



Analysis

Faculty of Geosciences at the University of Mitrovica (UMIB)



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Abbreviations

AC	Appeals Commission
AI	Administrative Instruction
BA	Bachelor's degree
ET	Expert Team
ESMS	Electronic Student Management System
FVA	Food and Veterinary Agency
FMCE	Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering
FMM	Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy
FGT	Faculty of Geosciences and Technology
FFT	Faculty of Food Technology
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
ICMM	Independent Commission for Mines and Minerals
IMSHE	Information Management System in Higher Education
MA	Master of Arts degree
MPA	Ministry of Public Administration
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MF	Ministry of Finances
N/A	Not Applicable
OI	Ombudsperson Institution
OQIE	Organization for Quality Improvement in Education
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SQC	State Quality Council
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
KEC	Kosovo Energy Corporation
KFOS	Kosovo Foundation for Open Society
UMS	University Management System
USA	United States of America
UMIB	University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletin"
UP	University of Prishtina
UITC	University Integrity and Transparency Coalition

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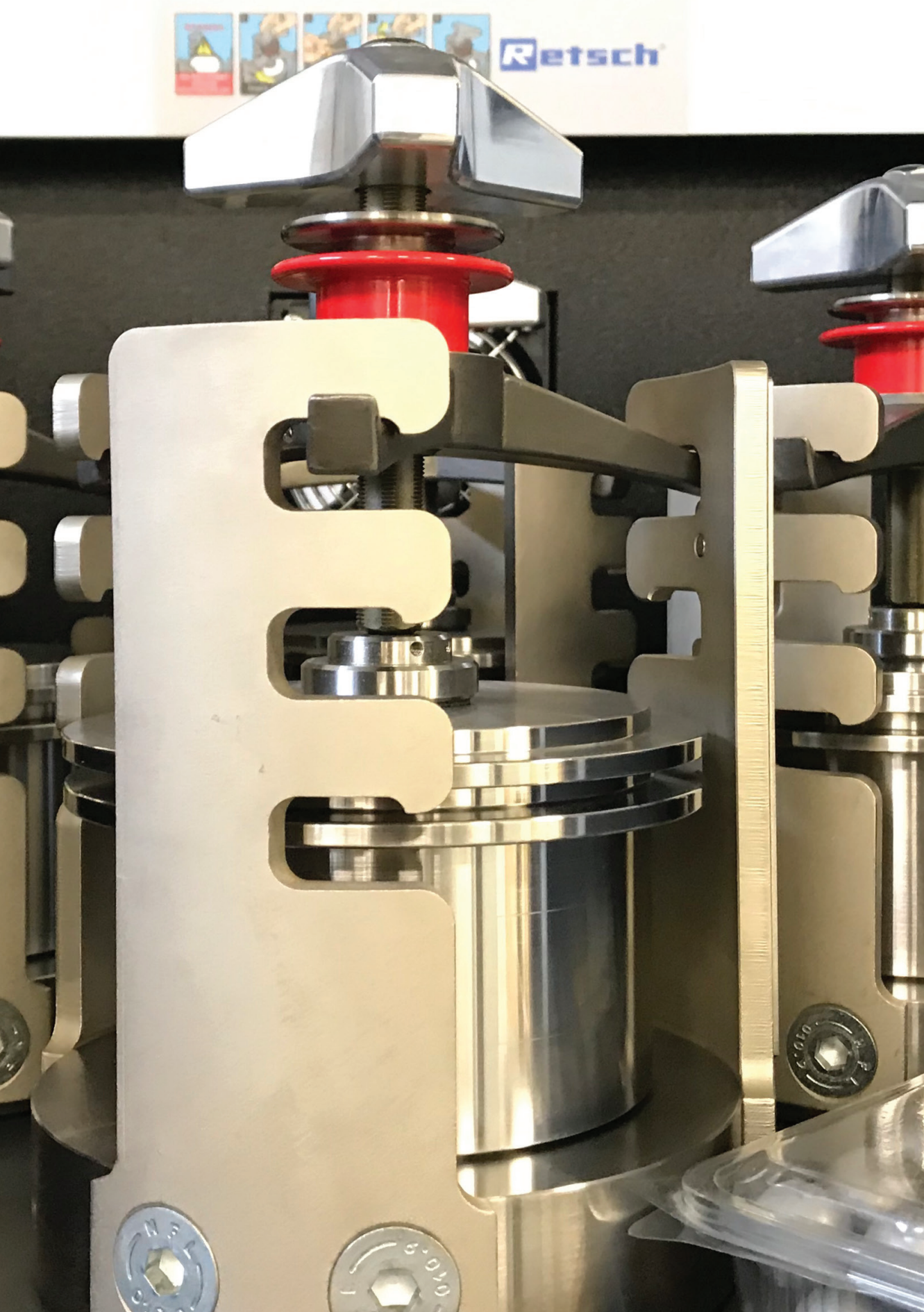
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Retsch



INTRODUCTION

When the University of Mitrovica “Isa Boletin” failed to achieve accreditation in July 2019,¹ during the last accreditation process, there was a strong public reaction.²³ Since the decision affects subjects not available for study anywhere else in Kosovo, such as programs at the Faculty of Geosciences, how might the closure of these programs impact the country’s industrial economy? This report therefore analyses the risk associated with the failure of UMIB to achieve accreditation for the second time in a row, as a result of which study programs found to be inadequate could be shut down, and it explores implications for the country’s economy.

The report analyses the number of student enrollments at all degree levels for the respective courses in geosciences in the years 2014/15–2018/19, to better understand the popularity of these programs. In addition, the report aims to inform the public debate, in order to increase pressure on the decision-making authorities not to close these programs.

In order to assess the situation after the non-accreditation of the UMIB and to understand whether there is a risk that one of the geosciences study programs might be closed, we have analyzed the following:

- The UMIB accreditation report by international experts;
- Decision of the State Quality Council (SQC)
- The UMIB’s complaint regarding non-accreditation, sent to the SQC;
- Other relevant documentation such as the Statute, Code of Ethics and other regulations;
- Curriculum vitae of academic staff and external contractors currently employed at UMIB;
- Lists of academic personnel who are permanent employees and lists of temporary contractors, hired for lectures and fieldwork;
- Lists of professors who retired in the last five years;
- Recruitment of permanent teaching staff;

- Comparison of student numbers enrolled by academic years;
- Results of scholarship applications at the UMIB

In order to investigate how closing UMIB programs might impact some of the major mining, energy and industrial enterprises, (Trepca, KEC, and Ferronikel), as well as relevant state institutions (the Independent Commission of Mines and Minerals (ICMM)), and to assess these enterprises human resource needs, we also researched the following:

- key challenges facing the above organizations with regard to recruiting new generations of professional staff;
- which professional qualifications these enterprises need most;
- which geosciences graduates these enterprises need most;
- number of engineers employed in these enterprises and their average age;
- number of engineers who retired in the last five years;
- number of engineers who will retire in the next five years;
- number of UMIB graduates employed in these enterprises in the last 5 years;
- number of UMIB students who did internships in these enterprises in the last 5 years;
- number of UMIB students who won scholarships from these enterprises;

For the purpose of this report, we also conducted interviews with the UMIB Rector, the Dean and Vice Dean of Geosciences, current and former professors of this faculty, engineers and experts in the relevant field now working in industry, and also with representatives of the SQC and the KAA.

