



"Through others we become ourselves."

Lev S. Vygotsky

International Advisory Committee 2013

In late May, HSE held the third annual meeting of the International Advisory Committee (IAC). The purpose it pursued was to give an expert opinion and recommendations on the development of the University. Like last year, the meeting was constructed as a series of presentations followed by a discussion

The meeting was opened by the Rector of the Higher School of Economics Yaroslav Kuzminov, who presented the international experts, and noted that the current meeting of the IAC is held in an atmosphere of HSE's training to participate in the competition "Top 100", aimed at discovering the best Russian universities that are able to engage in international competition and be included in the hundred of the best research universities of the world.

The working part of the meeting was opened by the supervisor of the Institute of Education Isak Froumin, highlighting the recent initiatives of the Russian government in the development of higher education and counter-initiatives of HSE. As a promising new educational and scientific policy, he noted the support of the model of a research university and the internationalization of university education, the fight against plagiarism and low-quality universities and university funding on a competitive basis. To be competitive in the academic market, HSE is working on measures to attract young professionals into the higher education system, the introduction of national and international academic mobility programs and educational programs, improvement of graduate and PhD-programs, the development of various forms of support to students, graduates and young professionals, applied research and projects. Alexey Novoseltsev in his presentation described the changes that are planned in the program of the University.

One of the most discussed topics of the IAC meeting this year was the personnel policy of HSE. It was presented in the report of the vice rector Vadim Radaev. The aim of HSE personnel policy, he said, is the integration into the global academic market, which requires an increase in the capacity of research and teaching activities of the University. At present, the problem is a relatively low publication activity of HSE employees in international peer-review journals, scant involvement in international research, a small (3%) number of foreign teachers and the lack of recognition by the scientific community.

The situation is expected to be improved by the implementation of principles of international recruitment, the involvement of experts from the international academic market, the development of academic mobility and the organization of various training courses. Particular attention was paid to the new principles of contractual policies partly implemented in the recent evaluation of the teaching staff.

Dear colleagues,

In late May, HSE held the third annual meeting of the International Advisory Committee (IAC), the task of which was to give an expert opinion and recommendations on the development of the University. This year one of the most discussed topics of the IAC meeting was the personnel policy of HSE, which aims at the integration of the University into the global academic market. Such a goal requires an increase in the capacity of research and teaching activities, and the facilitation of the internationalization processes. Read more of the ways the university is planning to tackle the problems of the current relatively low publication activity of HSE employees in international peer-review journals, scant involvement in international research, and, as a result, the lack of recognition by the world scientific community.

We are also proud to continue our interview series. This time our colleague Christopher S. Swader, an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Sociology and a Senior Research Fellow at the Laboratory for Comparative Social Research (HSE Branch in Saint-Petersburg) has kindly shared his work experience and views with us.

This is the last issue of the HSE LooK for the current academic year. Hopefully, our first three issues got you interested, we lived up to your expectations and you will anticipate more LooKs starting from September 2013. During July and August we are with you and open to your suggestions, though. If you still have questions on the internal life of the University, the processes within the walls of HSE or troubles getting your work-related problems solved, you are more than welcome to contact us <http://iai.hse.ru/>. Your feedback inspires us and your sharing your opinion would mean a lot. So please, don't hesitate to write, call, answer the questionnaire on our website or come by to discuss the obstacles you might be facing in a friendly atmosphere over a cup of coffee.

Have a great summer,

Yulia Grinkevich
Director for International Academic Integration

The main faculty evaluation criteria were the presence of a degree, the number of scientific publications (depending on their position) and teaching rating among the students. In the nearest future, the list of criteria is planned to be complemented by regular training and use of Learning Management System (LMS). The new contract policy includes promotion of research and innovation in teaching through effective teaching contracts (with an increased salary and improved social benefits), financial and academic support to young teachers, varying the amount of workload and duration of contracts, depending on the degree of conformity with the essential criteria.

The Director of International Academic integration Yulia Grinkevich made a presentation of the "New Administrators" programme, based on the idea of creating competitive conditions for attracting foreign HSE students and teachers.

