993-1996).

From then on, the University of Lille III was in a totally new situation in institutional and university terms, and despite (perhaps as a result of) draft Regional Plans, it had a complementary role with other universities, particularly the new ones, at the same time as sometimes being in competition with them.

1.2.2. Local and regional authorities working in close partnership with the University

Contractualisation with the Region

A true partnership developed with local and regional authorities during the 1980s, and the joint State-Region Plan helped to set objectives relating to the development of university teaching and research.

Both the State and the Region contributed to the funding; European funding was also sought for certain projects.

For example, the Plan Contract for 1994-1998 made it possible both to complete the 'University 2000' Plan, which aimed to provide new students coming to universities in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region with decent conditions, and to define new ways of giving support to existing universities and facilitating the development of the new University of Artois and University of Littoral.

With regard to research, substantial consultation took place between the Region, higher education structures, and especially the research centres.

Regional development was based on three main objectives:

- continuing to work at bringing the workforce in the Region up to standard and structuring it around priority issues;
- organising the impact that the development of research had regionally, with a view to stepping up exchanges with industry around issues and sectors affecting the Regional economy, and enabling socio-economic actors to have access to the technological resources that flowed from this research;
- supporting this activity with specific human resource measures.

One priority concerned support for developing the human and social sciences sector as part of actions structuring around federative programmes (*e.g.* production and towns) and resource centres (*e.g.* admission and reception facilities, meeting places, IT and documentary resources, publishing services) **with a view to increasing their international visibility** and, by setting up a field of inter-disciplinary competences, for example, increasing ('in ethical terms') the opening that social sciences make into other scientific and technological sectors.

This project, in which the University of Charles de Gaulle-Lille III was directly involved, led the institution to give careful thought to the way it organised research.

Implementation of regional plans in higher education and research

The question of area planning, a question since the early 1980s which had led to the opening of university branches in the Region, became a key issue in the early 1990s. In fact, it became so important that the Comité Interministériel d'Aménagement du Territoire (Interministerial National Planning Committee) for Regional Development meeting in Troyes in 1994 decided that Regional Higher Education and Research Plans should be drawn up in full consultation with the State, the

Regions, other local authorities and the institutions and bodies concerned, with a view to establishing outlines of national policy in this field.

The aim of these Plans was to achieve consistency in the higher education and research map; this had been determined in the light of the specific characteristics and needs of each Region, and it aimed to produce a real intra- and inter-regional policy of co-operative and complementary practice complying with research bodies' national scientific strategies. They were part of a national planning exercise, and articulated a desire to correct inter-regional and intra-regional imbalances.

The Plan drawn up in 1995 proposed a structuring around federative programmes and research centres.

The preliminary notes to the Human and Social Sciences programme focused on the specificity of Letters and Human Sciences research: 'It is becoming increasingly clear that subjects dealing with Man in society, languages and cultures and the foundation of knowledge and traditions could not, without incurring a degree of risk, be dissociated from what are known as exact sciences. The latter are, by general consent, fully aware that they need research in human sciences; however, for reasons related to institutional structures and to traditional divisions in knowledge in our technical society, they do not always know how they need it. Conversely, the superior isolation of literary subjects remains all too often in ignorance of what links them to exact sciences. It would therefore be illusory and harmful to give exclusive prominence to either of these terms in a scientific policy. A 'technology is all' approach holds out little prospect of success, as does the way that human sciences turn in on themselves.

If there is any kind of specificity of Letters and Human Sciences research, it must lie in a reciprocal, complementary relationship with what constitutes the specificity of other sciences. In our so-called post-industrial society, it is a matter of jointly thinking through the bases and foundations of practices insofar as they involve "Man" in his ethical dimension. That has manifested itself on many occasions down through the ages, and we have now entered a period of essential synthesis, "reconstruction" and representations of Man's situation in society and the world'.⁴

The University, which is party to this new development promoted both by contractualisation between the State and the Region and by Regional Plans, is gradually opening to the outside world. These developments oblige it to reflect not only on its organisation but also on its teaching and research projects so that the University can propose actions under the terms of these Plans. At the same time, therefore, it must produce balance sheets indicating the skills that it needs to develop and offer. The way the institution functions internally is also being altered.

1.3. Breaking up a university model

By tradition, the University of Letters and Sciences naturally tended to be innovatory in respect of teaching and research and to be 'stable' in terms of management. It was enough to ensure that students sat their examinations, that groups of students were managed, that an operating budget -- highly recurrent, after all -- was also managed, and that there were administrative staff capable of performing their jobs consistently in a low-grade IT environment.

