

**Η ΕΜΠΕΙΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΠΡΩΤΗΣ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΗΣ
ΑΞΙΟΛΟΓΗΣΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΤΜΗΜΑΤΟΣ
ΓΕΩΠΟΝΙΚΗΣ ΒΙΟΤΕΧΝΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ:
ΕΡΕΘΙΣΜΑΤΑ & ΠΡΟΚΛΗΣΕΙΣ ΓΙΑ
ΠΕΡΑΙΤΕΡΩ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗ**

**Τμήμα Γεωπονικής Βιοτεχνολογίας
ΓΠΑ**

Ιούνιος 2012



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ	HELLENIC REPUBLIC
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ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ	FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT (final report 05-12-2011)

DEPARTMENT | [AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY](#) |

UNIVERSITY | [AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS](#) |

Version 2.0
October 2011

BRIEF OVERVIEW

- The site visit was conducted between the 3rd and the 7th of October 2011
- **External Evaluation Committee**
 1. Prof. **Christos A. Ouzounis** Principal Investigator – CERTH and Professor, CCBR, University of Toronto, Canada (Coordinator)
 2. Prof. **Spyridon Agathos** Professor of Biotechnology, University of Louvain, Louvain, Belgium
 3. Dr. **Mattheos Koffas** Associate Professor, Center for Biotechnology & Interdisciplinary Studies, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), USA
 4. Dr. **Anastasios Papageorgiou** Professor of Structural Biology, Biocity Turku, University of Turku, Turku, Finland
 5. Prof. **Athanasios Theologis** Professor Emeritus, Department of Plant & Microbial Biology, University of California - Berkeley, USA

PROS AND CONS

- **Curriculum**
- **Teaching-Examination system**
- **Research**
- **General**

CURRICULUM (PROS)

- **Well-planned and broad curriculum to prepare agricultural biotechnologists** with a strong background in the fundamentals in plant molecular biology, chemistry and physics
- **The biotechnological and agronomical aspects of the undergraduate curriculum have been recently more balanced**, even though there is still debate as to the optimal mix between the two
- Attractive features of the curriculum are the **4-month practical exercise** is required as well as a final-year **research dissertation**, which includes the preparation of a final written document and an oral presentation
- The **existing curriculum** serves the goals of the Department, is of **high standards** and is **executed efficiently**
- The curriculum is **coherent** and **focused** on preparing graduates with experimental **skills in laboratory** and **applied biological processes** for agricultural practice, industry and other sectors

CURRICULUM (CONS & IMPROVEMENTS)

- The undergraduate students seem to prefer an earlier exposure to biotechnology-oriented subjects. One possibility might be to give an introductory survey course on **Agricultural Biotechnology** (or **Applied Biotechnology**) in each of the two first years
- The right **balance between agricultural and biotechnological subjects** especially during the first 6 semesters
- **Reduction of the redundancy** in the curriculum (less “swelling”) and **avoidance of overlapping** context between undergraduate and postgraduate programs
- **Formal mechanism for continuous student academic counseling** (academic advisors should be appointed to each student).
- A certain **long-term vision** regarding the curriculum might be required in the near future, given the eminent changes in the educational system nationally

TEACHING-EXAMINATION SYSTEM (PROS)

