Η ΕΜΠΕΙΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΠΡΩΤΗΣ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΗΣ ΑΞΙΟΛΟΓΗΣΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΤΜΗΜΑΤΟΣ ΓΕΩΠΟΝΙΚΗΣ ΒΙΟΤΕΧΝΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ:
ΕΡΕΘΙΣΜΑΤΑ & ΠΡΟΚΛΗΣΕΙΣ ΓΙΑ ΠΕΡΑΙΤΕΡΩ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗ

Τμήμα Γεωπονικής Βιοτεχνολογίας
ΓΠΑ
Ιούνιος 2012
EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT (final report 05-12-2011)

DEPARTMENT | AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY |

UNIVERSITY | AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS |

Version 2.0
October 2011
BRIEF OVERVIEW

• The site visit was conducted between the 3rd and the 7th of October 2011

• External Evaluation Committee

1. Prof. Christos A. Ouzounis Principal Investigator – CERTH and Professor, CCBR, University of Toronto, Canada (Coordinator)

2. Prof. Spyridon Agathos Professor of Biotechnology, University of Louvain, Louvain, Belgium

3. Dr. Mattheos Koffas Associate Professor, Center for Biotechnology & Interdisciplinary Studies, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), USA

4. Dr. Anastasios Papageorgiou Professor of Structural Biology, Biocity Turku, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

5. Prof. Athanasios Theologis Professor Emeritus, Department of Plant & Microbial Biology, University of California - Berkeley, USA
PROS AND CONS

• Curriculum
• Teaching-Examination system
• Research
• General
• Well-planned and broad curriculum to prepare agricultural biotechnologists with a strong background in the fundamentals in plant molecular biology, chemistry and physics

• The biotechnological and agronomical aspects of the undergraduate curriculum have been recently more balanced, even though there is still debate as to the optimal mix between the two

• Attractive features of the curriculum are the 4-month practical exercise is required as well as a final-year research dissertation, which includes the preparation of a final written document and an oral presentation

• The existing curriculum serves the goals of the Department, is of high standards and is executed efficiently

• The curriculum is coherent and focused on preparing graduates with experimental skills in laboratory and applied biological processes for agricultural practice, industry and other sectors
CURRICULUM (CONS & IMPROVEMENTS)

• The undergraduate students seem to prefer an earlier exposure to biotechnology-oriented subjects. One possibility might be to give an introductory survey course on Agricultural Biotechnology (or Applied Biotechnology) in each of the two first years.

• The right balance between agricultural and biotechnological subjects especially during the first 6 semesters.

• Reduction of the redundancy in the curriculum (less “swelling”) and avoidance of overlapping context between undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

• Formal mechanism for continuous student academic counseling (academic advisors should be appointed to each student).

• A certain long-term vision regarding the curriculum might be required in the near future, given the eminent changes in the educational system nationally.
TEACHING-EXAMINATION SYSTEM (PROS)

• Most of the faculty members are well-trained and committed to teaching, research, and outreach activities

• The presence of well-trained and experienced laboratory assistants meets the needs for teaching the various subjects, both theoretical and especially laboratory courses

• The faculty members seem to respond to the students’ feedback on curriculum issues

• The Committee appreciates the experimental/laboratory orientation of the Department

• The teaching staff is basically adequate

• Faculty and students seem to be getting along very well

• Resources such as classrooms, teaching equipment and information technologies are generally adequate and are used effectively for achieving their teaching goals

• All faculty and other supporting personnel appear enthusiastic and up-to-date in pursuing their educational aims
TEACHING-EXAMINATION SYSTEM (PROS) CONTINUED....

• Extensive use of the internet, library resources and presentation facilities is the norm

• The faculty members generally use high quality textbooks that are widely acceptable by the international scientific community, several of which have been translated into Greek