Teaching, too, was located on a continuum, and fundamental cultural values were transmitted in Letters and Human Sciences, particularly in History. The University had a conservative mission and in part still has it).

Teachers, too, had to be able to teach on this same continuum; it was enough for there to be libraries in good condition and minimal supervision, as the sense of what they did was contained in the very subjects they taught.

As far as evaluation was concerned, therefore, it was a question of measuring performances relating to these practices; this was done essentially by using two types of indicator:

- student exit: the number of students successful in competitive recruitment served as an evaluation;
- evaluation of teaching: this was directly linked to the previous point (in this context, the quality of teaching depended on the number of successful students).

These methods no longer appear to be appropriate for the following reasons:

- diversification of types of employment taken by students;
- difficulty in assessing the number of real jobs taken by students;
- the need for less stable learning (knowledge versus competences) in a more fragmented, unstable world characterised by uncertainty;
- the need to incorporate new tools and methodologies;
- the need for administrative, ‘secretarial-administrative’ (Taylorian model) staff as well as technical and technical-administrative staff with in-depth knowledge in their specialities which enabled them, for example, to oversee matters such as research.

As a result, it has become necessary to re-think evaluation practices in the light of the changes currently taking place in universities.

2. FROM THE NATIONAL CONTEXT TO EVALUATION PRACTICES AT LILLE III

2.1. The national context

2.1.1. *The Savary Law: more autonomy for universities*

In 1984, the Savary Law turned Établissements Publics à caractère Scientifique et Culturel (EPSC -- Research and Cultural Public Institutions) into Établissements Publics à caractère Scientifique Culturel et Professionnel (Research, Cultural and Vocational Public Institutions). A concern with having a closer relationship with enterprises and local and regional authorities, a desire to provide training (in education and continuing education) that was more closely associated with these organisations, and occupations concerning graduate entry into employment were quite new areas for consideration.

The Law handed universities more autonomy, and in order to give them the resources to practise this autonomy, a system for distributing State-allocated appropriations was proposed. However, a ‘rudimentary and norm-referenced’ system was adopted ‘in the absence of a reliable system of information capable of providing a snapshot of the situation in an institution at a given moment (*e.g.* budget level, budget structure by component unit and type of course, and precise indicators of the student/teacher ratio by component unit or type of course)’.⁵

At the same time, an evaluation body, the *Conseil National d'évaluation* (CNE -- National Evaluation Council) was set up to respond to the missions set out in the legislation. Its aim, according to the Savary Law, was ‘to evaluate institutions, to assess the outcomes of contracts, and to recommend appropriate measures for improving the operation and effectiveness of teaching and research bearing in mind the higher education map and the conditions of student access and guidance.’

However, this concern with evaluation increased in response to additional pressure from such quarters as the national and international environment and growing competition. It was therefore becoming increasingly necessary to introduce new methods into teaching, research and administration.

2.1.2. The orientation Law of 1989: an articulated desire to develop evaluation practices

Lionel Jospin, who was Minister of Education from 1988 to 1992, took a keen interest in this question.

In 1988, he asked a group of researchers to look into the evaluation of teaching performance in university institutions, and wrote in the following terms to Michel Crozier, a specialist in the sociology of organisations whom he had invited to chair the working group:⁶ ‘How university institutions are perceived by students, the general public and the government depends on their teaching performances. That is why I think it is very important to focus on quantitative and qualitative indicators that will measure these performances. Some of these indicators will be simple and will be published regularly; others will be more elaborate and will be used by the Centre National d'Évaluation (CNE -- National Evaluation Centre) for its studies, by the Minister when allocating resources, and by universities themselves when carrying out their self-evaluations.’

With regard to the law, the Orientation Law drafted in 1989 as a follow-up to the Savary Law served to ensure that existing evaluation bodies were more widely recognised. Title V, Article 25 provides as follows: ‘With a view to adapting the missions of the education system, responding to a demand to lengthen the period of studies, developing the role and methods of recruitment and training of teachers, and improving life in these institutions ... the *Inspection Générale de l'Administration de l'Éducation Nationale* (the Ministry of Education's Inspectorate General in charge of reviewing how administrative tasks are performed) is carrying out evaluations at the level of *département, académie*, regions and at the national level. These evaluations report on teaching experiences in order to ensure that innovatory practices become widely known.’ It also states that ‘the CNE constitutes an independent administrative authority’ (Title V, Article 27).