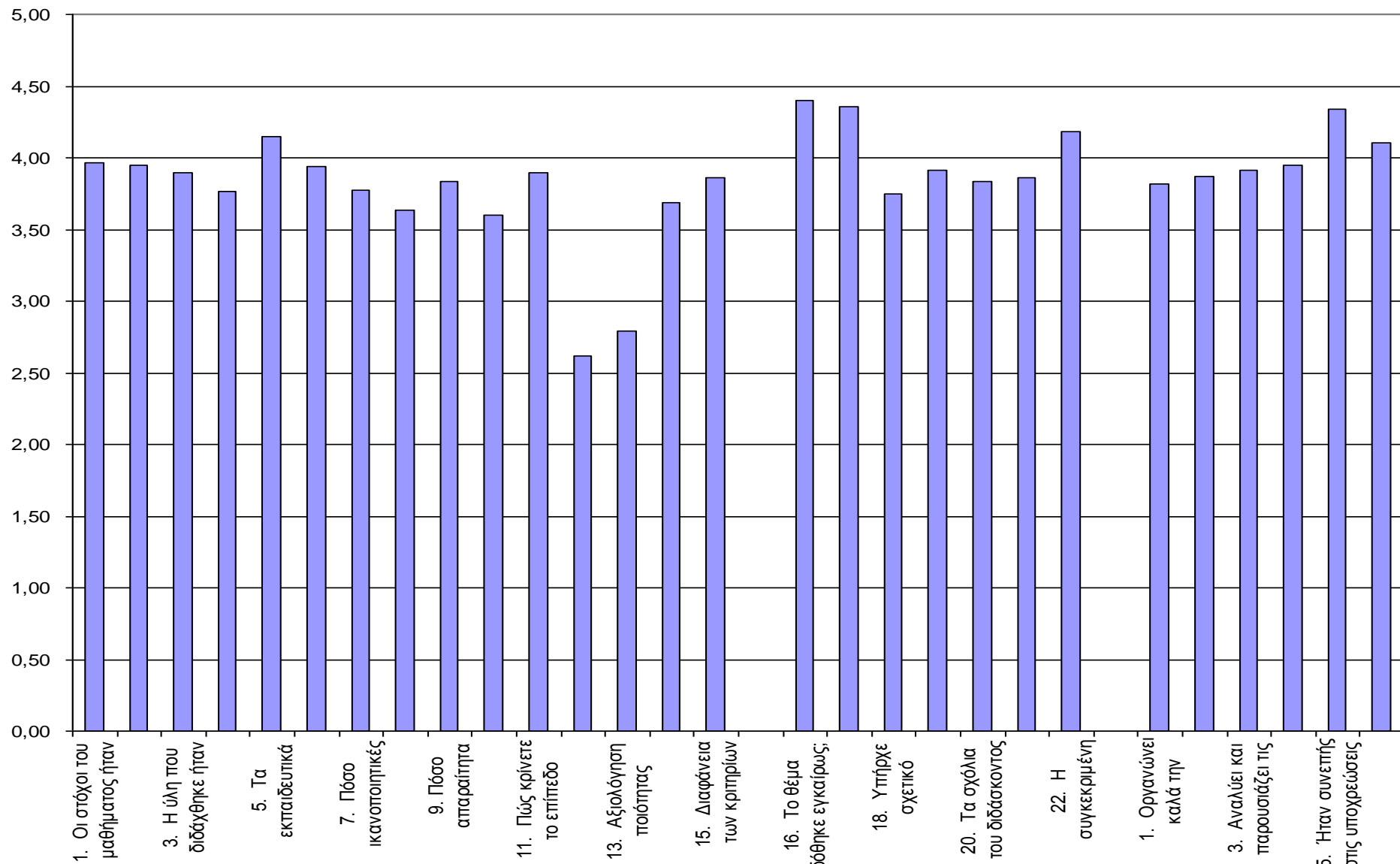
- Most of the faculty members are **well-trained** and **committed to teaching, research, and outreach activities**
- The presence of **well-trained** and **experienced laboratory assistants** meets the needs for **teaching** the various subjects, both theoretical and especially laboratory courses
- The **faculty members seem to respond to the students' feedback** on curriculum issues
- The Committee appreciates the **experimental/laboratory orientation of the Department**
- The **teaching staff** is basically **adequate**
- Faculty and students seem to be getting along very well
- **Resources** such as classrooms, teaching equipment and information technologies are generally **adequate** and are **used effectively** for achieving their teaching goals
- All faculty and other supporting personnel appear **enthusiastic and up-to-date** in pursuing their **educational aims**

TEACHING-EXAMINATION SYSTEM (PROS) CONTINUED....

