



This document reports on a HERQA Institutional Quality Audit  
carried out between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> August 2008  
at

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# Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency

## St Mary's University College

### Institutional Quality Audit Report

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# Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency

## St Mary's University College

### Institutional Quality Audit Report

#### **Introduction**

HERQA is an autonomous agency established through the Higher Education Proclamation (351/2003) as one of the key agencies responsible for guiding and regulating the higher education sector in Ethiopia. HERQA has been established to help ensure a high quality and relevant higher education system in the country. One of the central roles of HERQA is to encourage and assist the growth of an organizational culture in Ethiopian higher education that values quality and is committed to continuous improvement.

As one of its key activities, HERQA carries out Institutional Quality Audits of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). An Institutional Quality Audit is an in-depth analysis and assessment of the quality and relevance of programs and of the teaching and learning environment. Equally importantly, an Institutional Quality Audit assesses the appropriateness and effectiveness of a HEI's approach to quality assurance, its systems of accountability and its internal review mechanisms. The product of an Institutional Quality Audit is an Institutional Quality Audit Report.

HERQA intends that through its Institutional Quality Audit Reports and the dissemination of good practice that it will help to enhance the provision of higher education in Ethiopia and the confidence of all stakeholders in the quality and relevance of that provision.

#### **HERQA's Approach to Institutional Quality Auditing**

A HERQA institutional quality audit proceeds through a number of stages. The initial action is a self evaluation carried out by the HEI to be audited. HERQA asks that this should deal with ten focus areas. These are as follows:

- 1: Vision, Mission and Educational Goals
- 2: Governance and Management System
- 3: Infrastructure and Learning Resources
- 4: Academic and Support Staff
- 5: Student Admission and Support Services
- 6: Program Relevance and Curriculum
- 7: Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- 8: Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes
- 9: Research and Outreach Activities
- 10: Internal Quality Assurance

HERQA has issued documentation to illuminate each of the above areas providing reference points and indicating possible sources of evidence.

Following the institutional self evaluation, the HEI prepares a Self Evaluation Document (SED) organized in accord with guidelines issued by HERQA. This helps to ensure that all SEDs deal with the same aspects of the work of HEIs and are of similar structure and length. The completed SED is sent to HERQA.

Following receipt of the SED, HERQA initiates a dialogue with the HEI to establish a timescale for the institutional quality audit. HERQA also selects a team of trained institutional quality auditors (typically five people), sends the names of the proposed team to the HEI and asks the HEI to consider if any member may be unsuitable. Where reasons for unsuitability are upheld by HERQA (e.g. possible conflict of interest) then a replacement will be nominated.

Following analysis of the SED by the auditors, selected members of the audit team make a one day briefing visit to the HEI. The purpose of the visit is to help ensure a common understanding of the audit procedure in the HEI; help the HEI make the necessary preparations and arrangements for the audit and to indicate further information that the HEI should try to make available to the audit team. During this visit the timetable for the institutional quality audit visit is discussed and, where possible, the date for the visit confirmed.

The institutional quality audit itself is carried out during a four day visit to the HEI by the team of auditors. The key purpose of the audit visit is to validate the SED submitted by the HEI.

During the visit the team studies documentation, visits facilities, meets with staff and students and observes teaching. At the end of the visit the team makes a brief oral report to the President of the HEI.

Following the institutional quality audit visit, the audit team drafts an audit report. This draft is sent to the HEI to check for factual accuracy. HERQA then produces a final Institutional Quality Audit Report which is presented to the HEI and subsequently published. An Institutional Quality Audit Report seeks to make clear HERQA's confidence in the ability of the HEI to provide appropriate degree level education. Importantly, a report also aims to support a HEI by recognizing its good practices and by indicating areas where changes in provision and practice can improve the quality and/or relevance of its activities.

Further to the institutional quality audit report the HEI is asked to prepare an action plan that seeks to enhance the quality and relevance of its provision. HERQA requests a copy of this plan and monitors its implementation. Subsequent institutional quality audits consider the extent to which the HEI has been able to use its action plan to enhance quality and relevance.

# Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency

## St Mary's University College

### Institutional Quality Audit Report

#### Executive Summary

This document reports on the Institutional External Quality Audit of St Mary's University College carried out by a team of five HERQA auditors and one HERQA observer in August 2008. The starting point for the Audit was a Self Evaluation Document (SED) prepared by the University College. The quality audit centered on ten focus areas identified by HERQA with a view to validating the SED, judging the extent to which the University College is fit for its declared purpose and determining the level of confidence in the University College's ability to provide relevant and appropriate higher education and safeguard the standard of its degrees. The EQA team spent four days at the University College. During their visit the team had 14 meetings with members of the academic staff and one meeting with students. In addition, they observed teaching in 1 class and visited a range of facilities.

St.Mary's University College is a development of St. Mary's Language School which was established in Addis Ababa in 1991. The University College was established in 1998 under St. Mary's General Education Development PLC with the head office in Hawassa and a branch in Addis Ababa. With a policy of strengthening itself, the University College shifted its head office from Hawassa to the Lidata campus in Addis Ababa in 1999. Currently the head office is at Maichew Square beside the Wabe-Shebelle Hotel.

In 1998 the University College in Addis Ababa started with just 37 students. It now has more than 5000 students. There are four faculties (Computer Science (=Informatics); Law; Teacher Education; and Business. These offer five fields of study as regular degree programs: Accounting, Computer Science, Law, Management and Marketing Management.

The vision statement of the University College states that it *aspires to become among the leading **the** higher education centers of academic excellence in teaching-learning, research, publications and community services and contribute to Ethiopia's development.*

The EQA team reached the following main conclusions from their audit visit.

- St Mary's University College is a private institution of higher education offering regular, extension and distance education programs leading to the award of recognized certificates, diplomas and degrees.
- The University College was very well prepared for the visit of the audit team. Many documents were made available to the team and requests for meetings, visits and further information were readily agreed and acted on.
- The SED, although not covering all area of interest to the audit team was, nevertheless a helpful document providing evaluative insights into the work of the University College.
- The University College has grown considerably from an initial student number of less than 50 in 1998 to more than 5000.
- The vision statement of the University College underlines its commitment to contribute to Ethiopia's development.

- The vision of the University College to become among the leading higher education centers of academic excellence in teaching-learning, research, publications and community services is not time bound or limited to geographical boundaries. Such clarifications would be useful additions.
- The mission of the University College focuses on the attainment and maintenance of high quality and standards in teaching, research and community services.
- The University College has an intention to establish a Center for Entrepreneurship.
- The University College has a clearly stated goal that also centers on the provision of high quality services.
- A comprehensive set of set of values underpins the work of the University College.
- There has been consultation on the vision, mission, goal and values of the University College and, once agreed, these have been widely disseminated to the University College community.
- The University College has a Strategic Plan to guide its continued development. This plan has identified a number of strategic issues that will be addressed as priorities.
- The leadership of the University College is very strong.
- The Senate Legislation is a key document that establishes the academic rules, regulations and many of the working procedures of the University College. The Legislation is under review and the University College will need to establish when this review will be completed and new legislation implemented.
- The management of the University College is transparent and participatory but there is room for further staff and student representation on committees.
- Communications structures in the University College are good and functional.
- Communication is aided by the open door policy adopted by the University College.
- The University College has developed good staff and student relationships and an environment conducive to academic endeavor.
- There is a strong commitment to quality that is shared by staff and students of the University College community.
- Evidence of the University College's commitment to quality and quality enhancement is the establishment of the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA).
- The University College would appear to have adequate teaching space for current numbers of regular students.
- There is a shortage of private offices for the academic staff of the University College. This has meant that some members of staff have no private area for preparation and marking or to meet with students seeking academic counseling. But still there are well-furnished staff rooms in each building designated to each faculty.
- The University College has provided opportunities for ICT and Internet for both staff and students and intends to enhance this as a priority in its Strategic Plan.

- The Libraries of the University College need to be enhanced, particularly with academic journals. The institution is actively pursuing ways of meeting this need.
- There is a fair and transparent appointments procedure for academic staff in the University College. New staff benefit from an induction program.
- The University College has clear and transparent criteria and procedures for promotion but has no teaching staff promoted to professorial rank.
- While some members of staff in all departments have several years of experience, no teacher has a PhD and staffing of the University College falls short of that specified by the MOE. Much of the teaching on some programs is done by first degree holders.
- From the data provided to the EQA team on student and staff numbers, the average student/staff ratio for regular programs in the University College is between 11:1 and 16:1. While this is seen as generous, it is recognized that the calculation may not be based on the number of full time equivalent staff *i.e.* the staff teaching regular students may also teach on other programs, and thus the ratio may be higher.
- The University College has a strong commitment to staff development. While it has established an Academic Development and Resources Center (ADRC) to support teaching and learning by providing assistance and resources to instructors it could benefit from a human resources development strategy and plan.
- The Academic Development and Resource Centre (ADRC), has made a worthwhile contribution to staff development in terms of pedagogical training.
- Staff appraisal is being used effectively in the University College to identify staff development needs and to reward members of staff that perform well.
- There is a transparent system of student placement in the University College. Students are allocated to programs on the basis of their choice.
- New students have a structured induction to the University College and receive a comprehensive handbook.
- Members of staff are provided with information on the academic attainment of students entering the University College.
- The Student Affairs and Services Office of the University College works closely with the student community on the provision of a range of services for students.
- The University College has established a comprehensive and functional system of student class representatives to aid communications between students, staff and management.
- A Guidance and Counseling Service is providing a valued service to students of the University College.
- Very few members of staff provide a regular consultation hour as they are required to do.
- A tutorial program established to support students has been discontinued due to lack of student participation. This needs further investigation.

- Student discipline cases in the University College are handled by the Student Discipline Committee which has two student representatives.
- The University College has carried out helpful surveys on student satisfaction that have been used to inform practice.
- The provision of sports and recreation facilities for students on the University College campus is not yet adequate.
- The Student Wellness and Development Center has been instrumental in developing HIV & AIDS awareness in the University College.
- The University College has a structure of committees and a set of procedures designed to ensure that curriculum development results in relevant and required programs of appropriate standard but their work is not informed by clear decision-making criteria.
- In approving new courses and programs the University College has no system for considering student workload other than in lecture equivalent hours.
- The University College does not distinguish between program approval (an academic decision) and making a decision to launch an approved program (largely a resources decision).
- The University College has not always been able to involve external stakeholders in curriculum development. This is because of lack of commitment from stakeholders.
- A planned program of regular curriculum reviews is yet to be embedded in the practices of the University College.
- The University College is producing course catalogs and while this is a positive step, many course descriptions do not state the expected learning outcomes that should be the basis for student assessment.
- The University College has no written policy on teaching and learning.
- The University College encourages diverse approaches to teaching and learning and there is good evidence to support the claim that instructors use a range of methods.
- There is no sound evidence that students are assessed on their achievements of stated, expected learning outcomes of the courses they have followed.
- The student grading system is mainly based on norm referencing and this does not assure that standards of grades are maintained from year to year.
- While an appeal system is in place, there is no transparent system applied across the University College that ensures that students are graded fairly and consistently, that students are well protected from discrimination and that staff do not award unmerited or inaccurate grades.
- The University College has various figures for attrition which indicate that the average may be in the area of 12 to 16% but there is a general view that attrition is much higher. There is a need to review how data on student attrition is collected and analyzed so that it shows the attrition for each cohort of students each semester in each program as they pass through the University College.

- The University College has implemented measures to retain students and limit attrition. These need to be continued.
- The University College has initiated a tracer study to follow up its graduates and established an Alumni Association.
- The University College has established an Internship Office that seeks to connect students and potential employers but more needs to be done to establish stronger links with employers to help ensure that its graduates are well prepared for the world of work.
- The University College has demonstrated a commitment to research.
- While the expectation is that staff of the University College will engage in research, as yet, there is no written research policy or any established document of guidelines for research activities. However, recently the new Center for Education Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance has prepared a draft research strategy.
- Most members of the academic staff of the University College have no contractual time for research and are not actively engaged in research.
- While student research is given a high profile, the engagement of academic staff in doing research is not yet part of the culture of the University College.
- The University College has organized and sponsored five successive National Educational and Research Conferences.
- The University College has launched academic journals and published other research works.
- The University College has established a number of successful national and international academic linkages.
- Community service features in both the vision and mission statements and outreach activities are undertaken, but the University College appears to have no stated policy on outreach and no mechanism appears to be in place for systematically recording community activities.
- The University College does not appear to be involved in consultancy.
- The University College has a very strong commitment to quality evidenced by the establishment of the Center for Education Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance, the Quality Assessment Council and various bodies with responsibilities for quality, the provision of training on quality assurance and its research and publications on the quality of its provision.
- To date, the work of the University College in relation to quality has been on quality assessment. The emphasis now needs to move to quality assurance and quality enhancement.
- The University College has not yet developed a comprehensive policy on quality assurance or a well-established and fully-functional, integrated quality assurance system or mechanism. The Quality Assessment Council and the Center for Education Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance will be important to the establishment of such a policy and system.

- The University College has no established and functional mechanisms for the identification and dissemination of good practices.

The overall conclusion of the EQA team is that **St.** Mary's University College has grown successfully in a planned and purposeful way and established itself on the landscape of higher education in Ethiopia. While having graduated only a few hundred students from regular degree programs, it has put in place an infrastructure and established practices that should allow for more growth in regular student numbers should demand be there. While the University College has found it difficult to recruit instructors with a PhD and hence is not meeting MOE requirements, it has put efforts into staff development.

The University College has a very strong commitment to quality and has taken a series of actions related to quality assessment and quality enhancement. It now needs to focus on quality assurance. While a strong supporter of research, the University College has yet to develop a strong research culture among its staff. Few members of staff are research active and productive. The vision statement of the University College states that it *aspires to become among the leading higher education centers of academic excellence in teaching-learning, research, publications and community services and contribute to Ethiopia's development*. While this statement is not bound by time or geography, for St Mary's University College to move from its current position to the realization of its vision, will continue to require much effort and considerable resources. The foundation for the necessary development is firm.

The report commends the University College on 57 activities. It offers 36 essential recommendations, 20 advisable recommendations and 15 desirable recommendations.

# Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency

## St Mary's University College

### Institutional Quality Audit Report

#### **The Institution**

Founded in 1998, St. Mary's University College (SMUC) is one of the private institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia. Its birth was prompted by the increasing demand for education in an increasingly competitive environment. Its mission statement has a strong focus on the quality education. The University College has programs in Accounting, Secretarial Science & Office Management, Marketing Management, Management, Computer Science, Law, Languages, Social Sciences, Mathematics and Basic Sciences and Education. The University College offers regular, extension and distance modes of study.

The University College started with three fields of studies: Accounting, Law and Marketing Management and with only 37 students in Addis Ababa. The number of students in the regular and extension programs – diploma and degree- (not including the distance education program) has now reached more than 5000 with full-time and part-time academic staff numbering more than 200. When the administration and the distance education staff members are included, the entire employee number rises above 800.

The institution runs degree programs in five fields of studies in the regular programs: Accounting, Computer Science, Law, Management, and Marketing Management.

#### **The Institutional Self Evaluation**

SED (page 2) reports on how the University College carried out the self evaluation. This was done by establishing a nine person self evaluation task force. This task force collected, organized and analyzed data and documents from various offices and departments. At department level, a three-person committee was designated in each department to submit a report, through the department head, to the self evaluation task force. These reports were prepared after all department staff members had been made aware of the quality audit judgment criteria so that they would give their informed comments to the self evaluation team. Following these procedures, and after thorough discussion, the final document was produced by the task force.

Keeping in mind the limited experience the academic and administrative members of staff of SMUC have on self evaluation, the University College conducted an orientation session. This was attended by more than 30 academic and administrative staff. The session aimed to enhance their knowledge of the judgment criteria used HERQA. This session was informed by inputs from SMUC staff trained by HERQA and by a resource person from HERQA.

The SED formed a useful starting basis for the external quality audit providing both description and evaluation. However, the SED failed to include information on a number of aspects that were required for the institutional quality audit. These are noted in the related sections of this report. From the account of the self-evaluation process it is clear that it involved many people and there is no doubt that the University College put a considerable effort into the self evaluation and treated it as a serious activity.

#### **The Institutional Quality Audit Process**

The External Quality Audit was carried out by a team of five auditors and one observer (see Appendix 2). Two members of the team had visited the University College previously to

undertake a briefing visit. During this briefing visit the HERQA team explained the arrangements that should be made for the audit and requested additional information that the University College should make available to the EQA team (see Appendix 5). The list of requested documents was left with the University College. During the briefing visit the timetable for the audit had also been discussed and the importance stressed of scheduling meetings and visits that were required and informing selected staff and students as to when and where they would be required to meet with the EQA team.

The EQA team spent four days at the University College. On arrival, the EQA team reported their presence to the **Academic Vice Dean** who was managing the audit visit. They subsequently met with the President. Before departing on Day 4 they made a brief feedback report of their findings to the President. During the week the team had fourteen meetings with staff members and one meeting with students. In addition, they visited teaching and learning support facilities on the Mexico campus and observed teaching in one class. They also visited classrooms, staff offices, computer laboratories, printing facilities, a library, recreational facilities and a clinic. The team also studied documentation. Furthermore, the team met together at least once each day to discuss their findings and prepare for meetings. On the final day the team met together to agree findings to be presented to the President. On most, but not all occasions, all audit team members worked together. Meetings were carried out in English except for the meeting with students. This was carried out in Amharic.

The University College made available the meeting hall on its Mexico campus for the EQA team. This served as their office and also for meetings. This arrangement was very satisfactory. Importantly, the University College prepared a detailed timetable for the audit activities before the arrival of the auditors. This was able to be adjusted to accommodate additional activities as the need arose. The EQA team was exceptionally well supported by the **Academic Vice Dean** who acted as liaison person and facilitated the work of the team highly professionally.

The University College had gathered together an extensive collection of very useful documents for the EQA team and these added greatly to the information in the SED and informed the audit. Of particular value to the audit was the Faculty Hand Book of the University College (March 2007), the Five Year Strategic **Plan**, course catalogs, course description, reports, research records, committee minutes, and student and staff data; and these, along with the SED, were key references for the EQA team. The EQA team asked for and received a number of other documents following several of its meetings with staff. The list of documents consulted is given in Appendix 6.

All the requested meetings and visits took place. The staff and students who met with the EQA team were willing contributors and discussants and the team learned much from them. Similarly, staff who welcomed team members to their work bases did so willingly and, again, the EQA team learned much from their observations and interactions. **Meetings were also held with employers, though little in number, and gave positive feedback on the UC.**

While it is recognized that the University College offers different modes of study, the institutional quality audit has been concerned with regular degree programs only.

### **The Institutional Quality Audit**

This section of the report presents the EQA team's observations and views on each of the ten focus areas of the institutional quality audit. Following a commentary on the focus area based on information provided in the SED and gained during the audit visit, each section ends with commendations (if any) and recommendations. Recommendations are grouped into essential, advisable and desirable. Essential recommendations are actions that need urgent attention to assure quality and/or relevance. Advisable recommendations relate to areas where there is the potential for quality and/or relevance to be at risk and where action

is needed but not so urgently. Desirable recommendations are actions which will help to enhance quality and/or relevance.

### **1: Vision, Mission and Educational Goals**

Staff members at various levels from department to academic commission took part in formulating the vision and mission and setting the goals of the University College (SED, page 4). These are stated in the Faculty Hand Book and are posted in departments and staff rooms. The EQA team noted these important reminders of these key statements.

SMUC has developed a 5 year (2007/8 to 2011/12) Strategic Plan which sets out the strategic direction for the University College. The document which was published in September 2007 states the Vision of the University College. This is reproduced in the SED (page 4) as follows.

*The Vision of St. Mary's University College is to become among the leading higher education centers of academic excellence in teaching learning, research, publications and community services, and contribute to Ethiopia's development*

The SED (page 4) states that:

*the institutional initiatives that are advanced to lay the foundation for research, publication and community services can be considered as indicative of the operations leading to realizing its vision.*

and, in considering its investigations overall, EQA team concluded that a considerable effort is being made by staff and students to make progress towards this vision.

From the Strategic Plan, the SED (page 4) gives the mission of the University College as follows:

*The mission of SMUC is to offer conventional and distance modes of education accessible to the society at large with reasonable tuition and scholarships with optimal focus on quality and standards in teaching, research and community services.*

The goal of the SMUC as stated in the strategic plan and the SED (page 4) is as follows:

*SMUC aims at offering quality higher education, training, services and conducting research and publications that meet and exceed the requirements of students and stakeholders and nurturing sustained and mutually beneficial relationship with them.*

According to the SED (page 5) the University College, in an effort to implement its mission, has put in place the Centre for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA). This has developed from the Research and Quality Assurance Office (SED, page 5). This report will return several times to the work of the CEIRQA. There is also an intention to establish a Center for Entrepreneurship, also in support of the mission of the University College. This is to be led by a PhD holder.

While not stated in the SED, the work of the University College is based on a set of core values. The Strategic Plan (page 19) gives these as follows:

- a) *Efficiency, belief in and commitment to in using time, material and human resources by designing ways and means to reduce cost and enhance optimal use of resources.*
- b) *Excellence (individual, team and organizational) in undertaking teaching, research and community services.*

- c) *High regard for students (as they are future leaders and professionals of Ethiopia) and staff (because the very existence of SMUC depends on the performance, diligence and integrity of every academic and support staff).*
- d) *Integrity while performing duties, exercising rights, life-long learning from mistakes and good practices of oneself and others.*
- e) *Positive thinking towards the achievability of SMUC's vision, mission, Institutional goals and specific objectives.*
- f) *Quality and standards by putting in place and observing pertinent quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.*
- g) *Self – initiative to achieve SMUC's vision, mission, goals, objectives and values, and to creatively formulate tasks commensurate with the daily working hours rather than waiting for instructions.*
- h) *Team work and team spirit among members of the academic staff, support staff and students.*
- i) *Tolerance towards free expression of views and ideas, interpersonal relations based on equality and fairness, and appreciation of diversity and maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect.*
- j) *Transparency, trustworthiness and accountability in the performance of all tasks, goals and objectives of the University College and responsiveness to feedback, peer review, monitoring, evaluation and sustained personal and institutional development towards excellence.*

The EQA team sees these as a very worthwhile set of values and encourages SMUC to seek means to encourage staff and students to uphold these values and to devise means to ensure that, indeed, they are being upheld.

Again while not in the SED, the University College has identified a number of strategic issues (goals) to be addressed within the planning horizon. The strategic issues/directions (goals) of SMUC as presented in Strategic Plan (pages 27 - 33) are:

- to enhance the ICT and physical infrastructures of the University College;
- to recruit and retain staff members of the highest excellence and continuously develop their capacity;
- to improve the quality of teaching, learning and effectiveness of research both in the conventional and distance mode;
- to extend the University College's services and outreach activities and augment SMUC's role as a local development partner;
- to improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the administrative processes and services;
- to enhance link and partnerships with local and international institutions;
- to strengthen and deepen quality assessment and sustained improvement schemes.

In discussion with President and various groups, the EQA team learned that the SMUC has made an effort to involve the wider community of the University College in the development of the Strategic Plan. The plan has been discussed by departments and the strengths and weakness have been identified. To enable the staff at large to internalize the strategic direction of SMUC, the summary of the strategic plan has been given to each member of staff. However, from discussion with students and staff representatives, the EQA team noted that their perception of participation in the process of development of the plan was that it was quite limited; the main activity being the completion of questionnaires. The SED notes (page 5) that until the development of the strategic plan in the current academic year, little attempt was made to make the vision and mission of the institution known to the community. The main vehicle was the prospectus. This may explain the contrasting views on participation in strategic planning. However, all of the student representatives with whom the EQA team spoke were of the view that the University College is clearly heading towards realization of its vision. The EQA team is of the view that the University College has worked to communicate its intentions, to both internal and external stakeholders by including its Vision, Mission, and Goals in key documents which are distributed widely and also by ensuring that staff are made aware of the strategic priorities of the institution.

In terms of its vision the EQA team is of the view that this needs to be clarified as to its scope. Does the University College aspire to be among the leading higher education centers in Ethiopia? in Africa or in the World? *i.e.* the vision needs some boundaries.

With regard to its Strategic Plan, the EQA team did not identify any intent to introduce any specific new degree programs or if any postgraduate programs will be launched. The emphasis is on consolidation and quality enhancement. The EQA team is not critical of these important objectives.

**With regard to Focus Area 1 (Vision, Mission and Educational Goals) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The development and communication of vision and mission statements and a set of goals and values.
- (ii) The existence of a five year development plan.
- (iii) The development of a strong commitment to work towards the realization of its vision.

**The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 1 (Vision, Mission and Educational Goals)**

**A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) reviews the scope of its vision;
- (ii) establishes systems to monitor the implementation of its values;
- (iii) ensures that all its activities are contributing to the realization of its vision and are underpinned by its values;
- (iv) establishes systems to monitor progress towards its vision and goals;

**C Desirable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (v) considers the need to plan to open specific new programs, including postgraduate programs;
- (vi) reviews regularly its vision, mission, goals and values and revises these as necessary;
- (vii) ensures that its plans are reviewed in the light of changing circumstances.

## **2: Governance and Management System**

The governance and management system of a HEI is important to the quality and relevance of education in that particular Institution. The management system is expected to be transparent, participatory, and one that clearly defines duties and responsibilities, not only of each member of the institute but also, for each and every decision making unit of the institution. Such a governance and management system will guarantee the smooth running of various activities and programs. It also ultimately assures the quality and relevance of education and the sustainability of the institution. A strong governance and management system also helps the institution be responsive to the growing needs of students, staff, and other stakeholders. It was with this in mind that HEIs are requested to provide information about governance and management system in their SEDs so that both the HEI and the EQA team can assess the existence and appropriateness of the existing governance and management system for the educational programs being offered and the other activities of the HEI.

SMUC has an organogram that depicts the organizational structure of the institution (Faculty Hand Book, Annex 1). The organogram shows that the University College is headed by a President assisted by two Vice Presidents. At the time of the audit visit SMUC had no Vice Presidents. The President is supported by an Academic Dean and an **Administrative Head**.

The President is accountable to the Academic Commission and the Academic Commission seems accountable to an Administrative Council, the members of which represent the owners. The SED does not mention the Administrative Council. However, the EQA team noted the duties and responsibilities of the Administrative Council in the Legislation (page 4). These are:

- *to ensure the design and implementation of education, training and research programs;*
- *to review and adopt the plans and budget of the University College and submit this to the Council; and to follow up their implementation upon approval;*
- *to determine the details of the University College's function;*
- *to recommend appointees for the key posts of the University College;*
- *to set criteria that can be used in hiring and managing both academic and administrative employees of the University College;*
- *to undertake studies and to forward recommendations that can help towards strengthening and expanding the University College;*
- *to approve regulations such as staff promotion and other administrative affairs that relate to the academic staff of the University College, and supervise the implementation of the same upon approval;*
- *to approve tuition and service fees to be charged by St. Mary's University College;*
- *to seek ways for strengthening the relations of the University College with other similar higher institution; and*
- *to consider and handle complaints in accordance with the Council's regulation.*

Discussion with the President and other senior staff indicated that the Administrative Council has little or no influence over the day-to-day academic activity on the University College. This explains why the Administrative Council is not indicated in the organogram of the University College. In this regard the University College seems fully autonomous in all academic decision making.

The SED (page 7) states that:

*Governance and management system is periodically reviewed to meet the growing needs of students and staff. The system operates in a flexible and*

*responsive manner. Decisions that affect staff and students are usually made after thorough discussions are held by departments and committees representing the various Faculties. There is also a session at the end of each semester, where the top management meets members of each department. In the series of sessions, instructors raise issues of concern that require improvement. Likewise, the management points out matters that need to be focused on by both parties. During such sessions, the performance report of each department is presented.*

The EQA team found abundant evidence in support of the above statement

The team studied the Legislation of SMUC that governs all academic matters. The Legislation now appears considerably old. The EQA team learned that this Legislation is now under revision but no information on the nature of the revision, the progress of the revision or the target date for completion of the revision was able to be obtained. It is assumed that the revision is to strengthen the organization and functioning of the institution so that it is better positioned to implement its strategic plan, accomplish its mission, achieve its goals and realize its vision.