BACKGROUND

The opening of the Mitrovica Technical High School in 1961 established a foundation for the study of mining, technology and metallurgy in Kosovo. In the first school year (1961/1962), classes were only available to students of mining, but by 1963, a department of technology had opened, and this was followed shortly, in 1969, by a metallurgy department.

In 1970, the department of mining, technology and metallurgy was established in Mitrovica, as part of the Technical Faculty at the University of Prishtina (UP). However, study of these subjects continued in Prishtina until July 22, 1974, when the Kosovo Assembly established the Faculty of Geosciences and Technology in Mitrovica. In 1978, the Institute for Research in Technology, Mining and Metallurgy was founded within the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy (FMM). Lastly, the Department of Geology was opened in the school year 1980/81, adding a fourth program of study to the faculty. In 1989, after the autonomy of the Autonomous Region of Kosovo was revoked, and once Albanians were being excluded from educational institutions, Albanian staff and students were also barred from the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy, and also from the Technical High School. One of the “arbitrary measures” of that time was the decision of the Popular Assembly of Serbia, on March 19, 1991, which separated Kosovo high schools from the University of Prishtina, joining them to the Serbian Association of High Schools. The “arbitrary measures”⁴ also affected the FMM,

but despite having been excluded from its building in the north of Mitrovica,⁵ it managed to continue teaching students in the Abdullah Shabani primary school in the city, and also in the Skenderbeu school in the village of Vaganica. In the first academic year following the war (2001/2002), MA and BA degree programs were offered by the FMM according to a program approved by the Senate of the University of Prishtina (UP), based on the Bologna Declaration. In 2007, the University of Prishtina Governing Council, based on the provisions of the Statute of the University of Prishtina (UP), established the Institute for Research in Technology, Mining and Metallurgy. MA and BA degree programs were offered in the academic year 2008/2009. In 2011, the Governing Council renamed the Faculty, changing its name from the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy (FMM), to the Faculty of Geosciences and Technology (FGT). On March 6, 2013 the Kosovo Government decided to establish the University of Mitrovica, and the Kosovo Assembly ratified its statute on May 31, 2013. Currently, the University of Mitrovica Isa Boletin (UMIB) has a total of 22 study programs in 6 faculties: the Faculty of Geosciences, Faculty of Food Technology, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering and Faculty of Education.⁶ The Faculty of Geosciences has 3 BA programs – in mining, geology, materials and metallurgy – and it also offers MA programs in mining, metallurgy, materials, mineral resources and hydrogeology with engineering geology.



ACCREDITATION

On July 15, 2019, the KAA decided not to accredit the UMIB for a number of reasons. Firstly, the UMIB had not completed, or only partially completed, the 11 chapters of the Accreditation Manual. One of these chapters (the Standard for Strategic Planning, Governance and Administration), had not been done at all. Meanwhile, according to the KAA, the other 10 chapters had only been partially completed. The loss of accreditation presents an extreme risk to the UMIB since the Law on Higher Education states that an institution failing to achieve accreditation for the second time, should lose its license.

Mission statement

The KAA decision contains 4 key observations regarding the UMIB Mission Statement. First, it notes that, “it is unethical” that over half (or 53%) of the UMIB Mission Statement is copied from a similar statement given by another public university in Kosovo. Second, the KAA notes that the Mission Statement does not include elements that “provide for the necessary management of institutional decision-making” and it also lacks clear instructions for planning, decision-making and activities. Third, the KAA notes the lack of knowledge among the staff of the mission of the university. Lastly, they note that despite the existence of a body

that reviews the Mission Statement, there is no evidence that they consulted external actors.⁷

Strategic plan

In the KAA’s assessment of the strategic plan, they observe that it failed to pass through the required consultations, budgetary review or meet implementation deadlines. They note that external consultations failed to include students or job market representatives (employers). With regard to the budget-strategy report, the KAA experts conclude that, “strategic planning was not included in budgetary preparations” which highlights a gap between the organization’s financial priorities and its objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan. Lastly, they noted the absence of an action plan to achieve specific objectives, commenting that, “there are no metrics, targets or performance indicators” for specific time periods, which makes it impossible to evaluate the university’s progress in implementing its plan.

Management duties and administrative staff

The KAA experts identified two problems relating to the UMIB staff. First, the staff who were in the Self-Assessment Report (in part

of the organogram) were not the same as the staff in the Statute organogram. As a result, they noted that it was impossible to assess whether the responsibilities of governing structures were clearly defined and achieved in practice. Second, during their visit to the UMIB, the KAA experts observed that some of the administrative staff were not at work. The experts noted concerns about how the “management responds to institutional needs” to achieve the effective functioning and organization of the administration.

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics was not published on the Website, and the KAA assessment notes that the UMIB did not respond to their request for data about any violations of the code, such as academic misconduct, plagiarism and copying. They observe that most academic staff were unaware that the UMIB even had a Code of Ethics. These findings, among others, encouraged the experts to conclude that mechanisms for overseeing ethical standards “are not sufficiently clear or transparent” and that the code should be “more predictable” given it is the basis for decision-making.

Evaluating quality

With regard to quality assessment, the KAA experts noted that the UMIB has not created a “defined system for planning, implementation, evaluation and review”. In addition, members of staff interviewed by experts found it difficult to give examples of an integrated quality assurance system. Although the experts made no comment on the Quality Regulation, they did observe that it has yet to be enforced one year after being adopted.⁸

Teaching and learning

The KAA criticized the absence of a formal quality instrument besides students’ evaluation of courses. The experts noted that it was not possible to identify “innovative methods of teaching that include students as active participants.” They concluded that the methods used were focused mostly on student learning outcomes.

Research

The UMIB could not convince the experts that it had a research plan, research principles or research motivation. A research plan had been approved or was in a final draft. But the experts were not convinced by the application of the research principles presented by the UMIB, since they lacked research objectives and priorities. Finally, the experts mentioned an under-developed research culture, small budget and low motivation among the academic staff to publish in credible scientific periodicals because they saw their roles as primarily about teaching, not research.

Employment of staff and development plan for academic staff

The decision not to accredit the UMIB states that the experts were not able to evaluate the implementation of a staff development plan as there was no manual for staff or job applicants at the university, and as staff were not assessed on performance. First, the staff development plan could not be evaluated because it did not have measurable targets, or an allocated budget for its application. Second, the experts noticed that there was no manual or job description for any applicant or employee providing information about their

duties and responsibilities, or other useful details. Third, the report states that the UMIB admitted that it had never implemented a “procedure to review staff performance” which would include concrete indicators and results (such as a change to position or grade, and salaries).⁹

Student management

With regard to student management, the KAA experts criticize the publicly available information, quality of student surveys and mostly the lack of information or its misuse. First, the experts conclude that there was a lack of data on the admittance of new students. Second, they note that student surveys had questions that referred to services that the UMIB did not provide or had questions that were too general to be useful. Third, the experts observe that there was no data on the profile of the student population, the careers of their graduates or reasons for the dropout rate. They add that existing data (on success, student satisfaction, and dropout rates) were not sufficiently used. The report states that such data was neither used to support decision-making nor for quality assurance.

