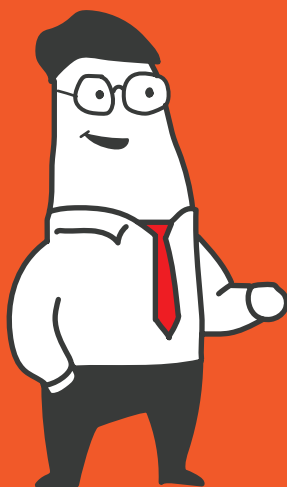


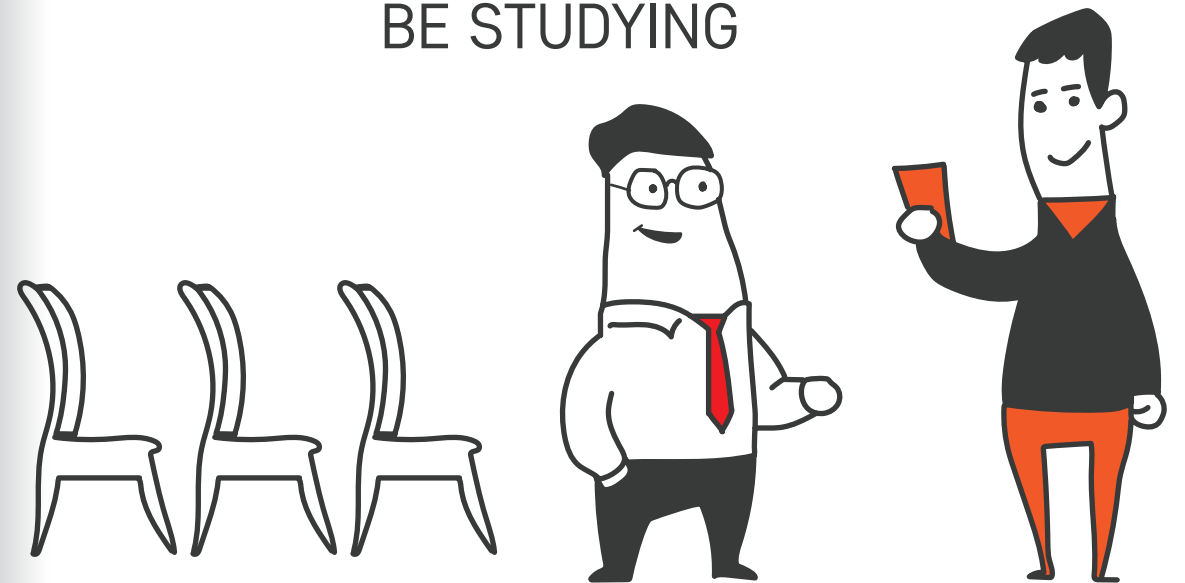
THE UP SITUATION

WHERE PROFESSORS
PRETEND TO BE LECTURING
AND STUDENTS TO
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this publication is **to briefly identify** the main issues faced by the University of Prishtina (UP) from the post-war period to date. Consulted for this purpose were various documents and strategies compiled by the UP, higher education laws adopted by the Kosovo Assembly, reports, analyzes and studies of various NGOs on the UP, then various progress reports of the European Commission (EC), etc.

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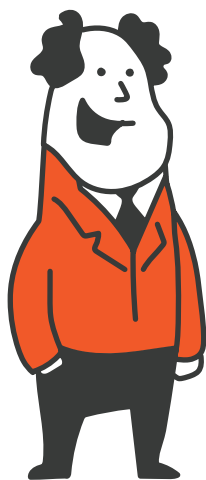
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Selection of academic staff

The academic staff selection in UP, especially after the Kosova war (1998-1999), was mainly done on party/clan/nepotistical/corruptive basis. The extraordinary politicization of UP is one of the shortcomings mentioned in the EC Progress Report on Kosova. The ÇOHU organization in its “Naked University” study published in December 2013, found that a considerable number of politicians (MPs, ministers, deputy ministers, political advisers, government departments’ directors, etc.) or their family members are part of the UP academic staff. According to this research, the politicians, particularly those from the PDK (Democratic Party of Kosova), have influenced not only the recruitment of the academic staff, but also the selection of the UP leading bodies.



number of politicians (MPs, ministers, deputy ministers, political advisers, government departments’ directors, etc.) or their family members are part of the UP academic staff.