The EQA team learned that each staff member is given a Faculty Hand Book. This is being used in place of the legislation while under revision. This is a comprehensive and well organized publication. The Hand Book contains the mission, vision and objectives of the University College as well as the organizational structure and membership of some important committees. Importantly, it contains elements found in most senate legislation. It sets out the membership and terms of reference of the various offices and office holders of the University College. It has substantial sections on academic staff, dealing with such as: duties and responsibilities; promotion; leave; disciplinary matters; and important policies (for example: equal opportunities; sexual harassment, misconduct; consensual relationship, speech and expression; smoking; and insurance). It also sets a number of rules and regulations of the University College as they apply to courses, examinations and student grading, as well as having sections on student related matters. The Faculty Hand Book is supplemented with other documentation. There is also a Student Hand Book with complementary information.

Regarding the decision making processes in SMUC, the SED (page 6) outlines that academic decisions are made at different levels. Department Councils are the lowest decision making bodies. Hierarchically, Faculty Councils are the next higher bodies that make academic decisions. All departments, faculties and offices are represented in the highest decision making body – The Academic Commission. Every decision making body meets every two weeks.

The EQA team noted that the minutes of the deliberations of a Departmental or Faculty Council and The Academic Commission are normally available in each department and office. Discussion with various office holders revealed that in addition to the release of committee minutes, members of staff are periodically informed of the deliberations of the academic commission through the office of the Academic Dean. This office also releases notices on issues of importance.

At the department level, the duties and responsibilities of the Head of the Department and duties and responsibilities of the Department Council are clearly indicated in the Faculty Hand Book as well as in the legislation. The EQA noted that there are clearly stated duties and responsibilities for instructors, office holders and committees and that these are widely available. An exception appeared to be at faculty level. **The EQA team failed to locate a description of the duties and responsibilities of the Faculty Dean and the membership, and duties and responsibilities of the Faculty Council.**

The EQA team looked at the composition of very important standing committees of the University College in order to assess their involvement in decision making process. It noted that staff and students are not well represented in several committees and was surprised to

note that there is no student representation at Academic Commission level. However, the EQA team did note the effective system of class representatives and the open door policy to students. It also noted that the University College has incorporated a quality assurance unit into its organizational structure.

The EQA team noted some recent mergers of committees and units and while recognizing that this may be economical of time, is not fully convinced that in all cases the expanded functions can be handled by the one committee or, in the case of the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance, that Research (in its wider sense) sits well alongside the quality assurance and enhancement brief.

From discussion with staff and student representatives, the EQA team learned that the management of the SMUC is responsive to requests for change from staff and students, as long as these are justified. During the same discussions the team was informed of a number of good features of the University College. These were recorded as follows:

- strong, participatory and transparent management system;
- an open door policy;
- friendly and conducive working environment;
- strong commitment to and focus on quality;
- availability of a wide range of documentation;
- effective communication system that informs the University College community of how decisions are made and of the key outcomes of the decision making processes;
- good relationships between office holders, instructors and students.

The EQA team has come to the view that SMUC has strong leadership. It benefits from a well considered organizational structure and efficient management. This is characterized by good documentation, good communications and staff and student representation. Above all the EQA team gained the impression that the atmosphere created in SMUC is conducive to learning and teaching. The driver in the University College is the quest for quality and quality enhancement.

**With regard to Focus Area 2 (Governance and Management System) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The existence of strong leadership.
- (ii) The participatory and transparent management system
- (iii) The adoption of an open door policy.
- (iv) The general availability of comprehensive documentation.
- (v) The effectiveness of its communications system.
- (vi) The friendly and conducive working environment.
- (vii) The existence of a strong team spirit.
- (viii) The strong commitment and focus on quality.

**The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 2 (Governance and Management System)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) completes the revision of the Legislation and make this available at an early date;
- (ii) clarifies the duties and responsibilities of the faculty deans and specify members of the faculty councils; See the Prospectus page 23, it specifies member of FC
- (iii) reconciles the organogram with the actual practice on the ground;
- (iv) considers student and staff representation on important decision making bodies from the departments upwards.

### **3: Infrastructure and Learning Resources**

This section of the report draws on the outcomes of a number of meetings with staff and students, the study of documentation, observation of teaching and, important, visits to the facilities at the University College

#### *General teaching accommodation*

SMUC is located on three sites in Addis Ababa all by main roads near Mexico Square. The main (Mexico) campus is located close to Wabe Shebelle Hotel; the Lideta campus is beside the Federal High Court and the Distance Education Division is beside the Ethiopian Petroleum Enterprise. The main campus houses academic departments and the administration. The Lideta and Mexico campuses have classrooms, computer science laboratories and secretarial science laboratories (Prospectus, page 16). The SED (page 8) states that the Mexico campus comprises three buildings which possess 12, 12 and 16 (=40) classrooms respectively, each with capacity of 50 students. It also has computer laboratories (see later).

The SED (page 8) states that the University College considers **the** its infrastructure and learning resources make an important contribution to teaching and learning and that the classrooms have a favorable learning atmosphere with good ventilation and ample space for students. Classrooms on the main campus were visited and observed to have chalk boards or/ and white boards and the necessary materials for the classes observed. None of the rooms was overcrowded or uncomfortable but the EQA team noted that none of the rooms that were visited displayed any posters or examples of student work. The rooms were seen to be fit for purpose.

#### *Computer laboratories*

The Mexico campus has ten computer laboratories with total of 231 computers assigned for students use with opportunities to access these and use the Internet outside class time for project work and study. However, the SED (page 11) reports misuse and abuse of these facilities that has made the running cost of the computer laboratories very high. This is regrettable. The EQA team noted that the University College has *Computer Systems Acceptable Use Policy* (Faculty Hand Book, page 29) and commends this. The University College has established a computer network and maintenance unit. This has 8 members of staff who are responsible for ensuring the campus computer system is working properly. These members of staff also provide training in computer use to academic and administrative staff with a view to encouraging electronic communications and so reducing the reliance on paper. While the EQA team is of the view that the computer equipment may be adequate for the needs of the University College, they learned that the availability of specialized applications software was a concern for some.

#### *Office accommodation*

While there is a common room for staff, the SED (page 8) reports a shortage of office accommodation for academic staff. This problem was also voiced by staff. A shortage of offices has meant that many members of staff have no private area for preparation and marking or to meet with students seeking academic counseling. SMUC needs to consider ways in which it can provide work areas for staff and also private areas where staff can meet with students.

#### *Libraries*

SMUC has libraries for Business, Law and Computer Science and Teacher Education which together can seat about 800 students. The library stock of texts and reference books totals some 7000 titles with some held in multiple copies. The SED (Appendix B) provides information on the library stock of books but provides no information in journals. The EQA team saw little evidence of the presence of academic journals in the libraries.

The SED (page 10) notes that the acquisition of library resources is one of the biggest challenges for SMUC due to the unavailability of relevant materials locally. Importing stock is seen as increasingly expensive for the institution and it is accepted (SED, page 10) that the University College has not met fully the needs of its students in terms of library resources. However the EQA team was encouraged to learn that the University College is seeking ways to secure donations of books from various sources including NGOs and universities in other countries. Members of staff are also encouraged to purchase books they consider appropriate for their courses and are able to reclaim the cost against receipts. This is seen as a very useful way of adding stock.

SMUC has also encouraged staff to write learning materials and texts and has prepared guidelines for use by those considering this. The SED (page 10) reports that 4 books and a workbook series have been produced. These learning resources have supplemented the materials available in the library.

One point of concern raised by students was the opening times of the libraries. Students considered that the libraries should offer longer service hours. Keeping in mind the excellent communications between the senior staff of SMUC and the study body, the EQA team was surprised to learn of this unresolved issue. It may well be that this is a minority concern but, nevertheless, it requires investigation.

#### *Student lounges*

The SED (page 11) reports that the University College institution has student tearooms but that these are considered inadequate. In an attempt to provide a better service it is intended to open an Internet cafe which, as the name suggests, will provide an additional outlet for refreshments and also improve Internet access. This is to be welcomed.

#### *ADRC*

An important resource for the University College is the Academic Development and Resource Center (ADRC). The ADRC was established to support teaching and learning by providing assistance and resources to instructors. The ADRC has teaching materials and audio visual equipment that staff can borrow to use in class. It also has reference resources on teaching and learning for staff to consult. In addition, it has computers and provides Internet access. Importantly, the ADRC organizes and provides training in pedagogy and other areas related to teaching, learning and assessment.

#### *Finance*

The financial stability of the institution and the adequacy of its budget to run and sustain its programs were addressed in the SED (page 12). SMUC has been able to expand and to initiate a building program. It has also diversified its income streams. The EQA team has no reason to doubt the financial stability and viability of the University College.

**With regard to Focus Area 3 (Infrastructure and Learning Resources) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The provision of computers and Internet access.
- (ii) The system that allows staff to purchase books.
- (iii) The establishment of the ADRC.

**The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 3 (Infrastructure and Learning Resources)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) improves office accommodation for staff;

- (ii) improves the library stock, particularly academic journals.

## **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (iii) investigates the adequacy of availability of specialized computer software;
- (iv) investigates the adequacy of the service hours of the library.

## **C Desirable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (v) seeks to reduce the misuse and abuse of computers.

## **4: Academic and Support Staff**

The members of the academic and support staffs of a HEI are its main asset. They need to be appropriately qualified, sufficiently knowledgeable and adequately skilled for the tasks they have to accomplish. They also need to be present in sufficient numbers and to be well matched to the duties they have to undertake. It was with this in mind that HEIs are requested to provide staffing information in their SEDs so that the EQA team can assess the appropriateness of the staffing for the activities of the institution, particularly the educational programs that are being offered.

St. Mary's University College acknowledges that **it's** most important resource is its staff and claims that it employs qualified, competent and caring individuals. The EQA team has investigated if this is indeed the case and sought evidence that instructors are sufficiently knowledgeable and adequately skilled to develop the knowledge and skills of their students. The EQA team has also sought to determine if the number of academic staff teaching on programs meets the minimum requirements set by the Ministry of Education.

### *Academic staff*

According to the SED (page 12) the University College has 165 academic staff, 73 of these are engaged in teaching degree programs. From the staffing in the SED (Appendix C) it is noted that there are 62 (85%) male and 11 female (15%) instructors teaching the regular programs. While it is recognized that the recruitment of female instructors is not easy, it is to be hoped that SMUC will continue to try to increase the number of female academic staff.

The table on the following page presents further information on staffing compiled from information in the SED (page 13 and Appendix C). The first thing to note is that no instructor holds a PhD. However 60 (82%) on the staff have a masters level degree. Only 18% have a first degree alone. In some areas e.g. Accounting, Language and Social Science, all the instructors have a higher degree but in Informatics (= Computer Science) more than half the staff have only a first degree. The MOE requires that the proportion of PhD holders in a HEI should be at least 30% and the proportion of masters holders should be at least 50% with no more than 20% of instructors teaching on a particular program having a Bachelor degree alone. Clearly, SMUC falls short of the PhD requirement overall. It also falls far short of the staffing requirement in Informatics (= Computer Science) where 60% of the instructors have a BSc only. However it was noted from the action plan for 2007/2008 (page 29) that the University College has a plan to recruit PhD holders. SMUC is also working to develop a salary package to attract and retain staff. It is noted that the University College has no professors among its teaching staff.

The SED (Appendix C) provides information on the experience of the academic staff, including teaching experience. While the SED (page 12) notes that that the staff are quite young, the EQA team has calculated that the average level of experience is 10 years with a range from 6 in Accounting and Informatics to 15 in Law. Some members of staff in Management, Law, Language and Mathematics have over 20 years of professional

experience. This must be seen as a strength and a resource which can provide support to less experienced colleagues, particularly as the EQA team learned that even young members staff carry heavy responsibilities. The SED (page 13) shows that all the members of the academic staff are either lecturers or assistant lecturers.

Faculty/ Department	Sex		Qualification					SSR
	M	F	Total	PhD	Masters	Bachelor	No Students	
Accounting	13	2	15	-	15	-	179	12:1
Management	12	-	12	-	11	1	139	11:1
Marketing Management	5	2	7	-	5	2	105	15:1
Informatics	9	1	10	-	4	6	110	11:1
Law	9	1	10	-	9	1	165	16:1
Language	7	1	8	-	8	-		
Mathematics	5	2	7		4	3		
Social science	2	2	4	-	4	-		
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>73</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>13</b>		

The above table also provides information on student numbers and shows calculations of the Student/Staff Ratio (SSR) for different programs. With a declared number of 698 regular students in programs in Computer Science (= Informatics), Accounting, Management, Marketing Management and Law and a staff of 54 (SED, page 13) this gives an SSR of  $698/54 = 12.9:1$ . This is a generous ratio which varies very little between programs (from 11:1 in Computer Science to 16.5:1 in Law). It is below the 20:1 recommended by the MOE. What is not clear in the SED is the number of staff contributing to regular programs who also teach on other programs as part of their normal work load. The EQA team learned through discussions with the **Academic Vice Dean, Academic Assistant Dean**, Faculty Deans and staff representatives that most of the staff who teach on regular programs are also teaching on extension programs. This has an impact on the SSR calculation. In computing SSRs it is necessary to calculate the number of full-time equivalent staff (including part-time staff) contributing to a program in relation to the number of students being taught, not the overall number of staff contributing to a program, some of whom may be spending most of their time teaching on other programs.

The SED (page 12) notes that the University College employs part-time staff to meet its needs. It also reports on a high turn over of staff. **No figures were available.**

#### *Administrative staff*

The members of the administrative staff of the University College have an important role to play to help achieve its mission, goals and objectives. The SED provides no information on these support staff.

From the data received from the Office of the Administrative Vice President, the EQA team noted that SMUC has a total of 58 support staff, excluding security guards, and cleaners which are outsourced and employees whose job is purely manual. This gives a ratio of 165/58 academic to administrative staff or 2.8:1 *i.e.* there is about one support staff for every three academic staff. Among all administrative staff, the EQA team was told that females constitute the higher percentage. **No information was available on qualifications.**

#### *Academic staff recruitment and appointment*

The SED (page 13) outlines the procedures by which the University College recruits academic staff. The EQA team learned that posts are advertised and that vacancies may also be drawn to the attention of likely candidates. Applications are screened by a committee and short-listed candidates interviewed. It was also learned that, until recently, the most able students from a graduating cohort might be appointed as graduate assistants. The

procedures for selection are set out in the Faculty Hand Book (pages 33 – 36). While the EQA team was not made aware of any generic criteria such as academic excellence, relevant experience and communication abilities that are used in the selection of staff, it came to conclusion that the recruitment and appointment procedures operate as indicated in the Faculty Hand Book. It is satisfied as they are fair and transparent.