Infrastructure and IT

In the chapter on space and infrastructure, the experts list 7 buildings or spaces that the UMIB is lacking: a university library (which also indicates a lack of literature), social science laboratories, recreation areas, a buffet, as well as sports and medical facilities and housing for students. The general observation of the experts with regard to IT was that “the system and software used in education is not up-to-date with labor and market needs.”¹⁰

Cooperating with other institutions

The chapter on co-operation with other institutions assesses international cooperation, as well as collaboration with domestic enterprises. The KAA conclude that the UMIB has no strategy for international cooperation, and according to the experts, the agreements they were shown were inactive. The experts state that to be effective, the internationalization of UMIB activities must be led by its institutions, and not be left to the initiative of individual staff members. They report finding no evidence to evaluate the participation of other enterprises and professionals in commissions for the preparation of study programs. The experts conclude that there is no systematic communication with business to understand their needs for university graduates.¹¹

UMIB appeal's non-accreditation at the SQC

On August 7, 2019, Rector Alush Musaj lodged a complaint with the KAA Appeals Commission. He was appealing against the July 29, 2019 decision of the State Quality Council (SQC), not to accredit the UMIB. According to his complaint, the SQC decision involved a violation of the provisions of the decision-making procedure, an incorrect assessment of the situation and mistaken understanding of the applicable law and regulations. The UMIB therefore requested the annulment of the SQC's decision on these three grounds, and on the basis of the evidence and arguments presented to prove these claims. The UMIB argued that the KAA had breached the relevant provisions because according to Administrative Instruction (AI) 15/2018 on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, the latter had a minimum of two weeks after receipt of a draft expert evaluation report to provide feedback to the KAA, but UMIB was given only three days. According to the UMIB complaint, the SQC violated the procedures and deadlines provided by the AI by not allowing sufficient time for comments.

With regard to the claim that the expert report was based on an incorrect assessment, the UMIB presented a series of arguments and evidence, proving that the situation described by the Expert Team (ET) in the evaluation and justification of SQC decision no. 1356 / 19D in many cases did not align with the actual situation on the ground. To prove that the assessment was mistaken, the UMIB presented evidence

relating to the 12 chapters, 11 of which are examined in detail in the decision to withdraw accreditation:

University Mission Statement

The UMIB does not deny the KAA observation that "it is unethical" that over half (or 53%) of the UMIB Mission Statement is a copy of the mission statement of another public university in Kosovo. They argue that having the same statute as the UP does not mean that the UMIB copies its academic activity. The mission statement, as set out in the UMIB's interim statute, was drafted and approved by the MEST in 2013. The UMIB argues that, since being separated from the UP in 2015, its representatives have consistently asked to draft a new statute, but have received no support or interest from the MEST.¹²

Strategic plan

The UMIB did not comment on the expert findings regarding the strategic plan, such as the absence of indicators, employer consultation, metrics and targets, or lack of coordination with budgeting. However, the UMIB complaint does dispute the finding that there were no student consultations, and they provide as evidence, emails sent to the academic consultation units, and the MEST, a copy of the decision to establish a strategic planning committee, and the articles and sections of the Statute that show that students are on faculty councils.¹³

Financial sustainability

This part of the complaint mentions some specific plans or projects, although the KAA experts said they did not see these documents. The UMIB presents 6 arguments to demonstrate its financial sustainability. These include: a budget increase from 3.15 million to 4.78 million Euros (over 50% increase), changes to the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, the allocation of additional budget to implement the strategic plan, the ability to use the categories “goods and expenditures” and “subsidies” for different purposes (academic mobility, internationalization, scholarships, study visits), as well as investment in laboratories based on two new spending frameworks. Finally, they make a general observation about the failure to approve a new law on higher education, by which the university could generate its own revenues.¹⁴

Code of Ethics

According to the UMIB, the Code of Ethics was published after its approval in February 2016 in the section for regulations on the University website. The UMIB also contests the expert comments that the code is not predictable, with regard to understanding the disciplinary measures that may be taken to enforce it. The UMIB argues that Article 35 makes the measures clear. Although the UMIB complaint does not reveal any cases of measures taken to address academic misconduct, the UMIB describes the committee responsible for drafting the code as committed.¹⁵

Quality assurance

The UMIB does not comment on the lack

of a system with appropriate mechanisms for planning, implementation, evaluation and review. However, it does state that the questionnaires given to students also contain questions for management and administrative staff. In response to the expert observation that student data is not being used sufficiently to inform decision-making, the UMIB notes that the database is accessible to all staff.¹⁶

Ensuring quality of teaching and learning

The UMIB complaint notes that they have a Quality Assurance Regulation, which is contrary to the expert finding that the university has no formal quality assurance instrument. They also argue that the UMIB does use innovative teaching methods, noting for example that students are taught how the contents of the syllabus can be applied in practice and stating that there are projects designed to stimulate teamwork and fieldwork as ways of solving specific problems. The evidence the UMIB provides includes the Quality Assurance Regulation, two student presentations and a contract for a project called “Innovative Teaching in Mathematics” with an implementation period between 2018-2021.¹⁷

Research plan

The UMIB makes no comment on the expert observation that there are no manuals explaining staff duties and responsibilities, promotion opportunities, and so on. The UMIB states that procedures for hiring academic staff are “uniquely regulated” in various ways by UMIB regulations on the one hand and national laws (adopted by the

Assembly) and by laws (adopted by ministries and the Government). The UMIB does not address the expert comment on administrative staff missing from the workplace, but it does note that administrative staff are subject to an annual review, as part of the annual human resources plan, and appropriate records are kept. This response is also used to contest the expert view that the UMIB lacks a staff performance review procedure.¹⁸

Staff, processes, employment and professional development

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Student management

To counter the KAA critique that student data is in some cases missing or not used, the UMIB complaint cites the online Alumni Network as well as two platforms, the Higher Education Information Manage-

ment System (SMIAL) and University Management System (SMU). The first is mentioned in the context of facilitating alumni networking and events held for graduates. The two platforms are used in the context of existing data. The UMIB claims that these 3 online systems enable them to find “the necessary details that serve as the basis for improvement.”²⁰

Buildings

In response to the expert criticism about the buildings, the UMIB states that it has been in new facilities since November 2018 and that it now “possesses the most modern infrastructure in the region”. In addition, the complaint states that there is a functioning library and that the medical center is very close to the university (500 meters away). With respect to the other missing 5 buildings, the UMIB complaint claims that: the dormitories are under construction, the student canteen is currently being processed by the Governing Council under the necessary legal regulation and plans are being made to include it within the current site, while the gym and recreational center are at an advanced stage of design.²¹

Institutional cooperation

To provide evidence of collaboration with other institutions, the UMIB notes the creation of the Advisory Board for the “HERAS” project, supported by an Austrian Development Agency project. They also note the contract to establish professional boards for this project. As additional evidence of cooperation, the UMIB lists its international and domestic agreements, membership in international organizations,

and participation in organizing international conferences.²²

In order to better understand the situation regarding the UMIB Complaint to the SQC, we conducted an interview with Vjollca Krasniqi, deputy leader of the SQC.

The UMIB's appeal to the SQC was not considered because the KAA Appeals Commission (AC) resigned on 27 August 2019. The Administrative Instruction allows higher education institutions that receive negative decisions from the SQC to reapply for institutional accreditation after 90 days. So the UMIB reapplied for accreditation and in its meetings on January 16 and 17, 2020, the SQC approved this application, along with applications from other universities. The UMIB now has to submit a self-assessment report within 30 days and the KAA should then invite in the expert team for evaluation.

The reason for the resignation of the AC derives from a disagreement regarding their mandate and decision-making power over accreditation issues which were under appeal, as well as due to conflicting legal interpretations about the mandate of this Commission.