The presentation of the vice rector Maria Yudkevich was dedicated to the internationalization of research. The problems of international recruiting were considered and new approaches to the organization of academic expertise, increase of publication activity and impact studies were proposed. The purpose of the international recruitment is to raise the level of academic research to the international standards and obtain the recognition of HSE by the international scientific community as a research university. To acquire internationally recruited staff the University must actively position itself in the international job market, turn to generally accepted international practice of faculty employment on a competitive basis, and to create attractive, competitive conditions, which requires elimination of a number of linguistic and bureaucratic barriers.

Two instances are responsible for the peer-reviewed scientific results of HSE staff- the Basic Research Program, carrying out institutional support to project teams and research centers, and the Academic Fund, providing grant support to individual projects. In the future it is planned to create a unified system of academic expertise with an extensive base of international and national experts who meet qualification requirements.

In order to improve the publication activity support for English-language publishing is provided, programs for the development academic writing and presenting research results at international conferences are being worked out.

A joint presentation of the Director for International Cooperation Olga Moshkova and the vice rector Sergey Roshchin addressed the assessment of the export potential of HSE training programs, including new approaches to attract foreign students. It was noted that one of the main characteristics of the modern world-class universities is the high level of internationalization. Around the world, the number of foreign students studying abroad is constantly growing (experts predict that by 2025 it will reach 8 million), together with the increasing competition and universities for these students. The process of exporting Russian educational programs is hampered by the absence of a complex and coherent government policy to promote Russian education abroad and by the insufficiency of the existing regulatory and legal base for large-scale involvement of foreign students. Even though Russia remains the most attractive country to students from Eastern Europe.

From 2009 to 2012 the number of foreign students at HSE has tripled, reaching 3% of the total number of students. By 2020 it is planned to increase this index to 15%. The University has 30 double degree programs with partner universities, it is involved in more than 40 agreements on student exchange, our teachers have developed about 300 courses in English for undergraduate and graduate programs. However, the dual degree programs and courses taught in English, are focused primarily on the Russian students, and foreign students are more and more participating in HSE's short-term programs (summer schools, intensive language courses, etc.). The focus areas in highest demand among foreign students are management, business administration, IT. These courses are not taught in the Higher School of Economics in English. Speakers pointed out that one of the major challenges facing HSE is to create educational products that are competitive in the world market. In the future we plan to expand the thematic clusters of English-language courses, introduce new educational formats, launch bilateral double degree program, develop multi-disciplinary educational programs, expand academic postgraduate programs and introduce mechanisms for the internationalization of graduate programs.

In addition, HSE will actively conduct marketing of educational services, expanding its presence in numerous regions of the world. It will exploit the opportunities of interuniversity cooperation and explore new mechanisms for involving talented foreign students to the University (for example, create foreign training centers).

The second day of the meeting began with a presentation on international positioning HSE by the vice rector Ksenia Muratova. After this there was a meeting of the members of the IAC, where expert recommendations on further development of HSE were worked out.

In their interview to the informational bulletin "Okna Rosta" experts Eric S. Maskin, Philip G. Altbach and Timothy Colton shared their view on HSE's achievements during last year.

Eric S. Maskin: *"It is very impressive. This is a university, which seems determined to improve. During the last few years HSE has taken some important additional steps to upgrade and move to a new level."*

Philip G. Altbach: *"It's very difficult to assess in detail, but I am very impressed by the elected course of HSE. Some of the plans that had been discussed with us last year are implemented. Some of the ideas, such as the "New Administrators" are quite promising. We are all quite convinced that this institution is one of the most active ones in Russia, it is looking outward, trying to internationalize, focusing on global issues, working with very good international institutions."*

Timothy J. Colton: *"We were very impressed by how much HSE has accomplished. Many organizations have plans and they are very good at coming up with ideas and proposing to move in a certain direction. HSE not just does that, but implements its plans. And quite quickly - once they have arrived at a choice, they start to execute it more or less immediately. I think that's a rather rare quality, especially in Russia. It is impressive, taken that Russian organizations sometimes have difficulty moving from general idea to strategy. HSE is quite different in that regard."*

Anna Shestakova and Vladimir Seliverstov

Editorial staff of the informational bulletin "Okna Rosta"

Translation by **Elena Eliseeva**

“IT’S EXCITING TO SEE THINGS CHANGE”

Christopher S. Swader is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Sociology and a Senior Research Fellow at the Laboratory for Comparative Social Research (HSE Branch in Saint-Petersburg). Christopher kindly shared his experience and expectations with the HSE Look.