#### *Academic staff induction*

Following appointment, a new member of staff is given notes on teaching and learning activities. These explain what is expected of an instructor. They then follow a two-week pedagogical training program. In addition, a new instructor is given a Faculty Hand Book. This provides a comprehensive set of academic rules, regulations and procedures including guidelines for promotion. The Faculty Hand Book also includes a copy of The Higher Education Proclamation.

#### *Academic staff appraisal/evaluation*

The SED (page 14) reports that, until last year, academic staff members were evaluated by students alone and this was used as the means to gauge their performance. However, this was found to be not totally satisfactory. As of the current academic year the University College is employing a more comprehensive evaluation system (SED, page 14). The EQA team learned that students and the members of staff are happy with the latest performance evaluation procedure.

The EQA team was interested to discover whether the staff evaluation reports reach the staff members concerned or not and the kind of measure taken by the institution after evaluation. Through discussion with Faculty Deans and staff representative, the EQA team was confident that evaluation results do reach individual instructors. Low scoring members of staff get training. Evaluation result below a threshold level can lead to dismissal.

The EQA team noted that from 2006, SMUC has operated a well documented system for evaluation for merit pay. This involves 3 aspect of activity:

- (1) Teaching Performance (65%)
  - student evaluation (50%)
  - Head of Department evaluation (15%)
  - teaching material production (10%)
  - practical activities for students organized by the teacher (15%)
  - timely submission of grades and attendance records (10%)
- (2) Research and Training (25%)
  - involvement in research (75%) and training (25%)
- (3) Service (10%)
  - involvement in committee work, departmental, institution and community service (67%)
  - other efforts (33%)

In the year 1999 E.C. 11 members of staff and in the year 2000 E.C., 12 members of staff each received a merit award of 500 - 3500 birr from the University College. This is seen by the EQA team as a positive move.

#### *Academic staff promotion*

The Faculty Hand Book (pages 47 - 67) sets out the criteria and the procedures to be followed by staff seeking promotion. The individual faculty member is responsible for collection, organization, and presentation of material to support candidacy for promotion, while the Department Chairperson is responsible for coordinating the promotion process at department level and for making recommendations on promotion to the Academic Vice President. The final decision is made by The Academic Commission of the University

College. The criteria for academic promotion include, among others, the length of service at a given rank, effectiveness in teaching, research publications, participation in the affairs of the University College and service given to the public. The criteria are clear and the procedures are transparent.

#### *Academic staff development*

The University College has given a strong signal that it is committed to staff development by giving support to staff for short and long term training (SMUC Action Plan 2007/2008, page 30). The Academic Development and Resource Center (ADRC) is responsible for assisting instructors in their delivery of courses by providing access to the Internet, and classroom audio visual equipment as well as training. The Center organizes pedagogical training at least twice a year aimed at improving the teaching skills of instructors. This is mostly offered by inviting professionals from other institutions. The EQA team learned that pedagogical training and induction is now being offered to newly-recruited academic staff and others as the need rises (see also section on induction). Other training that was reported was focused on helping the administrative staff to develop specialized skills especially on customer relationships. Regarding long term training, it was noted through discussion with the **Academic Vice President/ Dean** and the staff that members of the academic staff pursuing their second degrees have a reduced teaching load while members of the administrative staff receive full scholarships for diploma programs and, for degree programs, can compete for a 50% reduction of tuition fees. This is seen by the EQA team as an encouraging initiative of the University College. Generally, the EQA team noted that the University College has made a strong commitment to training but in the light of the staffing profile commented on above, will need to continue to do so. The EQA team was not made aware of any policy document on staff development or an overall staff development plan. It is the view of the EQA team that the University College should seek to develop such a policy and plan. It is commendable that the University College has already developed its own training capacity.

#### *The Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance*

The University College has established a Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA). The Center has a role in staff development as well as other responsibilities. Further reference is made to the work of the CEIRQA elsewhere in this report.

**With regard to Focus Area 4 (Academic and Support Staff) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The fair and transparent appointments procedure for academic staff.
- (ii) The provision of induction and documentation to new academic staff.
- (iii) The commitment to staff development.
- (iv) The provision of training for staff.
- (v) The staff evaluation scheme that identifies development needs.
- (vi) The system of merit payments.
- (vii) The establishment of clear criteria for the promotion of academic staff.

**The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 4 (Academic and Support Staff)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) creates and implements a human resources development strategy and plan;
- (ii) improves its staffing profile and, in particular, recruits PhD holders as instructors.

#### **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (iii) continues to seek ways to attract and retain staff, particularly females.

**C Desirable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (iv) reconsiders how it calculates student/staff ratios so that they reflect the full time equivalent staffing of its programs;
- (v) records the profile of its support staff;
- (vi) monitors the impact of staff development activities.

## **5: Student Admission and Support Services**

### *Student admission*

The SED has a comprehensive section on student admission and support (pages 15 - 18). The information provided here was checked and supplemented in meetings with staff and students. The EQA team also had access to additional documentation.

St. Mary's University College admits students in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Education. Students who meet the admission requirements of the MOE are admitted to their programs of choice providing the availability of space allows. Several members of staff informed the EQA team that since the MOE assigns high scoring students to public institutions, the University College admits many low scoring students to its programs. Staff expressed the view that this skewed intake affects the quality of education. The EQA does not necessarily agree with this view. While the entry grades of students may impact on the level of attainment that many can reach, this is not the same as the quality of provision that is provided by the University College. If the University College is able to demonstrate that it adds value, even although students are not very high achievers, then that would be good evidence of quality.

The University College informs staff of the examination scores of admitted students and members of staff confirmed that they know about this attainment of their students. To date, the University College does not set any entrance examinations. However, starting in the coming academic year, the University College has a plan to conduct an entrance examination for computer science program applicants (SED, page 15). This has been prompted by the observed wide variation in the ability of students to gain the necessary skills.

The EQA team confirmed that admission and registration procedures are announced in appropriate ways such as via notices put up at the main gate of the campus, through flyers and in an entry in the Student Hand Book. At the beginning of every year, newly admitted students are given an induction program to provide orientation to the University College and its courses, the rules and regulations and the services available. Discussion with staff and office representatives confirmed that department heads, the Student Affairs and Services Office, the Registrar, the Academic Programs Office and the Academic Dean's Office take part in the induction program. On top of this, each student is given a copy of the Student Hand Book. The Student Hand Book provides a range of information from institutional policy to the rights and obligations of the students and includes information on such important matters as equal opportunities and sexual harassment. The Hand Book is well known to staff and students.

### *Student support*

Higher education students require to be supported in a number of different ways. In addition to the provision of academic support and counseling, a higher education institution must provide a range of other services. The EQA team explored this provision. The team learned that a number of services have been established under The Office of Student Support Services. These are listed in the SED (page 16) as follows.

1. Registrar's Office
2. Programmes Office
3. Placement & Career Office
4. Centre for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance
5. Student Affairs and Services Office
6. Guidance and Counseling Unit
7. Student Wellness and Development Centre
8. Finance Office
9. Student Union

The University College also provides a student lounge and a bookshop

#### *Academic support and counseling*

The University College has a Student Advising Handbook. In the handbook important information such the duties and responsibilities of an advisor and the areas in which academic advice should be given are stated clearly. Instructors are required assist students on academic matters. Part 5 of the Faculty Hand Book (pages 89 - 102) is devoted to *Student Advising Tasks*. There is no doubt that the University College has made it very clear to staff what is expected of them in such matters .This has also been communicated to students.

However, from discussions with both staff and students the EQA team understood that very few members of staff provide a regular consultation hour. The SED (page 16) acknowledged that due to space constraints and failures on the part of the instructors, the availability of advice to students on academic matters has not been as expected or as is required by the University College. Action is required to remedy this situation.

On a more positive note, from discussions with staff and students the EQA team learned that the University College has provided tutorial programs in English language and mathematics. The team was informed by staff that, initially student participation in the tutorial sessions was encouraging but gradually student participation decreased and the programs were terminated due to the failure of students to attend. On the other hand, students complained that they do not know why the programs have been terminated. The EQA team had no records to verify the drop in attendance. This is a matter for further investigation by SMUC.

A counseling service is an important element of a student support structure and this has been recognized by the University College. The Senate Legislation (page 25) states that guidance and counseling services to students shall be provided by advisors, counselors and the Head of Student Affairs. The service is brought to the attention of students during induction. The EQA team confirmed that the University College has two professional counseling staff with degrees in psychology (one male with MA and one female with BA) who provide a guidance and counseling service on a regular basis. The appointment of male and female counselors has created a favorable environment for both male and female students to come forward for counseling. The counselors reported that an increasing number of students are making use of their services. The team noted from the report of the Guidance and Counseling Office that in the 2007/08 academic year, guidance and counseling services were given to 23 students (3 in academics, 12 in psychological and 8 in social problems). The team also noted that the Office organizes panel discussion on drug and crime related issues with invited resource persons. The Office works closely with St. Emanuel Psychiatric Hospital concerning students who may need their assistance and also provides referrals for additional specialized support services.

#### *Student affairs and services*

The Student Affairs and Services Office works closely with the Student Union on matters related to organizing student clubs. In this respect, students organize events such as talk-shows and presentations of narrative and poetic works. In the SED (page 18) it is reported that a Student Wellness and Development Centre was established in 2006. From the

discussion with students and staff, the EQA team confirmed that the Center and HIV/AIDS clubs have run a number of successful workshops to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS. The EQA team visited the Center and observed that it enables students to get access to materials that deal with HIV/AIDS and has various pieces of equipment such as a TV set, a photocopier and computers with Internet connections.

#### *Student voices*

From discussion with students and staff, the EQA team has noted that the University College follows an open door policy for its staff and students. Also every classroom has a student representative who facilitates contacts with departments, student union and different offices of the University College for any matter related to teaching and learning. From the discussion with students, the EQA team learned that the student representative of any class or any individual student is at liberty to go to any office at any time of the day to discuss an issue of concern. The students stressed that this practice has significantly helped the student community to actively contribute to enhancing teaching-learning activities of SMUC. For this, and the practice of conducting student satisfaction surveys, the University College and its students are to be congratulated.

Also from discussion with students, the EQA team learned that any student complaint is usually dealt with and resolved immediate unless the specific case requires further investigation. With regard to this the SED (page 17) reports that there have been issues with regard to the fair treatment of all students by their instructors. The surveys on *Student Satisfaction* and on *Instructors Use of Assessment Methods* in 2005/06 indicate that students were not satisfied with several actions of the management and their respective instructors. This report returns to the issue of fairness of assessment in a later section.

#### *Student discipline*

Student discipline cases are handled by the student discipline committee which has two student representatives. It is chaired by the Student Affairs and Services Office Head. After hearings are completed and outcomes recommended, these are referred to the Faculty and Student Affairs Standing Committee of the Academic Commission for approval. Students have the right of appeal.

#### *Medical services*

The SED does not report on the provision of any medical services or first aid treatment for students or staff or any arrangement with outside providers of such services. The University College needs to ensure that appropriate provision is in place.

#### *Recreational facilities*

With regard to sport fields, the space limitation on campus does not allow the institution to have the kind of recreational facilities a higher education institution might have. However, students get access to the sports fields of the Building College of Addis Ababa University for training. The SED (page 12) notes that the multipurpose hall provides a venue for a number of student activities. It also notes that the University College has leased a new building with some open ground that it intends to use for sports and recreation. The EQA is of the view that this aspect of the student support services of the University College is, as yet, underdeveloped.

**With regard to Focus Area 5 (Student Admission and Support Services) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) Transparent entry criteria and procedures.
- (ii) The admission of students to programs of choice.
- (iii) The provision of a student handbook to every new student.
- (iv) The provision of information on student attainment to their instructors.
- (v) The establishment of student support structures.

- (vi) The establishment of the Student Wellness and Development Center.
- (vii) A functional guidance and counseling service.
- (viii) The open door policy.
- (ix) The system of class representatives.
- (x) The practice of conducting student satisfaction surveys.

**The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 5 (Student Admission and Support Services)**

**A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) ensures that staff provide the required academic counseling and support to students;
- (ii) investigates reasons for non attendance at academic tutorial programs with a view to initiating a more appropriate provision;
- (iii) investigates allegations of unfairness and takes appropriate actions.

**B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (iv) reviews its provision of medical services;
- (v) reviews its provision of recreational facilities.

**6: Program Relevance and Curriculum**

The University College has established structures and procedures to deal with the development and approval of new curricula and the revisions and reform of established curricula so that these remain relevant.

Every department has a Curriculum Committee with a responsibility for curriculum development and approval. The work of such committees is reported to the Academic Commission and it is here that approval for a new curriculum or a change to an established one is granted (or not). The EQA was not able to gain any detailed information on the working of these bodies or of any criteria that are used to make decisions on curriculum approval and to decide if a new curriculum should be launched. In considering launching a new course or program it is important for the University College to reach a decision on the adequacy of its resources. This decision needs to be informed by criteria.

The SED (page 18) indicates that new curricula are informed by a needs assessment. However, despite the good efforts of the University College it has not proved easy to get the inputs from stakeholders in business and industry and so, as indicated in meetings with senior staff, curricula are more often based on assumed needs rather than researched needs. Stakeholders are clearly of great importance in ensuring that the curricula offered have appropriate and relevant content and that courses aim to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are desired by employers and others. It is thus regrettable that the University College has had such a poor response to its invitations to participate in this important work.

However, despite some drawbacks, there have been good efforts made through the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Unit to attune the curricula to employability skills. The Faculty of Law has actively participated the National Legal Education and Training Reform Program. The Faculty now follows the curriculum designed by the Technical Committee formed from staff of all Ethiopian Law Schools and the Justice and Legal System Research Institute. Also, in the light of this experience, other programs have also been revised to ensure that they too are aiming to develop appropriate skills.