As a result of these disagreements between the SQC and the AC, over the AC mandate, Avni Gashi, who was then acting head of the KAA, sought a legal interpretation from the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA). The MPA's interpretation was based on the first Regulation,²³ in which according to Article 5, the AC is a second instance body in the KAA. Consequently, the

AC continued to operate on the basis of this regulation. Meanwhile, the SQC also sought a legal interpretation from the MEST which had set up a working group to review the regulation. The legal opinion of the MEST supported the revised regulation²⁴ and instructed that this version be used. The AC rejected the legal opinion of the MEST and resigned. The whole process took place in the period between April and August 2019.

Following the resignation of the AC, the SQC declared that the decisions taken by the Commission were invalid. They drafted a letter to inform the Higher Education Institutions about this, but the letter was never sent.

In an email sent in September 2019, the MEST informed the SQC that it withdrew its initial legal interpretation, clarifying that the legal opinion of the MPA, on the first regulation, was valid.²⁵



CURRENT SITUATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

At the time of publishing this report, the Faculty of Geosciences has a total of 28 permanent academic staff (24 men and 4 women), of which 13 are professors, 6 associate professors, 5 assistant professors and 4 are assistants. The average age of these categories is 56 years for professors, 55.5 years for associate professors, and 48 years for assistant professors. The average age of all professors in geosciences is 54 years old, and that of assistants is 33 years old. In 2020, two professors, one in mining and one in metallurgy, will reach retirement age. There are four professors on temporary contracts in geosciences (all in mining), but no temporary assistant. The average age of these four professors is 66 years. In 2020, the youngest of these four professors will turn 60, while the oldest will be 70 – an age at which he must retire.²⁶²⁷

In total, there are 141 BA and MA students in geosciences, which means that the professor to student ratio in lectures is 1:5. Of these 141 students, approximately 113 or 80% are male and only 28 or 20%

are female. One student comes from the Bosnian community.²⁸

All members of the geoscience academic staff have completed their BA degree in Kosovo. Most of the staff have completed their MA degree also inside the country (21 members or 66%), while the rest (11 members or 34%) studied in other countries of the former Yugoslavia and Albania. Of the 30 members of staff with a PhD, 24 or 80% completed their doctoral studies in Kosovo and Albania. Only 6 academic staff or 20% completed their doctoral studies abroad and in a foreign language; and only one PhD is from a country outside the Balkans. The vast majority studied at least one degree program outside Kosovo (19 members or 63%), mainly in Albania and the countries of the former Yugoslavia, while fewer (12 members or 37%) have entirely local academic qualifications. No staff member has completed all levels of study abroad and in a foreign language.²⁹



RECRUITMENT, CONTRACTING AND RETIREMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

To adequately summarize the activities of the academic staff of the Faculty of Geosciences for the period 2014/15 - 2018/19, we reviewed the lists of permanent and contracted academic staff, retirements of professors, and vacancies for full-time teaching positions (new professors, applications, and promotions). We analyzed the jobs advertised for basic subjects in the pure sciences (mathematics and physics), although these do not affect the accreditation of the programs. In the below data, we list the hires, retirements and vacancy advertisements for the academic staff of geoscience departments, for the period 2015/16 - 2019/20:

- In **mining**, every academic year there have been at least five professors who are permanent full-time staff, but never more than one assistant on a temporary contract. During this period, three permanent assistants and seven assistants on alternative temporary contracts, were employed.
- In **metallurgy**, every academic year there were at least seven permanent, full-time professors, and never been more than two assistants on a temporary contract. During this period, four full-time assistants and six assistants on alternative temporary contracts were employed.
- In **geology** every academic year there were at least eight permanent, full-time professors, and no more than two assistants on a temporary contract. During this period, there were seven full-time assistants and thirteen assistants on alternative temporary contracts.
- In **general studies**, in the academic year 2019/2020, there was one permanent, full-time professor, and every year there was one permanent, full-time assistant. Four professors and nine assistants were on alternative temporary contracts.

Mining				
Academic year	Permanent staff		Temporary staff	
	Full-time professors	Assistant	Full-time professors	Asistentë
2015/16	9	0	5	3
2016/17	5	0	4	0
2017/18	8	1	4	2
2018/19	8	1	6	2
2019/20	5	1	4	9

Geology				
Academic year	Permanent staff		Temporary staff	
	Full-time professors	Assistant	Full-time professors	Asistentë
2015/16	8	2	2	4
2016/17	8	2	3	0
2017/18	8	1	1	4
2018/19	8	2	0	5
2019/20	11	0	0	0

Materials and Metallurgy				
Academic year	Permanent staff		Temporary staff	
	Full-time professors	Assistant	Full-time professors	Assistant
2015/16	12	0	2	4
2016/17	12	0	1	2
2017/18	10	1	4	0
2018/19	8	1	5	0
2019/20	7	2	0	0

General studies				
Academic year	Permanent staff		Temporary staff	
	Full-time professors	Assistant	Full-time professors	Assistant
2015/16	0	1	1	3
2016/17	0	1	1	3
2017/18	0	1	1	2
2018/19	0	1	1	1
2019/20	1	1	0	0

During the 2014/15 - 2018/19 academic period, there were six recruitment rounds to hire full-time academic staff, and four similar rounds to recruit temporary academic staff. In 2014 and 2015 there was no recruitment. Permanent contracts were advertised for 18 full-time professors and five assistants, and alternative temporary contracts were also advertised for two professors and 17 assistants.³⁰

In the period 2015/16 - 2019/20 two professors in geology terminated their contracts, and there were no professors who retired. In mining, there are 8 retired professors. Of these, 4 are on temporary contracts, 3 have stopped work (2016 and 2017) and one stopped work in 2020. In metallurgy, 6 professors retired in this period, one of whom continues to work, while 5 others have stopped.³¹

During the 2014/15 - 2018/19 academic period, there were six recruitment rounds to hire full-time academic staff, and four similar rounds to recruit temporary academic staff. In 2014 and 2015 there was no recruitment.

PROGRAM POPULARITY, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS

We also researched the numbers of students enrolled over the academic years in BA and MA degrees, including the gender ratio, and the results of UMIB scholarship applications. We wanted to better understand student interest in studying geoscience between 2014/15–2018/19, but also what challenges and successes they experience when studying.

Enrollment of new students

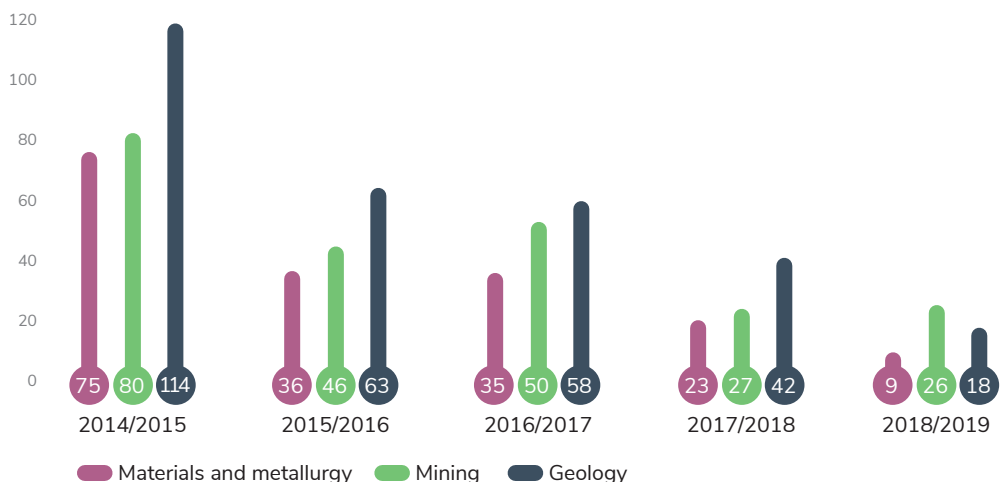
In the UMIB, the Faculty of Geosciences had the lowest number of new students enrolled for the period 2014/15 - 2018/19,

and inside this Faculty, the Materials and Metallurgy program has the lowest new student enrollment. Registration in all programs at this faculty almost halved in the 2016/17 academic year, and there was also a drastic decline in the 2018/19 academic year.³²