- Extensive use of the **internet, library resources** and **presentation facilities** is the norm
- The faculty members generally use **high quality textbooks** that are **widely acceptable by the international scientific community**, several of which have been translated into Greek
- Overall, the **teaching process is of high standards**

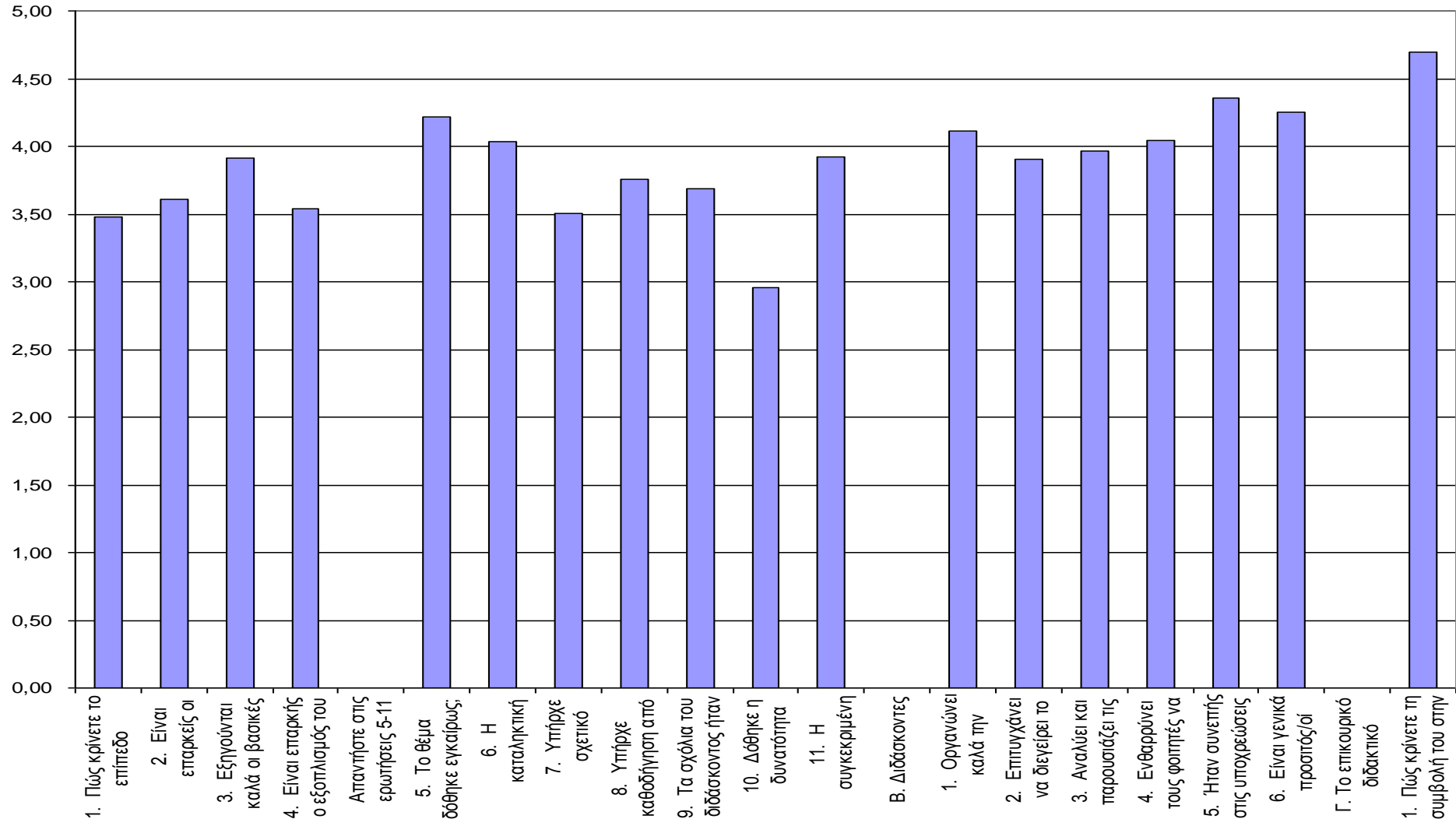
STUDENT EVALUATION – THEORY

WINTER SEMESTER 2010-2011



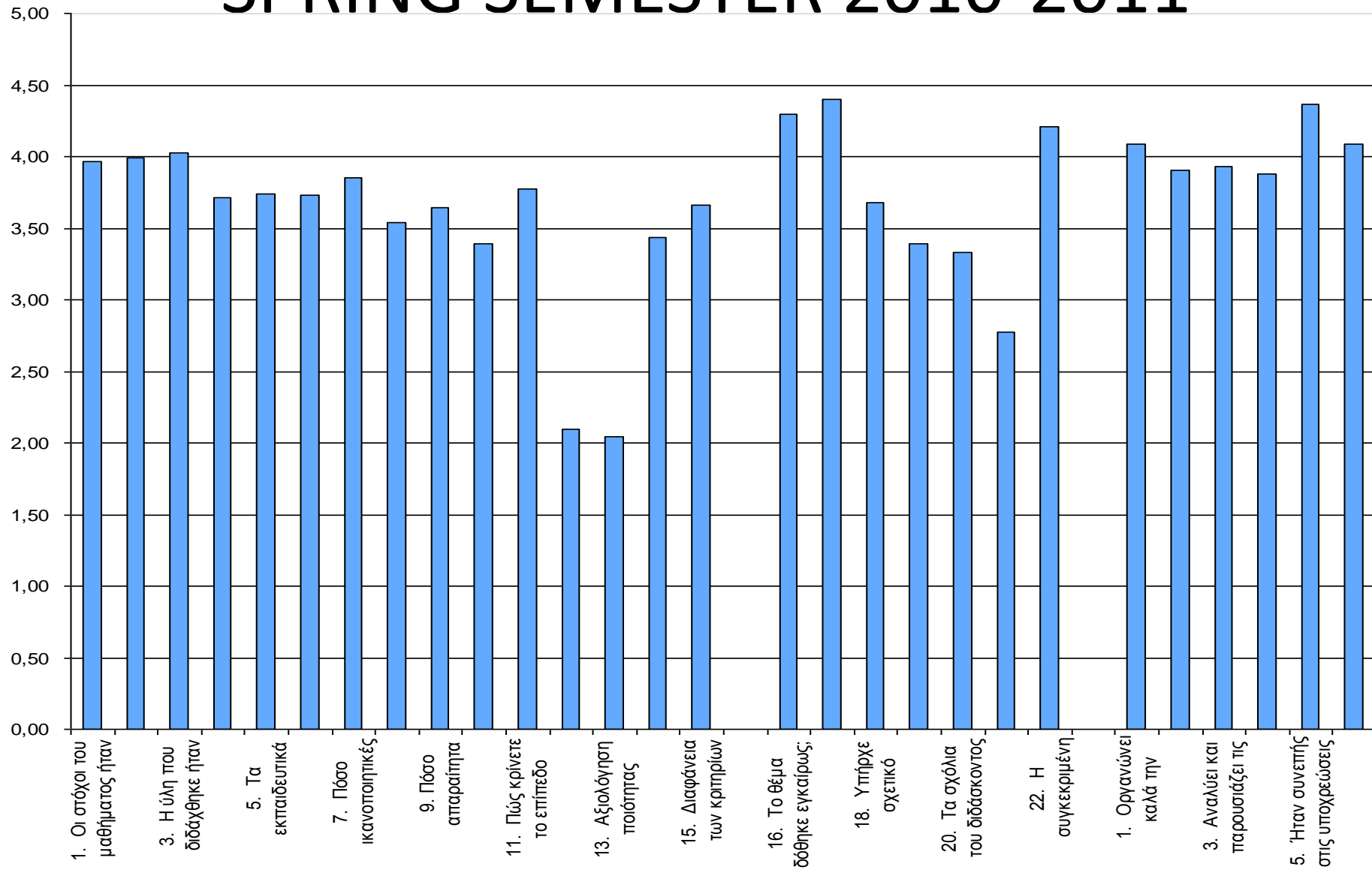
STUDENT EVALUATION – LABORATORY