One of the tasks of the EQA team was to seek information on whether course catalog include the objectives of courses so that students know what it is they are expected to learn. The University College provided the team with one such catalog. This included program and course guides that, among other things, set out the aims and objectives of the programs overall, and of the courses that make up each program as well as short descriptions of each course. It is the view The EQA team that this good practice could be enhanced by updating and standardizing the content of each guide and by including the aimed for learning outcomes of programs and courses in addition to the content and the teaching objectives as has been seen for the revised curricula of the Faculty of Law, Faculty of Business and Department of Computer Science. The EQA team noted in the SED (Appendix: *What a course outline should include*) that a course outline should include the Course Objectives these should be *the general learning outcomes to be accomplished at the end of the semester*.

The EQA team was not provided with minutes of any curriculum committee meetings or records of workshops at which curricula were discussed and so is unable to comment on the process of development and approval curricula.

One aspect of the curriculum that came to light in meetings with staff relates to credit hours and students loadings. While the University College requires that each course be given a credit hour rating and there are guidelines as to the minimum and maximum credit hours of courses that a student may take, the concept of student loading appears to be unknown. Courses are given credit hours based on the amount of contact time. In this system, lecture hours are give more credit than laboratory classes or workshops. Also, time to complete assignments, study, prepare for and do examinations is not considered. With no common expectation of the overall workload for a typical student, different course of the same credit rating can make quite different demands on students. The University College has not set an expectation of the nominal weekly workload of a typical student other than the hours of class attendance. This makes it difficult to develop curricula. It also means that students can easily be overworked or alternatively, can be under-occupied.

It is important the students are aware of what it is they are expected to know and do as a result of following a particular course and program of study. It is reported above that course catalogs provide this information. The University College also has an expectation that at the beginning of classes, students will be told about the course they are to follow and the objectives of the course. This is good practice. However, as reported in the SED (page 19) in the 2006 survey done on the *Assessment of Instructors Course Planning and Coverage Practices*, most students were not informed about the teaching methods and assessment of their courses. It is to be hoped that the Academic Commission and Department Curriculum Committee will take action so that students are well informed regarding what they are studying and why.

**With regard to Focus Area 6 (Program Relevance and Curriculum) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The establishment of curriculum committees in each department.
- (ii) The attempts to involve stakeholders in curriculum development and review.
- (iii) The creation of a course catalog in a standard format.
- (iv) The involvement in the revision of the curriculum for law.

**The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 6 (Program Relevance and Curriculum)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) develops guidelines and criteria for course and program curriculum approval;
- (ii) develops guidelines and criteria for granting permission to launch approved programs and courses;
- (iii) communicates the expected learning outcomes of all courses and programs to students;
- (iv) investigates student workload and establishes an expected average student workload linked to the credit value of courses;
- (v) ensures that regular program evaluations take place in accord with an established schedule.

## **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (vi) renews its efforts to work with stakeholders on the curriculum matters.

## **7: Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

### *Teaching and learning*

While there appears to be no overall policy on teaching and learning, the teaching and learning approaches at SMUC vary depending on the discipline. The EQA team learned that in The Faculty of Law there is a dominance of in-depth discussions and Socratic teaching. The moot court is central to its approach. By contrast, courses in business disciplines largely adopt a lecture method but students also work on tasks and benefit from inputs from visiting professionals and excursions to work places. The Department of Computer Science has a heavy emphasis on active learning and students spend a considerable amount of time developing and practicing skills including computer maintenance.

The EQA team also learned that members of staff are frequent users of audio visual aids and that the University College has put a considerable effort into developing the teaching skills of its instructors. Furthermore, the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance is actively researching aspects of teaching and learning and assessment from different perspectives. One of the outcomes of such studies was that there are differences in the delivery of subject matter in classrooms. Some of the instructors lay emphasis on academic skills whereas others make efforts to give prominence to employability skills. The University College is seeking to minimize such differences.

It is the view of the EQA team that SMUC encourages diverse approaches to teaching and learning and that there is good evidence to support the claim that the instructors at the University College do use a range of methods well suited to the needs of their students and the aims of the courses they teach.

### *Assessment*

SMUC has a clear and explicit policy concerning course coverage and assessment procedures that instructors are expected to adhere to in the strictest manner possible (SED, page 21). If a course is taught by two or more instructors, then one becomes the coordinator and will be in charge of ensuring the pace of course coverage, the administration of required tests and, finally, the grading of students. This is as it should be. The University College uses letter grades to describe student achievement. This awards superior work with an A grade, above average work with a B grade, average work a C grade, unsatisfactory work with a D grade and failing work with an F grade. This is described for both staff and students in appropriate documentation. It was made available to the EQA team as an appendix to the SED.

The EQA team explored the operation of the grading system with staff representatives and with students. Student representatives were critical of the application of the system. The SED also reports (page 22) that students have complained that the grading system is too stringent. It is claimed that that students are assessed on their achievement of the objectives

of the courses that they have followed but, in line with grading rules, instructors use a comparative system to grade students. The SED appendix on grading indicates the proportions of a student group that should be awarded each grade. For example an A grade should normally be awarded to between 0% and 10% of the students and a C grade to between 30% and 65%. While these are quite broad ranges, the system depends on a student's performance relative to that of other students rather than the achievement of predetermined performance criteria. This is an unsatisfactory system. An assessment system must allow for all students who satisfy the criteria for a grade to be awarded that grade. Grade criteria should not relate to the achievements of other students. Systems that relate to the average student in a cohort give no assurance on standards.

The SED section on assessment says nothing about the range of forms of assessment and the balance between continuous assessment and examinations. The EQA team would have welcomed information on this. The SED does report on concerns over the implementation of assessment practices and on irregularities. It is good that these have been picked up and dealt with and that the University College has provided training in this area. The EQA team welcomes the policy of providing feedback to students on their assessments and noted that follow up action has been taken when this has not occurred.

The EQA team is concerned to learn that, in general, there is no moderation of grades nor is it the practice to employ external examiners from other institutions to help assure the comparability of standards. Assessment seems to be the responsibility of individual instructors. There appears to be no practice of double marking or checking for accuracy of marking and recording. When more than one group of students takes a course and they have different instructors, one instructor is the coordinator. The duties of the coordinator are set out in the SED (appendix). These do not include any checking or moderation of assessments. Also, there is no anonymous marking (*i.e.* where the marker does not know the name of the student whose paper is being marked). The EQA team is of the view that there is no robust and transparent system that ensures that students are assessed fairly and consistently and that the current practice is open to abuse. In particular, it allows unprofessional instructors to award undeserved marks to favored students or to penalize unfavored students. While students can appeal against their grade this must be seen as an additional mechanism and not the mechanism that guarantees fairness. Similarly the current system offers little assurance on the comparability of grades from year to year. This is heavily dependent on the intake.

The University College needs to review its policy and practices on assessment and take action to increase confidence in the fairness, consistency and comparability of the standards of the grades that it awards.

**With regard to Focus Area 7 (Teaching, Learning and Assessment) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The use of a range of approaches to teaching and learning.
- (ii) The provision of training for staff.
- (iii) Providing timely feedback to students.
- (iv) The work of the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance to study aspects of both teaching and assessment.

**The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 7 (Teaching, Learning and Assessment)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) develops and disseminates a policy on teaching and learning;

- (ii) reviews and disseminates a revised policy on student assessment;
- (iii) takes steps to make the fairness of marking of student assessments more transparent;
- (iv) replaces norm referenced grading practices with a criterion referenced system.

## B Advisable recommendations

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (v) assesses students for the attainment of expected learning outcomes;
- (vi) develops clear attainment related criteria for the grades (A to F) that it awards to students;
- (vii) introduces anonymous marking where practicable;
- (viii) introduces systems for the moderation of grades to ensure consistency of standards.

## C Desirable recommendations

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (ix) monitors the implementation of its policies on teaching and learning and assessment and takes actions as considered necessary;
- (x) uses external examiners to help moderate standards and report on the quality and relevance of programs where practicable.

## 8: Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes

St. Mary University College claims that it *views student progression as a critical issue, which impacts the quality of education in one way or another* (SED, page 23). While the SED reports on measures designed to retain students, it presents no data on admission cohorts and the number of students of each entry cohort graduating. The EQA team wishes to stress that it is only by the systematic collection of such data that attrition can be monitored.

The University College published a Bulletin of Student Statistics (BOSS) in December 2007. The document was prepared with the aim of providing *relevant, reliable, and up-to-date information on the institution* (page 1). Data from this is reproduced below.

Entry Year	Admission Numbers	Graduating Numbers	Attrition Numbers	Attrition %
1992 EC	52	32	20	38.5
1993 EC	41	26	15	36.6
1994 EC	2877	2709	168	5.8
1995 EC	7980	5786	2194	27.5
1996 EC	7803	6014	1789	22.9
1997 EC	10970	10228	742	6.8
1998 EC	15742	15330	412	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>45465</b>	<b>40125</b>	<b>5340</b>	<b>11.7%</b>

The above table shows that the overall attrition rate is just 11.7%. This is seen remarkably low. Keeping in mind the number of degree graduates of the University College, the EQA team was somewhat uncertain on the student body that this data was describing. Also, in the light of the comments in the SED (page 24) on the upward trend on attrition, these numbers must be viewed with some caution. This caution is also merited by the views expressed in meetings with the senior staff and administrators who described the attrition rate as high.

Another document provided to the EQA team presents data (correct as of 24 July 2008) on the attrition of students from regular degree programs. This is presented on the following page.

	No of students			Attrition Numbers			Attrition %			Attrition due to academic reasons		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>Accounting</b>	71	108	179	4	15	19	5.6	13.9	10.6	12	-	12
<b>Marketing Management</b>	40	65	105	5	23	28	12.5	35.4	26.7	12	3	15
<b>Management</b>	60	80	140	13	12	25	21.7	15.0	17.9	9	4	13
<b>Law</b>	87	64	151	3	3	6	3.4	4.7	4.0	1	-	1
<b>Computer Science</b>	52	52	104	18	8	26	34.6	15.4	25.0	3	5	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>49</b>

This data shows that while the average level of attrition is 15.3 % the rate for female students is a little higher than that for males. It also shows that the rate for different subject areas is markedly different. Attrition from Law is a very modest 4% while both Marketing Management and Computer Science lose a quarter of their students. Worryingly, Marketing and Management lose more than a third of their female students and have twice the average attrition for female students. In terms of reasons for drop out only 49 (47%) of the 104 leave the University College for academic reasons. Of the females leaving, the table shows that only 19.7% leave for academic reasons while 86.1% of males leave for academic reasons. However there must be some doubt about these figures as the table shows 12 males leaving Accounting for academic reasons yet in an earlier column of the table shows that a total of only 4 males left this program. Also, once again the basis for the figures is not clear. They also contain inconsistencies (e.g. in row 1 the attrition of males due to academic reasons (12) is greater than the total number (4)). It is uncertain if the data represents the number of students graduating in relation to those enrolling some years earlier or if they represent the difference between the numbers of students enrolled between one academic year and the next. The University College may need to calculate and present its attrition data in a way that shows the tracking of a cohort of students from entry to graduation. In that way it can properly show attrition and ideally target actions to address this at faculty and department level. It is important for SMUC and its stakeholders to know how many of an entering cohort of students completes the program and graduate.

While in conversation with the EQA team, some senior staff spoke of the efforts made to reduce the attrition rate of students. The SED (pages 24 & 25) also provides information on this. The institution offers scholarships for students who are genuinely in dire financial straits. Some of the students who fail to settle their tuition fees are given a scholarship or are allowed to pay their fees after graduation. Students with weak academic performance are identified and offered assistance. There are tutorials in Accounting, Mathematics and in English. The SED (page 24) points out that

*The tutorial sessions are not discriminatory. Any student who wants to join such classes will not be turned away. Such all-inclusive sessions minimize the uneasiness that may be observed among students with academic deficiencies.*

The University College has also introduced an English language enhancement program in which students can learn from a native speaker. However, despite these efforts SMUC recognizes that more needs to be done to limit attrition. This is to be applauded.

No data is presented in the SED on the employment destinations of graduates. The SED (page 25) notes however, that the University College has graduated only 235 degree students from its regular programs and that 220 of these were in the last year. The University College has initiated a tracer study to follow up of these graduates (and those of other programs). This is being done by the Centre for Educational Improvement, Research and

Quality Assurance and a considerable budget and human resource has been made available for this. The EQA team has learned that SMUC has already conducted a survey on employers' satisfaction with their students and, as a result, developed policies and guidelines on essential employability skills. In addition, the University College has established an Alumni Association and this should help SMUC maintain contact with its former students and perhaps, through them, their employers.

With regard to contacts with employers, the University College has established an Internship Office (= Practicum and Apprenticeship Office) that seeks to connect students and potential employers. This is another area where SMUC has made a promising start but also recognizes that more needs to be done to establish strong links with employers to help ensure that its graduates are well prepared for the world of work and that they are assisted to secure suitable graduate level employment. It is noted that the University College Prospectus (page 55) states that

*The Faculty of Law undertakes follow-up with regard to the employability and professional competence of a cross-section of its graduates. Feedback from employers is encouraging and proactive measures to enhance the practical aspect of the curriculum are underway*

While the EQA team did not see this feedback they welcomed this procedure and consequent action as an example good practice.

**With regard to Focus Area 8 (Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The collection of student statistics.
- (ii) The efforts to stem student attrition.
- (iii) The establishment of an Alumni Association.
- (iv) Undertaking studies of employers.
- (v) Undertaking graduate tracer studies.
- (vi) Efforts made to liaise with potential employers of graduates.
- (vii) Efforts made to help place graduates in suitable employment.

**The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 8 (Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) reviews how it collects data on student attrition so that it shows the attrition for each cohort of students each semester in each program as they pass through the University College;
- (ii) continues to seek measures to retain students and limit attrition;
- (iii) collects data on the number of graduates from each program who gain employment, their employers and the nature of the employment;
- (iv) strengthens its links with potential employers of its graduates;

#### **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (v) strengthens such as tutorial support to help to reduce the level of attrition due to academic reasons;
- (vi) uses feedback from the employers of graduates of all its programs to enhance their quality.

## 9: Research and Outreach Activities

The SED (page 4) and Faculty Hand Book (page 2) make clear that the University College aspires to be among the leading higher education institutions in research as well as in other areas of activity, including community service. By engaging in such activities it intends to contribute to Ethiopia' development. It was with this ambition in mind that the EQA team considered the current research and outreach activities on the University College.