Student applications, enrollment and graduation from BA and MA programs

Analysis of the number of students who have graduated throughout the academic years, reveals that the percentage of graduates in the period 2014/15 - 2018/19 in

Student enrollments³³



all programs at the Faculty of Geosciences is very low compared to the number of students who enroll:

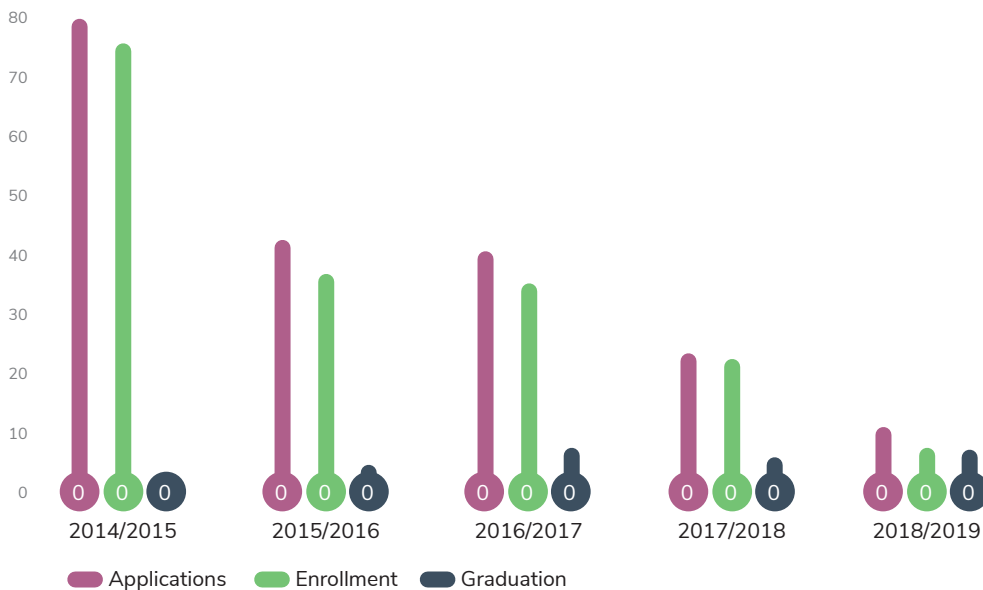
- In **materials and metallurgy**, of 178 students enrolled, only 20 or 11% have graduated.
- In **geology**, of 295 students enrolled, only 37 or 12.5% have graduated.
- In **mining**, of 229 students who enrolled, only 41 or 18% have graduated.

Data on student enrollment across the academic years indicates that the most popular program for students is geology, while mining is the program in which most graduated.

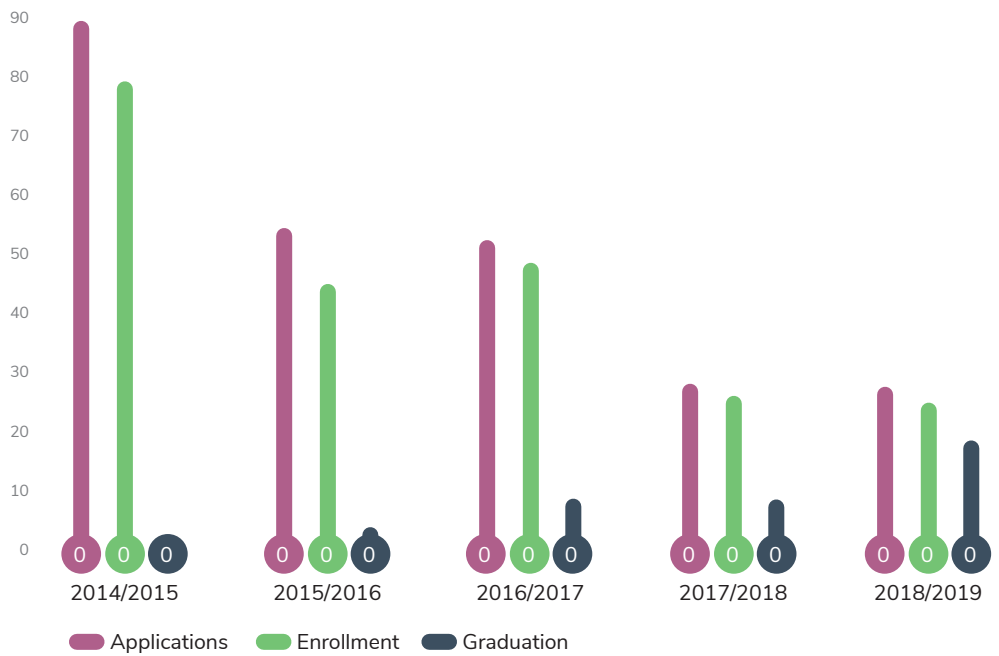
Analysis of data for MA programs in the period 2014/15–2018/19, reveals that student enrollments and graduations were stable, without major fluctuations. Of 25 students enrolled in metallurgy, 6 students or 24% have graduated. Of 37 students

The tables below display data on the number of applications, enrollment and graduation in study programs for the period 2014-2019:

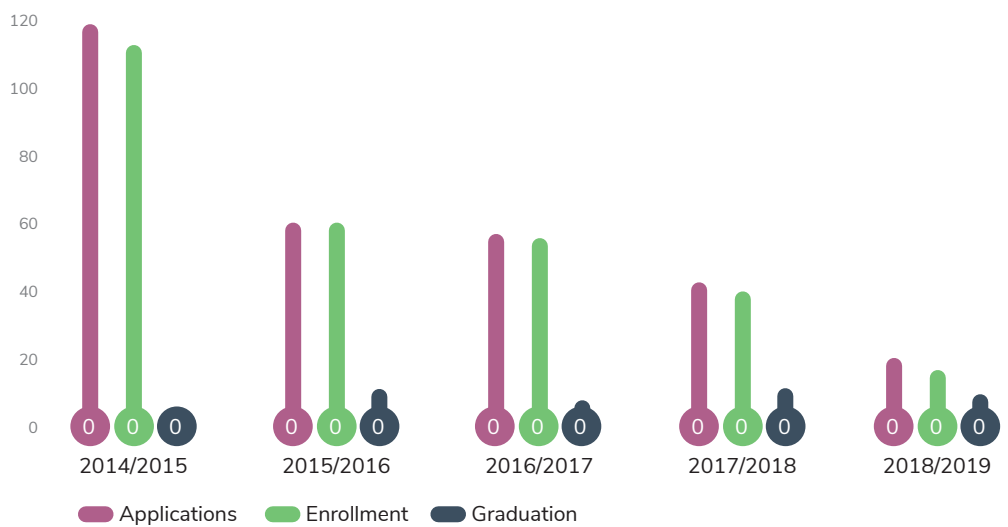
Materials and Metallurgy Program (BA)



