Informal Student Groups in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Informal student groups in Far Eastern Federal University exhibited significant activity and received essential support from the university administrators during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic burst out, the number of informal student groups known to administrators has only increased, counterintuitively. Our findings show that the value of informal student groups for participants in the educational process is comparable to that of formal education programs, although participation in such groups is not part of any formal requirements or explicit societal demands. A series of interviews was conducted with members of informal student groups (a volunteer community, a group of medical volunteers, associations of engineering and information technology students), faculty members, and administrators. Analysis of interview transcripts shows that informal student groups can be considered valuable in the university corporation as a way of entering a profession, as a response to the implicit societal demand for "maturity" and agency development in students, and as a means of "internalizing" the learning environment and becoming a member of the university corporation. At the same time, a number of respondents perceive self-organization within student groups as generally and intrinsically valuable. Our findings show that informal student groups have an unspoken value in themselves, supported by an equally unspoken societal demand for "collectivist education", which is yet to be discussed.

Keywords

educational values, implicit curriculum, informal education, informal student groups, universities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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By 2011, when Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU) was established as a result of the merger of Far Eastern State University, Far Eastern State Technical University, Pacific State Economic University, and Ussuriysk State Pedagogical Institute, the four universities cumulatively had about 50 active student organizations registered. Those were both organizations created on the basis of constitutional documents

and elective procedures, such as student councils and student organization boards, and informal self-organized associations, such as language clubs, Olympiad coding clubs, an e-sports team, a model UN, historical dance classes, etc. The number of informal student groups is constantly growing: it increased from about 25 in 2013, when the university moved to its new campus in Russky Island, to 42 by the outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Every year, informal student associations organize over 300 events of various kinds, including at the national and global scale (under the auspices of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities). FEFU provides support for informal student groups on an equal basis with student representative organizations: they can apply for competitive grants, use the university's coworking spaces, and get a space of their own for temporary use. Technology entrepreneurship teams have access to the Project Activity Center, Russky Technopark, and the Startup as Diploma program.

Informal student groups exist in a number of universities and are mostly perceived positively by educational stakeholders: students, their parents, faculty, administrators, and employers providing internship opportunities [Brint, Cantwell 2010:2460; Stuart et al. 2011:213]. At the same time, it is difficult, based on day-to-day operations, to compare such groups by value for the university, assess their role in the university's organizational culture, locate them in the hierarchy of values, and determine the presence or lack of societal and professional demand for their activities. Besides, as such practices are less controllable and measurable, they are also vulnerable to formal managerial decisions.

In March 2020, Russian universities had to interrupt face-to-face education and shift to emergency distance learning for a week. Organizational capacities of university teams were only enough to support the most vital components of the learning process. In FEFU, despite a smoothly running system of digital governance and the extensive use of online teaching, the transition to distance learning required a massive mobilization of managerial and faculty human resources. In a week, however, it turned out that informal student associations remained active as well, having adapted their activities to online formats, where possible. Counterintuitively, the number of informal student groups known to administrators did not decrease but increased by 12 to make 54. Over 100 online events were held in March–September 2020: conversation clubs, case clubs, hackathons, parliamentary debates using the Leader-ID.ru platform and the Boiling Point—Vladivostok facilities. ASAP Project was launched by university administrators in cooperation with student leaders to sustain self-organized practice-oriented teams and opportunities for student employment.

Faced with the emergency transition to distance learning, informal student groups did not suspend their activities, maintaining a high level of student engagement and receiving acknowledgement and support from university administrators at different levels. Mean-

while, activities of formal student organizations were essentially limited and largely sporadic during that period. The present study is aimed at answering the following research question: why is the value of informal student groups for educational stakeholders comparable to that of formal education programs even though participation in such groups is not part of any administrative requirements or explicit societal demands?

1. Research on Student Self-Organization during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Even in the pre-pandemic era, the reciprocal influence of online formats and informal student interactions was already widely discussed in literature. Rather than replicating face-to-face learning formats, the online learning environment should be regarded as a unique medium which, by its nature, necessitates unique communication, community-building, teaching, and learning strategies [Arasaratnam-Smith, Northcote 2017:188–198]. The COVID-19 pandemic made researchers from universities across the world enquire what has been lost and what has been acquired as a result of the transition to online education [Zakharova, Vilkova, Egorov 2021].

