

MYKOLAS ROMERIS UNIVERSITY 2010

Summary

The year 2010 was one of structural and managerial change at Mykolas Romeris University. The University became the first in Lithuania to change its status and become a public body, as stipulated in the Law on Higher Education and Research. Having completed the changes, the University set out to form strategic goals in order to create new and attractive national and joint study programmes, to gain a foothold in extended form studies, to develop e-studies and their research sphere.

The most significant event of 2010 at the University was the International Association of Universities (IAU) conference, “Ethics and Values in Higher Education in the Era of Globalisation: What Role for the Disciplines?” The patron of the conference was the President of the Republic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė. IAU is an UNESCO-established organization of higher education institutions, uniting the most progressive world universities and higher education institutions and organizations from 150 countries and making a huge impact on the policy of higher education. There were more than 500 representatives from foreign universities of more than 60 countries participating in IAU’s Conference. Renowned leaders in the global and European higher education sphere acted as presenters. The Conference was an opportunity to present the University and the country’s higher education to the world, to make academic and research contacts. During the Conference, and thanks to the contacts made there, there were more than 30 new cooperation agreements with European, African, Asian, North and South American universities signed in 2010. This provided a legal basis to create new joint study programmes, implement joint research as well as student and lecturer exchanges, to participate in EU and other projects and programmes financed by international organizations and in the creation process of global studies and research spheres.

The University became the first in Lithuania, according to the new Law on Higher Education and Research, to change its status, becoming a public body in the beginning of 2010. The Higher Education and Research Law, and the new status of the University, established a new management system. An earlier version of Mykolas Romeris University’s Statute vested power in the Senate as the highest autonomous academic body. The Council’s role was that of a public oversight and custodial body. The new Statute foresees three University management organs: the Council, Senate and Rector.

On December 2nd, 2009, by decree of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, the new Council of Mykolas Romeris University was announced.

That was the first such management organ established at a Lithuanian university, as outlined in the new Law on Higher Education and Research. Council members expressed interest in life at the University and ongoing changes. A virtual workplace was created for council members and they are able to vote by e-mail on draft projects.

Mykolas Romeris University Council member and International Association of Universities (IAU) General Secretary Eva Egron-Polak made meaningful proposals for structural changes in Mykolas Romeris University, for creating an image of a progressive university and presenting the University to the global community. Having led the IAU for decades, Eva Egron-Polak gained a great deal of experience uniting universities throughout the world, strengthening their civic role and disseminating the latest information to world universities on issues relating to education, studies, university management and internationalization. As a member of Mykolas Romeris University Council, Eva Egron-Polak has put this experience to use in her work for the University. One of Eva Egron-Polak's projects, "Leadership in the Wake of Higher Education Reform," implemented at Mykolas Romeris University, has helped to create a new university management model, to improve the quality of studies and to involve community representatives in the management of the University.

Members of the IAU highly appreciate Eva Egron-Polak's contributions in the improvement of university activities quality, modernization of university management, strengthening of their social role and the creation of a global sphere for higher education in humanities. With the support of Eva Egron-Polak, Mykolas Romeris University had the opportunity to organize an IAU international conference on June 24th–25th, 2010. The theme of the conference "Ethics and Values in Higher Education in the Era of Globalization: What Role for the Disciplines?" was significant not only to the region, but to Europe as a whole. The event helped strengthen the University's international dimension, review priorities and formulate new strategic goals.

The Council reviewed and approved the University's new structure, which allows implementation of the University's strategic goals and improves the studies' quality. The Faculty of Politics and Management was established and it has five departments: Environmental Policy, Management, Political Sciences, Public Administration, and Strategic Management. An Institute of Humanities was founded. This is something new at the University, opening up perspectives for studies of the humanities. Overall, during reorganization of the existing structures, there 16 new departments were established. A Health and Sports Centre was set up.

