

# Quality Matters

Volume 2 No.6 February 2008 A Quarterly Newsletter of the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance  
St.Mary's University College.

## In this Issue

From the Editorial Desk P 2)

News Items (P 3)

Interviews (P 5)

Perspective (P 7)

Research Corner (P 8)

Fun Corner ( P 10)

## Quote of this issue

*"Quality is the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfills requirements."*

(ISO)

This newsletter is published every three months by SMUC's Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance. The Objective of the newsletter to inform the SMUC community as well as interested public, private, non-governmental stakeholders about the activities and endeavors of the institution in fostering quality education and research in the Ethiopian Higher Education setting.

Tel.251-11-5 53 80 01/ 537998

P.O.Box:1211

Email: [smc@ethionet.et](mailto:smc@ethionet.et)

[http// www.smuc.edu.et](http://www.smuc.edu.et)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

## St.Mary's University College to launch Institutional Quality Audit.

St. Mary's University College organized a training workshop on Institutional quality audit for its staff from January 30 to February 1, 2008. A self-evaluation taskforce of close to 30 members, comprising both the academic and administrative staff of the University College, participated in the training held at SMUC. Members of the self-evaluation steering committee of the University College also took part in the training.

The training was intended to expose participants to quality audit procedures which seek to sort out good practices of the University College as well as areas that need improvement. Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance Agency's (HERQA's) quality audit procedure is adopted to carryout the evaluation.

Topics addressed in the workshop were HERQA's institutional quality audit procedures, international quality audit practices, with special emphasis on England and Wales, as well as com-

*Continued on page 3*



### From the Editorial Desk

Perusing education is not only instrumentally valuable, but it is also important in its own right. Education enables people to acquire information and convert it to knowledge, both of which are critical to make effective choices and translate them into desired actions. It is, however, a dire reality that people in our country need access to higher education where skilled labor force is still chronically insufficient after almost more than half a century of such journey. Cognizant of this fact, the education sector reassumes its own huge responsibility to realize the Ethiopian renaissance by producing qualified and competent professionals in this era of global knowledge-based economy.

Though massification of higher education is the current typical phenomenon in the country, quality of the education, however, poses serious challenges to the educational system. The chronic shortage of qualified teachers coupled with extreme shortage of teaching and learning resources could aggravate the already existing pedagogical and curricular problems of the sector. Institutions should, therefore, have to offer quality education so as to revitalize the programs.

Certain issues concerning politics, culture, morality, art, literature and philosophy that have shaped or seek to shape the values of our social identity seem to have less claim on our students' attention. Through fostering such dialogues, we can broaden and deepen our students' interest in what really matters. The institutions should also serve as incubators of research and development for future products and processes that will build the economy. This, however, can hardly be accomplished without the provision of quality education. What then is quality education?

Though there is hardly any consensus on what constitutes quality education, the presence or absence of qualified and inspiring teachers, relevant curriculum, appropriate instructional materials, democratic management, academic freedom and

well-maintained physical environment as well as the active involvement of students in college governance can be thought of as its yardstick. In other words, in an institution which offers quality education to students, everyone from the highest level of management right down to the classroom teaching should actively engage in creating the learning environment that students need, and respond accordingly when those needs change. What current studies in the area ascertain is inputs, processes and outputs of our institutions are what define quality education. It is, therefore, with this background that higher education institutions should strive to achieve excellence in their mission.

### Useful Links

Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (Ethiopia)

Website: [www.higher.edu.et](http://www.higher.edu.et)

PROPHE- Programme for Research on Private Higher Education

Website: [www.albany.edu/dept/eaps/prophe/](http://www.albany.edu/dept/eaps/prophe/)

International Network for Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (INQAAHE)

Website: <http://www.inqaahe.org>

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK)

Website: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

Center for International Research on Higher Education

Website: [http://bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/soe/cihe](http://bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe)

Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia

Website: <http://www.qsae.org/>

International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

Website: <http://www.eric.ed.gov>

International Network for Higher Education in Africa (NHEA)

Website: <http://www.bc.edu>



## News Items

### **Institutional Quality Audit...**

pilation and documentation of self evaluation document. The workshop was finalized with Dr. Bob Campbell's wrap up presentation on quality audit procedures from HERQA's perspective.