Mining Program (BA)



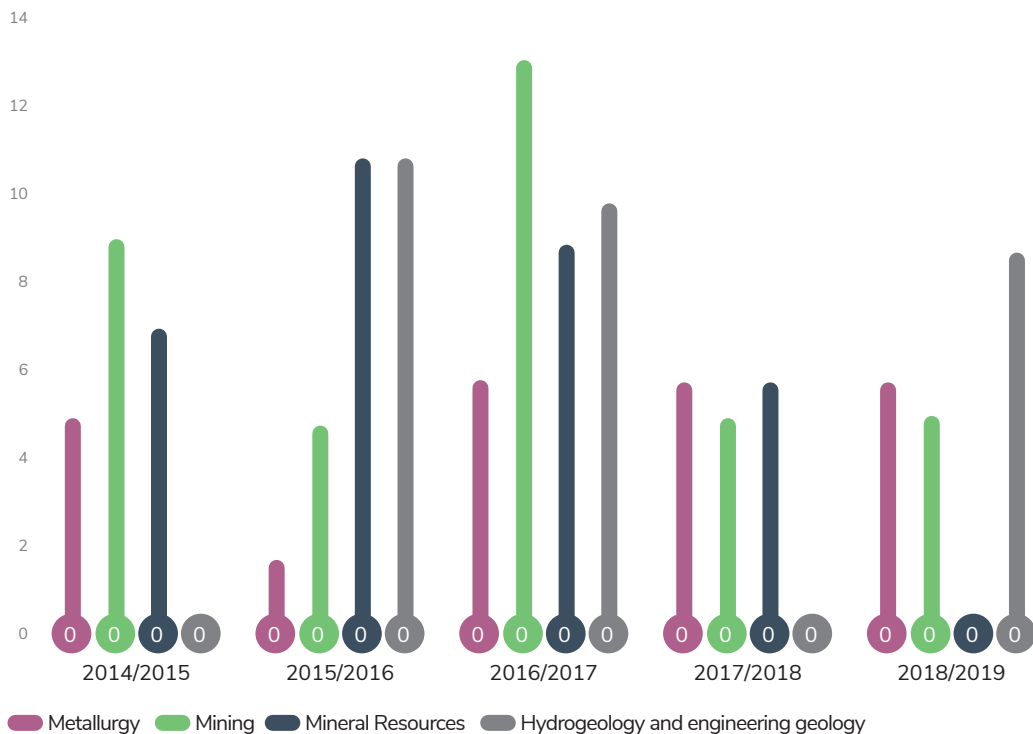
Geology Program (BA)



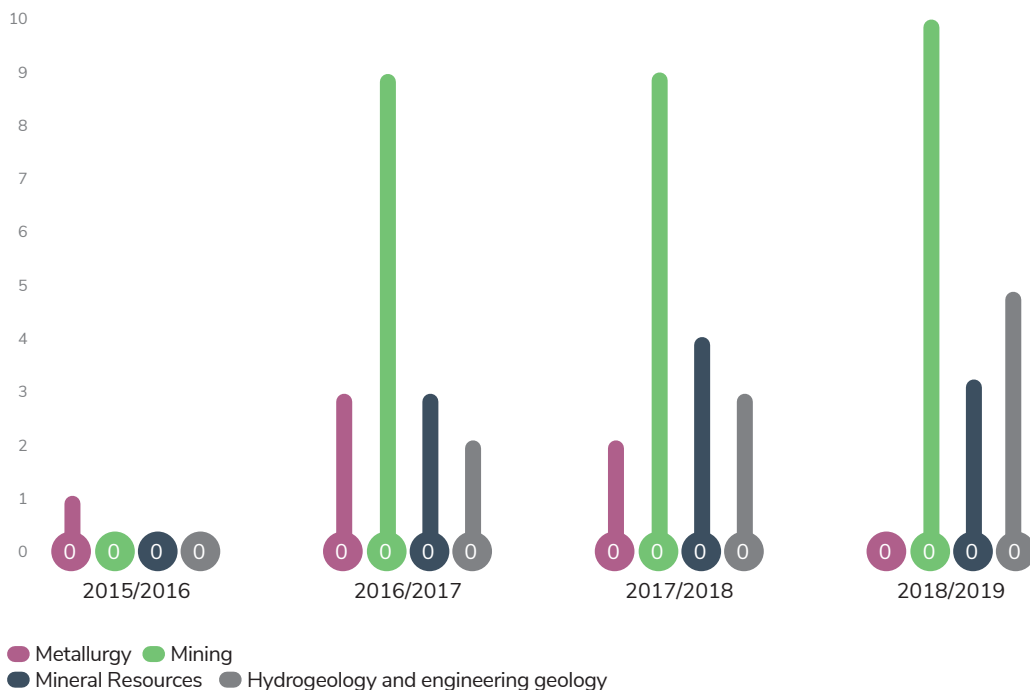
enrolled in **mining**, 28 students, or 77%, have graduated; of 33 students enrolled in **mineral resources**, 10 students or 30% have graduated; of 30 students enrolled in **hydrogeology** and **engineering geology**, 10 students or 33.5% have graduated.

It is clear that mining is the program that is most popular and most successful because it has the most enrollments, between 2014/15–2018/19, and also has the largest number of graduates in relation to enrollments. Out of all the geosciences programs, **metallurgy** has the least number of enrollments and graduates.³⁴

Student enrollments, MA



Student graduations, MA³⁴



Scholarships

A total of 285 students in all the UMIB faculties received scholarships between 2015/16–2019/20. Students in the Faculty of Geosciences won the fewest scholarships over the years, receiving 21 scholarships or 7.37% of the total.

The total value of all scholarships at the UMIB during this period was €190,666.00, while for Geosciences the amount was €17,106.00, which is 9% of the total amount. The FFT leads with 64 scholarships, the largest number, receiving a total of € 56,409.00.

As the university recognizes that the content studied is more complex, students

in Geosciences, at the FFT and FMCE can pass their second-year exams with a grade point average of above 8, compared to other faculties where students can only pass with a grade point average above 9.

In the academic year 2014/15, the UMIB awarded 24 scholarships worth €800, which means the total value of scholarships for the period 2014/15–2019/20 was €209,866.00.³⁵

Number of scholarships by faculty³⁶



7.37% Geosciences

22.46% FFT

19.30% FMCE

17.19% Education

19.30% Law

14.40% Economy

PROFESSORS' VIEWPOINTS

The interviews conducted with members of the permanent academic staff at the Faculty of Geosciences reveal that the UMIB has been severely impacted by non-accreditation, especially in the geoscience programs. According to interviewees, the removal of accreditation undermined the UMIB's reputation as a Higher Education Institution (HEI), and deterred new students from enrolling as they lost confidence in the quality of scholarship at UMIB. This is most concerning given that the Faculty of Geosciences is the only program for mining in Kosovo.³⁷ According to Dean Naser Peci³⁸, there will be a chain reaction of consequences caused by non-accreditation, and according to Professor Nazmi Hasi, this negative impact will be visible for another three years.³⁹

Half of the professors interviewed entirely agreed with the findings of the international accreditation experts and the decision of the SQC. All of these professors

hold the UMIB Rectorate responsible for the loss of accreditation and believe that the latter should bear moral responsibility for this failure, even leading to resignation. Professor Nazmi Hasi states that the expert findings were correct and agrees with their consequences. He clarifies that the expert observations were shared with the UMIB's management and rectorate, specifically with the Vice-Rector for Teaching and Student Affairs, and he adds that prior UMIB management had serious professional and managerial defects.⁴⁰ In this regard, Professor Sylejman Hyseni says no one is prepared to take responsibility and the Rectorate and the Board are too political,⁴¹ while Professor Afrim Koliqi says that the UMIB is under the influence of a political party and certain groups. He concludes that, despite the long tradition at the Faculty of Geosciences, most universities and colleges have been created by politics, and as such they are both universities and electoral colleges.

