Mykolas Romeris University 2013

Summary

Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) is the second largest University in Lithuania. In 2013, 17.5 thousand students and unclassified students studied at MRU, of them 622 students are foreign nationals. About 2/3 were first cycle (Bachelor level), 1/3 – second cycle (Master level) and about 150 – third cycle (Doctoral level) students. MRU implemented 113 study programmes, 31 of which were Bachelor, 76 Master and 6 Doctoral level programmes. Most MRU students studied law, economics, public administration, social work, psychology, political science, business and administration. 16 study were programmes implemented in English, 10 of which were in cooperation with foreign universities. In 2013, 4.149 freshmen were enrolled in MRU (2.303 to the Bachelor level studies and 1.828 to the Master level studies), 149 of them were foreign students. 3.205 students (1.709 of Bachelor level and 1.496 of Master level) graduated from MRU that year.

In 2013, MRU together with Middlesex University (UK) opened a joint Business and Media School (BMS). The School will award dual degree diplomas in economics, informatics, management and communication. 8 new joint and dual degree study programmes and 4 programmes in a new Communication area were opened. In 2013, about 900 MRU academic community members participated in academic exchange, including 668 students, out of which 212 were outgoing and 456 incoming students.

The University has invested heavily in the quality of studies and independent learning resources and technologies with particular emphasis put on student initiative and entrepreneurship. A computerized student feedback system was established and about 30% of MRU students and unclassified students took part in the survey on the quality of studies. The majority of study material is placed in the e-learning environment *Moodle,* which is open to all students. Technologies facilitated distance learning, broadcasting of lectures via internet, teleconferencing, and virtual consulting technologies have been systematically put in use. Both undergraduate and graduate students were offered elective courses on self-employment and entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial competencies were integrated into each study programme's learning outcomes.

MRU engages in fundamental and applied, disciplinary and interdisciplinary research in the areas of social sciences and humanities, technology and biomedicine. Research is carried out under 2010-2014 priority research area of Social Innovations for Global Growth and five research programmes: Justice, Security and Human Rights; Social Technologies; National Sustainable Growth in the Context of Globalisation; Improving the Quality of Life and Advancing Employment Opportunities; Continuity and Change of Values in Global Society. University researchers participate in international and national research programmes and projects and carry out contracted research. In 2013, more than 1,300 research papers were published and more than 80 scientific and Lithuanian EU Presidency events were organized. The open lecture series *Research café* was initiated to popularise research results. Along with local and foreign partners, 6 doctoral study programmes were implemented. E-publications were developed along with open access to research results. Research and student organizations, such as the Academic Ethics Centre, the Student Research Association, the Association of PhD Students and the Alumni Club, operate at MRU.

In 2013, University management was aimed at implementing the priorities set out in MRU strategic activities plan – creation and implementation of new market oriented, distance learning and joint study programmes with foreign universities, development of internationalization, enhancement of the research quality and quantity. In 2013, a new result-based work remuneration system was approved by the MRU Council. It aims to ensure the principles of transparency and objectivity, is in line with the University's strategic goals and was positively evaluated by the European University Association experts.

Regular international evaluations of MRU constitute an important mechanism for monitoring of the effectiveness of the management of the University. In 2013, the evaluation of MRU was carried out by Institutional Evaluation Programme of the European University Association (EUA). EUA experts in their conclusion stated: "The team has enjoyed learning about the unique characteristics and distinctive role of Mykolas Romeris University. Based on what the team has seen during the evaluation process, it remains confident that the university could successfully meet the challenges it is now facing in a constantly changing environment. The team feels that MRU is moving in the right direction and hope that this progress will continue and intensify". The experts presented the propositions for the improvement of the University management.

Since 2013 MRU has been involved in the pilot evaluation of U-Multirank rating system developed by the European Higher Education Area.