Accademic advancements

The “Academic integrity of the University of Prishtina Leaders” report published in February 2017 by ORCA (Organization for the Promotion of Quality in Education) has highlighted that almost half of UP leaders (members of the Steering Council, Rector and Vice-Rectors, Senate Members, Deans and Vice-Deans) do not justify their academic titles. This means that these members of the academic staff of UP have at least one paper in journals listed as suspicious or in publications that do not even meet the criteria of genuine scientific journals. The UP Statute and the Regulation on the Selection and Advancement of Academic Staff are very generous regarding the most important criterion: “published papers in relevant international or regional scientific journals as the first author or a correspondent” stipulating that an assistant professor should have at least one, associate professor at least three, while regular professor five such publications. An investigation of UP professors’ CVs might reveal worse pictures than those of UP leaders.

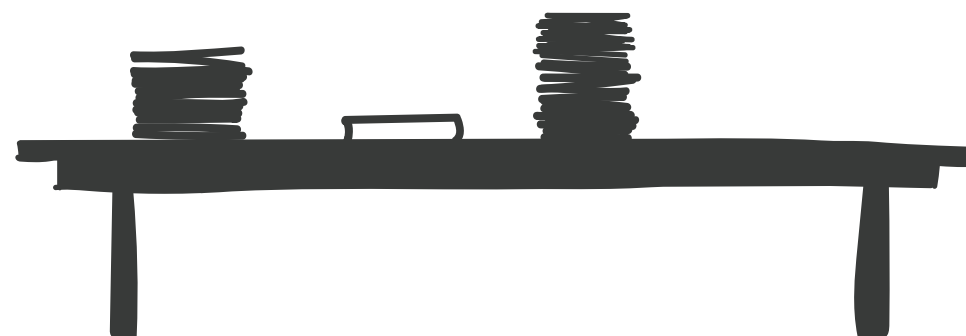


The chairman of the UP Steering Council stated in 2014 that nearly 80% of UP professors have scientific titles and publications of no value.

Pagiarism in MA and PhD thesisD

Another issue related to the lack of qualifications between the academic staff of UP is plagiarism in the MA and PhD thesis of staff members, as well as the MA and PhD thesis generally defended in the UP. The issue of plagiarism has been treated superficially and to date there hasn’t been any serious overarching research on it, but the indications are that plagiarism is extremely widespread both within the academic staff and the students at the UP. Very often, the diploma thesis is a plagiarism of thesis presented in previous years, and there

are even cases when they are written for a certain price by individuals who provide such services through social networks and advertisements even displayed in the UP premises. The chairman of the UP Steering Council stated in 2014 that nearly 80% of UP professors have scientific titles and publications of no value. Even when plagiarized papers are discovered, not only do the resignations not follow, but no action is ever taken by the competent authorities, nor does any public punishment follow.



Curricula

The UP has 194 study programs accredited by the Kosova Accreditation Agency (AKA), which is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Of these 82 are Bachelor, 86 Master and 26 are PhD programs. Experts estimate that AKA does not apply internationally recognized quality standards to its accreditation process. Study programs are detached from the labor market. Also, little or no practical work is done

during university studies, mainly because of the large number of students and poor curriculum planning. There is no research on curricula, and many UP departments do not even have online curricula. Research needs to be done on the quality of curricula, coordination of course content with curricula, as well as the realization of curricula. EC Progress Reports for Kosova have suggested that curricula be reformed and research promoted.