Professor Behxhet Shala, Vice-Rector for International Cooperation, says that the, “the findings are right, but the criteria are not in line with the conditions, opportunities and statute of the university”.⁴² Professor Sabri Avdullahi, coordinator for academic development in geosciences, disagrees with the report’s findings because he claims the standards were so high that no university in the country could meet the required criteria.⁴³

All the interviewees agreed that there had been a general decline in student interest and that this was largely due to industry failure. They said a lack of jobs for graduates of these programs resulted in a fall in the number of enrollments at this faculty. Professor Sylejman Hyseni points out that in geosciences it had long been discussed whether the faculty might be shut down due as a result of student disinterest.⁴⁴ Professor Muharrem Zabeli, a vice dean in geosciences, blames the fall in student numbers on the industry, adding that with just a little investment in developing Trepca, the number of students in the faculty would increase immediately.

⁴⁵

In addition to the lack of job prospects for geosciences graduates, declining interest is also caused by the challenges student face in completing their degree at this faculty, and migration also appears to be a factor. The interviewees all argue for the need to better design degree programs at the university, creating new programs in geosciences, and providing incentives

to encourage students to study technical subjects.

Professor Nazmi Hasi argues against the duplication of faculties already available in other universities. He notes that the UMIB faculties of Education, Law and Economics are more popular with students, but these faculties and courses are also at the UP. Given that the UMIB has such a rich tradition of metallurgical technical sciences, he stresses it is important to maintain this unique technical profile.⁴⁶ Similarly, Professor Izet Ibrahimli argues that UMIB should define itself as a technical university and specialize in those degree programs, “in which its academic staff has a tradition and consistency of excellence for several decades”.⁴⁷ This approach, he believes, would make the UMIB a leader in the region. Similarly Professor Afrim Koliqi thinks that one or two well-qualified and professional universities in the country is sufficient. According to him, Kosovo needs universities with specializations designed to develop the country’s economy, not seven or eight universities that all offer the same subjects, because Kosovo is too small to need a Law Faculty in every city.⁴⁸

Continuing this theme, Professor Sabri Avdullahi notes that work is being done to create new degree programs that are more up to date in order to make the faculty more popular with students.⁴⁹ This is why the UMIB is collaborating with universities in Albania and Poland. Rector Alush Musaj notes that specialized geosciences programs will soon be offered in an effort



to modernize and attract students to technical programs.⁵⁰

All interviewees confirmed the need to provide incentives for current and potential geosciences students, because it is difficult to complete studies in these fields, and because of the importance of this sector to the country's economy. According to Professor Izet Ibrahim, the technical sciences have always been considered the most difficult to complete successfully, meanwhile there is a perception that if you study economics or education, it is easier to get a job.⁵¹ Given that most of the time, working in this sector involves challenging field work and mining, it is perhaps not surprising

that many students prefer to study law, economics or education in order to have an office job.⁵² Professor Sabri Avdullahi said that they had asked the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) to allocate ten scholarships a year to geosciences students as incentives, but although these were promised, they have not yet been provided.⁵³ Professor Kemajl Zeqiri, also an ICMM board member, recommends offering paid student internships, as well as merit rewards to students as they progress through the degree program.⁵⁴

If the Faculty of Geosciences were closed, the consequences would be disastrous for the country's development and economy. According to the

interviewees, if technical programs in mining, technology, geology, metallurgy were to be closed, Kosovo would have to recruit professionals from abroad for these fields.⁵⁵ Professor Zenun Elezaj argues the Faculty of Geosciences has to survive because it is the only national institution that prepares people to work in the mining sector, which is considered essential for future economic development.⁵⁶

Geosciences and mining enterprises

We interviewed representatives of the four largest mining companies in order to identify the importance of the Faculty of Geosciences to industry and to understand the current situation with regard to engineering staff at these businesses. We also sought the following data from two publicly owned mining companies, Trepca and KEC, and two private companies, NewCo Ferronikel and Sharrcem:

- Key challenges regarding recruitment of new professional staff;
- Shortages of professional categories;
- Current number of engineers employed, the profile of these engineers and their average age;
- Number of graduates from the UMIB and other universities employed in the last 10 years and their profiles;
- Number of students from the UMIB and other universities that have done professional internships at the business and their professional profile;
- Number of interns employed in the businesses who studied at UMIB

and other universities in the last 10 years and their profile;

- the Number of students who received scholarships from businesses and the value of the scholarship funds awarded to each university;
- Number of the UMIB students who received scholarships from businesses, their number in each UMIB technical faculty and the total financial award received;
- Collaboration between businesses and the UMIB and how this takes place;
- Membership of the UMIB Advisory Board and business awareness about this board.

KEC

KEC has over 4,000 employees, of which 365 are engineers. The average age of their employees is about 56 years of age. This average is high among engineers as well as other employees, and according to KEC, this is the company's main challenge in terms of continuity of professional staff. KEC's demand for new engineering staff is underlined by the fact that during the period of 2010-2019, the retirement trend has been higher than the employment trend. In the last 10 years, 144 members of staff have retired and 112 have been employed. This means that in this ten-year period, the number of KEC engineers has decreased by 32.

In the next decade, between 2019 and 2029, about 205 engineers are expected to retire. Currently, KEC needs graduates who

are mining engineers (from Geosciences) and also engineers who have studied thermoenergy, electroenergy, electronics and machinery (coming from other faculties). The business does not keep data on employees and interns by university and degree of study. There were no recruitment policies to attract graduates, given that KEC does not allocate scholarships and did not pay the 310 interns to which it offered places during the period 2010-2019.⁵⁷⁵⁸

Trepça

Trepca currently has 1,215 employees, of whom 55 are engineers. Of these, 30 are geosciences graduates (11 in mining, 9 in geology and 5 in metallurgy), while the others are graduates of electronics (12) and mechanics (18). The average age of Trepca engineers is 50. During the last 10 years, 23 engineers have retired, and 21 engineers are expected to retire in the next 10 years.⁵⁹ Given the number of staff aged over 50 and the time needed to train new staff, experts and the business itself say that, “this is the last chance” to hire new engineers.^{60 61}

Already, the company has a shortage of staff qualified in geosciences (mining, geology and metallurgy), electricity and machinery. In the last 10 years, Trepca has employed graduates from FMM, the Faculty of Geosciences and the FMCE. The enterprise is not involved in the UMIB Advisory Board and they are not aware of the board’s existence. Although Trepca welcomes interns, it does not provide incentives to attract UMIB students and graduates, such as paid internships, or

scholarships to educate engineers in the fields the business requires.⁶²

ICMM, employment and businesses

The Independent Commission for Mines and Minerals (ICMM) is an independent agency that reports to the Assembly of Kosovo. Some of its key responsibilities include issuing and inspecting licenses (for exploration and exploitation of mineral resources). Half of ICMM employees (33 out of 76 staff) are earth science engineers. Of this total, 17 engineers specialize in geology, 12 in mining, 2 in electronics, 2 in geodesy and 1 in technology. Most of these engineers graduated from FMM in the early 2000s. The ICMM has never provided paid internships as its experts say there is no legal foundation for such roles, and this means funds cannot be set aside to pay interns. They suggest the MED resolves this gap by issuing an administrative instruction for compensation of interns/apprentices.