### **Looking to the Future and Building on the Past: St. Mary's University College mapped out its plans for 2007/8 - 2011/12**

SMUC has finalized the preparation of its five years' strategic plan document. The document is designed to recognize the work done over the past decade, and build on the achievements so as to enhance the University College's commitment to quality service provision.

With sufficient depth, the Strategic Plan document captures a vision for SMUC that serves as a useful guide to subsequent institutional academic plan. Thus the document clearly states institutional priorities with regard to each of the institutional strategic directions.

The plan not only calls for the institution to continue its service, it also focuses on new opportunities to advance the University College's teaching, research and commitment to enhance quality of the service.

Efforts toward producing a new five-year plan, which runs through 2008, began in April 2006. Members of the strategic planning team were comprised of a broad-base of academic and administrative staff. The team, thus, spent a considerable time discussing on the plan and seeking comments from SMUC's community as well as other stakeholders upon the first draft which appeared in September 2007.

A thorough study was made to gauge the opinions of students, faculty members, administrative staff, employers and policy makers through survey, focus group discussions and interviews. Further on, the plan was vetted across various stakeholders that enabled the team to receive valuable input that informed and strengthened the document with each successive draft document. Indeed this document is representative and reflective of the faculty, students, staff and employers.

(Teshager Mersha)

### **Chamber of Commerce organized a four-day training workshop.**

Representatives from St. Mary's University College attended a four-day training workshop on "Total Quality Management and ISO 9001 International Quality Management."

*Continued on page 4*



The training, which was organized by Addis Ababa Chamber of commerce, was held at the Exhibition Hall from 13-16 November 2007.

The training was intended to help organizations achieve flexibility and quality for continuous improvement in their business activities with enhanced focus on customers throughout the entire operation.

At the end of the conference, professionals and businessmen from both the public and the private sector, who took part in the training, were awarded certificates upon successful completion of the training.

#### **EQUIP conducted a two-day consultative workshop for Public and Private Higher Education Institutions.**

A consultative workshop for the Special Interest Group (SIG), a committee of professionals from nine pioneering and newly established public universities, was conducted by the Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) for two days at EQUIP's office. St. Mary's University College, from the private sector, participated in the workshop.

As the project of establishing Academic Development Resource Centers (ADRCs) phases out, with only the logistic support of the group (i.e. EQUIP) to stay, the work is passed onto HEIs themselves. EQUIP initiated the project which was funded by

the Netherlands Government. The intention was establishing a cadre of experts who would ensure quality educational service in HEIs of the country.

The development of Quality Care Manual and Quality Instruments as well as Data Capturing and Analysis were topics of concern that the Committee discussed thoroughly. Subsequent four meetings for the year 2008 are expected to take place as per the plan of the Committee.

#### **CRQA in change process.**

St. Mary's University College (SMUC) is in the process of restructuring its Center of Research and Quality Assurance (CRQA) into the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA).

As per the new structure, the Center (i.e. CEIRQA) will have three units: Teaching-Learning Assessment and Communication unit, Research and Publication, Outreach and Data unit, and Facilities and Staff-student support unit.

The restructuring is done with the intention of making tasks and activities of the center give strengthened focus to quality and standards in teaching, research and outreach activities of SMUC. ■



# Interviews

This column features interviews of people including government officials, policy makers, educators, and presidents of universities or colleges as well as students on quality related issues.

In this edition of the newsletter we present the views of students and teachers at St. Mary's University College on quality education.

## **Background**

*The interview is intended to have a glimpse on the perception of students and teachers on quality education. Four students from the regular program and two lecturers at St. Mary's University College were interviewed. Their responses are summarized and presented below. We would like to thank the respondents for sharing their views.*

*The first interviewee we talked to was a junior Regular Degree student at St. Mary's University College.*

### ***What do you think is quality education?***

Currently, I would say, quality education is transmission of appropriate knowledge to students and the ability of students to use this knowledge in real life. In other words, quality education equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to bring about tangible change to the society they are living in. Hence, to me educational quality is measured by output. However, students' background also count to a great extent in ensuring educational quality.

***Our next interviewee, who is a senior regular Degree student views quality education in terms of input:***

*"An institution with good library stock, adequate*

*access to the internet and entertainment facilities as well as decent academic environment is one which offers quality education."*

Thus, the physical infrastructure is what I think counts most in quality service provision of academic institutions.