Overhauling the University administration management structure, an Academic Affairs Centre was established, as well as a Project Management Centre, and a Chancellery Office, which has a Document Office, Legal Office and a Human Resources Office. The Communications and Marketing Centre was established and it has a Marketing Office and an International Relations Office. The area of international studies (joint study programmes, Erasmus and other programmes) was delegated to the Academic Affairs Centre. In addition, the national and international public relations functions were integrated. By decision of the Council, a new Library structure was formed uniting the Central and 1st Faculty Building's Library affiliate. At the library, an Information Resource Formation unit was established and a Library User's unit (containing Reader's Services, a consulting group, and an Information Service and Formation Group.)

The implemented changes allow the University to successfully exist and operate in a competitive environment, to integrate into the global competitive European and world higher education sphere, and to join international networks and mega-networks. While undertaking changes, the number of employees (not lecturers or academic staff), was reduced from 434 to 393, and expenses decreased by 9% and more than 1 million litas a year was saved. In 2010, the number of Mykolas Romeris University lecturers, with an academic title, from the total amount of lecturers, grew from 66% to 68%. The University has created a salary payment system oriented towards achieved results in seeking to implement strategic University goals. University administration managers continuously undergo training to improve their knowledge and skills, incorporating the best global and European practice and innovations in the area of higher education. The wide array of Mykolas Romeris University's contacts with international university organizations and networks, as well as universities throughout the world, helps in this regard. There is continuous participation in forums, meetings, conferences, seminars and discussions, where one becomes acquainted with the progressive experience of global management of higher education.

In 2010, based on the popularity of study programmes, Mykolas Romeris University remained one of the leaders among Lithuanian universities. Despite the start of a general decline in student numbers, the number of students at the University has remained virtually unchanged, remaining the second largest in the country. This year the first diploma was awarded for the first joint Master's study programme in Lithuania, which was implemented together with two foreign universities. The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education accredited seven new programmes and nine already implemented study programmes, of these, two were accredited after an evaluation of the international Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS). Establishing strategic guidelines for the University's development in 2010-2020, there were intensive discussions regarding the future study philosophy, the studies' flexibility and appropriate ways of enlargement, reacting to the changed legal status of the University and new challenges, study coordination was reformed. Steps were taken to prepare for the updating of the entire study system along with its management. University graduates score high on indicators for finding employment and income levels.

The University's strategy foresees internationalizing all University study programmes and transforming to joint programmes implemented together with foreign partners. These types of programmes will provide students with additional opportunities to study in foreign universities, reach additional study results and compete in the international labour market. In 2010, Mykolas Romeris University had two joint study programmes with a total of 67 students. The Social Policy Faculty's Comparative Social Policy and Welfare joint Master's Degree programme is implemented along with Finland's Tampere University and Austria's Johannes Kepler Linz University. In 2010, for the first time in Lithuania, graduates were awarded Master's Degree diplomas signed by university rectors from three countries. The second is the University Law faculty's joint International Law Master's programme, implemented with Belgium's Ghent University six years ago. This year it has students from five countries. Graduates of the programme are awarded university diplomas and the joint aspect of the programme is mentioned in the diploma supplement.

There is a growing interest in the University from foreigners seeking a Bachelor's or Master's Degree. In 2010, foreign citizens from 27 countries were studying at the University.

The University was the first in Lithuania to begin observing and analyzing its graduates' employment and career process (according to data provided by Sodra, the State Social Insurance Fund Board of Lithuania). Graduate employment and career monitoring are part of the University's informational system. These prepared systems allow for observation and analysis of the graduates' place of employment, changes, and income received. University graduate employment and income indicators are very high. In 2010, about 94% of University graduates were employed after having completed their Bachelor's Degree studies. Employment indicators for Master's Degree graduates are even better and reach 99%.