How come you chose HSE?

When I was back in Bremen and I got an advertisement in my inbox, I was honestly ready to dismiss it. But I looked at the Higher School of Economics, and I translated the payment that was offered into euros and saw that it would be competitive with what I would be making in Germany if I stayed there. I also saw the low teaching load and the focus on research, which is very important. All three of these aspects together were opposite to my preconceptions of what academia in Russia is like.

You have been here for almost 2,5 years, how can you estimate your achievements?

It was actually what I expected in very good ways. I think I got what the ad promised and what I was expecting, meaning really strong focus on research in the last few years. In my previous job I was overwhelmed by administration, and here I am overwhelmed by research. And that is what I prefer.

As to the achievements, I just published a book based on my dissertation and launched some other research projects. For example, I had a project with the Academic Fund called Commodification of Intimacy, and we were comparing Moscow, Kiev, and Minsk in terms of how everyday dating becomes more economized, and how people begin to calculate and look to date for profit. It’s about how normal everyday relationships become more materialized and how people try to milk each other for more. In a total of 2 years I had perhaps as many as 10 students that were working with me on this, and we had an article published last December internationally and another one published in the Russian journal “Economicheskaya Sotsiologiya”. There are 3 more written with the students, which are still in the oven; we’re working on them and trying to get them done by the end of the year.

Involving students into my research has a lot of advantages. You can always arrange it as an umbrella project, meaning everyone has their own little piece, and then they come together in the end into a big project. Or you can have one unified project that works in stages. I prefer the second approach. It is a lot more work, because as project head you have to make sure that each stage is done in a particular way. It also means that we work together more intensively. The students have a major role in gathering all the data and running certain events. Something fun that we did and are still scientifically analyzing it is a speed dating event. We ran this in September of 2011. We cooperated with a local Moscow speed dating company, 13 women and 12 men came and we had tape recorders at each table (of course, everyone signed up & agreed to this). We are now in the process of analyzing

the conversations, how people were dressed, the surveys they filled out, and connecting this information to who chooses who. The students loved the part of arranging the event and sitting in the corners there, observing everyone.

Honestly, I’ve been extremely busy and this was really good, I have done what I was hoping to.

Is getting students involved in the research here different?

Apart from the cultural differences, it is easier to get students here interested in projects. That’s absolutely the case. Every time I sent out an announcement for one project or another, I always get a lot of responses and CVs that are sent in. The trickier part is actually managing the project once the students are in. The students are really interested in gaining experience, getting data and learning to analyze it, and this is one of the advantages of working here.

You spoke of research, what about your teaching experience?

My teaching experience has been pretty good as well. I teach “Life Course” sociology at the BA level. I give lectures and seminars are a part of the course. It is a big research field in Germany, Northern Europe and the United States, but in Russia it is relatively small. Only few faculty members and students here had been working in this field. I think it might have been the first time it was explicitly taught in Russia. The students always come wondering what kind of exotic subject this is, and I try to get them interested in something different than what they’ve learned. It seems to me that HSE has been able to draw some of the best students all over Russia and this is really impressive.

Before, I was mainly teaching in Germany. The academic culture there is very different. Due to the movement in 1968 that reversed some of the traditionalism and authority in German universities, students are really used to expressing their opinion, debating and arguing with the professor. There is a lot of discussion; students are expected to critique you.

Here it seems to me that people are not used to that. They love it, they love the expectation that they should be talking more on the subject in class. Not all of them are used to it, but I found they jump for that opportunity. Other differences include debating style. Sometimes the students were overly-eager in debates, and were very forcefully making their point. Maybe, they weren’t always as diplomatic as they would be expected to be in Germany.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of working at HSE?

The biggest advantage is by far the teaching and researching mix. The balance is in favour of research, I don’t know anywhere in the world with such a privileged position for junior professors. Often people, who teach one or two courses a year as we do here are nearing retirement and have written 10 books, so we are extremely lucky in this way.