UP 194 study programs accredited



Literature and Libraries

In many UP departments, students are often constrained to use scripts and summaries of lectures, and sometimes also past exam tests. This type of literature, unfortunately, in most cases is without any academic quality. Furthermore, there are cases when professors oblige students to buy books they authored, though their academic quality leaves much to be desired. A considerable number of faculties do not have libraries, and even those in existence are poorly supplied. In most of the UP departments, adjacent to the libraries are the reading rooms and their conditions aren't any better either: the number of seats in the library and reading rooms is very limited and the working hours too short. About EUR 3 million have been spent on translating university textbooks into Albanian, but most of these textbooks lie stored in warehouses.

Academic journals

Though with 13 faculties that comprise in total 41 departments, 42 programs, 5 modules and 5 cathedres, the UP currently publishes only 3 scientific journals. However, these 3 journals do not meet the international criteria and therefore do not even have any international codes of scientific journals, but are only issued codes from the National and University Library of Kosova (BKUK). Furthermore, none of UP's academic units has a functional scientific research center, which means that there is no financial support for scientific research or publication of scientific journals, where potential scientific works could be published. Members of academic staff have no motive to publish in UP journals, as for their academic advancements they are required to publish in relevant international or regional scientific journals.



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Subscription of world academic journals

During the 1970s and 1980s, the UP was subscribed to several world academic journals. This subscription, due to the already well-known circumstances, was discontinued during the '90s. Unfortunately, it did not continue after the Kosovo war (1998-1999), with emphasis following the Declaration of Independence (2008). For several years UP had access to only 14 different sources of academic and scientific information through the EBSCO electronic platform. By the end of 2015, the UP ensured a one-year access to over 3700 journals and over 28,000 publications from the prestigious Science Direct platform of Elsevier Publishing. This was not continued in 2017.

The presence of professors in lectures

Many UP professors hold public and government posts and are employed in various private colleges, so they do not have time to run lectures at the UP. Instead, their lectures and exams are run by their assistants. Instead of being punished for their absence, these professors, as evidenced by audit reports, are paid for their non-attended lectures. During April 2017, ORCA monitored the provision of consultations according to the official schedules in three faculties with the largest number of students in UP: the Faculty of Philosophy, Economics and Law. The monitoring showed that many professors were missing from the office during the consultations hours they should run during the working schedule. According to the ORCA survey findings, out of 1177 lectures monitored at the Faculty of Economics, Philosophy and Law, 218 or 18.5% of them were not held due to the absence of professors. There is no imposition of financial prohibitions, as provided in the Regulation on Disciplinary Measures against the UP Academic Staff.

Student Evaluation

UP assessment methods encourage students to learn mechanically (by heart). Students are evaluated mainly through final exams, which are often multiple choice tests that promote mechanical learning. This method is used because it takes less time, and the number of students in the UP is known to be very large, making it difficult to evaluate their creative/analytical knowledge. Moreover, most students choose a professor who conducts a multiple-choice test rather than one that asks them to write essays. Copying is also largely present in the UP, mainly because many professors use tests from the previous exams, which are readily available in photocopying shops. Another problem is that there have been reports of professors who are generous in their evaluation, because they try to buy students' silence due to their inability to lecture and absence from lectures. Professors who are also politicians thus aim to win votes from their students. But there are also instances of negligent, humiliating, insulting and threatening behavior of professors towards students.

Sexual Harassment

The Center for Art and Community - Artpolis in early 2017 published a report titled "Treatment of Sexual Harassment in Public Universities," putting the emphasis mostly on the UP as the largest public university in the country. The report claims that sexual harassment is widespread – though there are no data to what degree – yet it is not reported almost at all, and when in some cases it is, next to nothing is done. According to above report, students do not report cases of sexual harassment because, apart from not believing that anything will be done, they fear the possible consequences and the public stigma. The UP in 2013 has defined a set of rules in the Code of Ethics for Academic Personnel, envisaging the treatment of sexual harassment cases, but has not provided specific rights and obligations for the administrative staff or the UP students. Namely, there are no specifically designed policies for sexual harassment cases, clear definitions of what forms of behavior constitute sexual harassment, explanations of reporting procedures to encourage students to report cases, or any specifications of procedures that the academic and administrative staff should follow once cases have been reported and procedures started.