In medical education research, for instance, particular attention is devoted to risks and opportunities associated with professional identity formation [Stetson, Dhaliwal 2020:131–133] and subsequent integration into the profession, as well student self-organization practices that can mitigate those risks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, medical students were temporarily extricated from the clinical environment, and observers wondered if preserving or advancing students' professional identity and professionalism while away from patients and colleagues was possible. Researchers demonstrate how educators across the world succeeded in not only fostering professional identity formation while students were away from the clinical setting, but also in expanding notions of professionalism and what doctors do. Innovative examples of advancing professional identity in non-traditional ways are showcased: putting students in a public health role, promoting interprofessional work, and supervising social media engagement with society.

Canadian Engineering Education Association is concerned about socialization of undergraduate engineering students learning in online environments. Using data from a survey of such students, researchers identify the factors of online learning environments that affected students' socialization experiences: decreased frequency of interpersonal interactions, which hindered students from acquiring engineering knowledge and skills; lack of social interactions, which threatened students' mental wellbeing they would need to learn well; lack of synchronous interactions in learning, despite increased opportunities for asynchronous communication in the online environment; lack of opportunities for students to socialize and learn from others, etc. [Sweeney, Liu, Evans 2021:1–8].

In 2020, almost all campuses across the United States abruptly closed and shifted to remote instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To examine how computing departments facilitated student participation in educationally engaging activities during the campus closures, American researchers administered a survey to over 900 students in 14 computing departments and interviews with 30 faculty members and university administrators [Thiry, Hug 2021:987–993]. Though students reported increased mental health struggles, they reflected on the myriad ways that faculty and peers supported their engagement in learning. In response to the pandemic, faculty and student leaders structured supports, such as peer-led team learning sessions and student clubs, and informal student organizations of various specializations intensified their activities.

FEFU's experience demonstrates that informal student groups become highly active during a crisis. Unlike authors of the studies mentioned above, we do not regard such intensification exclusively as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis pushed universities into a "fire in a library" situation, where the most valuable books have to be carried out of the burning building. Under such circumstances, informal student associations were supported by all participants in the educational process, which indicates their unique value for the university corporation.

2. Methodological Frameworks of Student Self-Organization Research

One of the possible ways to answer the question about the unique value of informal self-organized associations for the university corporation can be found in Anton Makarenko's doctrine, which is still fundamental to Russian educational thought. Makarenko based his theory of personality development on the concept of *collective* (meaning "community"), which he interpreted as a free association of people united in their goals and actions, organized and equipped with organs of governance, discipline, and responsibility. However, he was also guided by the explicit societal and governmental demand for student self-organization practices: "The mission of our education is to raise a collectivist" [Makarenko 2014:138]. In the present-day Russian education system, the mission is defined somewhat differently: according to Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation", education serves the purpose of intellectual, spiritual, moral, creative, physical, and/or professional development of the individual, satisfying their educational needs and interests—therefore, the law leaves collectivist educational outcomes outside the formal education requirements.

Another angle for analyzing the value of informal associations, agency, and self-organization of students can be found in the works of the French sociologist Michel Foucault and his followers. Foucault distinguishes among four major types of technologies in the organization of human society: (1) technologies of production, (2) technologies of sign systems, (3) technologies of power, and (4) technologies

of the self. He further asserts that knowledge and education are inseparable from the technologies of power in a modern society. Knowledge acquisition is a transforming process for those involved in it. The "power-knowledge" structures are methods of objectivizing the subject by making them acquire knowledge, i. e. methods of power reproduction. They are opposed to technologies of the self, which "permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" [Foucault 2008:99–100]. Foucault's positive education program consists in restoring the status of education in general, and university in particular, as an institution that promulgates "care for the self". Regulatory power of the teacher should give way to pastoral power of the mentor. The central questions for education should be: "How to govern oneself, how to be governed, by whom should we accept to be governed, how to be the best possible governor? How to be governed, by whom, to what extent, to what ends, and by what methods?" [Foucault 2004:122]. From this perspective, activities of informal student groups can be regarded as a "university in university", which puts Foucauldian "return of the subject" into practice.