Mykolas Romeris University is developing the humanities and social sciences, and in the past years, physical and biomedical science, fundamental and applied innovative inter-directional and interdisciplinary research. The University participates in national, regional and international research programmes and projects. It practically applies research results and presents them to the public. In 2010, there were over 1000 research publications published (22 monographs, 3 studies, 9 textbooks, over 300 articles in internationally-recognized research publications, over 600 other publications in periodicals, one-time and expanded editions), almost half of all publications are written in foreign languages in internationally-recognized research publications. Much effort is concentrated in the development of e-publishing. The University publishes five periodic scientific journals: *Jurisprudence*, *Social Work*, *Public Policy and Administration*, *Intellectual Economics*, and *Social Sciences Studies*, which are included in international and widely-recognized academic databases. From 2010, the archives of research articles are stored and accessible via the University webpage. In 2010, University researchers, undertaking scientific research, cooperated with partners from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey and other countries. Also, the University participated in "Dorich House" network activities, along with seven European universities from Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Turkey and Sweden. Our academic researchers successfully integrated into the international researchers' consortiums, "Health and Aging," "Migration," and "Ecology and Sustainable Development" activities.

In order to implement the University's marketing and communications functions, the Communication and Marketing Centre was established in 2010. There were efforts to begin to change the University's public relations (communication) areas from concentration on paid traditional advertising media towards expert and more attractive info-presentation in traditional media channels, as well as in innovative communication means (social networks *Facebook*, *Youtube*, and others). The first video presentations about University events were prepared.

The Mykolas Romeris University Library is a contemporary, modern, technology-based academic information center. The year 2010 was one of structural changes at the library. By Decree of the University Council, a new library structure was approved. A new 12-person Reading Room was erected. There were 665,200 visitors at the Library in 2010 and there were 779,100 publications issued. There were 659,400 searches undertaken in the databases and 154,400 documents were sent over. The Library added 11,300 publications in 2010 and subscribed to eight new electronic databases. In addition, the library received gift book collections. The Library added valuable books to its collection, including the personal library of renowned dissident Viktoras Petkus and books presented by the Chinese Ambassador to Lithuania.

An important and necessary prerequisite for a contemporary, modern University is the computerization of all studies and research institution activity areas and supplying them with contemporary informational technologies. That is why each year the University sets aside a huge amount of funds and effort to implement informational technology, for restoration and development. In 2010, many of the University's auditoriums were computer-equipped with work stations for lecturers and they had the latest programming equipment installed. In some of the auditoriums, video conferencing systems were installed, the computer network service infrastructure was updated and the extended form studies provided new opportunities.

The University fosters artistic and aesthetic traditions with various cultural events organized on campus. In 2010, the Mykolas Romeris University Choir won a Gold Diploma in the International Robert Schumann Choir Competition in Zwickau, Germany. Three new groups were established, including a string quartet, folklore ensemble and the dance club "Salsa." Member of the academic community are encouraged to let their artistic talents unfold in 11 different artistic groups, which operate on campus. In 2009, there were 162 students attending rehearsals and the number grew to 300 students in 2010.

The University encourages an active lifestyle, with an emphasis on exercise. The students' and the academic community's physical education is oriented towards encouraging a healthy lifestyle. This is achieved by training, sports exercises, tournaments and individual work. University students who have achieved a high level of skill have managed to make the name of Lithuania known throughout the world. About 120 students are improving their mastery in various sports and represent Lithuania and Mykolas Romeris University teams. The year 2010 was very successful for the University's athletes. The Women's Basketball Team became Lithuania's Student Basketball League Champions for the third year in a row. The Men's Basketball Team took the silver in this league and the University's football players, for the first time, became the champions of the Lithuanian Student Football League. The Mykolas Romeris University Women's Volleyball Team won bronze medals in the National Student Volleyball League. Our student athletes also had a good showing in the XXVI SELL Games in the city of Tartu. In the division of Lithuania's Higher Education School Teams, our University won 1st place and among 75 universities from 14 countries, we won 2nd place. Our athletes also did a great job of representing Lithuania in various world sport events.

There were opportunities for University academic members to improve their health and physical prowess, and cultural and leisure activities were offered as well. The University continuously provides aid for socially disadvantaged students and those with special needs. Each year some students pay a reduced fee for their studies or receive scholarships. In addition, the dorm fee is either reduced or completely waived for those who live in student housing.