Another interviewee who is a regular senior law student at St. Mary's Law Faculty notes that, the presence of experienced teachers with sufficient numbers is one of the determinants of quality education in a given institution. Moreover, quality education is related to the availability of appropriate and sufficient books. Equally important is the number of students learning in the institution which shows the quality of educational service being rendered. Indeed, the institution should also be reputable in the labor market.

A 3<sup>rd</sup> year student on his part stated what he thinks is quality education. For him quality education is weighed against the presence of highly skilled and knowledgeable teachers critical for educational quality. Besides, availability of good classroom conditions, good library, good campus premise, in-campus entertainment facilities, and well-equipped laboratory as well as democratic and participatory management are what bring quality education in a given academic institution. Of course, educational quality also means labor market reputation of graduates from a given institution.



***When do we say a given higher education institution offers quality education?***

In the view of the first respondent, we should weigh the performance output of our students during their training or after graduation. For example, during our stay at the University College we go out to different institutions for apprenticeship. For instance, last summer I was practicing at the Federal High Court (Lideta). There, students from the St. Mary's University College were favorably accepted; for they come to the institution being fully informed on what they are supposed to do. Therefore, these students practice with little help and guidance from their supervisors. Moreover, I was able to see the works of my seniors and was able to note no difference in the way trainees of St. Mary's University College and professional employees of the institution carried out their tasks.

***What would be your criteria when choosing HEIs if you seek quality education?***

Personally, I weigh institutions on the basis of the appropriateness of academic and administrative service I get as a student.

The other student that we interviewed stated that what comes to his mind first when he thinks of quality education is the how of the teaching-learning process. Next is the efficiency of teachers on teaching and their willingness to support their students.

We now present the views of lecturers at St. Mary's University College on quality education.

***What do you think are measures of quality education?***

The first thing is the presence of experienced and qualified teaching staff in a given institution. Next is the background of the students since they can be thought of as inputs in the educational process. Last, but not least, the educational process should be based on pragmatic approach to learning.

***What do you mean by pragmatic approach to learning?***

By pragmatic learning I mean learning which is more concerned with practical results rather than theories and principles.

***What do you think should be done to improve the educational quality in academic institutions?***

Well, you know, quality is not something that you only talk of at a higher institution level. It is rather a cumulative effect of the whole educational cycle. It is, therefore, very essential to give due attention to the first and second cycle of primary education.

***If you were to describe quality education in the best possible way, how do you define it?***

'The foundation is the most important base to quality education.' ■



## Perspective

### Applying Total Quality Management: the Case of the Education Sector

The prominent feature in higher education during the last decade has been a significant increase in enrollments all over the world. Despite the achievements of this rapid growth, major challenges for higher education systems are also prevalent. This is especially true in the quality of programmes, curriculum restructuring, relationship of teaching and research, governance and autonomy in the organizational arrangement of academic systems.

The growing concern for quality matters in the Ethiopian educational system has led to the establishment of Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) and Higher Education Strategic Center (HESC). The agency and the Center are created, among other things, to support efforts of various universities to deliver quality education and research services that address the real development needs of the country. To this end, institutions must develop various instruments and strategies to achieve quality.

Back in the old days, Total Quality Management (TQM), which refers to satisfying customer and creating customer enthusiasm through understanding their needs and future expectations, was recognized as an important management philosophy whose application was widely used in the manufacturing industry. However, over the last few years, TQM has started to be applied in the education industry of advanced nations. Though most of

the applications have been in the administrative side of the institutions, some academic institutions of those nations have started applying TQM to curriculum development. Hence, in this issue emphasis is given on the importance of identifying the customer and analyzing the processes.

Literature in the area ascertains that endorsing TQM represents a fundamental change in the way one does business. Once the commitment is made to implement TQM, one of the first steps is to identify actual and potential customers or stakeholders. To do this, one should treat the educational process as a system; all elements and the interactions among those elements must be addressed. The philosophy behind this underlying premise is that process improvement should begin and end with the customer. Thus, universities should identify their customers in their own settings, which is different from other business enterprises. It can rightly be argued that there are many stakeholders of the university including students, employers of graduates, parents of students, taxpayers, the society, etc.

