

Tbilisi State University Main Directions of strategic development 2006

Background

The century faced the first Georgian University to new demands. University should meet the challenges of the era, develop science and prepare students for further professional activities.

Tbilisi State University must be a competitive institution setting high standards of teaching and research within the system of higher education.

Reform envisaged by the Georgian Law on Higher Education is being fulfilled only partially. Well-structured Bachelor's and Master's system enables students with better chances for their professional orientation taking into account different skills and possibilities and activates international exchange.

The given document outlines the main principles and values as the basis of the University development within the coming 5 years.

Following forms should be taken into account for the realization of the University development strategy:

1. **Projects**
2. **Measures**
3. **Indicators of plan fulfillment**

Projects are vitally important for achieving the planned goals. Accordingly, projects are worked out on the central level. The projects include exact start and finish dates, detailed plan and the project team. As a rule projects are supported by appropriate human and financial recourses.

Unlike projects, **measures** are not accomplished by specially established teams, but rather by certain scientific or administrative units in line with the rights delegated to them. These measures do not require additional human or financial recourses.

Indicators can check achieved or expected outcomes. The indicators should be maximally informative. They are defined as a tool of control as well as means of displaying achieved success documentally.

1. Strategy Implementation

Main directions of teaching and research should be identified at the University. University should preserve and develop existing scientific potential. Identification of main directions, especially according to the specialties must be carried out in a systemic and coordinated manner. With active participation of the Faculties, University identifies the directions that will be developed or established in coming 5 years period.

The priorities and posteriori ties of teaching and research should be identified. And the main criterion of this process will be the quality of teaching and research.

Despite the existing financial difficulties, University should preserve the wide spectrum of specialties. At the same time, narrow specialties should meet high standards. Otherwise preservation of such specialties will lose sense. Minimal equipments of narrow specialties, as well as regional demand on them and their value in society should be taken into consideration.

University disciplines should take into account the ongoing changes within the science structure. An old traditional curriculum scheme has long been destroyed in science. But university curricula still stay within the old system scientific structure. The changes within the structure of scientific disciplines should be reflected on the title and content of disciplines.

University should exploit the possibilities of active cooperation between the Natural sciences and Humanities. Research in separate disciplines should serve as a basis of developing interdisciplinary researches and an individual profile of teaching.

Forms of Implementation

- Interdisciplinary Bachelor's and Master's programme
- Identification of new directions of teaching and research
- Establishment of interdisciplinary scientific centers (institutions) and working teams

2. Improvement of the quality of scientific researches

The main reference point of science and research development must be quality. University pays particular attention to researches directed towards solving complex tasks, and spreading and applying the knowledge acquired as a result of such researches. Fundamental as well as applied science will be developed. Researches done on basic problems of humanity, culture and society should be oriented on problem solving. The main goal of scientific research should be the acquisition of innovative knowledge.

Scientific researches should be defined as the basis for regional, national and international cooperation. University should have at least the function of leading regional scientific center and nurture the expansionist ambition of exporting its education.

Control on the quality of scientific researches will be implemented by means of periodic internal and external evaluations, as well as by various forms of self-evaluation of scientists.

Measures:

- Establishment of internal university foundation for scientific researches
- Organization of interdisciplinary seminars, meetings etc.
- Definition of scientific research plans according to the separate branches
- Opening a competition for academic positions according to modern scientific directions
- Elaboration of common conception of university internal evaluation system for scientific research
- Acquisition of additional sources
- Organization of seminars of PhD researcher
- Taking into account the possibilities of additional resources while taking academic positions
- Organization of trainings and seminars for institutes and faculties on the acquisition of additional resources; methodic support in administering of human and financial resources
- Preserving and developing an individual profile of scientific researches
- Enhancing the relationships between science and business sector
- Developing copyright system
- Activating Cooperation with different non-university centers
- Assisting students' researches

Indicators:

- Intensity and quality of national and international scientific cooperation
- Amount of doctorates holding academic positions at Tbilisi State University as well as at other Higher Education Institutions
- Amount of defenses of academic degree
- Amount of scholars

3. Improvement of teaching process and conditions

The optimization of teaching process should be carried out on the basis of existing human and financial resources. A system of consultations on learning process should be established as one of the forms of students' service. The responsibilities on the quality teaching of academic staff will thus increase. The content of teaching should be oriented on qualification goals and current scientific researches.

Teaching process should help students in their self realization, should consider their different interests. University must differ from a High School. Unlike pupils, University student must not be the object of teaching process. Students should become the active subjects of teaching process.

Contacts between students and professors should not end up in auditoria at the end of lectures. Student must be involved in scientific research. Main form of students' involvement in scientific researches is establishment of institutes of narrow profile.