Another one is that for a social scientist, who would potentially be working here it’s the dynamism. It is very exciting, the country and the city within the country, and another place of development is the University itself. It’s exciting to see things change. It is nice that people come together and have a common goal and you can see things happen. This is not something you will find at very established University that are hundreds of years old and are very proud of their traditions and are unwilling to move in any direction.

Another advantage is the students. Many are extremely bright, with a fantastic level of English, and these are very good in sociology.

Disadvantages... well, what does the future look like in the country? No one knows. If you're an international staff member and with a family, you have to know how to plan. Where will my wife work? Where will my child go to school? Especially, if you keep in mind that this still is a new project at the University. Sometimes the international staff becomes a lightning rod for those who are upset that something else is going on at the university, so perhaps not all political forces are always supporting us in every single way. If the wind suddenly changes, we might have to go too, but, who knows?

Normally when people have to mention disadvantages they say something about bureaucracy as well. Just for fun, I'll mention it! But, honestly, I think that I have more time to do research here than I did before, because the teaching load is less. Yes, I have to spend more time running to weird parts of the town and turning in documents and copies of things I've already given many times. But, on the other hand I have to teach less. So I think the balance is still positive. And there are people who are working to solve these bureaucratic problems that come up.

Have you noticed any changes in HSE since you came?

There have been big changes in sociology. Rafael Mrowczynski and I were the first internationally hired staff in sociology here, and now there are seven of us on the tenure track, in addition to post docs. Lots of things have changed. We now have an English language sociology seminar, which didn't exist before. We invite prominent people from all parts of the world to come, which is very nice, I can present in English there. There is also the Laboratory of Comparative Social Research, which I am a part of. It was established since I came. It is another fantastic place, a second home for me. It makes it easier to get research done here and learn new things.

Little organizational things have changed in the University, for example we were reassigned. When I came we were assigned to a "kathedra" (subdepartment), and now we're assigned centrally to the faculty. It allows us to work with anyone in the whole department and is more

efficient. I have ties with people at nearly every sub-department.

Given the chance, would you personally improve anything at HSE?

I feel fine here, and I always have. I see that HSE is still arranging its teaching in the same way it is done in the German system, with "kathedras", which are like little kingdoms. Here, perhaps it is not efficient for research, as there are also laboratories, which try to do research as well. These "kathedras" are one of the biggest differences between Russian academic structure and the Anglo-American one.

I've also mentioned a problem of planning. If a British or an American person wants to travel to Russia, they need to get a visa and plan ahead. Some of them don't know what Russia is like and they are a little bit afraid. So they need at least 6 months to plan. But on the other hand, the process of applying for summer schools or conferences seems to work on a much tighter timeframe. The money is released a couple months or a week before sometimes, and that is tricky, because you can't invite someone if you don't have guaranteed funding. Especially if it's someone really prominent. So it's hard to plan those things sometimes.

How do you see yourself in 5 years from now?

I could easily see myself here. It depends on family things as well, whether my wife is still happy here and we will find a place for our child to go to school, she is three months now and every day it is something new. The real question is long-term security. The whole point of the tenure system is that you can focus on long-term research projects and be settled somewhere. This way you can plan ahead, for example if you apply for a long-term grant and start a project for 5 or 10 years and gather data. This is difficult to do if you don't have pension or social security for after you retire, or get sick. This type of dynamic environment is maybe most suited for people in their early and mid careers.

Interview by **Yulia Grinkevich**

Text by **Elena Eliseeva**

Congratulations!

Dr. Valentina Kuskova, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Management, and **Dr. Fabian Slonimczyk**, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Economics **have become the Outstanding Author Contribution Award Winners** of the Emerald Literati Network, 2013.

Dr. Kuskova's "**When West Meets East: Methods of Assessing Group Variation in Comparative Emerging Markets Research**" published in *Research Methodology in Strategy and Management* and Dr. Slonimczyk's "**Chapter 2. The Effect of Taxation on Informal Employment: Evidence from the Russian Flat Tax Reform**" published in *Research in Labor Economics* have received Awards for Excellence.

The papers have been selected as they were ones of the most impressive pieces of work received by the Emerald Literati Network throughout 2012.

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