In 2013, some structural changes were implemented at MRU. The Faculty of Social Policy was abolished and a new Faculty of Social Technologies was established. The Faculty of Social Technologies includes BMS and four Institutes that continue research and studies formerly carried out by the Faculty of Social Policy. The establishment of the Faculty of Social Technologies is in line with MRU's strategic priority – orientation toward innovative interdisciplinary research and studies in new technologies, media and their impact on societal development.

MRU began to apply the document on Norms of Full Time Equivalent Positions approved in 2012. The document was aimed to link the number of full time equivalent positions with objective indicators, such as the number of students and financial turnover. In 2013, the number of academic and administrative full time equivalent positions was decreased by 11 positions and, as a result, MRU expenses were reduced by 0.5 million Litas per year.

MRU also became the first university in Lithuania to begin using the e-Signature. It allowed optimization of information flows, adjustment of staff functions and launch of online network management. In 2013, the new module of the Document Management System (DVS) was created and implemented. This module allows preparation of applications for public

procurement, participation in projects, organization of cultural and sports events, hosting of guests, etc.

In 2013, a position of Professor Emeritus was established, aiming to honour professors who were actively engaged in research and teaching and made remarkable contributions to the academic community. The first MRU Professor Emeritus titles were awarded to Prof. Dr. Mindaugas Maksimaitis, Prof. Dr. Stasys Puškorius and Prof. Dr. Juozas Žilys.

MRU academic community continued developing its internationalization efforts. 18 bilateral cooperation agreements with foreign universities were signed, thus, expanding opportunities for preparation of new double diploma study programmes as well as joint study and research projects, including the European Commission's programmes, such as Erasmus+ and Horizons 2020.

In 2013, 477 academic and administrative staff members went abroad for secondment and professional training.

In addition, MRU organised international and Lithuanian Presidency to the EU Council events, such as Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities, the European University Association's (EUA) Board, Council and Lithuanian academic community meeting, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) Advisory Committee meeting, international research conferences on Japan and Europe in Global Communication and on Understanding Contemporary India: Challenges and Perspectives.

158 foreign visiting and exchange professors came to MRU and their visits were funded by the Erasmus programme, the Research Council of Lithuania, the Ministry of Education and Science, etc. 85 foreign partner delegations visited the University. MRU actively cooperated with the Embassies of France, Germany, Japan, China, Azerbaijan and the USA.

In 2013, MRU academic staff continued implementing national and international projects, generated ideas, developed and realized joint study programmes with foreign higher education institutions.

The projects were aimed at improving the quality and internationalisation of research and studies. 4 Master level study programmes were updated and implemented, 5 additional joint Master level programmes are being prepared, and the teaching staff qualifications were developed.

MRU carried out projects with foreign universities, developed partnerships not only with the West, but also with the East. International projects are implemented together with Bologna University in Italy, the Free Berlin University, Edinburgh University, Lund University, the University of Maribor, Bangladesh's Chittagong University, Pokhara and Katmandu universities in Nepal, the Yanka Kupala State University in Belarus, Free International University in Moldova, etc.

In 2013, one of the largest University strategic projects – development of MRU Studies, Research and International Mobility Centre – was launched. The project is aimed at developing innovative theoretical and practical solutions to promote entrepreneurial society and digital generation of professionals able not only to apply but also to create perspective social technologies.

In 2013, MRU developed services to the society. The main income from the sale of services were funds received from training courses and research. The total amount of signed and developing contracts was 1.868.079,50 Litas (520.000 Litas are in the process of developing). In 2013, the number of signed service agreements grew up twice, as compared with 2012. Majority of service agreements were signed with ministries and other public sector institutions.

Contracts for applied research were primarily signed with private companies and co-funded by the Science, Innovation and Technology Agency under the measure Inočekiai LT.

In 2012–2013, the University consolidated its position in the increasingly competitive Lithuanian higher education market. MRU increased its market share from 16.78 percent (in 2011–2012) to 17.45 percent (in 2012–2013).

