



INTERNALIZATION STRATEGY UNIVERSITY LUCIAN BLAGA SIBIU

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DISCLAIMER:

The document at hand represents the internationalization strategy of Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu for 2013-2020. As the overall university strategy is being elaborated currently (July, 2013) this document might be adapted in order to comply with the overall university strategy. The overall "acting" framework as well as the methodology used have already been coordinated with the LBUS2020 strategy, thus are to be seen as fixed. Both documents - the LBUS2020 strategy and the Internationalization Strategy - will be subject to vote by the university Senate as soon as they are available in a finale version.

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Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu



An overview

LBUS is a public institution, established in 1990. The origin of LBUS as an academic institution is recorded in the first months of 1990, immediately after the overturn of the political regime in Romania – therefore LBUS is a young university. The University of Sibiu became a legal entity by means of the Romanian Government Decree no. 255 of March 5, 1990 which stipulated that the former Sibiu Higher Education Institute changed into an independent University subordinated to the Ministry of Education. On May 12, 1995 the University of Sibiu was granted the name of the distinguished Romanian writer and philosopher Lucian Blaga.

LBUS encompasses nine faculties organized in departments, with 1012 academic and non-academic staff working with a total number of 17,000 students for bachelor and master degree programs, for the academic year 2012 – 2013.

The strategy of LBUS for creating and consolidating its own patrimony, with concrete objectives for building new spaces and adequate conditions for teaching and research activities was accomplished notwithstanding the global finance crisis with a deep impact upon the educational activities entailed by under-funding. Teaching facilities

were expanded thus reaching a total area of 97.700 m² and the lands surrounding in a total area of 78.594m². Furthermore an investment for the endowment of specialized laboratories added up to more than 30 million RON between 2009 and 2012.

International activities

Since 1990 when the University of Sibiu was established, one of the most important strategic directions, mentioned in the University Charter, has been the development of cooperation with foreign universities – a prerequisite for Sibiu higher education to achieve in short time, prestige, as well as national and international recognition.

Institutional internationalization has thus represented one of the main priorities of the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu included in its strategic development program. Specific actions for the development and strengthening the cooperation with European universities as well as with universities from all over the world have been undertaken on one hand to enable the students and academics to experience other education systems, and on the other hand to promote abroad the educational values of the university in Sibiu.

International activities are still a major goal for LBUS. All collective efforts have been focused on the enhancing the degree of internationalization and on the improvement of the university's visibility abroad. Nowadays, LBUS is a member of the most important international organizations and academic networks.

LBUS is an active member in U-Multirank project aimed to design and test the feasibility of multi-dimensional global ranking of universities worldwide. For the last 4 years LBUS has signed 44 cooperation agreements with countries all over the world and this merely represents half of all partnerships concluded by LBUS so far. MOUs have been signed with universities from Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, South Korea, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, India, Serbia, Liberia, Latvia, Malaysia, Macao, UK, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Moldova, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, USA, Thailand, Taiwan, Ukraine and Cuba.

Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Windows is a program designed to encourage incoming mobilities for students, teachers and staff from Asian countries like Cambodia, Pakistan, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Nepal and India, and LBUS is very well represented in three such programs. The high standards of our university were highly appreciated by international students, illustrated by the positive feedback received.

So far we have implemented four Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Windows programs (EMMA, EMMA East, West and EMMA West 2), and from the academic year 2013-2014, LBUS is a partner to another three-year Erasmus Mundus program.

ERASMUS (European Community Actions for the Mobility of University Students) is part of the Community Education Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and includes actions for European cooperation in higher education. ERASMUS involves the following activities: student mobility and placements, teachers' mobility, training for non-teaching staff, intensive programs, organization of mobility, curricula development and university – business cooperation. ERASMUS supports the development of the European dimension of the undergraduate and postgraduate study programs, covering all disciplines and fields of study.

"Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu gives great importance to students' and teachers' mobilities and undertakes a great variety of activities designed to improve curricula and introduce new topics and courses through transnational collaboration between universities. The Programme fosters not only learning and understanding of the host country, but also a sense of community among students from different countries and LBUS has tried to make this community stronger through the cultural events and workshops organized for both Incoming and Outgoing students.

LBUS has about 300 bilateral agreements signed with 26 European countries and sends annually about 100 students to prestigious universities in the EU and receives around 50-60 students. It should be noted that in recent years, study and placement mobilities for students increased by 100%, and also the number of teaching mobilities increased.

The Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILC) are specialized courses in the less widely used and less taught languages organized in the countries where these languages are used as teaching languages at higher education institutions. The course is intended to help incoming students integrate in the Romanian social environment, thus ensuring a proper and transparent teaching system, facilitating the further development of the European educational area. By offering opportunities to diverse groups of learners and by providing the optimal creative environment for the talented young students that Europe needs, universities are increasingly central to future growth and to the consolidation of Europe's knowledge society. The EILC facilitates the development of innovative practices in education and training, and ensures interaction between Erasmus students in an academic environment.

LBUS successfully organizes Erasmus Intensive Romanian Language Course, every year, since 2009. At the end of the EIRLC students receive a certificate of participation and 5 ECTS. The EIRLC consists of intensive teaching and learning hours of Romanian language through modern and interactive methods. The participants have the opportunity to get in touch with the Romanian cultural environment through organized multicultural evenings, visits to museums, Romanian movies, glass painting workshop, traditional and modern dances workshops, trips, etc.

Development of summer schools is an efficient and effective way in promoting the values and image of LBUS. The Department of International Relations together with Faculty of Economics initiated in the summer of 2012 an Erasmus Intensive Program (IP) entitled Knowledge-based Green Economy: Challenges, Constraints and Opportunities, with three-year duration. The IP aims to discuss different approaches and concepts of dealing with frameworks and models of the Green Economy from a management, economic, application domain – tourism and banking – and from a communication and skills point of view. Special focus will be given to the European situation, which needs to integrate economies on different development levels, additionally to dealing with the effects. The IP will thus offer a suite of specialist presentation and case studies in the fields of Economics and Business Administration, Tourism and Sociology and Cultural Studies improving the educational quality in this field as well as strengthening the European dimension.

Setting up the first Confucius Institute in Romania at LBUS in 2007 represents a successful outcome of a longstanding diplomatic and academic cooperation. The year 2007 is rich in significance for the city of Sibiu – for

the prestigious title of European Capital of Culture as well as for the opportunity to promote the Confucius Institute in Romania at national and international levels. The goal of the Confucius Institute is to promote and intensify intercultural understanding in Romania by offering programs in Chinese language and culture. Thus, the Confucius Institute at LBUS will promote its mission through a variety of educational and cultural activities addressed to students and teaching staff, as well as to the local community and business leaders. The role of the Confucius Institute at LBUS is to build bridges and strengthen Romanian-Chinese interaction at all levels. International exposure to one of the fastest-growing economies in the world – “the Chinese miracle” – is not only relevant but essential for the emergence of a global awareness as well as for preparing graduates to become the future leaders in a competitive world. Students and teaching staff alike will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in Chinese language, culture and society and to gain genuine knowledge about one of the world’s most important competitors.

LBUS places great emphasis on institutional internationalization in order to open up new academic opportunities and visions in view of facilitating the integration of teaching staff, researchers and students into the global academic community by accurately and thoroughly observing international professional and scientific standards. The goal of the Confucius Institute at LBUS is to strengthen the bridge between Romania and China – by a wide and substantiated awareness of Chinese tradition and modernity – mediated by an effective intercultural communication in a global world.

The Confucius Institute represents a strategic advantage for the sustainable development of LBUS in the context of a fierce academic competition in the knowledge-based society. This has been confirmed by the anticipative and visionary thinking of LBUS administration who has chosen to invest – material, financial and human resources – in promoting Chinese language and culture with an essential role in the future global evolution. Therefore, the Confucius Institutes affiliated with a Higher Education Institution have become centers of innovation for the university and for the community alike.

As a result of the successful Romanian-Chinese academic cooperation, actively promoted and strongly supported by LBUS and the Confucius Institute, a new undergraduate study program was set up at the Faculty of Letters and Arts: Chinese-English (2010-2013).

By October 6, 2010 LBUS was signing the Agreement for University Consortium / MOU for University Cooperation, on the occasion of the Pan-Confucius Institute Conference in held at Keimyung University, Republic of Korea, with the common goal of developing stronger ties and increasing understanding among 17 universities in 11 countries - through the exchange of students, faculty and staff members. Participants to the Consortium are: the Keimyung University, University of South Carolina, Western Michigan University, George Mason University, Georgia State University, Webster University, Hokuriku University, Kansai Gaidai University, Université de La Rochelle, the University of Havana, National Autonomous University of Mexico, McMaster University, the University of Sheffield, Universita Cattolica Del Sacro Cuor, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, National University of Modern Languages of Pakistan and Beijing Language and Culture University.