2.1.3. Setting up the observatory of costs

In addition to bodies that were officially recognised by the Law of 1989, the Observatoire des Coûts des Établissements de l'Enseignement Supérieur (Observatory of Costs in Higher Education

Institutions), which is attached to the Direction Générale de l'Enseignement Supérieur (General Directorate for Higher Education), was set up to meet the needs of both the Ministry and institutions.

2.1.4. Contractualisation between the State and the institution

Because contracts are giving way to consultation and negotiation, and 'providing a flexible and convenient framework for implementing the major goals of the State, while at the same time enabling the university to obtain support for its specific projects',⁷ evaluation practices are becoming necessary to report on these actions. It is also expressly stated in respect of any contract (they are renewed every four years) that it 'shall undergo an evaluation of its action programmes against pursued objectives before it is renewed'.⁸

Accordingly, since the late 1980s, the University of Charles de Gaulle has been visited by the CNE, the Inspection Générale de l'Administration (IGAEN) and the Observatory of Costs, and it regularly carries out self-evaluations particularly within the context of contractualisation.

2.2. The first evaluations carried out in the institution

2.2.1. The evaluation carried out by the CNE in Lille during 1989-1990

The CNE evaluation was based on quantitative and qualitative indicators; this approach enabled the institution to prepare essential data for an external evaluation. Qualitative assessment was carried out by 'peers', teacher/research fellows working in other universities.

The evaluation was conducted carefully and rigorously. The method was extremely descriptive and based on quantified data, and it reached precise conclusions. However, there was a degree of conflict between, on the one hand, analyses of a department or stream, which had been carried out by peer-review and made judgements based on subject-related reference paradigms and practices (or needs) and, on the other, statements relating to management.

The two aspects of evaluation are not connected and the data do not overlap.

2.2.2. Evaluations carried out by the IGAEN

Evaluation of this type are corollaries of CNE evaluations. In practice, they focus on a given aspect of university life (*e.g.* organisation of the bursar's department or pass rates in examinations) from the point of view of the Administration which has to evaluate (in the qualitative, managerial sense of the word) how to respond to the missions that the institution has been given; however, it cannot directly link them with university practices as carried out by teacher/research fellows, and even less with subject-based paradigms that determine or explain these practices or ways in which courses, streams or even departments are organised.

2.3. The most recent evaluations: the observatory of costs study

One of the objectives of the CNE was to increase the need in institutions for internal evaluation; the University has gradually adopted these practices.

Moreover, the contractualisation linking universities in carrying out higher education policy has greatly contributed to the implementation of these practices.

Consultation between the State and the University is based on reviews or evaluations of objectives as represented by institution projects. The need to carry out these projects has prompted the development of organisational and management tools.

The Observatory visited Lille III in the context of contractualisation. The Ministry needed bargaining levers at national level, but the institution also wanted this evaluation on a voluntary basis.

This was how the idea of evaluation evolved. It was no longer a check or inspection, but rather an asset that enabled the institution to develop management tools and improve the way it functioned in the fields of administration, teaching and research; it provided an element of transparency. It was also a way of opening up to the outside world.

A few years ago, it appeared to the team managing the University that the logic of the SAN REMO system, which allocated university grants, conflicted with the institution's need to maintain its 'classical' teaching with its traditional job opportunities (particularly competitions for teaching posts), and at the same time open itself up to the outside world by offering new subjects and know-how (*e.g.* information technology and new technology in general) and the establishment of more directly vocational and 'business'-oriented sectors, but without denying the 'Letters and Human Sciences' culture.

The University therefore decided to alter its calculation norms by not taking into account the real costs of Literature students (*i.e.* costs incurred by the existence of courses with few students or due to the development of audio-visual methods and information technology). The issue was decisive if the University really wanted create or develop courses successfully and design new projects.

It was in this setting that the Observatory of Costs visit took place.

The decision was taken by the governing board on 13 January 1995 after many discussions.

The Observatory's work consisted of carrying out the most detailed and accurate collection and analysis of information possible in the University over a period of several months. This led to the involvement not only of a number of cost centre officers but, broadly speaking, of the entire University workforce, that is to say the 600 teachers and 400 IATOS staff (*i.e.* administrative and technical staff), all of whom had to describe their jobs.

Employees were asked to participate in the study; students were not contacted.

This type of evaluation was a new experience for Lille III.

It was also the first time that the Observatory had worked in a University of Letters and Human Sciences, a 'major Literary institution', all of its previous analyses having looked at scientific or multi-disciplinary universities or schools.