In 2013, MRU graduates were successful in the job market. Only 186 MRU graduates were registered in the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, as of the data of January 1st, 2014 (on January 1st, 2013, the total number was 208), and this makes up barely 4.92 percent of all Lithuanian university graduates registered in the Lithuanian Labour Exchange and only 0.09 percent of all registered unemployed.

The launch of MRU-Middlesex University Business and Media School (BMS) in 2013 strengthened the positioning of Social Technologies in the University that was an important factor in forming MRU study programme package as well as signing cooperation agreements with foreign universities (in this area, significant steps forward were made in cooperation with Dongseo University, South Korea).

MRU internet website www.mruni.eu remained the most visited website among Lithuania's universities and MRU social networks among the most active in the country.

In 2013, MRU's Library services were developed and expanded. A well-coordinated education service system was created, helping Library users, in and outside classrooms, to improve their skills and abilities (computer, technology, information literacy). 2.088 students, researchers, high school pupils and librarians took part in trainings organized in English and Lithuanian by MRU's Library in 2013. Users were provided with additional work places for independent research and studies and unlimited access to traditional and electronic knowledge sources. The Library subscribes to various information sources. Also, new digital resources were opened and e-services were offered for users. The need for electronic information sources and development of information and telecommunication technologies has formed a new and active group of distance users. In 2013, electronic Library services proved to be popular and were used 3 315 904 times.

The most important activities in the area of developing and implementing Information Technologies in 2013 were related to information system STUDIJOS (Studies) and the new Admissions module, including signing of contracts. In addition, the Student self-service module was updated along with the Studies Calendar. Implementation began of *Google Apps for Education* services, which work on the basis of cloud computing. A new database archive was implemented along with a reserve copy system and an updated virtualization platform.

Student personal growth and development is enhanced by MRU. Academic community members take part in numerous cultural events. MRU's Cultural Activities Centre includes 11 dance, theatre and music groups that attract hundreds of students and provide opportunities for developing their talents and abilities. In cooperation with international students, many events and activities were organized that brought foreign cultures and nations closer to MRU. In 2013, MRU's Theatre was established. The first performance called "Threshold of Life" about the continuous balancing between existence and non-existence and the desire to live based on Joshua Sobol play called "Ghetto" (directed by Julius Dautartas) was staged and attracted many spectators.

The University is also well known for the achievements of its athletes.

In 2013, MRU student rowers, who took part in the Universiade, brought home 5 gold medals. 24 MRU athletes represented Lithuanian students at the Universiade (the largest number of any institution of higher education). The most noteworthy event of this sports season

was MRU Law Faculty graduate Justinas Kinderis' world champion medal (modern pentathlon), which guaranteed him the title of the Best 2013 Lithuanian Athlete and the title of the best world pentathlon athlete. When selecting Lithuania's best student athletes, 5 MRU students were awarded from 2nd to 6th place among the top 10 Best Student Athletes.

MRU Women Team was awarded 6th place in the European Chess Championships. Other MRU Teams (Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer) also made it to the top of the League: the Men's Basketball Team became the Champions of Lithuania's Student Basketball League, Women – winners of bronze medals; Men's Volleyball Team – the Vice-champions of the Student Volleyball League; Beach Volleyball Team became champions, Women – 3rd place winners, Soccer – 3rd place winners in Lithuanian Football Federation South zone's 2nd league.

MRU pays much attention to social welfare of its academic community and financially supports students who are orphans and those with disabilities. In 2013, 59 students with disabilities were given special care and attention. The Social Affairs Commission considered students' requests for reducing tuition or Student house fees. In the 2012-2013 academic year's spring semester, 231 students had their tuition fees waived or reduced in the total amount of 237.8 thousand Litas, and during the 2013-2014 academic year's fall semester the total amount reached 256.3 thousand Litas. During the 2012-2013 academic year's spring semester, 93 students were exempted from Student House fees (the total amount was 46 thousand Litas), and during the 2012-2013 academic year's autumn semester 60 students were exempted from Student House fees (the total amount was 19.1 thousand Litas).