

ACCREDITATION REPORT

Site Visit Team Report

for

St. Elizabeth University

of

Health and Social Work

May 15-18, 2017

International Evaluation Committee Members

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Preliminary Accreditation Report
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I. INTRODUCTION

On October, 2016, Dr. Daniel J. West, Jr. met with Dr. Vladimir Krcmery, Rector (President) of St. Elizabeth University in Bratislava, Slovakia. A discussion was held concerning the scheduling of another international accreditation site visit for the Spring, 2017. Dr. West was asked to Chair the international accreditation site visit and to work with other accreditation team members who had familiarity with international accreditation criteria and standards, prior experience working on international accreditation teams, a knowledge base of CEE countries, and professional expertise in the programmatic areas. Dr. West selected members of the site visit team, discussed these with Dr. Krcmery, and finalized the team.

St. Elizabeth University was founded as a private university in 2002. St. Elizabeth University is accredited through the National Accreditation Committee of the Slovak Republic in the academic areas of: social work, public health, nursing, tropical public health, medical technology, missionary and charity work and psychology. It was further noted that a special program was being recognized in the Czech Republic as emergency medicine paramedics.

In preparation for the site visit, St. Elizabeth University prepared a self-study progress report based on the April 16-22, 2012 Final Accreditation Report issued September 30, 2012. Very detailed information was provided by Dr. Vladimir Krcmery noting that of the twenty-three recommendations at the time of the last site visit, (4) were determined to be not met, (3) partially met and (16) met. A detailed analysis of accomplishments was provided along with data files. Based on the information submitted, it was determined that a site visit would be scheduled for May 2017. Several international candidates were suggested to be members of the accreditation site team. Dr. Krcmery indicated that information would be prepared on all programs of study and submitted in advance to members of the site visit team for consideration and review. A preliminary site visit agenda and schedule was developed by Dr. Krcmery and Dr. West prior to a site visit. The agenda itself was modified prior to the actual start of the site visit. The agenda was finalized with the team members during an introductory conference that was held on May 15, 2017 prior to the start of the site visit. Each member of the accreditation committee received self-study documentation from St. Elizabeth University consisting of legal status, annual reports, survey of programs, course syllabi, course content, curriculum sequencing, faculty scholarship and research summaries, description of all programs of study and characteristics of each program of study. It was determined prior to the beginning of the site visit that the accreditation team would visit Nova Zomky, Skalica, Zilina, Michalovce, Presov, Roznava, Strakonice, (Czech Republic). Members of the site team would also visit social projects that were in place in Bratislava, Slovakia. Additional documentation and supporting materials were made available to all committee members prior to the site visit, during the site visit, at academic locations visited by the site visit team, and during deliberation meetings prior to the exit conference with Dr. Vladimir Krcmery and the Scientific Council.

A blended model was used for the accreditation site visit. The team agreed to use criteria established by the National Accreditation Council of Slovak Republic; 2013 criteria for Accreditation as used through the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education; and other international criteria. The team agreed that the major areas for review at St. Elizabeth University would include:

1. Mission, Goals and Objectives
2. Governance and Administration
3. Institutional Support
4. Students and Graduates
5. Faculty Research and Scholarship
6. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Outcomes
7. Community and Professional Services
8. International Projects and External Affiliations
9. Resources and Academic Relationships
10. Facilities and Technology
11. Educational Effectiveness Assessment
12. Ethics and Integrity

This report is based on a review of the self-documentation; progress reports on the accreditation commission recommendations from the accreditation visit in 2012; interviews with faculty and students; interviews with the Rector, Dean, Vice-Dean; meeting with administration and members of the Board of Directors; direct observations and impressions by the site visit team members with various stakeholders; and visits to specific locations and tour of facilities. All programs of study were thoroughly examined.

II. INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Rector of St. Elizabeth University, Dr. Vladimir Krcmery and his colleague Dr. Marian Karvaj, voluntarily invited an international team of four professionals to conduct an accreditation visit on May 15-18, 2017. The intent was to review the progress report based on the accreditation site visit conducted in April 2012. A peer review model was used with an emphasis on collaboration and consultation. The international evaluation committee consisted of the following experts:

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III. INTERIUM SITE VISIT AND PROGRESS REPORT

Dr. Daniel J. West, Jr. conducted an interim site visit on October 2016. The purpose of the interim site visit was to examine evidence, documentation and reports to support progress in addressing the actions, observations, and recommendations at the time of the last accreditation evaluation site visit conducted April 16-20, 2012. The progress report was based on the final accreditation report that was issued September 30, 2012. The interim progress report was received on May 19, 2016. This report was reviewed by Dr. West on May 20, 2016. The final outcomes of the progress report as submitted was discussed with Dr. Krcmery on May 21, 2016. Based on the interim site visit and progress report, a determination was made to establish another accreditation site visit for May 15-18, 2017 composed of international experts.