- **First stage: drawing up a protocol of co-operation**

A protocol of co-operation was drawn up to formalise reciprocal undertakings that had been made by the University and the Observatory of Costs in Higher Education Institutions.

Production of the protocol was preceded by an initial phase of exchanging information and quick questions; this ensured a proper understanding of the work that had been planned and of the aims that were to be pursued. The governing board then gave its backing to the preparation of a document setting out objectives and anticipated outcomes as well as co-operation on the evaluation strategy, the resources made available and the involvement of actors.

This document was then put to a vote by the governing board, and later presented to the President of the University for his signature.

- **Second stage: composition of the team**

A project team was established as soon as the visit of the Observatory of Costs was confirmed.

It was composed of people who came from a variety of backgrounds: specialists trained in evaluation and management techniques (Observatory of Costs consultants) teacher/research fellows who acted as facilitators (they worked among their 'peers'), and two people from Lille III, a teacher/research fellow and a female research engineer whose job it was to co-ordinate the study between the University and the Observatory while involving themselves fully in the team and participating in all activities concerning Lille III (*e.g.* explaining the study to staff, collecting data and analysis).

- **Third stage: consideration given to methodology**

After discussion on the team, the questionnaires were adapted so that they more accurately met the need for an analysis specific to Literary universities.

On the one hand, discussion focused on the teaching/research link as the Observatory's method involved drawing a distinction between the two so as to concentrate on the teaching aspect.

Only the cost linked to teaching was used in calculating the course cost per year/student. That did not seem to make much sense in a Literary university.

On the other hand, it was necessary to take account of factors that were peculiar to the University. Apart from the high degree of centralisation (much of the management is carried out in these services (*e.g.* human resources, maintenance and supplies services, bursar's office, and the research and education service) where most staff work), there are the numerous libraries and research laboratories, a substantial distance-learning section (the second of its type in France), numerous rare languages, a highly developed cultural sector (in terms of both courses (*e.g.* Plastic Arts, Theatre Studies, Cinema and Musicology) and activities on offer (a service organises and manages all cultural activities). The University therefore owns numerous well equipped rooms (*e.g.* a cinema, recording studios and a theatre, and it manages an exhibition gallery) and numerous objects and materials including musical instruments and audio-visual materials; a service has been set up to manage these objects. These specific features relating to structure and subjects necessitated some changes to the questionnaire; it had been mainly written for use in scientific and multi-disciplinary universities.

- **Fourth stage: presentation of the surveys⁹**

The Observatory's mission was presented to all staff. For the benefit of teachers and managerial personnel, several meetings were then organised in plenary session and then in each of the services separately (*e.g.* teaching and research units, joint services and central services).

Observatory surveys are presented in seven registers:

- Register I contains an introduction to the institution.

A detailed organigram of the institution is requested:

- central, joint and inter-university services, component units and teaching years;
 - premises with travelling times between sites;
 - an organigram with the number of IATOS staff involved;
 - an organigram with the number of teaching staff involved.
- Register II deals with course years.

It consists of eight questionnaires.

- a list of course years per component unit and sub-component unit;
 - numbers of students per course year;
 - a list of courses on offer, whether major component units or major sub-component units, per academic year;
 - a detailed description of teaching provided per major component or sub-component unit per year.
- Register III relates to the provision for depreciation and maintenance of equipment.

All objects and materials in each room or office that are subject to provision for depreciation are listed.

- Register IV covers teaching staff costs.

Teachers have to use a grid to show the percentages of time they spend teaching and doing research.

- Register V covers the costs of IATOS employees.
- Register VI deals with operating expenditure.
- Register VII deals with beneficiary departments.

- **Fifth stage: collecting the data**

Members of the Observatory team met nearly all University employees individually.

This phase took a little over a year. The whole team put a great deal of effort into it. During this period, it was necessary to explain the questionnaires again to everyone; people needed convincing and sometimes reassuring. Some made their distrust clear. Some also drew our attention to the ambiguity in the Observatory's status. (It is presented as an independent body, yet it is attached to the Ministry: 'What was it going to do with the data it collected? Would the information remain

confidential?') Others wondered what the consequences of such a study might be: 'What political decisions will flow from it?'

- **Sixth stage: data processing and validation by the services concerned**

As the Observatory consultants got to know more about the University, the software had to be adapted.