On the other hand, by focusing on a customer who is too far from the operation, it is very easy to overlook the needs of the more immediate customers. Though uncommon for universities to address the needs of the industry in curriculum development, in countries like ours, students are usually treated more as a product than a customer.



## Research Corner

It is likely that many of the problems that plague some universities stem from an effort to make a remote body happy while inadvertently ignoring students. This in fact seems a classic case of improperly defining the system. Thus, all relevant participants must be included in the educational system. Once all participants are identified, the relative importance of each participant can be established.

Taking a systems-approach to education can thus be a very useful endeavor. If the student is identified as one of your customers, you must try to satisfy that customer, but you must be very sure you know what that customer really wants. Customers must make an informed decision in deciding what they want, taking into account costs, performance needed, legal issues, and the like. Students may say they want an easy 'A' in every class, but what they really want is education. If high grades were passed out with no learning taking place, prospective employers would quickly learn to avoid hiring the graduates of that university.

The perspective we should thus take is that the students are, at least, spending their precious time with us. We must, then, be sure that we are satisfying their real long-term needs, not simply short-term desires.

The principles of TQM are intended to be described in subsequent editions of this bulletin.■

(Markos Mezmur)

Title: Promoting Quality in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges for the Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia.

Researchers: Kate Aschroft (Prof.) and Philip Rayner (PhD.)

Research Type: Descriptive or Analytical

Date and Place of Publication: July 26, 2004 (a paper presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Conference on PHEIs)

The paper explored methods of quality assurance and techniques of assessing students. The study also outlined some guidelines that might be used in Quality Assessment or Audit together with the challenges that private higher education institutions in Ethiopia are facing. Evidences of the study were collected from Higher Education Systems Overhaul (HESO) visit report. It included visits to eight public sector institutions during which 34 meetings with various stakeholders and discussion with faculty deans were held. Moreover, focus group discussions with the team drawn from eight public and private sector HEIs and the Ministry of Education were made. Analysis of the data revealed that private HEIs should work through their association and collaborate with the public sector to ensure involvement of all stakeholders. The study also underlined the need to

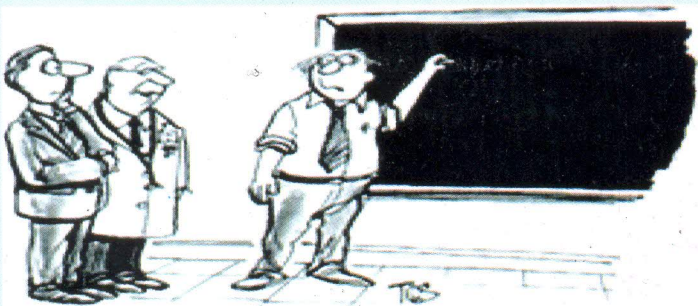


reflect stakeholders' expectations and perceptions in developing performance indicators. The research finally concluded that the requirements of Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) ought to go beyond impacting purely academic skills to include the development of ethical values, behavior of their students and focus on the developmental challenges the country faces.

Those who might wish to access the full text might visit our website at <http://www.smuc.edu.et>: Proceedings of the Second National Conference on PHEIs. ■



"I have to read this disclaimer: Any opinions expressed in this course belong to the professor and do not necessarily mean the university is left-wing."



"It's a clear case of RLS: Repetitive Lecture Syndrome."

## Fun Corner

### The universal grade change form

To: Professor \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

I think my grade in your course, \_\_\_\_, should be changed from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ for the following reasons:

\_\_1. The persons who copied my paper made a higher grade than I did.

\_\_2. The person whose paper I copied made a higher grade than I did.

\_\_3. This course will lower my Grade Point Average and I won't get into:

\_\_ Medical School

\_\_ Graduate School

\_\_ Dental School

\_\_ Fraternity/Sorority

\_\_ The Mickey Mouse Club

\_\_ Tri County Tech

\_\_4. I have to get an A in this course to balance the F in \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_5. I'll lose my scholarship.

\_\_6. I'm on a varsity sports team, and my tutor couldn't find a copy of your exam for me.

\_\_7. I didn't come to class and the person whose notes I used did not cover the material asked for on the exam.