Importantly, the University College has established a Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA). This is led by a well qualified member of staff. As the name suggests, this office has responsibility for both quality assurance and research. The EQA team voiced its concern on the merger of the Office for Research with the Office of Quality Assurance and Educational Improvement to establish this new office, but both staff and the SMUC management have argued that this merger is not problematic.

While the expectation is that staff will engage in research, as yet, there is no research policy or any established document of guidelines for research activities. However, recently the new CEIRQA has prepared a draft research strategy (SMUC-Research Strategy-draft, 2008). The intention is to implement this in the next academic year. Although there has been an Office for Research this does not have appeared to have published an annual report of the research activities of the University College or the research projects undertaken, research grants gained, research contributions made and research articles published. There is no monitoring of the research activity and research productivity of staff.

However, the EQA team noted that the University College has organized and sponsored five successive National Educational and Research Conferences. These have covered a wide range of educational issues relating to the quality of education in Ethiopia. The University College has published and distributed the proceedings of each conference. These proceedings have published a total of 86 papers out of which 36 were contributed by SMUC's staff as indicated below.

### National Educational and Research Conferences

	Conference Themes	Year	Number of papers published	Number of papers by SMUC staff
5 <sup>th</sup>	Private Higher Education in Ethiopia at the turn of the Ethiopian Millennium	2007	17	3
4 <sup>th</sup>	Nurturing a Culture of Continuous improvement ...	2006	20	9
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Paving the Road for Quality Education in Ethiopia	2005	20	8
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Private Higher Education in Ethiopia: Challenges and Opportunities	2004	21	12
1 <sup>st</sup>	Revisiting the voyage of half a decade private higher Education	2003	8	4
<b>Total</b>			<b>86</b>	<b>36</b>

These annual national research conferences have created opportunities for SMUC staff and the wider academic community to engage with research. Also, the SED (page 26) mentions that instructors are encouraged to present papers at research seminars elsewhere. Members of staff who contribute thus, receive an honorarium from the University College. Also, selected papers from final year students are presented publicly and then published. The SED (page 26) also reports that there is a student research sponsorship scheme. This makes research awards to students from SMUC and other institutions. However, the EQA team was unable to discover what awards have been made.

The EQA team noted that the Faculty of Law has started the *Mizan Law Review*. Two issues have already been published (Volume 1, No. 1, June, 2007; and Volume 2, No. 1, January, 2008). These containing 7 and 11 articles respectively. Out of the 18 published articles, 10 were contributed by the staff of the University College. The third issue is expected to come out soon. The journal has been distributed to public and private HEIs, the Federal Supreme Court and the Justice and Legal System Research Institute. Another academic journal, *The Journal of Business*, is expected to come out at the end of this year.

The EQA team noted the important internal research publication series from the Center for Educational Improvement Research and Quality Assurance. These relate to research on aspects of quality in the University College and are returned to again in the next section of this report.

The team also noted publications providing materials for teaching and learning. While not research works, these present evidence of the scholarship of the academic staff of the University College.

### Standard Books Published by SMUC

Title	Year of publication
Managerial Accounting	2005
Ethiopian Criminal Law Digest (parts I & II)	2006
Principles of accounting	2005
Financial Accounting (Part I, Volume I)	2008
Introduction to Bookkeeping	2006

While seeking to be leader in research, the University College has no system to bid for or to support staff to bid for research projects or seek research funding from external agencies or international donors. Although the University College management is ready to support and facilitate the research endeavors of staff from its own resource, there does not appear to be an established system to call for research proposals, for proposal selection, funding and follow up. No documentation was made available on research fund allocation and uses of funds for the research.

The EQA team has concluded (as does the SED, page 26) that while there is research activity in the University College, research is not yet part of the institutional culture. In the meetings that the EQA team held with staff, it was learned that the majority of staff are inexperienced in research and have heavy teaching loads with little time and opportunity for research. They also reported a lack access to acceptable research journals in which to publish research and claimed that the capital-intensive nature of research inhibits activity. The SED also expresses the view that research is capital intensive and also that *with no government support it is hardly possible to make a significant advance in such undertaking* (page 26). It is the view of the EQA team that, in addition to local journals, there is no shortage of international journals that provide outlets for good research and that much research can be undertaken with very little financial outlay. What staff may lack are the skills, the time and the motivation.

Also, and very importantly, in the discussion it was noted that unlike the public universities where each member of the academic staff is expected to devote at least 25% of their contractual time for research, most SMUC staff have no contractual time for research. For such staff, research has to be done in personal time. However, the EQA team noted that the University College has hired research staff.

The EQA team has come to the view that if the University College wishes to make its mark in research then it needs to establish its research priorities and give a much stronger sense of purpose and direction to research. It needs to establish a sound infrastructure to stimulate and support research; develop a broader research culture; include contractual time for research; provide appropriate research training for inexperienced researchers, make much clearer its expectation of research activity, and research productivity of staff who are contracted to do research, and systematically record their research activity and productivity. Unless the University College addresses such matters it will never be seen as a leading research institution, even in Ethiopia. It is to be hoped that the recently developed research strategy will provide the strong steer that is required.

Community service features in both the vision and mission statements of the University College (SED, page 4) and there is no doubt that SMUC engages in outreach activities. However, the University College appears to have no stated policy on outreach and no mechanism appears to be in place for systematically recording community activities.

From the SED and from discussions with staff, the EQA team has learned that SMUC has been engaged in various community service activities. For example the Department of Computer Science has trained employees from Lideta Kifle Ketema Administration, Addis Ababa City Administration Mass Media. Partner schools have also received material and financial aid and their teachers have been given training. Also, the Business Faculty has given training on bookkeeping to those working in micro businesses. In addition, women journalists from ETV have undertaken training to develop their skills in English language speaking and writing. Members of staff from the Ethiopian Roads Transport Authority and Akaki Spare Parts and Hand Tools Factory have been provided with training on Integrated Performance Management, Performance Audit, and Supervisory Management. It was not determined if such training was provided without fee or for a reduced fee, but regardless of this, it does demonstrate the willingness and ability of the University College to work with and for the community. This is further demonstrated by the free services given to Lideta Kifle Ketema Education Bureau by duplicating learning materials to be used by the entire set of primary schools located in the Kifle Ketema and the printing of registration forms to be used by the newly-opened, and only, public high school in the Kifle Ketema. Although not documented to the EQA team, SMUC has also supported education and training in a somewhat different way by awarding distance education scholarships to more than 100 prisoners.

In SED (page 29) notes that for the last two years, SMUC has sponsored a TV Talk Show that addresses social issues of national significance and that the University College has made a positive response to national disaster appeals and reconstruction projects. Interestingly, the Department of Marketing Management in collaboration with the New Business School in Amsterdam is running a project to promote Ethiopian coffee. The project aims to benefit Ethiopian coffee growers through fair trade. The project is at the stage of packaging the Ethiopian coffee under the brand name *Meleya*. These are all commendable outreach activities.

The EQA team had no document on how many staff have given scholarly contributions to the community however, from the SED (page 29) and from the discussion with staff; the EQA team has noted that important contributions have been made by staff through their participation in curriculum development with the Ministry of Education and the Addis Ababa City Administration. Some members of staff have been released from their regular work in the University College for quite considerable periods of time to participate in developing course materials. Also of note, is the fact that the members of staff in the Law Faculty have been actively engaged with the development of a national curriculum for law, working under the Ministry of Capacity Building.

The SED has no information on consultancies undertaken by the staff of the University College and during the audit visit gained no further information to indicate that the University College is active in this area.

The University College has developed a number of national and international links with other educational institutions. Although these do not appear to be informed or driven by any policy document, they are nevertheless evidence that SMUC is not insular. The information in the SED (pages 27 & 28), supplemented through discussions with staff gave the EQA team a clear picture of such linkages.

Significantly, SMUC, together with other private institutions, established the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions through which SMUC is actively working with HERQA and the Ministry of Education to enhance the quality of education in Ethiopia. It is on behalf of this association that SMUC has organized annual educational research conferences. Also, with regard to local linkages, SMUC has developed working relationships with Jimma University (on community-based education practices); Debre Birhan and Robe Teacher Training Colleges (to share educational materials) and; Woliso and Assela Teacher Training Colleges (for the transfer of knowledge and skills)..

SMUC has established international links with the University College of St Mark and St John in Plymouth, (UK) and, as indicated above, The New Business School in Amsterdam. It is also linked to the Asian Pacific Quality Network (APQN). The cooperation with St Mark and St John has gained funding from the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (UK) for the development and publication of short stories for second cycle primary school students of Ethiopia. Three books, each with teacher's guide and a teacher training module have been published. The EQA team has noted copies of these publications and was informed that they will be distributed to public primary schools in Ethiopia soon. The team has learned from discussion with the staff, that electronic versions of the materials will be distributed to other countries in Eastern Africa.

The University College has also been successful in working with the American embassy to secure the placement of a Fulbright funded consult to help promote and develop internal quality assurance.

The EQA team was impressed by the commitment of the University College to research and to outreach and recognizes the merits of its achievements in both areas but the team also notes that much is still to be done if the University College is to approach the realization of its vision. The University College may be seeking too much in setting out an unqualified vision to be among the leading higher education institutions in research. To seek to be such in a particular area of expertise or in a defined geographically area or both may be more attainable.

**With regard to Focus Area 9 (Research and Outreach Activities) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) Hosting five successive National Educational and Research Conferences.
- (ii) Establishing the *Mizan Law Review*.
- (iii) The intention to establish *The Journal of Business*.
- (iv) The establishment of The Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance.
- (v) Giving student research a high profile.
- (vi) Establishing national and international linkages.
- (vii) Providing community service.

**The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 9 (Research and Outreach Activities)**

**A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) finalizes and implements its draft research strategy;
- (ii) gives a stronger sense of direction to research;
- (iii) encourages a stronger research culture;
- (iv) motivates more staff to be research active;
- (v) develops a strategy to offer consultancy;
- (vi) builds mechanism, capacity and links to obtain external funding for research.

**B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (vii) provides research training;
- (viii) requires each faculty and department to have a research strategy and a research plan;
- (ix) establishes systems to monitor research activity;
- (x) considers the need for more staff to have contracts requiring them to do research;
- (xi) develops the capability of staff to offer consultancy and encourages them to do so;
- (xii) publishes an annual research and consultancy report.

**C Desirable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (xiii) establishes regular research presentation and review events;
- (xiv) requires each faculty and department to provide an annual research and consultancy report;
- (xv) considers the separation of the research and quality roles of the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance into two units;
- (xvi) documents its outreach activities;
- (xvii) expands its outreach activities.

**10: Internal Quality Assurance**

The University College has a strong commitment to quality and quality enhancement. This commitment has been translated into a series of actions that have sought to establish comprehensive systems for quality assurance, quality promotion and quality improvement. This is evidenced in the SED (pages 30 & 31) and was verified in the audit visit both in meetings with staff and through the study of documents provided by the University College. SMUC has a link with the Asian Pacific Quality Network (SED, page 28).

SMUC initiated work on establishing a robust quality assurance system some three years ago. This was done with the aid of a US Fulbright Fellow who provided several weeks of training for staff and helped to set up the basis of the developing quality assurance system.

Although the University College does not appear to have a comprehensive quality assurance policy, bodies with a responsibility for quality have been established at faculty and institution level under the Quality Assessment Council (QAC). The EQA team was provided with an Annual Report of this Council. Under the QAC a Quality Assurance Office was established and also a series of Quality Assurance Units: The Pedagogical and Assessment Quality Unit, The Administrative Service Quality Assessment Unit, The Faculty of Business Quality Assessment Unit, and The Law Quality Faculty Assessment Unit. As noted earlier, The Quality Assurance Office is now merged with The Research and Publications Office to form

the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA). With this merger, the above Units are now being restructured. The CEIRQA has ten staff at the levels of senior and junior researchers and (as indicated above) is led by a well qualified member of staff. Importantly, SMUC has allotted an adequate budget for the work of the CEIRQA. The EQA team again questions the desirability of the CEIRQA having roles for both research and quality.

The University College Prospectus (page 8) states that the CEIRQA

*Undertakes planned and systematic review of the teaching –learning process at SMUC to determine that acceptable standard of education is being maintained and enhanced;*

*Undertakes quality audit so as to provide an assessment of the University College’s system of accountability and internal review mechanisms; and*

*Makes sure that the University College’s quality assurance process complies with accepted standards.*

The CEIRQA has indeed carried out various studies on quality matters, the results of which have been disseminated and discussed with staff. To date, ten publications have been produced. These publications report on quality and aim to encourage measures to enhance quality. The Center has also out various quality-related activities. Importantly, it publishes and annual quality report.

#### **Publications of the CEIRQA**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>
1	SMUC Annual Awards Manual	2006
2	Annual Report 2006/2007	2007
3	Guidelines on SMUC Publication Series	2006
4	Performance Criteria for faculty Evaluation at St Mary's University College	2006
5	Student Satisfaction Survey Report 2005/06	2006
6	Instructors' use of a variety of Assessment Method	2006
7	Assessment of Instructors' Course Planning and Coverage Practices	2006
8	Report of Student Satisfaction Survey	2006
9	Instructors' Concerns at SMUC	2007
10	Assessment Grading Practices	2006

The EQA team considers that the work of the University College in relation to quality is highly commendable but notes that the focus to date has been on quality assessment. The EQA team wishes to encourage the University College to build on their excellent work and seek to embed robust quality assurance structures into its practices. Comprehensive and sound practices that assure quality, combined with a continuation of studies of quality will serve SMUC well.

The EQA team also investigated the existence of systems for the identification and dissemination of good practice that could lead to quality enhancement. The SED does not address this aspect of the work of the University College.

While the section on Good Practices has been omitted from the SED, the EQA team was able to find a list what the SMUC called 'good practices' in the Annual Report of the Quality Assessment Council. These are listed as:

- The Literary and Cultural Forum organized by the Department of Language;
- The opening of the Resource Center;
- The proposals to improve the working hours of the office to serve extension students;
- The Panel discussion on Management Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow organized by the Business Faculty;
- Workshop on Large Class Management organized by Academic Dean's Office.
- Students Gatherings organized by Students' Affairs Office.