Some difficulties remained at the data capture stage. Staff themselves had completed the questionnaire, and this meant that each employee had done so subjectively, so how were the responses to be interpreted? Accumulated responses were therefore replaced by comments. Meetings were organised with the services concerned to explain each item of information; discussion centred on management and improving the quality of education.

Other practices regularly took place in the institution, and reviews and checks were carried out every year.

The Observatory is currently returning the data to the University and presenting its conclusions sector by sector; the final version will be available in June/July 1997.

3. CONSEQUENCES AND PERSPECTIVES ASSOCIATED WITH THE EVALUATION

3.1. Evaluation and contractualisation

The first four-year contract between the institution and the Ministry of National Education was signed in 1989, and the second in 1993. The next contract is in preparation.

A prior 'snapshot' of the University is requested so that the institution's workforce may be analysed on the basis of indicators and characteristic features (*e.g.* indicators of the situation regarding teaching staff, distribution of IATOS¹⁰ staff by job, pass rate by cycle...).

As soon as the audit, an essential prerequisite for establishing objectives, was carried out, a statement of the institution's development policy was published. It incorporated a self-evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses together with the main development and restructuring issues. Objectives were then fixed.

When projects are looking into opening up new courses, they need to be accompanied by a request for accreditation.

The document must also include a planning of jobs, and maybe one of maintenance work being carried out on the property.

A review is carried out half way through the contract: one took place in 1992 during the first contract, and there was a second review in 1996. This review examines the main indicators with a view to highlighting developments.

A draft amendment to the contract was drafted in parallel.

The 1992 amendment stressed a desire to develop cultural, language courses, a concern to combat academic failure, and the development of a system of pathways, particularly in the first year. The university identified with national perspectives for improving first-cycle results and implemented convergent actions aimed at first- and second- year students in guidance, follow-up guidance, learning support and student/teacher ratio. Support teaching was introduced at the beginning of the academic year in 1992. It was also recommended that teaching and research units should, for each course, appoint a Year Officer charged with monitoring the academic development of students in the group with regard to the whole of the DEUG programme.

Projects dealing with computerising the libraries and with projects were also drawn up.

The draft amendment produced in 1996 incorporates all the proposals formulated four years earlier, and proposes new directions such as giving priority to international relations, developing the Distance Learning Centre, and restructuring the Law Faculty.

Several other projects were emphasised in the study, and every measure adopted under the terms of the contract is regularly evaluated; to take just one example, Year Officers provide the General Secretariat with an annual review. Reports are also requested on a range of projects by the University's Course Officer whose job it is to ensure consistency across all courses, but who also acts as link with the Ministry in this field.

The second institutional contract is now coming to a conclusion. A review has been carried out with a view to preparing the third contract, and will determine objectives for the coming four years.

This review will be based on a large number of evaluations including actions set out in the contract, more structural studies (*e.g.* the one conducted by the Observatory of Costs) and indicators used to inform, and prepare for, the next contract.

3.2. Quality and complexity

3.2.1. Theoretical considerations

Our approach is based on the following suppositions: any university quality assessment can only be carried out within the paradigm of the complexity linking the various levels (*e.g.* subject-based paradigms, the cognitive and 'social' behaviours of teacher/research fellows determined by these, models of transmitting knowledge, student support, a performance/outcomes match, and cost in the light of this match) and analysing these interactions within the institution, or more accurately analysing them within the experience of university life. Unless schizophrenia would rule at the University, it is equally clear that management 'models' are representative both of an 'administrative' vision imposed by the French model of public administration (*e.g.* an 'administrative' competition which determines the allocated posts of many of our employees, but takes no account of the competences required to do the job as well as possible) and of a representation that is socially marked by the university environment made up of what the various university actors are.

3.2.2. From evaluation based on quantitative data to evaluation of a model

This explains why, following the first Observatory of Costs report, what additionally and mainly took place was a consideration of the meaning of the evaluation and of the desired university model that

got under way. What should be evaluated? What would be the aim? What university model do we want?

If the study of costs and the setting up of indicators aimed at improving management are necessary, it is not only in these terms that quality can be measured. The university mission is a public service mission, and sometimes the words 'output' and 'performance' are particularly ill-suited to Literary universities. The 'maximisation' of results cannot be automatically reflected in the 'minimisation' of costs. Evaluation cannot solely be defined in quantitative terms; it must also be qualitative. Therefore, if one seeks to evaluate quality, perhaps, rather than the number of graduates turned out per year, should one also examine the jobs that these graduates take?