IV. SITE VISIT

The accreditation site visit and evaluation at St. Elizabeth University was conducted May 15-18, 2017. May 15, 2017 was used as a general meeting of the site visit team to establish and finalize the agenda, review self-study documents and reports made available in the Rector's office, discuss the interim site visit conducted by Dr. West, examine the outcomes of the progress report, and examine current documents that were distributed to each accreditation team member prior to the site visit in the form of a self-study. This was the third site visit by this team to St. Elizabeth University. The initial site visit was conducted on October 16-18, 2008; April 16-22, 2012; and the current site visit May 15-18, 2017.

The accreditation team also looked at the strategic planning report, conducted a meeting with Dr. Krcmery and his senior management team, finalized the locations to be visited, reviewed St. Elizabeth administrative and operational policies and procedures as made available in hard copy.

The accreditation team examined and reviewed the following:

1. University mission, vision and value statements;
2. Applications by all faculty (2013-2014-2015);
3. Minutes documenting key university planning meetings;
4. Progress of study involving credit hours, place of performance, length of study and a detailed listing of full-time and part-time faculty;
5. A review of classrooms, computer facilities, offices for faculty, common areas, and overall appearance of the faculty;
6. Research work by faculty in each of the programs of study;
7. Important scientific literacy works;
8. Research projects funded;
9. Compliment of faculty for each degree program of study (Professor, Associate Professor);
10. Support staff;
11. Qualifications of all faculty;
12. Study content and listing of core subjects in each degree;
13. Evaluation criteria for each course and program of study;
14. Observed examinations, thesis and final defense;
15. Admission criteria;
16. Academic advising;
17. Career advising;
18. Number of students by course of study;
19. Outcome data on graduates;
20. Agreements with other universities and locations;
21. Composition of examination boards;
22. Self-Assessment conducted by St. Elizabeth in programs of study;
23. Faculty evaluations;

24. Student course evaluations;
25. Mentors, preceptors and practical study;
26. Alumni clubs;
27. Faculty exchange programs;
28. Criteria for rank & tenure;
29. Professional service requirements for meeting criteria at the university, the profession, community and program or school;
30. Booklets and other publications in English and Slovak and humanitarian projects;
31. Enrollment of Ph.D. students;
32. International activities and locations; and
33. Student academic records.

Basic information and performance criteria for each program of study was reviewed and discussed in detail. Site visits were conducted to Nova Zomky, Skalica, Zilina, Michalovce, Presov, Roznava and Strakonice (Czech Republic). Site visits were also conducted at program sites in Bratislava which included shelters for the homeless and other humanitarian facilities as part of the mission of the University. A special site visit was made to the Czech Republic to examine a new program of study.

It should be noted that at each of the site locations the accreditation team met with the directors of the programs, faculty of each program of study in social work, public health, tropical medicine, medical technology, missionary & charity work and nursing. A physical examination and inspection was made of the classrooms, computer facilities, office for faculty, common areas, technology in the classroom, lighting, assembly hall, library and overall impressions of the academic facilities. At each location final examinations and defense of degrees were observed. The team talked with members of the faculty evaluation teams. Copies of theses were examined and oral examinations observed. Meetings were conducted with students at all locations.

The accreditation team reviewed characteristics of all degree programs of study offered by St. Elizabeth University for Health & Social Work in Bratislava and external site locations. Characteristics of the degree programs of study:

- Social Work – First Year
- Social Work – Second Year
- Public Health Bachelor
- Public Health Master
- Public Health Doctoral
- Nursing (BS)
- Nursing (MSc)
- Nursing (PhD)
- Tropical Public Health (MSc)
- Medical Technology (MSc)
- Missionary & Charity Work (First Year)
- Missionary & Charity Work (Second Year)
- Emergency Medical Paramedic (Czech Republic)