The above can be seen as worthwhile activities but the University College should be seeking to establish a system to trawl regularly for good practices, particularly in teaching, learning and assessment and to establish means by which these can be shared and, where appropriate, adopted more widely. In meetings with the management it was reported that notice boards, annual conferences and Academic Council meetings are used to disseminate good practices. However, the EQA team considers that there needs to be a better system for both the identification and dissemination of good practice. This could be an important role for the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance

**With regard to Focus Area 10 (Internal Quality Assurance) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The establishment of the Center for Education Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA).
- (ii) The establishment of the Quality Assessment Council and various bodies with responsibilities for quality.
- (iii) The provision of training on quality assurance.
- (iv) The publication of research reports on the quality of its provision.

**The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 10 (Internal Quality Assurance)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) develops and implements a quality assurance policy;
- (ii) puts more emphasis on quality assurance and establishes appropriate robust and comprehensive quality assurance structures.

#### **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (iii) develops system for the identification and dissemination of good practice;
- (iv) monitors the operation of its quality assurance system and makes changes to enhance its operation as seen necessary.

#### **C Desirable recommendation**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (v) considers the separation of the research and quality roles of The Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance into two units.

#### **Thematic Enquiries and Audit Trails**

The EQA audit team did not pursue any specific thematic enquiries or audit trails.

## **Good Practices**

The SED is silent on the good practices of the University College and how these are identified and disseminated. This is an unfortunate omission.

## **Plans for Enhancement of Processes and Practices**

The SED is equally silent on plans for the enhancement of process and practices in the University College. This is also an unfortunate omission

## **Conclusions**

The EQA team reached the following main conclusions from their audit visit.

- St Mary's University College is a private institution of higher education offering regular, extension and distance education programs leading to the award of recognized certificates, diplomas and degrees.
- The University College was very well prepared for the visit of the audit team. Many documents were made available to the team and requests for meetings, visits and further information were readily agreed and acted on.
- The SED, although not covering all area of interest to the audit team was, nevertheless a helpful document providing evaluative insights into the work of the University College.
- The University College has grown considerably from an initial student number of less than 50 in 1998 to more than 5000.
- The vision statement of the University College underlines its commitment to contribute to Ethiopia's development.
- The vision of the University College to become among the leading higher education centers of academic excellence in teaching learning, research, publications and community services is not time bound or limited to geographical boundaries. Such clarifications would be useful additions.
- The mission of the University College focuses on the attainment and maintenance of high quality and standards in teaching, research and community services.
- The University College has an intention to establish a Center for Entrepreneurship.
- The University College has a clearly stated goal that also centers on the provision of high quality services.
- A comprehensive set of set of values underpins the work of the University College.
- There has been consultation on the vision, mission, goal and values of the University College and, once agreed, these have been widely disseminated to the University College community.
- The University College has a Strategic Plan to guide its continued development. This plan has identified a number of strategic issues that will be addressed as priorities.
- The leadership of the University College is very strong.

- The Senate Legislation is a key document that establishes the academic rules, regulations and many of the working procedures of the University College. The Legislation is under review and the University College will need to establish when this review will be completed and new legislation implemented.
- The management of the University College is transparent and participatory but there is room for further staff and student representation on committees.
- Communications structures in the University College are good and functional.
- Communication is aided by the open door policy adopted by the University College.
- The University College has developed good staff and student relationships and an environment conducive to academic endeavor.
- There is a strong commitment to quality that is shared by staff and students of the University College community.
- Evidence of the University College's commitment to quality and quality enhancement is the establishment of the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA).
- The University College would appear to have adequate teaching space for current numbers of regular students.
- There is a shortage of private offices for the academic staff of the University College. This has meant that some members of staff have no private area for preparation and marking or to meet with students seeking academic counseling.
- The University College has provided opportunities for ICT and Internet for both staff and students and intends to enhance this as a priority in its Strategic Plan.
- The Libraries of the University College need to be enhanced, particularly with academic journals. The institution is actively pursuing ways of meeting this need.
- There is a fair and transparent appointments procedure for academic staff in the University College. New staff benefit from an induction program.
- The University College has clear and transparent criteria and procedures for promotion but has no teaching staff promoted to professorial rank.
- While some members of staff in all departments have several years of experience, no teacher has a PhD and staffing of the University College falls short of that specified by the MOE. Much of the teaching on some programs is done by first degree holders.
- From the data provided to the EQA team on student and staff numbers, the average student/staff ratio for regular programs in the University College is between 11:1 and 16:1. While this is seen as generous, it is recognized that the calculation may not be based on the number of full time equivalent staff *i.e.* the staff teaching regular students may also teach on other programs, and thus the ratio may be higher.
- The University College has a strong commitment to staff development. While it has established an Academic Development and Resources Center (ADRC) to support teaching and learning by providing assistance and resources to instructors it could benefit from a human resources development strategy and plan.

- The Academic Development and Resource Centre (ADRC), has made a worthwhile contribution to staff development in terms of pedagogical training.
- Staff appraisal is being used effectively in the University College to identify staff development needs and to reward members of staff that perform well.
- There is a transparent system of student placement in the University College. Students are allocated to programs on the basis of their choice.
- New students have a structured induction to the University College and receive a comprehensive handbook.
- Members of staff are provided with information on the academic attainment of students entering the University College.
- The Student Affairs and Services Office of the University College works closely with the student community on the provision of a range of services for students.
- The University College has established a comprehensive and functional system of student class representatives to aid communications between students, staff and management.
- A Guidance and Counseling Service is providing a valued service to students of the University College.
- Very few members of staff provide a regular consultation hour as they are required to do.
- A tutorial program established to support students has been discontinued due to lack of student participation. This needs further investigation.
- Student discipline cases in the University College are handled by the Student Discipline Committee which has two student representatives.
- The University College has carried out helpful surveys on student satisfaction that have been used to inform practice.
- The provision of sports and recreation facilities for students on the University College campus is not yet adequate.
- The Student Wellness and Development Center has been instrumental in developing HIV & AIDS awareness in the University College.
- The University College has a structure of committees and a set of procedures designed to ensure that curriculum development results in relevant and required programs of appropriate standard but their work is not informed by clear decision-making criteria.
- In approving new courses and programs the University College has no system for considering student workload other than in lecture equivalent hours.
- The University College does not distinguish between program approval (an academic decision) and making a decision to launch an approved program (largely a resources decision).

- The University College has not always been able to involve external stakeholders in curriculum development.
- A planned program of regular curriculum reviews is yet to be embedded in the practices of the University College.
- The University College is producing course catalogs and while this is a positive step, many course descriptions do not state the expected learning outcomes that should be the basis for student assessment.
- The University College has no written policy on teaching and learning.
- The University College encourages diverse approaches to teaching and learning and there is good evidence to support the claim that instructors use a range of methods.
- There is no sound evidence that students are assessed on their achievements of stated, expected learning outcomes of the courses they have followed.
- The student grading system is mainly based on norm referencing and this does not assure that standards of grades are maintained from year to year.
- While an appeal system is in place, there is no transparent system applied across the University College that ensures that students are graded fairly and consistently, that students are well protected from discrimination and that staff do not award unmerited or inaccurate grades.
- The University College has various figures for attrition which indicate that the average may be in the area of 12 to 16% but there is a general view that attrition is much higher. There is a need to review how data on student attrition is collected and analyzed so that it shows the attrition for each cohort of students each semester in each program as they pass through the University College.
- The University College has implemented measures to retain students and limit attrition. These need to be continued.
- The University College has initiated a tracer study to follow up its graduates and established an Alumni Association.
- The University College has established an Internship Office that seeks to connect students and potential employers but more needs to be done to establish stronger links with employers to help ensure that its graduates are well prepared for the world of work.
- The University College has demonstrated a commitment to research.
- While the expectation is that staff of the University College will engage in research, as yet, there is no written research policy or any established document of guidelines for research activities. However, recently the new Center for Education Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance has prepared a draft research strategy.
- Most members of the academic staff of the University College have no contractual time for research and are not actively engaged in research.
- While student research is given a high profile, the engagement of academic staff in doing research is not yet part of the culture of the University College.

- The University College has organized and sponsored five successive National Educational and Research Conferences.
- The University College has launched academic journals and published other research works.
- The University College has established a number of successful national and international academic linkages.
- Community service features in both the vision and mission statements and outreach activities are undertaken, but the University College appears to have no stated policy on outreach and no mechanism appears to be in place for systematically recording community activities.
- The University College does not appear to be involved in consultancy.
- The University College has a very strong commitment to quality evidenced by the establishment of the Center for Education Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance, the Quality Assessment Council and various bodies with responsibilities for quality, the provision of training on quality assurance and its research and publications on the quality of its provision.
- To date, the work of the University College in relation to quality has been on quality assessment. The emphasis now needs to move to quality assurance and quality enhancement.
- The University College has not yet developed a comprehensive policy on quality assurance or a well-established and fully-functional, integrated quality assurance system or mechanism. The Quality Assessment Council and the Center for Education Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance will be important to the establishment of such a policy and system.
- The University College has no established and functional mechanisms for the identification and dissemination of good practices.

The overall conclusion of the EQA team is that S Mary's University College has grown successfully in a planned and purposeful way and established itself on the landscape of higher education in Ethiopia. While having graduated only a few hundred students from regular degree programs, it has put in place an infrastructure and established practices that should allow for more growth in regular student numbers should demand be there. While the University College has found it difficult to recruit instructors with a PhD and hence is not meeting MOE requirements, it has put efforts into staff development.

The University College has a very strong commitment to quality and has taken a series of actions related to quality assessment and quality enhancement. It now needs to focus on quality assurance. While a strong supporter of research, the University College has yet to develop a strong research culture among its staff. Few members of staff are research active and productive. The vision statement of the University College states that it *aspires to become among the leading higher education centers of academic excellence in teaching-learning, research, publications and community services and contribute to Ethiopia's development*. While this statement is not bound by time or geography, for St Mary's University College to move from its current position to the realization of its vision, will continue to require much effort and considerable resources. The foundation for the necessary development is firm.

## **Commendations**

**With regard to Focus Area 1 (Vision, Mission and Educational Goals) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The development and communication of vision and mission statements and a set of goals and values.
- (ii) The existence of a five year development plan.
- (iii) The development of a strong commitment to work towards the realization of its vision.

**With regard to Focus Area 2 (Governance and Management System) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The existence of strong leadership.
- (ii) The participatory and transparent management system
- (iii) The adoption of an open door policy.
- (iv) The general availability of comprehensive documentation.
- (v) The effectiveness of its communications system.
- (vi) The friendly and conducive working environment.
- (vii) The existence of a strong team spirit.
- (viii) The strong commitment and focus on quality.

**With regard to Focus Area 3 (Infrastructure and Learning Resources) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The provision of computers and Internet access.
- (ii) The system that allows staff to purchase books.
- (iii) The establishment of the ADRC.

**With regard to Focus Area 4 (Academic and Support Staff) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The fair and transparent appointments procedure for academic staff.
- (ii) The provision of induction and documentation to new academic staff.
- (iii) The commitment to staff development.
- (iv) The provision of training for staff.
- (v) The staff evaluation scheme that identifies development needs.
- (vi) The system of merit payments.
- (vii) The establishment of clear criteria for the promotion of academic staff.

**With regard to Focus Area 5 (Student Admission and Support Services) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) Transparent entry criteria and procedures.
- (ii) The admission of students to programs of choice.
- (iii) The provision of a student handbook to every new student.
- (iv) The provision of information on student attainment to their instructors.
- (v) The establishment of student support structures.
- (vi) The establishment of the Student Wellness and Development Center.
- (vii) A functional guidance and counseling service.
- (viii) The open door policy.

- (ix) The system of class representatives.
- (x) The practice of conducting student satisfaction surveys.

**With regard to Focus Area 6 (Program Relevance and Curriculum) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The establishment of curriculum committees in each department.
- (ii) The attempts to involve stakeholders in curriculum development and review.
- (iii) The creation of a course catalog in a standard format.
- (iv) The involvement in the revision of the curriculum for law.

**With regard to Focus Area 7 (Teaching, Learning and Assessment) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The use of a range of approaches to teaching and learning.
- (ii) The provision of training for staff.
- (iii) Providing timely feedback to students.
- (iv) The work of the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance to study aspects of both teaching and assessment.

**With regard to Focus Area 8 (Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The collection of student statistics.
- (ii) The efforts to stem student attrition.
- (iii) The establishment of an Alumni Association.
- (iv) Undertaking studies of employers.
- (v) Undertaking graduate tracer studies.
- (vi) Efforts made to liaise with potential employers of graduates.
- (vii) Efforts made to help place graduates in suitable employment.

**With regard to Focus Area 9 (Research and Outreach Activities) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) Hosting five successive National Educational and Research Conferences.
- (ii) Establishing the *Mizan Law Review*.
- (iii) The intention to establish *The Journal of Business*.
- (iv) The establishment of The Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance.
- (v) Giving student research a high profile.
- (vi) Establishing national and international linkages.
- (vii) Providing community service.

**With regard to Focus Area 10 (Internal Quality Assurance) the EQA team commends the University College on the following:**

- (i) The establishment of the Center for Education Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA).
- (ii) The establishment of the Quality Assessment Council and various bodies with responsibilities for quality.
- (iii) The provision of training on quality assurance.
- (iv) The publication of research reports on the quality of its provision.

## **Recommendations**

### **The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 1 (Vision, Mission and Educational Goals)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) reviews the scope of its vision;
- (ii) establishes systems to monitor the implementation of its values;
- (iii) ensures that all its activities are contributing to the realization of its vision and are underpinned by its values;
- (iv) establishes systems to monitor progress towards its vision and goals;

#### **C Desirable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (v) considers the need to plan to open specific new programs, including postgraduate programs;
- (vi) reviews regularly its vision, mission, goals and values and revises these as necessary;
- (vii) ensures that its plans are reviewed in the light of changing circumstances.

### **The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 2 (Governance and Management System)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) completes the revision of the Legislation and make this available at an early date;
- (ii) clarifies the duties and responsibilities of the faculty deans and specify members of the faculty councils;
- (iii) reconciles the organogram with the actual practice on the ground;
- (iv) considers student and staff representation on important decision making bodies from the departments upwards.