The task can only be situated in a global perspective. It is necessary to analyse changes in the university to understand both the evaluation exercises that have already taken place, and those that will transform it in the future and will be involved in putting a new model in place.

When everything is taken into account, change in the University inevitably has to take place on all fronts:

- **at the research level**, either in order to review the meaning of research focusing on old fields or issues, or to find a reference point for our sectors' methods and issues in current questionnaires;
- **at the teaching level**, by updating old courses (through the use of new tools, new methods, or new questions) or by setting up new study tracks that are more effective at enabling students to find jobs -- at all events by adjusting the corpus of knowledge and competence referentials;
- **at management level**, given the uncertainty and lack of clarity on the outside, by providing structures that are able to respond to this and even anticipate it: these might include organising training and research units that are capable of innovatory work and of adapting to the outside environment thanks to a degree of autonomy and skilled administrative and technical staff, and a 'dispersal' of central services whereby they do not operate as a block opposed to teaching and research units. The various 'units' that make up central services (*e.g.* estates management, forward and day-to-day management of jobs, teachers and IATOS, financial management of projects, accounts, and course monitoring) need to interact not only with one another but also with all component units of the University, and teaching and research units in particular.

It is precisely this global, 'qualitative' dimension that should round off the evaluation of the Observatory; its methodology is very focused on costs.

If changes are to take place at these three levels simultaneously, how are we to evaluate these evolutions? And what standards are we going to use as the basis?

That is the aim of the study currently being proposed. How can we evaluate a research and teaching department that attempts to follow -- or, better, anticipate -- a world that is constantly evolving and full of uncertainty? What tools and methods can be put in place to calculate the matches and ratios between objectives and resources? How can we ensure that all actors participate in this

‘self-evaluating’ adaptation? This approach has to link up with evaluation operations, both inside and outside the institution, that have already been initiated.

When all is said and done, quality can only be achieved ‘globally’.

3.3. Favourable factors

3.3.1. A general awareness on the part of the staff of the need to introduce management tools

Following the CNE visit in 1989, management structures understood the need to acquire evaluation tools. Contractualisation reinforced this need, but it was the Observatory of Costs that raised the awareness of all staff.

As we are only at the data validation stage, it might appear premature to be imagining the consequences that the evaluation will have for management. However, it is already possible to observe an awareness of the need to ‘manage’ the institution as well as possible in order, for example, to improve courses and design new projects.

In education and research departments, this study made it possible to quantify information available on teaching models, teaching staff and hours that teachers have worked. Work was also done on the distribution of the work of management personnel and what it cost. In addition, an inventory of materials was drawn up in each service, and a replacement cost was calculated.

All of these data now enable Heads of Department to keep a better check on information. They know the student/teacher ratio in their teaching and research units, they can keep control over their equipment expenditures, and they know the total cost of their activities and of the service.

Collecting these data has often been a laborious task as the information was not always available in the form one might have liked, or else it did not yet exist.

3.3.2. The “political” context

The Observatory’s visit had taken place on the basis of a decision taken at central, that is to say governing board, level; there existed a political will to improve the management, and therefore the quality, of education.

President Losfeld, who was elected in January 1996, pursued the same policy. His programme stated:

“The University is a public service and must therefore apply and develop a public service logic...

The University’s missions, which include the production and dissemination of knowledge and education, place the student at the heart of university life.

The University is where a link is established between the extension of knowledge through research and the education of our future graduates. It is the guarantor of, and actor in, the social role of research; in return, research guarantees the quality of competences developed by its courses and by the fact that the competences are updated.

University management follows a clearly defined, well advertised policy.

University management is the property of all. There must therefore be real co-operation between all University actors.”

In other words, on the one hand, the University can no longer simply be a place where knowledge is produced for the sake of it, but rather a place where this knowledge is socialised in such a way as to enable various sections of the population to establish themselves in present-day life as well as they can and at whatever level. On the other hand, our management methods must respond to a powerful logic of service and, what is more, one of public service in which we must be simultaneously actors, promoters and guarantors.

President Losfeld also stressed the need for a policy of transparency and rigour:

“Several reports, including that from the French Treasury and most particularly one from the IGAEN, have underlined the need for strict management control. Clearly, if we are ourselves capable of ‘declaring war on waste’, our institutional partners will lend a favourable ear to the specific demands we will be obliged to make in respect of budget or staffing.”