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

A. Findings and Observations

St. Elizabeth University has maintained strong enrollment of students since being incorporated as a non-profit organization in Bratislava on October 7, 2002 in accordance with Act No. 213/1997 of the Legal Code as amended. St. Elizabeth University has By-laws, Articles of Incorporation and is registered as a non-profit organization providing generally beneficial services such as education, training, research, scientific and technical services, information services in the field of nursing, social work, public health, and psychology. It is the opinion of the accreditation team that St. Elizabeth University has been complying with changes promulgated by the Ministry of Education (MOE) as well as new policies and regulations that had been enacted by Parliament. St. Elizabeth has a mission and vision that differentiates itself from other public and private universities. The university has an appropriate governing structure and organizational framework that exists for the future growth and development of majors and degrees. Leadership remains strong with an administrative team of competent leaders and managers to support the current organization, locations, facilities, faculties, and students. These are appropriate affiliation agreements with health care providers, social agencies and other affiliated businesses entities. St. Elizabeth has cooperative agreements with NGOs, other regional government agencies, and countries where humanitarian projects are located.

In a report and survey conducted by the European University Association, a questionnaire was submitted on May 12, 2017 by St. Elizabeth University. This report represented that there are 287 full-time equivalent staff employed by St. Elizabeth University based on figures from 2015-2016 academic year. The total number of students enrolled at St. Elizabeth University were reported by bachelor, master, and doctorate degree levels. This report based on 2015-2016 academic year reflects data of 2,743 full-time students and 8,232 part-time students. St. Elizabeth notes that some important quantitative benchmarks include student satisfaction, student mobility rates and staff mobility rates. The University has an institutional strategic plan that identifies measures to improve teaching, academic staff development, ways of improving the learning environment and lifelong learning. St. Elizabeth identifies that it does have international university alliances and activities with professional associations in several countries.

The survey instrument identifies obstacles for improving learning and teaching. These constraints include financial resources, inability to recognize career progression and constraints imposed by the regulatory environment in the Slovak Republic. Teachers do not have enough time to cope with all areas of teaching, research and administration. Current administration is attempting to address these issues. St. Elizabeth has established programs of study that have been approved by the appropriate university governing body and by the Minister of Education in the Slovak Republic. The university has achieved national accreditation for designated programs of study in social work, nursing, public health, medical technology,

missionology. The university has specific characteristics that must be met with respect to all programs of study. A unique feature is that St. Elizabeth University has full time study and part time study. It was further determined by the accreditation team that all programs of study at all locations have appropriate facilities, equipment and supplies that are sufficient to support the mission, goals and objectives of St. Elizabeth University.

It was determined that there is no discrimination on the basis of gender, age, creed, race, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation in any aspects of the degrees of study at all locations. All programs of study at site locations appear to be in full compliance with relevant university policy. It is recognized that all program locations have a process in place for handling formal student complaints and faculty concerns. The University has a defined policy of academic freedom and academic standards for faculty in all degree programs of study.

The accreditation team also identified several strengths that are noteworthy.

1. It was determined that at all program locations the faculty had backgrounds that demonstrated they were academically and professionally qualified.
2. The number of faculty who have a applied professional experiences and are currently working in the health care industry proves to be exceptionally beneficial to the student teaching process and use of relevant and current information.
3. The university faculty incorporate integrated experiences, including field-based applications, that require students to draw upon, apply and synthesize knowledge and skills covered throughout the degree program of study.
4. St. Elizabeth through its programs, degrees and faculty are able to address real social problems that exist in the Slovak Republic and require trained and qualified graduates to address educational, social and political reforms.
5. It was noted by the accreditation team that St. Elizabeth University is one of the only universities in Europe that focuses on global solidarity in the development and application of internationalization networks on a global scale

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the international accreditation site visit the team suggests that the Board of Directors, Senior Administration and Faculty address the following recommendations in an effort to continuously improve the quality of education for students enrolled at St. Elizabeth University in all programs of study:

1. Join the International Federation of Catholic Universities (FIUC) and the European Federation of Catholic Universities as a way of enhancing the mission and vision; and ensuring that Catholic policies and procedures are part of the St. Elizabeth culture.
2. The University will have statements of mission, vision and values that guides the design, evaluation, and quality improvements of the university. St. Elizabeth University has an overall mission of global solidarity that encompasses European values, addresses national interests and provides a holistic approach to educating others.
3. After evaluating and developing a new mission statement, the University will re-evaluate current goals, objectives and performance metrics to make sure they are action based, observable realistic and measureable.
4. Involve students, alumni and practitioners in the appropriate areas of decision making and evaluation, and provide evidence that input is utilized in the curriculum and programs.
5. Monitor and evaluate degree completion rates, job placement rates, salaries and the careers of graduates.
6. Develop competencies that align with the mission and strategic objectives of the university. These competencies will form the basis of the curriculum, course content, learning objectives and teaching and assessment methods.
7. Continue to develop English as a 2nd language for some students in all academic disciplines but especially in the areas of nursing, public health and social work.
8. Develop a formal affiliation strategy to implement long distance learning, considering specialized courses, hybrid courses and student needs at different locations.
9. Increase the number of student scholarships that are available to enable study abroad opportunities for select students.
10. Develop interdisciplinary degreed programs of study by utilizing the expertise and body of knowledge in public health, social work and nursing. There are very specific needs in Slovakia and throughout Europe where people can be interdisciplinary trained for social counseling, community health and population health.
11. Re-evaluate the state type of examinations given at the national level to determine competency and knowledge of a specific profession.

12. Consider using interdisciplinary teams from nursing, social work and public health to work on projects in other countries.
13. The university will make available full and accurate information regarding its application process, the degree programs of study, the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment methods, and the student outcomes. The university should consider improving the website to reflect the overall mission of the university dealing with global solidarity and internationalization.
14. The University will ensure that all programs of study have learning objectives and performance outcomes that are observable and measureable. The University will use outcome evaluation as a way of improving the curriculum, teaching processes, methods of instruction and program effectiveness.
15. Develop affiliation agreements with other universities to expand research and scholarship opportunities for faculty and students.
16. Continue to implement institutional assessment framework and process (Common Assessment Framework) that measures and improves quality and university educational outcomes. The university will have institutional learning objectives (ILOs), program level objectives (PLO), and a mechanism for assessing student attainment of knowledge skills and competencies (individual learning objectives SLOs). Outcomes will be assessed at all three levels.
17. Provide evidence that the University is monitoring the educational needs of citizens and responding to this need by designing new programs of study, identifying new competencies needed in the health and social service professions. The University will identify barriers that decrease student access to a university education.
18. Consider offering online courses as part of the curriculum.
19. Ensure that graduates' career preparedness is monitored, documented and used for continuous improvement.
20. Develop competency-based education by identifying a set of competencies that align with the mission and types of job graduates enter. Degree programs will use competencies as the basis of the curriculum, course content, learning objectives, teaching and assessment methods.
21. The program curriculum in all degrees will develop student competencies in communications, interpersonal effectiveness, critical thinking, analysis, problem solving, decision-making, professionalism and ethics.
22. All programs of study will provide, throughout the curriculum, opportunities for students to participate in team-based and interprofessional activities. Faculty will

provide applied learning opportunities so students can apply and integrate knowledge, skills and competencies.

23. There will be an effective process for the monitoring and evaluation of field based applications and that students can draw upon, apply and synthesize knowledge and skills covered throughout the program of study.
24. All programs of study will incorporate a range of assessment methods driven by adult learning principles and align with defined competencies appropriate to the curriculum and courses.
25. All programs of study will demonstrate that they evaluate course instruction and the curriculum, as well as the program, and use the results to improve quality of teaching and the learning environment.
26. Program faculty will participate in defining faculty needs and in recruiting faculty to teach in the Program in accordance with University policy.
27. Faculty will participate in health related community and professional service activities outside of the University and draw upon these service activities in their teaching.
28. The Governing Board, working in collaboration with the Rector, must ensure mission achievement and fiscal integrity.
29. Establish an ongoing orientation or accreditation education program for board members focusing on core values, mission, vision and academic freedom.
30. Document and provide evidence in the assessment of student-learning outcomes (SLOs), program-learning outcomes (PLOs) and institutional effectiveness in meeting defined goals and objectives.
31. Demonstrate that the governing board monitors educational quality and uses a continuous review process for quality improvement.
32. Assure that faculty are involved in the accreditation review process and that academic expertise is used to improve SLOs and PLOs.

A. Final Recommendation

The accreditation team recommends that all academic programs of study at the bachelor degree, master degree, and doctorate degree levels at St. Elizabeth University in the areas of public health, nursing, medical technology, and social work be accredited.

A. Length of Accreditation

The accreditation team recommends accreditation for 5 years for all programs through 2021.

B. Progress Report

The team recommends a self-study progress report be completed in 3 years (2020) addressing progress in meeting all recommendations.

C. Next Site Visit

The team recommends a site visit in Spring, 2021.