Latin American Cultural Center opened in October 2011 with the participation of ambassadors from Mexico, Cuba, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru and Uruguay and it is an important gateway for collaboration in all areas with universities from these countries that make up the "Consortium of Universities of Latin U.S. and LBUS".

The UNESCO Chair in Quality Management of Higher Education and Lifelong Learning Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu – set up in January 2011 – is unique in Romania and Europe and operates among the only 23 UNESCO Chairs on Higher Education in the whole world. The purpose of the Chair is to develop and promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation under the broad perspective of lifelong learning and quality assurance and management. The mission of the UNESCO Chair of LBUS is to build capacities, promote and cooperate with other HEIs in Central and South Eastern Europe on identifying and sustaining actions needed for the strengthening of higher education-graduate employment/employers links, the increased assurance of the quality of learning and competencies provided by higher education in the country and the region, the provision of skills for lifelong learning as well as the improvement of the employability rate among graduates.

At the end of his presidential term at the University of Marburg, Prof.dr. DHC mult. Werner SCHAAL became President of "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu (in office 2000-2012) under the terms of the former Rector Dumitru Ciocoi-Pop (2000-2004), and two subsequent terms of Rector Constantin Oprean (2004-2012). Thus, LBUS is the only Romanian University having an international President and a national Rector. Prof. Schaal acted as an unbiased evaluator and staunch promoter of LBUS national and international prestige. Here are some landmarks of the long-standing cooperation between "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu and Philipps Universitat Marburg, meant to highlight their international visibility:

- Twinning between Marburg and Sibiu (since 2005) based on the successful partnership between Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu and Philipps Universitat Marburg

- Sibiu – Marburg Friendship Association is established as a legal entity, headquartered in LBUS (2011 – to date)

2009: award of an outstanding decoration – Bundesverdienstkreuz – as a sign of high official recognition of Prof. Schaal's national and international accomplishments as an ambassador of cultural interaction and promoter of academic excellence

- several visiting professors or doctoral advisors from Marburg: e.g. Prof. Heinrich Dingeldein – visiting professor at the Faculty of Letters and Arts and doctoral advisor since 2007

- the Department of Protestant Theology has been included in the LBUS

"Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu – a centre for excellence and academic renewal – hosted in June 2007 the annual meeting of the heads of Foreign Diplomatic Missions and representatives of International Organization in Romania. In a highly interconnected and interactive world, LBUS could keep in the mainstream of academic events only by promoting international cooperation therefore LBUS has adopted a policy of unprecedented academic contacts and links. It is the leadership's strong conviction that, LBUS could be successful only by interaction and cooperation. His Excellence Dr. Jean-Claude Perisset, Apostolic Nuncio for Romania and Moldavia, kindly accepted the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to lead this diplomatic delegation.

The „acting” framework

At present, there are over 80 public and private universities in the Romanian higher education system. Any thorough discussion and accurate understanding of the educational system requires reference to some legislative considerations.

The implementation of the Bologna system in Romania, as of the academic year 2005 -2006, has generated new challenges for the higher education system entailed by the major changes to the organizational strategy. The Romanian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (ARACIS) – one of the most important national institutions created for monitoring and control in view of successfully meeting the Bologna requirements – has functioned since 2005 as a result of the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 75/2005 approved by Law no. 87/2006. ARACIS is a public institution of national interest, responsible for drawing up standards and methodologies necessary for the approval of undergraduate and postgraduate academic study programs. Most Romanian universities underwent the process of institutional accreditation of academic study programs, performed by ARACIS between 2007 and 2010.

The legal framework of Romanian education underwent changes in February 2011 when a new Education Law no. 1/2011 was issued and further launched the process of university classification and hierarchy of academic study programs, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education Research Youth and Sports and in collaboration with EUA.

Given this context, LBUS has focused on the achievement of two academic goals: implementing and optimizing the institutional adjustment to higher education requirements in keeping study levels; as well as enhancing the quality and visibility of research and educational processes.