3.3.3. A new organigram

To achieve this at a structural level, the President’s office expanded and, in addition to the inevitable secretariat, largely turned itself into an evaluation and perspectives unit with:

- a statistician;
- project officers who either took responsibility for strategic tasks assisting in decision-making or carried out ‘field studies’ into the circulation of information, the management of future staffing needs and other equally important matters;
- a co-ordinator for appeals for tenders and other national and international programmes.

The reorganisation of central and joint services currently under way also aims to facilitate greater interaction between the University’s component units.

3.4. Actions already undertaken

3.4.1. A study of the circulation of information

‘Perfect circulation of information is a corollary of the management of complexity, which insists that no decision shall be taken, at whatever level, without thought being given to what interactions there are, or may be, with other component units or with the entire University.’¹¹

There has recently been a study of the circulation of information, of exchanges of information (input and output) between each of the University’s component units and of ways of optimising the processing of this information, and of increasing the interlinking between services and therefore the usability of this information (*e.g.* how dysfunction in a course can be resolved if information from the

teaching and research unit delivering that course is immediately processed by the service most likely to resolve the problem).

3.4.2. A match between teaching resources and pedagogical objectives

Indicators have been constructed that cut across both theoretical teaching staffing levels and teaching loads (according to the model) so that additional hours allocated to component units may be calculated more accurately. The preoccupation here is not only with effecting more efficient control but also with ensuring that the quality of teaching is a function of an adjustment between objectives (set out in the models) and allocated resources; demand for resources would never be enough on its own.

3.4.3. Competences aimed at achieving quality

A number of actions are also being carried out in parallel; they include an inventory of functions and a map of competences in all services. This survey is taking a long time as it is based on detailed interviews with all IATOS employees in all services and all managers; it will be completed by the end of this university year. In the coming weeks, comments already made and part summaries currently in preparation should still make it possible to sketch the outlines of the forward planning of resources in certain services, either by pinpointing the shortcomings or required competences or by identifying structures that will inevitably have to be set up.

Thought has also been given to ways of organising working time over and above the time referred to above. As a result of these two studies, services will be able to optimise their public service mission even further.

3.4.4. A budget designed to meet objectives

A study has been initiated into criteria for distributing budgets between component units of the University; it involves making use of more complex and, one imagines, fairer criteria. At all events, this work, for which budget distribution criteria such as those established by the Ministry for National Education, Higher Education and Research (updated SAN REMO) provide the basis, will make it much easier to decipher them, and also hand greater autonomy (and responsibility) over to the various component units.

3.4.5. Establishing a Centre de Ressources pour la recherche et l'innovation (CRRIP -- Resource Centre for Pedagogical Research and Innovation)

A dual structure has been set up consisting of the CVPE (Comité de validation des projets éditoriaux -- Publishing Projects Validation Committee) and the CRRIP. The task of the former is to evaluate various publishing projects (classical projects in printed form or multimedia). If the Committee, which relies on advice from outside, independent experts, gives a favourable opinion, the CRRIP makes resources that are necessary for carrying out the project (*i.e.* materials and technicians) available to the project designer. These are drawn from resources previously allocated to the CRI (Centre de Ressources Informatiques -- Information Technology Resource Centre) and the CAVUL

(Centre Audio-Visuel de l'Université de Lille III -- University of Lille III Audio-visual Centre), and are now allocated to the Committee.

3.4.6. Redefining the CTEU (*centre de télé-enseignement universitaire -- University Center of distance Learning*)

The Observatory of Costs conducted an extensive analysis exercise aimed at discovering the cost of each teaching unit delivered by the Centre. This, the first activity of this type carried out in France in distance learning, has led to considerable advances in thinking on the subject.

With the evaluation over, the objective now is to give consideration to a better way of integrating CTEU services into university education in general, and to set up regular exchanges with other centres in order to avoid redundancy in the production of course materials and to broaden student choice. A partnership between centres in Rennes, Rouen, Caen and Lille has just been set up.

The CTEU needs to be able to play two roles:

- by taking responsibility for distance learning for students (those living some distance away, or else are in employment) who are unable to benefit from directly taught courses;
- by setting up support teaching using multimedia tools, and enabling students to come up to standard through private study.

3.4.7. Computerisation and organisation

The introduction of information technology management tools (*e.g.* in the Registrar's Office, and in staff management and accounts) must go hand in hand with consideration of how the structures that jointly manage these tools are organised. For instance, if the Registrar's function in the University is to be optimised, it needs to be based not only on a highly centralised registrar service, as is currently the case, but also on the quality of interactions between a central service that guarantees the accuracy of the register of enrolled students and the validity of diplomas, and teaching units that have thought through the content of the courses and have the task of delivering them, evaluating students and awarding diplomas.

