

External Evaluation Committee Report

The Committee have the impression of a very strong collegial feel with a high degree of professionalism across the board from staff and faculty. The Center has achieved impressively well in a very difficult financial context. The current result of successful integration is that there now exists good coherent team work. The Center is thus in a good position to promote the strategy for the future which is currently emerging, but of course this will involve the need for more resources and investment. Insofar as the committee is concerned such investment would be richly returned with results.

Internationalization is well attested by publications, many of them in foreign publishers and indexed in reference databases; The organization of scientific meetings with the collaboration of specialists from various nationalities and many carried out abroad and participation in international scientific meetings, the projects that have the partnership and some the financing of foreign public and private entities; By the networks in which CEI-IUL researchers collaborate and through the admission, collaboration and supervision of researchers of multiple nationalities.

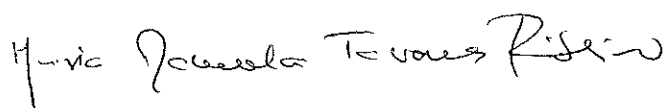
In more specific terms, we have the following constructive points to make:

- The committee noted that the statistics on scientific outputs show a good positive trajectory with increasing outputs in terms of articles, PhDs, external grants, and books. Only further comment here is that publications in the English language might be placed more ambitiously.
- Committee noted that the integration process between African and International studies has been done smoothly and with great success; it should not be underestimated how challenging how such integration processes can be.
- The committee has a positive view about the orientation to enlarge the research line of the center to Asia and Middle East and to create a research line on Latin America and the Caribbean. In the latter case, the committee consider that this research line would be articulated notably with the Europe and Transatlantic research line.
- The committee noted a recurrent theme iterated by staff, faculty and research students alike was the invigorating aspect of the interdisciplinary character of the Center. This could be used to promote the Center and attract high quality faculty and research students. There is clear benefit to be had from conversations between disciplines, including benefits for the discussion of contemporary issues and policies.
- The Center conducts a commendable number of conferences and seminars and has a strong program of public engagement. This part reflects the ethos of the director who rightly believes that public funding demands public dissemination, however there should be an ongoing discussion about the cost-effectiveness of these programs.
- In discussions with staff there was a high degree of satisfaction, even though circumstances are not ideal because of short term contracts. In time, hopefully short-term contracts will become the exception rather than the rule. When the center looks to make permanent appointments, there should be further consideration of staff development in terms of training courses.

- Following on from the previous points, considering the current success in achieving external funding awards, there will come a time when the center should consider the appointment of a director for post-awards management.
- International studies is a major attraction for students and faculty alike, particularly in the interdisciplinary form that is found at the Center. This should be used as vigorously as possible to promote the Center. In doing so, it should take care to distinguish international studies from IR. Ideally the Center should seek to develop an international studies PhD, which will draw on a recruitment pool different to pools drawn currently on by existing departments and schools. This seems to us a complete win-win situation.
- The Center might consider offering small fieldwork grants to PhD students where appropriate. These need be nothing than modest amounts between 2000-3000.
- The Center might consider creating opportunities for PhDs students to make presentations and/ or lectures at some point during their program to help prepare them for later academic careers.
- The launch of the MA program has been commendably successful and should provide candidates for the PhD programs. While the committee did not see any MA students as such, we did receive excellent feedback from one of the MA graduates who is now undertaking a PhD program. Not only was the report that this particular MA student enjoyed the course, but the candidate also felt that such feelings were more or less universal.
- Report from the PhD students was very positive, in particular they stressed the importance of the interdisciplinary nature of their program. The one student who was pursuing a non-interdisciplinary PhD also expressed deep satisfaction with his experience, which is a good indication of the collegiality of the Center and the PhD cohort. Staff were perceived by the PhD students as being open, approachable and extremely helpful.

Lisbon, 31st August, 2017.

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