Professors' Performance Evaluation

As for the professors' evaluation, both the evaluation by their students and from the dean/rectorate are lacking. Moreover, in addition to the assessment made by the Kosova Accreditation Agency as part of the accreditation process, there is no evaluation for the UP work by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) / Government of Kosovo as UP's main donor (almost EUR 30 million for 2017), or by the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Science, Technology, Culture, Youth and Sports/Assembly of Kosovo, as the founder of the UP.

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30 million €

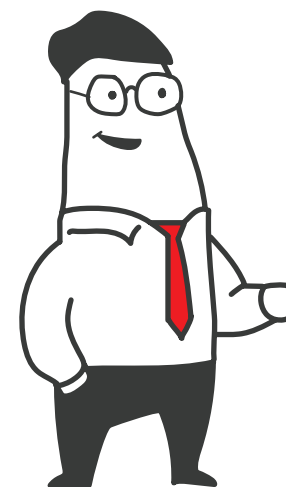


Professor-Student Ratio

The UP with its 48.735 students employs 924 regular academic staff members (teachers and assistants). In addition, the UP annually engages 479 part-time teachers. The professor-student ratio is roughly 1:50 (Albania 1:24, Serbia 1:23, Macedonia 1:17, and Croatia 1:9). Monthly salaries for regular teachers are among the best in the region - from € 700 to € 1,400, plus the fees for additional classes, exams, supervising Bachelor, Master, PhD thesis and participating in various commissions. In addition, many professors teach in other public or private universities, which significantly affects the quality of their duties at the UP.



48,735 students



924 regular academic staff members (teachers and assistants).

Student-Infrastructure Ratio

Classrooms are overcrowded with students, so the number of students does not align with the available space. According to the Rectorate data, UP has a total of 86,116.00 m², that compared to the total number of 48,735 students results in 1.77 m² in the UP available per student, which is below the standard of primary

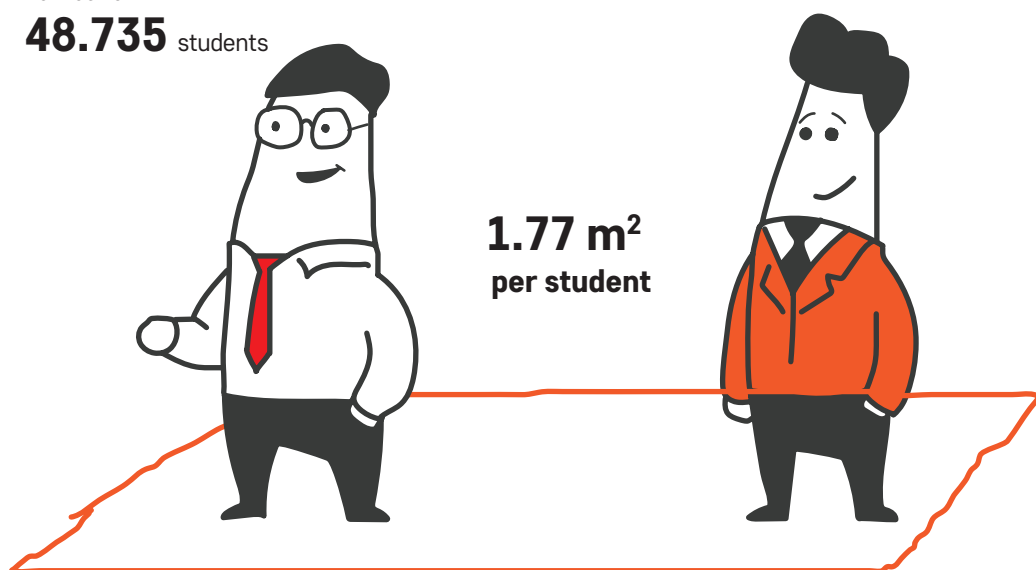
education, let alone the university one. The most extreme cases in the whole of UP are the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics with 11,925 m² and 17,834 students, which is 0.67 m² per student, then the Faculty of Arts with 7.151.00 m² and 935 students, who means 7.65 m² per student.