### **The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 3 (Infrastructure and Learning Resources)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) improves office accommodation for staff;
- (ii) improves the library stock, particularly academic journals.

#### **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (iii) investigates the adequacy of availability of specialized computer software;
- (iv) investigates the adequacy of the service hours of the library.

### **C Desirable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (v) seeks to reduce the misuse and abuse of computers.

### **The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 4 (Academic and Support Staff)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) creates and implements a human resources development strategy and plan;
- (ii) improves its staffing profile and, in particular, recruits PhD holders as instructors.

#### **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (iii) continues to seek ways to attract and retain staff, particularly females.

#### **C Desirable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (iv) reconsiders how it calculates student/staff ratios so that they reflect the full time equivalent staffing of its programs;
- (v) records the profile of its support staff;
- (vi) monitors the impact of staff development activities.

### **The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 5 (Student Admission and Support Services)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) ensures that staff provide the required academic counseling and support to students;
- (ii) investigates reasons for non attendance at academic tutorial programs with a view to initiating a more appropriate provision;
- (iii) investigates allegations of unfairness and takes appropriate actions.

#### **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (iv) reviews it provision of medical services;
- (v) reviews its provision of recreational facilities.

### **The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 6 (Program Relevance and Curriculum)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) develops guidelines and criteria for course and program curriculum approval;
- (ii) develops guidelines and criteria for granting permission to launch approved programs and courses;

- (iii) communicates the expected learning outcomes of all courses and programs to students;
- (iv) investigates student workload and establishes an expected average student workload linked to the credit value of courses;
- (v) ensures that regular program evaluations take place in accord with an established schedule.

#### **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (vi) renews its efforts to work with stakeholders on the curriculum matters.

### **The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 7 (Teaching, Learning and Assessment)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) develops and disseminates a policy on teaching and learning;
- (ii) reviews and disseminates a revised policy on student assessment;
- (iii) takes steps to make the fairness of marking of student assessments more transparent;
- (iv) replaces norm referenced grading practices with a criterion referenced system.

#### **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (v) assesses students for the attainment of expected learning outcomes;
- (vi) develops clear attainment related criteria for the grades (A to F) that it awards to students;
- (vii) introduces anonymous marking where practicable;
- (viii) introduces systems for the moderation of grades to ensure consistency of standards.

#### **C Desirable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (ix) monitors the implementation of its policies on teaching and learning and assessment and takes actions as considered necessary;
- (x) uses external examiners to help moderate standards and report on the quality and relevance of programs where practicable.

### **The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 8 (Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) reviews how it collects data on student attrition so that it shows the attrition for each cohort of students each semester in each program as they pass through the University College;
- (ii) continues to seek measures to retain students and limit attrition;
- (iii) collects data on the number of graduates from each program who gain employment, their employers and the nature of the employment;
- (iv) strengthens its links with potential employers of its graduates;

## **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (v) strengthens such as tutorial support to help to reduce the level of attrition due to academic reasons;
- (vi) uses feedback from the employers of graduates of all its programs to enhance their quality.

### **The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 9 (Research and Outreach Activities)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) finalizes and implements its draft research strategy;
- (ii) gives a stronger sense of direction to research;
- (iii) encourages a stronger research culture;
- (iv) motivates more staff to be research active;
- (v) develops a strategy to offer consultancy;
- (vi) builds mechanism, capacity and links to obtain external funding for research.

#### **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (vii) provides research training;
- (viii) requires each faculty and department to have a research strategy and a research plan;
- (ix) establishes systems to monitor research activity;
- (x) considers the need for more staff to have contracts requiring them to do research;
- (xi) develops the capability of staff to offer consultancy and encourages them to do so;
- (xii) publishes an annual research and consultancy report.

#### **C Desirable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (xiii) establishes regular research presentation and review events;
- (xiv) requires each faculty and department to provide an annual research and consultancy report;
- (xv) considers the separation of the research and quality roles of the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance into two units;
- (xvi) documents its outreach activities;
- (xvii) expands its outreach activities.

### **The following are the recommendations of the EQA team on Focus Area 10 (Internal Quality Assurance)**

#### **A Essential recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (i) develops and implements a quality assurance policy;
- (ii) puts more emphasis on quality assurance and establishes appropriate robust and comprehensive quality assurance structures.

## **B Advisable recommendations**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (iii) develops system for the identification and dissemination of good practice;
- (iv) monitors the operation of its quality assurance system and makes changes to enhance its operation as seen necessary.

## **C Desirable recommendation**

The EQA team recommends that the University College:

- (v) considers the separation of the research and quality roles of The Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance into two units.

## ***Appendix 1: Acronyms***

<b>ADRC</b>	Academic Development and Resource Centre
<b>BOSS</b>	Bulletin of Student Statistics
<b>CEIRQA</b>	Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance
<b>EC</b>	Ethiopian Calendar
<b>EQA</b>	External Quality Audit
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>HERQA</b>	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technologies
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>QAC</b>	Quality Assessment Council
<b>SED</b>	Self Evaluation Document
<b>SMUC</b>	St Mary's University College
<b>SSR</b>	Staff: Student Ratio

## ***Appendix 2: The Institutional Quality Audit Team***

Dr Asefa Abegaz (Mekelle University)

Mr Kevin Hurley (HERQA observer)

Ato Kassahun Kebede (HERQA)

Dr Alemayhu Kiflu (Bahir Dar University)

Dr Wondimagegne Chekol Mazengia (HERQA)

Dr Solomon Alemu Tesfaye (Adama University)

### **Appendix 3: Timetable of activities undertaken during the Institutional Quality Audit Visit**

#### **Day 1**

Meeting with University College/HERQA liaison officer  
Establishment of work base/meeting room  
Meeting with President  
Meeting with senior staff on mission, vision, organizational structure, roles and responsibilities  
Meeting with quality assurance team on quality assurance and relevance  
Meeting with Curriculum Committee on program approval  
Visit to facilities on main campus  
Study of documentation  
Team meeting

#### **Day 2**

Meeting with senior staff on staffing  
Meeting with staff representatives  
Meeting with heads of student support services on student support  
Observation of teaching  
Meeting with senior staff on teaching and learning  
Meeting with senior staff on assessment and examinations  
Study of documentation  
Team meeting

#### **Day 3**

Meeting with student representative  
Meeting with senior staff on student intake, student satisfaction and graduate destinations  
Meeting with representatives of Deans and Heads of Department  
Study of documentation  
Team meeting

#### **Day 4**

Meeting on topics suggested by the University College  
Meeting with leaders of research, consultancy and outreach activities  
Meeting with senior staff, Board members and external stakeholders on stakeholder links  
Feedback meeting with President  
Study of documentation  
Team meeting

**Appendix 4: Staff participants in meetings held during the Institutional Quality Audit Visit**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Abate Lakew	Assistant Dean of Faculty
Abebe Zenebe	Student Affairs and Support Unit
Abiy Mesfin	Assistant Lecturer
Aklilu Teklu	
Belay Mebrat	Lecturer
Belay Reta	Former Head of Student Affairs
Beshir Shemsu	Lecturer
Birkawit Bogale	Head, Guidance and Counseling Unit
Daniel Meread	Management
Elias Nour	Dean, Faculty of Law
Euse G Nalbandian	Senior Thesis Coordinator, Faculty of Law
Dr. Eyelachew Zewdie	Senior Researcher
Goitom Abraham	Dean, Faculty of Business
Hailemeleket Taye	Director, CEIRQA
Kassaye Tuji	Lecturer
Maru Bazezew	Faculty Dean
Mekonen Tadesse	Administration and Finance
Melaku Girma	Dean, Faculty of Teacher Education
Meron Mekuriaw	Lecturer
Mesfin Feyissa	Dean, Faculty of Information Technology
Misganaw Solomon	Associate Academic Dean
Samsonn Tilahun	Assistant Registrar
Sebsibe H/mariam	Lecturer
Tedla Halie	Academic Dean
Tagel Bulti	Lecturer
Tefera Belachew	Department Head
Terefe Feyera	Head, Department of Marketing and Management
Tsige Tafesse	Student Affairs
Ato Wondwosen	President

*(Note: this list is incomplete as not all those present in meetings recorded their names)*

## **Appendix 5: Documents requested from the University College**

*(the documents in italic type are requested from all HEIs being audited)*

- *Senate legislation.*
- *Policy documents.*
- *Current strategic plan.*
- *Current annual plan.*
- *Most recent annual report to the MOE.*
- *Current course catalogue.*
- *Staff handbooks.*
- *Student handbooks.*
- *Names of male and female academic staff in each department with their rank and qualifications.*
- *Workshop reports published in previous 12 months.*
- *Most recent research report.*
- *Most recent copies of journals published by the HEI.*
- *Reports on the HEI published in the previous 12 months.*
- Evidence of low tuition fees as compared to similar institutions (SED, page 3).
- Evidence of scholarship opportunities given to some students at the beginning of every academic year (SED, page 3).
- Information on staff broken down by qualification, academic rank gender and department.
- Faculty handbook (SED, page 4).
- Students handbook(SED, pages 4 & 16),
- Prospectus (SED, page 5).
- Student Advising Handbook (SED, page 22).
- Evidence of a number of documents, which deal with specific guidelines (SED, page 6).
- Samples of contractual agreements made with staff (SED, page 6).
- Information on the channels through which the strategic directions and vision, mission and goals are communicated to the University College's community.

- Minutes of the last 6 months meetings of the faculty and department councils (SED, page 6).
- Evidence for a flexible and responsive management system (SED, page 7).
- Evidence of departmental performance reports (SED, page 7).
- Evidence of a plan to restructure and recruit administrative staff (SED, page 7).
- Information on the location and faculties/departments of the different campuses (SED page 7).
- Evidence of the project to outsource the automation of the library system (SED, page 8).
- Guidelines on SMUC Publication Series (SED, page 10).
- Evidence of the five books published by SMUC (SED, page 10).
- Evidence of the pedagogic training organized for academic staff (SED, page 11).
- Evidence of the plan to launch an internet café (SED, page 11).
- Evidence of arrangement made to use the sports field of AAU-Building College (SED, page 11).
- Additional information on the construction of building within its premises (SED, page 12).
- Minutes of staff recruitment committee (SED, page 13).
- Evidence of high staff turnover (SED, page 13).
- Evidence of a comprehensive system and criteria for staff evaluation (SED, page 14).
- Evidence of the award made for outstanding performer instructors (SED, page 14).
- Evidences of trainings offered both for academic and support staff (SED, page 14).
- Evidence of professionals being involved in the training of the academic staff (SED, page 15).
- Evidence of activities carried out by Student Guidance and Counseling office and Student Affairs Services Office to organize panel discussions and other related learning environments (SED, page 17).
- Information on activities conducted by Student Wellness and Development Center (SED, page 18).
- Evidence of need assessments made to develop curriculum (SED, page 18).
- Samples of course outlines (SED, page 19).
- Evidence of efforts made through the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Unit to attune the curricula to employability skills (SED, page 19).

- Information on the Course Coverage and Assessment and Procedure Policy and appeal procedures (SED, page 21 & 23).
- Evidence of in-house training given to instructors of Business ,Computer Science and Law Faculties on measurement and evaluation (SED, page 22).
- Samples of feedback given by ADRC to 'upgrade 'the quality of final exams (SED, page 22).
- Evidence of data gathered concerning student progression, attrition, graduate outcome and graduate destination (SED, pages 23 & 24).
- Evidence of language enhancement program conducted in 2007(SED, page 24).
- Evidence of link with employers (SED, page 25).
- Evidence of student papers published (SED, page 26).
- Evidence of outreach activities and community services (SED, pages 26 & 28).
- Evidence of international links made by SMUC (SED, page 27).
- Evidence of Scholarly Contributions and Training services (SED, page 29).
- Evidence of a six-week training given to forty staff members by a senior Fulbright scholar (SED, page 30).

## **Appendix 6: Documents consulted for the Institutional Quality Audit**

- Addis Ababa University Library System Inter Library Loan Agreement.
- Agreement Paper on Sport Field between St Mary's University College & AAU on March 5, 2000 E.C.
- Assessing Grading Practices at SMUC Addis Ababa Ethiopia October 2006.
- Bulletin of Student Statistics (BOSS), December 2007
- Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation Internet & Data Service Application.
- Higher Education Proclamation 351/ 2003.
- Inter Library Loan Agreement Between The Libraries Of The United Nations Economic Commissions for Africa (UNCA).
- Research Strategy-draft, 2008. St. Mary's University College: Research Strategy Draft
- St Mary's University College - a Project on University College Library Structure & Its Job Description.
- St Mary's University College Action Plan for Academic Year 2007/2008
- St Mary's University College - Acquisition Policy.
- St Mary's University College Amended - SMUC Regulations on Missing Classes and Grade Submissions March 9 2007.
- St Mary's University College Course Catalogue, 1995
- St Mary University College Course Coordination and Moderation Guideline.
- St Mary's University College Faculty Hand Book.
- St Mary's University College Faculty of Business Undergraduate Revised Curriculum, 2008
- St Mary's University College Faculty of Informatics Department of Computer Science
- St Mary's University College Faculty of Informatics Undergraduate Revised Curriculum
- St Mary's University College Faculty of Law Curriculum for LLB Program, 2006
- St Mary's University College - Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation the Five Year Strategic Plan, 2008 (draft).
- St Mary's University College Guidelines for Instructors Evaluation by Students April 09-2008.
- St Mary's University College Institutional Self Evaluation Report, May 2008
- St Mary's University College - Inter Library Loan Policy, 2007.

- St Mary's University College Legislation
- St Mary's University College Library Automation Project - Technical Proposal.
- St Mary's University College Quality Assurance Manual (first draft)
- St Mary's University College Quarterly News Letters
- St Mary's University College Prospectus 2008-2009
- St Mary's University College - Senior Thesis Advising and Evaluation Guidelines.
- St Mary's University College Strategic Plan for Academic Years 2007/8- 2011/12
- St Mary's University College Student Hand Book.
- St Mary's University College TOR for Developing Bench Marks for Degree Programs at SMUC.
- St Mary's University College User Guidance, Rules and Regulations of the Library.
- St Mary's University College What the Academic Commission Deliberated, February 03 2003 - August 28, 2006
- Undergraduate Program Curriculum and Benchmark Specification, 2007