Public enterprises and employment

ICMM experts are concerned about the shortage of qualified workers, such as miners and engineers, at KEC and Trepca. They recommend investing in the mining sector, including Trepca, as this would stimulate the hiring of new engineering staff. They argue that investing in Trepca is easier than in KEC, because the Law on Trepca, adopted in 2016, opened it up to greater public investment and privatization.

Private sector and employment

The mining sector has a total of 665 licensed enterprises. In 2019, 255 companies were licensed — 118 for specific activities, 85 for exploration, and 52 for mining. However, the mining sector has numerous unregistered enterprises. During ICMM inspections in 2019, they identified 192 companies without licenses.⁶³ According to the ICMM experts, unlicensed firms not only are more likely to cause environmental damage,⁶⁴ but they also do nothing to stimulate hiring in geosciences as they do not employ engineers. In contrast, every licensed enterprise is required by law to employ at least one engineer qualified in a degree program at the Faculty of Geosciences. Thus, a simple calculation reveals that licensing 192 new mining companies would result in the employment of at least 192 geosciences engineers.⁶⁵⁶⁶

The key findings of the interviews conducted with members of the permanent and temporary academic staff at the Faculty of Geosciences, and with the management of Geosciences.

CONCLUSION

- The Faculty of Geosciences has a total of 28 academic staff (24 men and 4 women). The average age of full-time professors is 56; for associate professors, the average is 55.5; and for assistant professors, 48. In total, the average age of all full-time professors is 54. The ratio of professor to student during the lecture process is 1:5. No staff members have completed their BA degree abroad and in a foreign language, and approximately 34% completed their MA studies in other countries of the former Yugoslavia and in Albania. No staff member has completed all levels of study abroad and in a foreign language. A total of 6 members of academic staff have completed their PhD studies abroad and in a foreign language.
- In each study program for the period 2015/16 - 2019/20, there were more assistants hired on alternative temporary contracts than on permanent contracts: in mining, there were 3 permanent assistants and 7 temporary assistants; in metallurgy, there were 4 permanent assistants and 6 temporary; and in geology, there were 7 permanent assistants and 13 temporary. During this period, there was a decline in the number of permanent, full-time professors in mining and in metallurgy. In geology the number of permanent, full-time professors remained constant, until the 2019/20 academic year, when there was a slight increase.
- During the academic years, 2014/15 – 2018/19, there were six recruitment rounds for permanent academic staff, in which 18 professors and 5 assistants were sought. There were also four recruitment rounds to hire temporary academic staff, in which they advertised for 2 professors and 17 assistants.
- The Faculty of Geosciences, at the UMIB, enrolled the lowest number of new students in the academic period 2014/15 – 2018/19. Of the geoscience programs, materials and metallurgy attracted the least enrollments. All programs at this faculty experienced a severe fall in the number of students registered at this time. The main reason given for the drop in student numbers is industry failure. In addition to the lack of job prospects for geoscience graduates, other causes for the fall include how difficult it is to complete the degree program and also, migration.
- During the period 2014/15 – 2018/19, in all BA degree programs, the percentage of graduates is very low compared to the number of students enrolled. Of the 178 students registered in materials and metallurgy, only 20, or 11%, have graduated.

In geology, out of 295 enrolled students, only 37 or 12.5% have graduated. Mining has the highest number of graduates: out of 229 registered students, 41 or 18% have graduated.

- During the academic years 2014/15 – 2018/19 in all MA degree programs, student enrollments and graduations were stable and without major fluctuations. Of the 25 students enrolled in metallurgy, 6 or 24% graduated; out of 37 students enrolled in mining, 28 or 77% graduated; of the 33 students enrolled in mineral resources, 10 or 30% have graduated; and of the 30 students enrolled in hydrogeology and engineering geology, 10 or 33.5% have graduated.
- Mining leads not only in regard to the number of enrollments between 2014-2019, but also the number of graduates compared to enrollment. Metallurgy has the least new student enrollments and graduates.
- In the period 2015/16–2019/20, a total of 285 students at all the UMIB faculties won scholarships. Students at the Faculty of Geosciences won the least number of scholarships, with a total of 21 scholarships or 7.37% of the total. The total value of scholarships at UMIB during the period 2014-2019 was €190,666.00, out of which Geosciences received €17,106.00, which is 9% of the total amount.
- The gender ratio for the BA degree is 80% male students and 20% female students. For the MA degree, it is 85% male students and 15% female students.
- On July 15, 2019, the KAA decided not to accredit the UMIB because it failed to complete or only partially completed the Accreditation Manual chapters. One of the 11 chapters of this manual (Standard for Strategic Planning, Governance and Administration) was not completed at all. The loss of accreditation is the greatest risk that UMIB has ever faced, because institutions that fail accreditation for a second time lose their license.
- The UMIB appealed against its non-accreditation on August 7, 2019, alleging that the SQC decision violated the decision-making procedure, as well as being based on a mistaken assessment of the factual situation and incorrect application of the law and applicable rules.
- The UMIB's appeal was not considered because the KAA Appeals Commission (AC) resigned on August 27, 2019. The KAA still has no functioning Appeals Commission. The reason for the resignation of the AC is a disagreement with the SQC over their

respective mandates and decision-making powers regarding accreditation, as well as conflicting legal interpretations of the Commission's mandate.

The key findings of the interviews conducted with members of the permanent and temporary academic staff at the Faculty of Geosciences, and with the management of Geosciences, are as follows:

- Institutional non-accreditation is severely impacting the UMIB, especially the geosciences degree programs. The loss of accreditation has damaged the UMIB's reputation, preventing new students from enrolling and causing a loss of confidence in the quality of degree programs at the UMIB.
- Half of the professors interviewed agree with the findings of the report of international accreditation experts and with the decision of the SQC, that the rectorate of UMIB is responsible for non-accreditation. The other half of those interviewed disagree with the report's findings, arguing that the criteria are not aligned with the conditions, capacity and statute of the university.
- There is a decline in student interest in the Geosciences, and the main reason given is industry failure. In addition to a lack of job prospects, other causes include the challenge of completing the degree course, as well as migration.
- If the Faculty of Geosciences at UMIB closes, the consequences will be severe as it is the only faculty in the country preparing staff to work in the mining sector, which is the basis for the country's economic development.

The key findings of our analysis of KEC, TREPÇA and the ICMM are as follows:

- The Advisory Board is ineffective in connecting the Faculty of Geosciences to industry. Public enterprise executives and academic staff members are not aware of its existence.
- KEC and Trepca need continuity of supply of new generations of qualified engineers, including from the Geosciences.
- KEC and Trepca are not members of the UMIB Advisory Board. It is worth noting that some academic staff were also unaware of the board and its work.
- Mining companies without a license, in addition to causing environmental damage, have a negative impact on the employment of geosciences staff.
- NewCo Ferronikeli and SharrCem did not respond to Admovere's enquiries.

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