The same is true of other applications which will only be truly operational if the organisation of the institution is rethought in the perspective of more shared responsibility.

It also applies in the case of the delivery of education programmes that involve the use of teaching aids, and which incorporate all actors -- certainly administrative staff, but also teachers. These training programmes are now under way.

3.4.8. Planning the use of space

The University has been obliged to make use of old premises, that is to say the old Law Faculty building with its unique architecture including immense amphitheatres adjoining tiny classrooms and offices. Because of building work necessary to ensure that the premises met legal requirements, we were compelled to hire a programmer-designer and an architect to work with teaching units in

drawing up plans for organising teaching areas in such a way that they met the needs of a modern university like ours, and provided resources such as average-sized rooms equipped with modern facilities.

At the same time, a town planner is helping us re-think the architectural space of the campus so that it both bears the strong identity of a university campus meeting the needs of its actors and also fits perfectly into the city.

3.5. Actions to be undertaken

With a view to pursuing the objective of marrying quality, management and decision-making, new tasks have been planned and will be implemented on an ongoing basis:

- A University organigram that more effectively identifies the ‘academic complex’ (e.g. teaching units, research units and joint support units) and ‘central’ services and which, by breaking up a hierarchical services relationship and replacing it with a functional and more ‘participative’ relationship, will enable the entire institution to achieve greater performance;
- A more accurately focused student admission and reception system. When they arrive at the University, students should undergo an evaluation of their socio-cognitive competences and motivations, and receive a comprehensive introduction to the courses they may wish to follow; this might incorporate the qualities that are required, an introduction to programmes and methods of evaluation, opportunities for further guidance, and job opportunities. The review will be reviewed at the end of the first semester and possibly amended;
- Consideration stream by stream of the linkage in the acquired knowledge/required competences relationship as a function of sectors in which employment may be found. Statistics will, if possible, show connections between instances of jobs that students take and the educational courses followed;
- There is a need for an evaluation of teaching that focuses perhaps on what is taught, but mainly on the sought-for match between a concern for rigorous education (in the subject-based sense) and implied promises of finding employment;
- A powerful linkage between this dual requirement and research work which can only support this requirement if it simultaneously reconciles the same concern for subject rigour and the need to meet major social demands;
- Medium-term forward planning of teaching work, which takes account both of developments in the present-day world and of a wish not to break the University’s strong identities.

NOTES

1. This was articulated in the following statement that appeared in the Official Journal of the French Republic of 14 July 1989, page 8860, Article 3 of the Orientation Law on Education of 10 July 1989: “The nation seeks to bring an entire age cohort at least to the level of the *certificat d’aptitude professionnelle* (Certificate of Vocational Skill) or the *brevet d’études professionnelles* (Certificate in vocational Studies) within ten years, and 80 % of the cohort to the level of the *baccalauréat*.”
2. Preamble to the Agreement on setting up a branch of the University of Lille III in Dunkerque on 27 June 1987.
3. Diplôme d’études Universitaires Générales (diploma in General University Studies) (Corresponding to the first two years of university studies).
4. Regional Higher Education and Research Plan, Annex on scientific and technical policy in Nord-Pas-de-Calais, contribution of the Regional Research and Technology Delegation, October 1995.
5. This report was produced by Dominique Nicolle, project officer for the Conference of University Presidents; *GARACES et SAN REMO: deux systèmes aux logiques et aux environnements antagonistes* (GARACES and SAN REMO: two systems employing antagonistic logics and environments), October 1992.
6. Report to the Minister of State, the Minister of National Education, Youth and Sports, *L’évaluation des performances pédagogiques des établissements universitaires* (The assessment of teaching performances in university institutions), Collection of official reports, Documentation française, Paris, 1990.
7. Alain Abécassis, “The Policy of Contracts between the State and the Universities. A Quiet Revolution” in *Evaluation and the Decision-Making Process in Higher Education: French, German and Spanish Experiences*, OECD Documents, Paris, 1994.
8. Cf. University of Charles de Gaulle-Lille III Development Contract (1994-1997) between the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the University of Charles de Gaulle-Lille III signed in Paris on 27 September 1994.
9. Taken from Observatory of Costs documentation.
10. IATOS: Ingénieurs, Administratifs, Techniciens et Ouvriers de Service (Engineers, administrative staff, technicians and blue-collar service employees).
11. The Letter of the President, N° 4, April 1996.