The national evaluation process ranked LBUS in the B-type category of teaching and research public universities.

Labor-Market Regional and National Trends

The characteristics, current status and trend of regional and national labor market have divergent effects of LBUS demand. Demographic trends have negative effects, considering there are fewer high school graduates, while the labor demand in Sibiu County has positive effects, because it is usually higher than the national average.

As of 2012, we have witnessed a dwindling number of high-school graduates, entailed by certain demographic trends, i.e. the birth rate decline at the beginning of the 1990s with current consequences. Most LBUS students (82,57%) are aged between 18-25 therefore we expect a continuing decline in the total number of potential candidates nationwide, given the decreased birthrate associated with a low success rate at the baccalaureate examination.

Such a threat may be overcome by collective efforts of attracting a greater number of candidates from neighboring counties and expanding the recruitment pool. In recent years LBUS has recorded a slight increase in the number of students from outside Sibiu, a trend which can be further capitalized.

Likewise, the European context is favorable and is likely to generate opportunities that LBUS may capitalize in view of overcoming any negative demographic trends. In 2011, Romania ranked seventh in the European Union according to the number of students related to 1,000 inhabitants and only 26th considering the number of tertiary education graduates for the population aged 30-34. Taking into account the education specific objectives undertaken by the European Union and stipulated in the Europe 2020 Strategy – that will be carried through by Romania in its capacity as an EU member state, especially to reduce school drop-out rates to less than 10% parallel to the increase in the percentage of higher education graduates to over 40% for the population aged 30-34 – it is expected that the unfavourable consequences of demographic trends be alleviated by means of attracting candidates from other ages groups accompanied by a development of postgraduate and lifelong learning programs.

The Romanian labor market is currently recovering from the crisis. However, given the macro-economic situation of the European economy, it is also marked by an increased vulnerability entailed by the high degree of Romanian labor-market mobility. The Sibiu region is one of the most developed in the field of industry and services, which favorably influence LBUS development. Unemployment rate in Sibiu County is 3.9%, below the national level (4.9% in July 2012).

The low unemployment rate in Sibiu county associated to a wide range of part-time job opportunities in Sibiu contribute to a higher degree of attractiveness for the potential LBUS candidates. The partnerships concluded with the Sibiu City Hall and the Sibiu County Council enables LBUS to act as a significant service provider to the community. Besides such partnerships, LBUS has also initiated and developed collaborations with high profile economic units and stakeholders in Sibiu, as well as national and international associations and foundations. The partnerships concluded with the business community are aimed at developing applied research and providing technical assistance in a large number of fields: automotive industry, pharmaceuticals, finance-banking, and cultural patrimony capitalization.

In this context, LBUS invited representatives of the business community and local administration to join the Advisory Board of LBUS that provides advice to the top management of the university in order to better respond to the community needs.

The Internationalization Strategy

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu is an academic institution focusing on research and research-based teaching. Its acting principles are deeply rooted in the credos of academic freedom and cooperation. At such it fosters and supports the exchange of ideas, the common development and exchange of knowledge both in research and teaching. As such collaborating with other academic institutions and their members, both nationally and internationally, is inherent.

The present Internationalization Strategy represents LBUS' concept for international collaboration and branding until 2020 and is in line with the university's fundamental acting principles. As a method for implementing the strategy LBUS choose the Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard method. Viewed as a balanced modern tool it allows the university to weigh different perspectives into one common development direction.

The five perspectives which LBUS has established for itself are:

- Research and Innovation
- Education and Teaching
- Internationalization and Knowledge Transfer
- Internal Processes and Learning
- Financial Performance and Growth.

As such the importance of internationalization is immediately visible in LBUS' view.

When focusing on „Education and Training“ the internationalization perspectives looks especially into the internationalization of education as well as incoming and outgoing mobility for students.

The focus in „Research and Innovation“ is directed towards facilitating strong and stable international partnerships which can contribute to the goal of internationalizing research activities. Accessing international research networks and exchanging researchers – as outgoing and incoming mobilities – will further boost the research potential of LBUS.

The perspective „Internal Processes and Learning“ has been given a lower priority due to the major changes the other two perspectives have gone through in the last years. The university's credo is that international activities are not only an additional badge but need to become inherent to every activity and to the thinking of the institution. We consider that the best way to achieve this is to live the philosophy through daily interaction with the stakeholders. Learning will then happen automatically.