*Continued on page 10*



8. I studied the basic principles and the exam wanted every little fact.

9. I learned all the facts and definitions but your exams asked about general principles.

10. You are prejudiced against:

Males

Blacks

Females

Jews

Catholics

Whites

Protestants

Minorities

Chicanos

Students

People

11. If I flunk out of school my father will disinherit me or at least cut my allowance.

12. I was unable to do well in this course because of the following illness:

mono

broken baby finger

acute alcoholism

pregnancy

VD

fatherhood

13. You told us to be creative but you didn't tell us exactly how you wanted that done.

14. I was creative and you said I was just shooting the bull.

15. I don't have a reason; I just want a higher

grade.

16. The lectures were:

too detailed to pick out important points.

not explained in any sufficient detail.

your class was far too boring.

all jokes and not enough material.

all of the above.

17. This course was:

too early, I was not awake.

at lunchtime, I was hungry.

too late, I was tired.

18. My (dog, cat, gerbil) (ate, wet on, threw up on) my (book, notes, paper) for this course.

If you have comments on this issue of the newsletter or would like to contribute to future issues please contact our office on Ext 148

Or email: [smc@ethionet.et](mailto:smc@ethionet.et)

**Managing Editor**

Markos Mezmur

**Page Setup**

Abdurezak Abrar

**Center for Educational Improvement, Research  
and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA)**

**St. Mary's University College (SMUC)**

Tel. 251-115-53 80 01/ 53 79 98

P.O.Box:1211

Email:[smc@ethionet.et](mailto:smc@ethionet.et)

Website:[http// www.smuc.edu.et](http://www.smuc.edu.et)

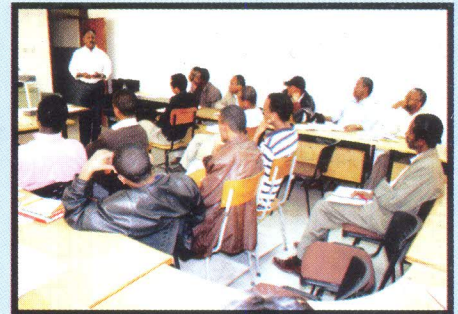
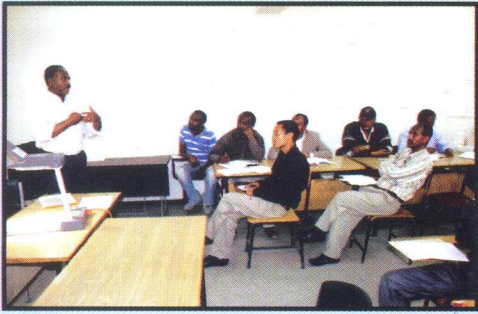
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



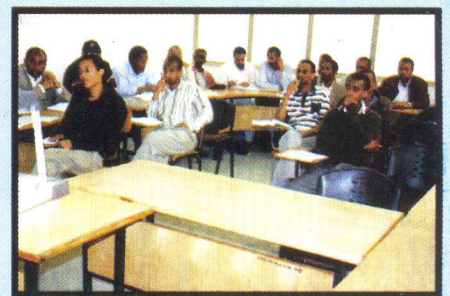
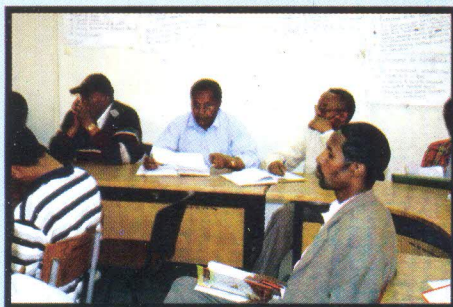
# Photo Gallery

## Workshop on Institutional quality audit.

Ato Goitom Abrham, Dean of Faculty of Business.



Dr. Bob Campbell from HERQA



participants



# Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA)

## Area of Focus for Self-Evaluation

In conducting institutional self-evaluation, a Higher Education Institution (HEI) should note that the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) institutional audit will focus on the following areas:

- Vision, Mission and Educational goals
- Governance and Management System
- Infrastructure and Learning Resources
- Academic and Support Staff
- Student Admission and Support Service
- Program Relevance and Curriculum
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes
- Research and Outreach Service
- Internal Quality Assurance

Evaluating these ten areas should be part of the preparation for an institutional quality audit.

**Source:** HERQA Institutional Quality Audit (Institutional Self Evaluation)

HERQA QA03/06/V1, May 2006

**St.Mary's University College**