WINTER SEMESTER 2010-2011



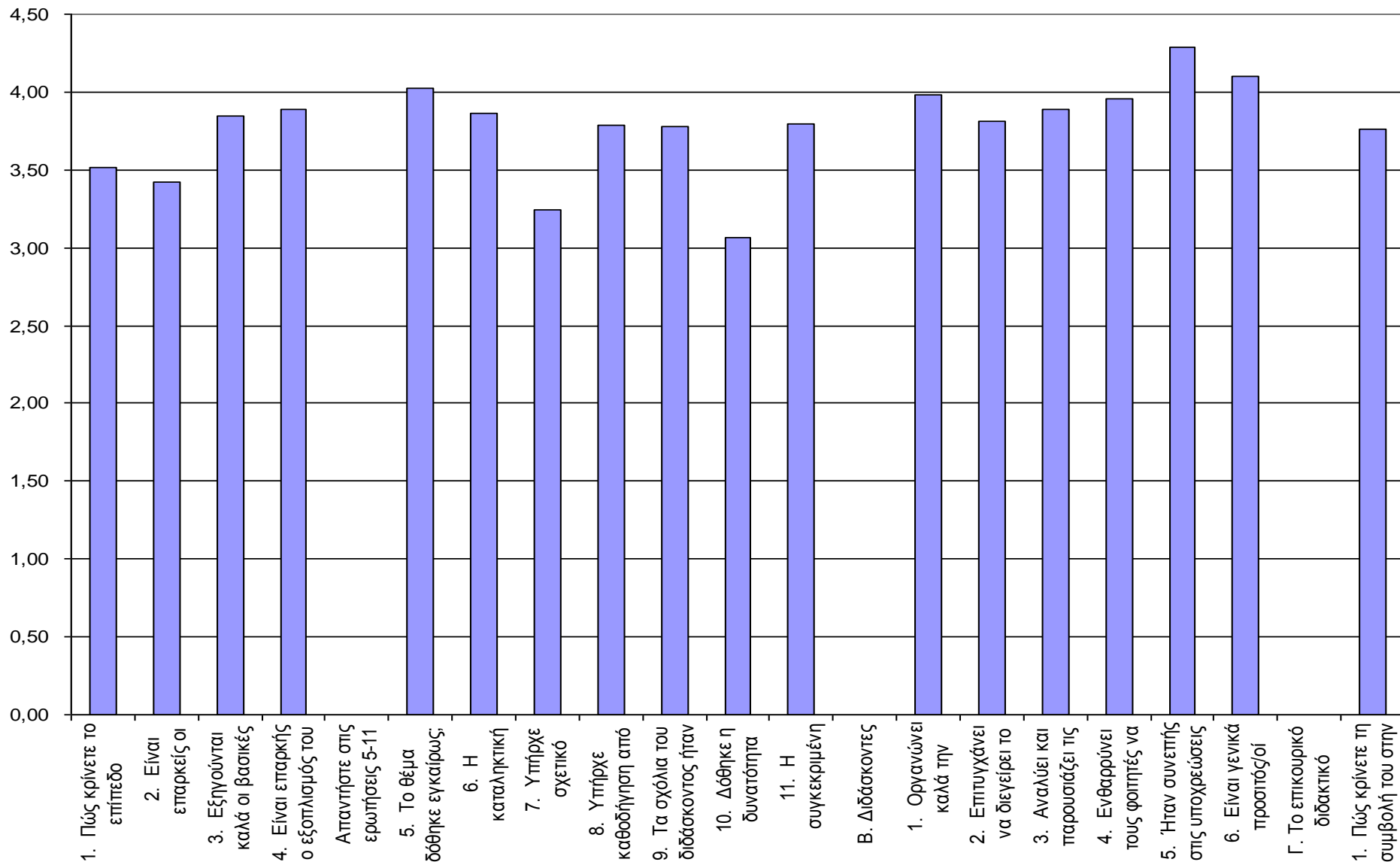
STUDENT EVALUATION – THEORY

SPRING SEMESTER 2010-2011



STUDENT EVALUATION – LABORATORY

SPRING SEMESTER 2010-2011



TEACHING-EXAMINATION SYSTEM (CONS & IMPROVEMENTS)