All activities which related to internationalization are included in the „Internationalization and Knowledge Transfer“ perspective with very close links to all other perspectives.

Financial measures will be dealt with in detail in each yearly operational plan.

Internationalisation of education



Being a young and relatively small university LBUS was and continues to be cognisant that attracting international talent is important. Key to attracting high-potential international talent is a diverse and high-quality offer of courses and/or programmes in foreign languages. As such it is an ongoing pursuit for LBUS to develop courses and/or programmes in English, German and French language. In parallel LBUS is striving to provide more opportunities for international students to attend intensive Romanian language courses upon their arrival in Sibiu.

The provision of courses and/or programmes in foreign languages and in front of an international audience motivates teachers to ensure topical interest and quality in courses/programmes. For students it improves intercultural and language qualifications to participate in such foreign languages courses.

Especially in lieu of the European Bologna Process, which is striving towards a harmonized structure of study programmes and emphasises collaborative elaboration of courses/programmes in form of joint degree studies, a working culture which understands to accept differences while integrating the strengths of different countries/universities becomes inherently important.

In context of the general considerations presented above LBUS focuses on the following to improve its attractiveness for international talent:

a) increasing and diversifying the number of courses and programmes taught in foreign languages

The emphasis lies here mainly on courses in English language.

Nonetheless Romanian universities in general have longstanding cooperation agreements with french universities and institutes, due to the closeness of the Romanian and French language. Due to its geographical location LBUS is also in a unique position to have also a significant number of active cooperation agreements with universities from German-speaking countries. The percentage of international incoming students from these countries lies at 43% of the total exchange.

The prioritisation of the topics/courses to be provided in foreign languages will also take into account strategic cooperation programmes, like Erasmus Mundus Asia Windows, where LBUS is the only university from Romania to be a partner.

The highest priority for internationalization will be given to courses and/or programmes on Master level, followed by those on the Bachelor level.

b) establishing a LBUS Summer University

During the last two years LBUS started pilot Summer Courses, both as externally funded programmes as well as self-financed ones. First experiences showed an increased visibility of the university for students and better cooperation levels with partners closely involved in these courses, especially if/when the courses were awarded ECTS and given recognition at all participating universities.

Thus LBUS aims to increase the offer of international summer schools. The aim is to create more flexibility in the degree programmes and tackle relevant scientific and didactic topics which are not (yet) included in curricula but are of interest for the academic communities. Course and programme development is done and made available in close cooperation with strategic partner universities, with ECTS credit endowment, recognition and quality assurance being essential actions to be covered. Summer schools provide good opportunities to increase the visibility of LBUS within the international student community and attract high-potential talent. They also provide good opportunities for lifelong learning.

For programmes and activities LBUS shall also strive to cooperate closely with Sibiu city and county in regards to the large pool of cultural activities the city offers. There is a high visibility of these events which can be used by the university in domains related to culture. Detailed plans shall be made available in the yearly operational planning.

Primary focus for summer schools at LBUS will be courses and/or programmes at Master level.

c) higher level of international collaboration in creating content and establishing degree programmes

LBUS understands itself as a research-driven university. During the next years the university will continue its reform of study programmes which it started 2010. In international context it will focus on developing content, primarily on Master programme level, in close cooperation with strategic partner universities, aiming where possible at establishing double-degree or joint-degree programmes.

Having the experience from a European-funded joint degree curriculum programme LBUS will direct its activities also in closely cooperating with national regulatory boards in order to support a transparent and coherent set of regulations for establishing joint degree programmes.

d) use of international quality standards

From mid 2012 to mid 2013 LBUS has had its first experience with the process of an international evaluation, through the university evaluation which has been done by the European Universities Association.

Drawing from this LBUS will maintain the quality standard approach – derived also from national regulation – for the development and accreditation of courses. A systematic approach will also be maintained for the award of ECTS credits to courses in order to maintain the ECTS label. For courses/programmes which are not yet awarded ECTS and which are to be included in the international programme ECTS course valuation will be compulsory.

As LBUS decided for a strategic development towards attracting talent from Asian countries and plans to diversify this to countries located in South America, it will begin to develop and promote its educational activities through international accreditations and evaluations.