number of students does not align with the available space

86.116.00 m²

that compared to the total number of

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Student organizations

From the survey data conducted by BIRN in 2009 and by D4D in 2015 it emerged that about $\frac{3}{4}$ of UP students were not satisfied with the student organizations. Since after the war in Kosova (1998-1999), these organizations have had almost no projects for the professional and scientific upbringing of students. They have mainly dealt with organizing excursions, freshmen and final year students' celebration nights (even those were said to have been abused) or with activities outside their competences serving exclusively to political parties (e.g. protests against indictments or sentences of former KLA members for crimes). Student organizations were engaged exclusively in political activities during the '70s and '80s (Socialist Youth League - SYL) and during the '90s (Independent Student Union - ISU). There have been cases when student leaders were involved in illegal mediation in exams and enrollment of new students. Instead of serving as reform generators in the UP, being among other things important

factors in the election of Deans, the Rector and the Steering Council, these organizations took care of selecting politically affiliated professors yet professionally unprepared. Not by chance, many leaders of student organizations, thanks to the services offered to political parties, today have important positions in Kosovar institutions. Most students, having no trust in their representatives, mostly remain silent when faced with problems and irregularities. Even the interest of students to participate in the election of their representatives is extremely low. Therefore, there is no accountability by student leaders who serve a small clientelist group and neglect the students' needs. The way of selection / form of representation has led many departments to have no representatives at the Student Council/Student Parliament. Also, usually poor students are selected as student representatives. It should also be said that the leaders of these organizations are almost all male students.

Minorities in UP

In the first postwar years in Kosova for many reasons it was impossible to integrate minorities into the UP, especially the Serb one. Yet, following the Declaration of Independence (2008), Kosova has had more opportunities to offer higher education in minority languages, primarily in Slavic languages, but also the languages of other minorities, as it aims to be part of European integration and the Bologna Process. In 2006, "Forum 2015" published a brochure with some examples of good practice from EU countries meeting the needs of minority communities for higher education. Following the declaration

of Kosova's independence, UP started to enroll minority students: Bosnians, Roma, Ashkalis, Egyptians and Turks. The quotas for admission of minority students have been increasing every year. In the academic year 2016-2017 the quota was 12% (about 1 thousand minority students). It should be said that Kosova institutions were ready to support the process of the Serb minority integration in higher education in Kosova, but the educational institutions working in Serbian language have refused any cooperation with Kosovar institutions.



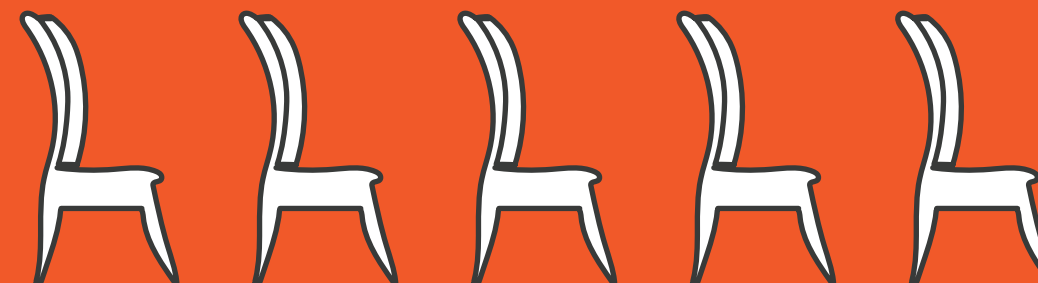
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CONCLUSION

From the review of the abovementioned material, it turns out that the UP faces the following problems: unqualified academic staff; selection of academic staff on party /clan /nepotistical / corrupt basis; undeserved academic advances; plagiarism; lack of coherent curricula, related to the needs of the economy and society in general; lack of scientific journals; lack of sub-

scriptions to international scientific journals; lack of libraries; outdated mandatory literature for students; lack of professors' evaluations by students and students' assessment by professors with outdated methods; the number of students disproportionate to the number of professors and the physical space; politicized student organizations, etc.



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