The contents and methods of teaching should be identified in joint participation of Natural, Social sciences and Arts and Letters rather than within a narrow single direction.

University graduates must be competitive on free labor market. Potential employer must be confident in high qualification of the university graduates. University itself should take into account the existing competitive environment of the labor market. It is important to study the needs of labor market and identify the professional criteria of future specialists.

Projects:

- Working out curricula, modern methods of teaching and evaluation, based on the latest results of scientific researches
- Enforcing modules; implementing various evaluation systems (ECTS, Diploma supplement etc.)
- Attending semester of obligatory lectures at Higher Education Institution abroad (according to certain specialties)
- Identifying qualitative standards on teaching according to faculties
- Developing the didactics of higher education institution; preparation of academic staff in this direction (trainings, seminars etc.)
- Identifying qualification demands for academic personnel and improving competition conditions for ensuring better objectiveness of the qualification of applicants
- Establishing curricula consultation office
- Carrying out periodic opinion polls of students on all obligatory disciplines
- Working out special programs for assisting gifted students
- Introducing special introductory courses for the freshmen
- Implementing the concept of teachers preparation and professional developing
- Working out the organizational forms guaranteeing an active dialogue between academic personnel and the students on the goals and contents of curricula
- Promoting students' independent forms of learning and teaching

Indicators:

- Equality between the entrants of the University and graduates of Bachelor's level

- Results of students' periodic opinion polls
- Results of graduates' opinion polls, finding if they are satisfied with received education
- Students' satisfaction with the possibilities of consultations and interaction with academic personnel.

4. Internationalization

Internationalization should touch scientific research, teaching and university management simultaneously. Internationalization should involve Europe, South Caucasus, Near East, North America. The forms of university internationalization include partnerships with foreign universities, promotion of students' mobility etc. Implementing joint MA and PhD programs will be the main priority of the University. Participation of foreign universities in the implementation of PhD programs will be obligatory. There will be an obligatory demand of spending one academic semester at higher education institution abroad for separate courses. Teaching of English language as an international scientific language should be enhanced between students, teachers and administrative personnel. The number of foreign students and teachers should be increased. University should have appropriate equipment for foreign students and professors. With this aim in mind it is necessary to rehabilitate the infrastructure of students' dormitories.

Project:

- Development of the project for internationalization.

Measures:

- Taking into consideration the possibilities of University internationalization while identifying the evaluation criteria
- Targeted cooperation with foreign universities according to main directions
- Invitation of foreign professors and their integration in University society
- Elaboration of foreign language (especially English or German) courses
- Training of academic or administrative personnel in foreign languages
- Implementation of joint MA or PhD programs.

Indicators:

- Number of foreign professors at TSU
- Number of TSU students spending at least three months at foreign Universities
- Number of foreign students at TSU.

5. Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is one of the most important priorities of the University together with scientific researches and teaching. In modern knowledge society learning continues during one's lifetime. This continuous process of learning is based on scientific researches.

While formulating the system of continuous education university should be oriented on the needs of labor market. In this process university will have to compete with other educational institutions. Accordingly, University should offer different and higher standards. The system of LLL should use a high potential of University education, namely updated knowledge, high level of innovation, interdisciplinary feature of teaching and the ability of direct transfer to professional practice.

LLL center must promote the activities of Faculties. At the same time, service oriented on different target groups must be well-coordinated and organized. The income from received from LLL should support teaching of these groups as well as accomplishment other university programs.

The methods of distance and electronic learning should be set up in the system of LLL.

Project:

- Working out the conception of distance and electronic learning.

Measures:

- Promoting the activities of separate faculties in the area of LLL
- Identification of the fields of LLL in which the university will be competitive
- Formulating modules oriented on LLL
- Setting up the LLL center

Indicators:

- The income from the activities of LLL center

6. Improving the service

University should be defined as an institution with appropriate service in the field of teaching and research. University should meet high standards of service.

First of all, University is oriented on the service of students. Students should have appropriate conditions of acquiring knowledge. Improving the quality of service means auditoriums equipped appropriately, the possibilities of getting updated scientific and curriculum information, updating existing library funds, establishing new libraries on faculties, and raising the qualification of academic and administrative staff.

Projects:

- Improving students consulting service
- Establishing University Students' service centers
- Establishing students service centers within the faculties.

Measures:

- Consultations for students
- Repairing auditoriums
- Fixing rooms for faculties
- Updating library funds; setting up new libraries within the faculties
- Allotting special space for students group works at libraries.

Indicators:

- The number of members and readers in the library
- Students' applications according to the specialties

7. Modern information technologies

Modern informative technologies should be widely used in administrative activities as well as teaching process and scientific process.