Incoming and outgoing student mobility

Since Romania's accession in 2007 to the European Union LBUS mobility numbers – in terms of students and staff – as well financial budget for mobility have increased dramatically. With more than 150 active partnership agreements LBUS has a distinctive international profile as a quality educational institution. The university collaborates extensively with European universities – both on a research and teaching level – and has strategically focused since 2009 on attracting high-potential talent from Asian countries. As tools it employs the Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus tools, with satellite programmes like Tempus and Fullbright taking up a small proportion of employed collaboration schemes.

While the outgoing numbers of students are quite satisfactory, incoming students – especially for the duration of full study programmes – are still quite rare. As the number of international talent who wishes to study abroad is constantly increasing and policies in place support such tendencies, LBUS aims to increase its intake of international talent. Their presence increases the dynamics of learning environments and constitutes a very important source of recruiting of young and talented researchers.

Strategically LBUS aims to diversify its cooperation pursuits in order to form a „triangle“ with its large basis in Europe, with two strategic foci in Asia and Latin America, especially for students at Master and PhD level.

In order to achieve the objectives described above the university will:

a) Transparently inform potential students about opportunities at LBUS and strategically award available grants

International students shall easily have access to relevant information for incoming and outgoing stays as well as the programmes and grants available to them.

Internal structures have been set up during the last year within LBUS to ensure a smooth flow of information towards the students. Strategically it will be important to make them operational and ensure their efficiency during the next years.

For incoming students a marketing and a visibility concept for international activities at LBUS shall be established in order to increase the visibility level of the university for students.

Strategically LBUS will aim to use tools like Erasmus Mundus in order to attract high-potential talents from South American countries, while maintaining the strong cooperation with Asian countries. A special focus shall be given here to developing the cooperation with Chinese universities during the next years.

In general the university will make sure, that grants are directed towards the most talented students.

b) Professionalise the support system for outgoing and incoming students

Starting with 2008 LBUS has invested both in human and material resources in order to create an environment where students in general, and international students in special, are aided in their needs and provided information.

In order to ensure student satisfaction with the support system the services offered by LBUS (encompassing information, accommodation, residence permits, Romanian Intensive Language courses) will be periodically reviewed. To ensure a constant quality specific service packages shall be defined, each of them allotted with clear quality standards. The service packages shall cover the needs of all international students and shall be tailored to specific groups if necessary.

c) Increase the number of foreign incoming students at LBUS

Being an attractive university for international talent is considered by LBUS to be a quality badge. Thus the university will develop a marketing concept to attract more international talent. It will make use of its large number of international cooperation agreements to promote available places as well as of professional settings like fairs etc.

d) Improve administrative processes for outgoing students at LBUS

Unclear processes and ECTS recognition are two of the major hurdles – besides financial restrictions - hindering students to go abroad.

LBUS wishes that its students develop a global outlook and learn to work and live in international communities. Thus it will aim to create clear and transparent end-to-end processes for a complete outgoing service. The responsible departments need to ensure a smooth process for the preliminary recognition steps necessary for a stay abroad as well as a full credit recognition upon return.

e) Strategically diversify the incoming/outgoing geographical areas to South America and China

Make use of funding schemes available in order to extend cooperation programmes with these two strategic geographical areas.

f) Create an Alumni network for international students at LBUS

LBUS aims to stay in touch with its international graduates in order to exchange knowledge and develop the university's international network. As such LBUS will develop a plan for establishing and developing the international Alumni network. Activities will be realized in close collaboration with the university's Alumni network for Romanian students which is currently also under development.

Internationalization of research



As a research-driven university LBUS strongly focuses on the development of knowledge through research networks. Having to overcome structural difficulties which stem from an older staff structure as well as constantly changing regulations – on a national level – for the promotion of academic staff, LBUS strongly focuses its strategic activities towards (re)establishing a working research landscape within the university and creating promotion opportunities for young research staff.

LBUS' research covers the entire spectrum, covering basic research as well as applied and strategic research. The university location in a highly industrialized area of Romania, with multiple cooperation opportunities, also fosters knowledge exchange programmes.

Nonetheless LBUS has a stringent need to further develop its research infrastructure, improve its publication output as well as to use more the opportunities for developing knowledge across traditional academic disciplines.

Such progress and work towards excellence can be done exclusively in close cooperation with other excellent researchers and universities. LBUS will thus strive to increase its number of strategic alliances with outstanding research institutions around the world.