• Overall, the teaching process is of high standards
1. Οι στόχοι του μαθήματος ήταν 
3. Η ύλη που διδάχθηκε ήταν 
5. Τα εκπαιδευτικά ήταν 
7. Πώς κρίνετε το επίπεδο ποιότητας 
9. Ρόλοι των κριτηρίων 
11. Πώς κρίνετε το επίπεδο σχετικό 
13. Αναλύει και παρουσιάζει τις συγκεκριμένες 
15. Διαφάνεια των κριτηρίων 
17. Έχετε ευκαιρία για εγκαίρως 
19. Τα σχόλια του διδάσκοντος 
21. Η συγκεκριμένη 
1. Οργανώνει καλά την παρουσίαση 
3. Αναλύει και παρουσιάζει περαιτέρω 
5. Ήταν συνεπής στις υποχρεώσεις 
7. Το θέμα δόθηκε εγκαίρως 
9. Πόσο ορισμένες 
11. Πόσο απαραίτητα 
13. Πώς κρίνετε το επίπεδο σχετικό 
15. Διαφάνεια των κριτηρίων 
17. Έχετε ευκαιρία για εγκαίρως 
19. Τα σχόλια του διδάσκοντος 
21. Η συγκεκριμένη 
1. Οργανώνει καλά την παρουσίαση 
3. Αναλύει και παρουσιάζει περαιτέρω
1. Πώς κρίνετε το επίπεδο
2. Είναι επαρκείς οι καλά αναφερεμένες ερωτήσεις 5-11
3. Εξηγούνται καλά οι βασικές διδακτικές ενισχύσεις
4. Είναι επαρκής ο εξοπλισμός του θεματικού
5. Το θέμα καθοδηγήθηκε από τη συγκεκριμένη
6. Τα σχόλια του διδάσκοντος ήταν
7. Η καταλήκτικη δοκιμή
8. Υπήρχε σχετική
9. Υπήρχε καθοδήγηση από τους φοιτητές για την
10. Δόθηκε εγκαίρως;
11. Δόθηκε η δυνατότητα
STUDENT EVALUATION – THEORY
SPRING SEMESTER 2010-2011
TEACHING-EXAMINATION SYSTEM (CONS & IMPROVEMENTS)

• Appropriate measures towards increasing lecture attendance (quizzes, mid-term evaluation, change of examination system)

• Mostly emphasis is placed on final exams. Each student should be examined on at least two different occasions, for example one midterm exam and one final exam

• The DAB makes an effort to use textbooks that are up-to-date, although in a few cases the notes and other material used were out-of-date

• More extensive use of English in post-graduate teaching could be beneficial for both Greek and international students. This can also be an advantageous element in attracting more foreign students at all levels

• Mobility & exchange programs, primarily because of limited or non-existent international accords between AUA and foreign universities. An effort should be made to encourage mobility further

• Improve (lower) the ratio of students:professors and reduction of teaching load (more time investment in research and grant writing)

• The results of the students’ evaluations should be publicized and considered for the improvement of teaching efficiency
**RESEARCH (PROS)**

- Most faculty members have the **ambition to publish high quality peer-review papers**, in the area of their expertise.

- The faculty is engaged in **multiple collaborations outside the Department**.

- The **publication output is considered at an adequate level, but with ample room for improvement**, given the current average level of 0.8 – 1.8 publications per faculty member and per year.

- There are **several funded research projects in progress** that are conducted by about one-half of the faculty members.

- There is a **good number of collaborations and networking** within and outside Greece.

- There are **publications** of a few groups with **co-authors** from several other centers and Universities, which shows that a core of **dynamic faculty** members is **pursuing high quality and excellence**.

- A few faculty members have been able to **excel in their research goals**.
• Several faculty members are internationally known and visible, as judged by invitations to review manuscripts for peer-review journals, membership in journal editorial boards, and organization of conferences

• Research is of high standards and internationally competitive
RESEARCH (CONS & IMPROVEMENTS)

• Regular Departmental meetings annual seminar series to be attended by the faculty and students

• Focused research policy that can optimize the use of resources and the international presence of the Department in a few, key areas.

• The DAB might consider reward mechanisms for laboratory assistants, MSc and PhD students (scholarship funds and/or funding research activities)
In general, **infrastructures are of high standard** while the **location and structure of the AUA** is quite unique and **should be clearly recognized as an asset**.

- Some faculty members are involved in **culture and outreach initiatives**.

- The **University’s Museum and Historical Archives** are **remarkable resources**.

- The publication of the quarterly **magazine “Triptolemos”** constitutes a valuable vehicle for maintaining and expanding **outreach to society**, including the Department’s and AUA’s alumni.

- The **infrastructure and location of campus** should be appreciated as a **value-added asset** and **better promoted for outreach** and other activities.
GENERAL (CONS & IMPROVEMENTS)

• **Tighter coordination** between faculty members

• **Tighter connection to industry/market** demands

• **Secure individual office/lab space** for all faculty members (equal treatment policy)

• **Increase budget/resource allocation for maintenance** of core facility/infrastructure

• The Department should appoint a **3-member committee to evaluate every two years the content of the various courses** to ensure that all of them are updated and remain current with the scientific advancements.

• The Department should consider establishing a **4-member advisory committee to formulate its long-term goals**

• The Department should enhance the safety of all laboratory spaces. **Ventilation** should be greatly improved as well as **procedures for the disposal** of the chemicals used. The disposal of chemicals in the sinks should not be allowed

• The Department should allow the **post-graduate students to rotate** in other laboratories
SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- High standards of Curriculum, Teaching and Research
- High rate of Student Evaluation

Weaknesses

- Loss of research focus
- Loss of long-term vision
- Lack of Common Research Goal and intra-departmental collaboration

Opportunities

- Right balance between Agriculture & Biotechnology
- Increase mobility and exchange, connections to industry

Threats