Projects:

- Formulating the concept of distance and electronic learning defining pedagogical goals of distance learning, and rational standards of their accomplishment
- Involving modern technologies in the learning and examining process
- Using updated informational technologies in the process of university management.

Measures:

- Preparing University staff in modern informational and communicational fields
- Setting up electronic catalogue in the libraries
- Availability of internet editions

- Improvement of internet service.

8. Raising the university image

High level scientific achievements and teaching stands for the university image.

Tbilisi State University has vast traditions and an individual profile. University should preserve and enforce its identity. Scientific and administrative units of the university should be identified as inseparable parts of the University. The inner communication system of the university should be improved. The vigorous relationship between the separate units of the Administration is of vital importance.

The relationship between the University and its alumni should be reestablished. The university alumni club should be established. The relationship between alumni that are actively involved in politics, business sector is of special significance, as they have the experience in modern management. These people should be the University lobbyists in the fields of economic, politic and public relations. Involving them in the University management should be discussed with special care. Participation of university alumni in the management of alma mater will assist in preserve University individual profile.

University should have active relationships with the society. The continuous relationship with scientific institutions, media, fields of culture and politics, business, schools, and the city itself is also necessary.

The society should be aware of the University achievements in science and teaching.

Project:

- Elaborating the statute of the union of University alumni.

Measures:

- Activating contacts with media and journalists specialized on the issue of education and science
- Establishing active cooperation with Tbilisi. Establishing working group "Tbilisi as a University city". Activating contacts with Georgian Technical University, Sulkhani-Kavaiani University, Conservatoire, and the Academy of Arts. Organizing joint concerts, exhibitions and other activities
- Conducting activities oriented on society, especially on secondary schools. Involving the representatives of politics and business in these activities
- Enforcing contacts between science and business sector
- Improving the architectural image of the University, equipping the rooms with appropriate updated equipments. Refurnishing the territory, repairing facades etc.
- Publishing University journal (herald) oriented on wide masses of society, reflecting successful researches
- Organizing "open door day" systematically.

Indicators:

- The satisfaction of university staff with working conditions. Organizing periodic opinion polls on this issue
- Cooperation with secondary schools
- Cooperation with other institutions of Higher Education located in Tbilisi
- "Exporting" the standards of TSU scientific researches and teaching
- Active contacts with non-university scientific centers.

9. University management

University must be managed as a huge corporation, according to the so called “new managing rules.”

The economical instruments of management should be used in the process of inner administrating.

Normative base of university activities requires further polishing. The functions, competences of each structural element should be clearly identified. This must be an anonymous system and leaving no room for personal sympathy or antipathy while decision making. Activities in this direction should be systematic (organizing scientific conferences, seminars) rather than single acts. It is vitally important to have cooperation with foreign experts on this issue.

There is a need for the decentralization of responsibilities including the means of budgeting. Certain functions currently under the central administration should be delegated to faculties. Actions that could be carried out on the lowest level should not be settled on the highest level. At the same time, decentralization does not mean anti-centralism. Each element of hierarchical system of the University management should be maximally concentrated on the implementation of their competences.

The budget of the faculties should have enough room for carrying out delegated rights.

The modern labor culture should be promoted within the University. It affects the academic staff as well as administration.

In this process the university will offer its administrative help to the faculties, namely in setting the criteria for selecting administrative personnel and further improving their qualifications.

Project:

- Elaborating higher education institutions management program

Measures:

- Training courses for university central administration and faculty administrative personnel
- Working out administrative structure.

10. The growth of professional qualification among administrative personnel

University authorities should meet special qualification and professional abilities. University must be aware of the administrative and management skills and abilities of its personnel. University in its turn should assist in developing such abilities.

Professional career of the personnel should have room for planning. University personnel should have a possibility of successful career development.

Project:

- The concept of the professional development of administrative staff
- Identifying the criteria for checking individual professional qualifications.

Measures:

- Periodic opinion polls of the personnel
- Trainings of the heads of administration
- Trainings of administrative personnel

- Trainings of scientific personnel in the didactic of higher education institution and methods of learning
- Active involvement of scientific personnel in managing structure of scientific organizations (especially in some specialized scientific editions).

Indicators:

- Number of training participants
- Number of trainings
- Number of heads of administration participating in trainings

11. The measures of social protection

The salary of the University staff must be adequate to their qualification. University should attract the intellectual elite currently scattered in private, state and non-state sector.

Project:

- The program of social protection for university personnel

Measures:

- Establishing university fund for social solidarity
- Discounted medical service and social insurance for the university staff.