As one in many steps to be done in this area LBUS aims to ensure optimal conditions for the internationalisation of research. Research cooperations in LBUS are exclusively based on personal relations and individual research groups. While this has a lot of merits and should continue as such, the university needs to ensure through strategic alliances the needs and aspirations of the research environments for international networks.

LBUS is participating in the large European and international networks in the domain it covers, yet it needs to massively increase its presence as a partner in research programmes like Horizon 2020. As such LBUS will give high priority to attracting external research funding in order to develop knowledge with international public and private partners.

In order to achieve the objectives above LBUS will aim to:

a) Increased international funding

In close cooperation with the research vice-rector and the corresponding structures at LBUS, who are in charge of providing advice about funding opportunities, international activities will focus on establishing strong and stable partnerships with highly recognized research institutions aiming at joint project development and research activities.

A thematic workshop series for research funding with international guests has already been started in 2013 and will be continued through the next years as a support mechanism for international networking activities in the research area.

b) Increased number of research projects with international partners

LBUS aims to increase its number of research contacts and participation into research networks in order to be able to join international research project initiatives as a project partner. Using such tools in combination with the expertise of its outstanding researchers LBUS aims to increase its recognition as a viable partner in research projects. The university will thus seek to include its research groups in projects which provide an added value for the university, either in the form of knowledge access and development or in form of high talent.

c) Higher number and better ranking of international publication of research results

The current ranking and evaluation framework as well as career promotion for academics is strongly linked to research publications in highly ranked journals and conferences. LBUS considers it of strategic importance to provide incentives for international publications of university's PhDs and academic staff. The peer review system in place is also a badge of quality for the university's research outputs.

LBUS aims to participate to the international efforts to provide free access to research publications.

d) Organization of highly recognized and visible international scientific conferences

LBUS is currently very active and will continue to be a highly active member of the international academic community when it comes to organizing major international conferences which provide a platform to present the university's research results to international experts. The conferences reflect the university's strengths in research and the excellence of its staff. They represent good starting points for cooperations –both in the academic and research areas.

Incoming and outgoing research mobility



Research, whether theoretical, basic or applied research, is being conducted increasingly in teams. A high percentage of these teams are composed by international researchers. Researchers are also increasingly mobile and move to institutions with a strong research reputation and available funding.

In LBUS' context of the demographic development and the financial endowment several research positions will become available during the next years. In order to attract highly-qualified talent the university aims to:

a) Offer development services/modules for talented research staff

LBUS is currently very active and will continue to be a highly active member of the international academic community when it comes to organizing major international conferences which provide a platform to present the university's research results to international experts. The conferences reflect the university's strengths in research and the excellence of its staff. They represent good starting points for cooperations –both in the academic and research areas.

b) Professional efforts to recruit foreign research high-potentials

Career opportunities at LBUS will be made visible not only for internal staff but also for external potential researchers. Job descriptions will be provided both in Romanian and English language and the available positions will be advertised in international specialised databases. Available positions will be pro-actively advertised in existing networks and through the international Alumni association, as well as through personal contacts to qualified PhD students and researchers.

The university is also considering setting up a mentoring program through emeriti professors to support and advise the young talent.

LBUS will further seek to attract recognised visiting professors to the university.

c) Support researcher outgoing mobility

International collaboration networks, participation in international research projects, international publications – all represent invaluable assets in a researcher's career development. In order to develop and attract excellent researchers which are at the top of their research field LBUS needs to provide incentives for mobility both for PhD students and academic staff.

When recruiting staff the university will focus on international experience, both in research and teaching, by creating opportunities for sabbaticals.

In the case of PhD students a minimum stay abroad should be requested.

g) Professionalise the support system for incoming and outgoing researchers

Starting with 2008 LBUS has invested both in human and material resources in order to create an environment where students in general, and international researchers in special, are aided in their needs and provided information.

In order to ensure researcher satisfaction with the support system the services offered by LBUS (encompassing information, accommodation, residence permits, Romanian Intensive Language courses) will be periodically reviewed. To ensure a constant quality specific service packages shall be defined, each of them allotted with clear quality standards. The service packages shall cover the needs of all researchers and shall be tailored to specific groups if necessary.

In addition, the university will focus on the integration of incoming staff and their families in the Romanian society in close dialogue with the authorities and other key players in the university's immediate environment.