- Appropriate measures towards **increasing lecture attendance** (quizzes, mid-term evaluation, change of examination system)
- Mostly emphasis is placed on final exams. Each student should be examined on at least two different occasions, for example **one midterm exam** and **one final exam**
- The DAB makes an effort to use textbooks that are up-to-date, although **in a few cases the notes and other material used were out-of-date**
- **More extensive use of English** in post-graduate teaching could be beneficial for both Greek and international students. This can also be an **advantageous element** in attracting more foreign students at all levels
- **Mobility & exchange programs**, primarily because of **limited or non-existent international accords** between AUA and foreign universities. An effort should be made to encourage mobility further
- **Improve (lower) the ratio of students:professors and reduction of teaching load** (more time investment in research and grant writing)
- The results of the **students' evaluations** should be publicized and considered for the improvement of teaching efficiency

RESEARCH (PROS)

- Most faculty members have the **ambition to publish high quality peer-review papers**, in the area of their expertise
- The faculty is engaged in **multiple collaborations outside the Department**
- The **publication output is considered at an adequate level, but with ample room for improvement**, given the current average level of 0.8 – 1.8 publications per faculty member and per year
- There are **several funded research projects in progress** that are conducted by about one-half of the faculty members
- There is a **good number of collaborations and networking** within and outside Greece
- There are **publications** of a few groups with **co-authors** from several other centers and Universities, which shows that a core of **dynamic faculty** members is **pursuing high quality and excellence**
- A few faculty members have been able to **excel in their research goals**

RESEARCH (PROS) CONTINUED....

- **Several faculty members are internationally known and visible**, as judged by invitations to review manuscripts for peer-review journals, membership in journal editorial boards, and organization of conferences
- Research is of **high standards** and **internationally competitive**

RESEARCH (CONS & IMPROVEMENTS)

- **Regular Departmental meetings** annual seminar series to be attended by the faculty and students
- **Focused research policy** that can optimize the use of resources and the international presence of the Department in a few, key areas.
- The DAB might consider **reward mechanisms** for laboratory assistants, MSc and PhD students (scholarship funds and/or funding research activities)

GENERAL (PROS)

- In general, **infrastructures are of high standard** while the **location and structure of the AUA** is quite unique and **should be clearly recognized as an asset**
- Some faculty members are involved in **culture and outreach initiatives**
- The **University's Museum and Historical Archives** are **remarkable resources**.
- The publication of the quarterly **magazine "Triptolemos"** constitutes a valuable vehicle for maintaining and expanding **outreach to society**, including the Department's and AUA's alumni
- The **infrastructure and location of campus** should be appreciated as a **value-added asset** and **better promoted for outreach** and other activities

GENERAL (CONS & IMPROVEMENTS)

- **Tighter coordination** between faculty members
- **Tighter connection to industry/market** demands
- Secure **individual office/lab space** for all faculty members (equal treatment policy)
- Increase **budget/resource allocation for maintenance** of core facility/infrastructure
- The Department should appoint a **3-member committee to evaluate every two years the content of the various courses** to ensure that all of them are updated and remain current with the scientific advancements.
- The Department should consider establishing a **4-member advisory committee to formulate its long-term goals**
- The Department should enhance the **safety of all laboratory spaces. Ventilation** should be greatly improved as well as **procedures for the disposal** of the chemicals used. The disposal of chemicals in the sinks should not be allowed
- The Department should allow the **post-graduate students to rotate** in other laboratories

SWOT ANALYSIS