Self-organization of students around a certain type of activity can also be viewed through the lens of Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction and professional recognition that he presented in *Homo Academicus*, while exploring the social structure of higher education in France [Bourdieu 2018]. As a result of his empirical study of structural changes in the French university community, Bourdieu suggested a theory of reproduction of social and professional bodies, based in particular on the concepts of *co-optation* and *recognition*. These processes allow the community to detect (and recognize) not only a specific competence in the candidate but also other properties required to become a member of the corps: specific ethical stances, manners, behavior, and faith in the institution's core values. The candidate is not supposed to demonstrate their properties explicitly and separately; rather, their behavior should manifest a certain way of thinking typical of a specific social or professional body. We find it productive to ask ourselves whether self-organization around a professional activity, e. g. software development, can be a form of achieving the "appropriate way of thinking" and a method of facilitating integration into the profession.

The practice of university education leaves no doubt about the high value of informal student associations, yet their role in the university corporation is not defined by formal documents or public consensus. In this situation, the concepts of *context*, introduced by Froumin in his monograph *The Secrets of School: Notes on the Contexts*, and *hidden curriculum*, which serves the basis for his speculations on complex educational outcomes, may be the adequate foundation for research on

informal student groups. According to Froumin, complex educational outcomes at school (we suggest applying this reasoning to higher education as well) do not emerge as a result of simple and technologizable teaching operations, but derive from *contexts*, a complex system of factors that defies exhaustive description. The culture of research, for example, cannot be "taught", but it can be absorbed in a laboratory, as a result of interactions within the research team. The obvious ambivalence of the status of informal student groups suggests that the answer to the question about their value for the university corporation should be searched for in the "hidden layers of the pedagogical reality" [Froumin 1999].

3. Research Design

3.1. Respondent Recruitment

The data source for this paper was semi-structured interviews with students participating in informal associations as well as with faculty members and university administrators directly involved in the activities of such associations. Interviewees were recruited from student groups that maintained or extended their activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the university student association support system and the Leader-ID database.[1] Recruitment of respondents was performed as part of the study examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the quality of education in Russian universities [Anisimov et al. 2020].

3.2. Sample

For the purposes of this study, the informal student groups that remained active during the pandemic were classified into four categories: (A) participants of FEFU volunteer societies established in 2012 while preparing for the APEC summit and still operating as a network of informal organizations; (B) groups of medical volunteers that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic; (C) engineering students who have worked as self-organized developer teams at FEFU Project Activity Center since 2017; and (D) self-organized teams of IT students existing since the movement to the campus in Russky Island in 2013 that received support from the university administration through the ASAP service of the Student Employment Assistance Program during the pandemic. Participants for interviews were selected by quota sampling, depending on the size of informal group category: five interviewees in A category, five in B, ten in C, and ten in D. The same principle was applied when selecting interviewees from among faculty members and university administrators that engage directly with informal student groups: two in A category, three in B, five in C, and five in D.

The final sample thus consists of 30 FEFU students (mean age = 21 years), ten faculty members, and five administrators. Of the 30 stu-

[1] Leader-ID: The 2020 Results. https://zen.yandex.ru/media/leader/leaderid-itogi-2020–5fed8115fe4e686f6a63da2f

dents, 20 are enrolled in IT and engineering majors, five in health and medical sciences, and five in the humanities. More detailed characteristics of the interview participants are given in the appendix.

3.3. Interview Procedure

The interviews were conducted online (using Telegram) and offline between May 2020 and June 2021. Names of the participants are not disclosed for confidentiality purposes. Every interview lasted between 20 and 60 minutes. The student interview guide included the following modules: biodata; participation in informal student associations before and during the pandemic; and perceived value of participation in informal student groups. The guide for faculty and administrators involved the following: biodata; engagement with informal student associations; and perceived value of informal student groups.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using the method of categorization [Kvale 2003]. In the course of analysis, units pertaining to the value of informal student groups were assigned codes, which were later divided into four categories. Categorization was performed by the two co-authors of the study independently, using the methodological frameworks specified in Part 2, with subsequent discussion of the results.

4. Results

4.1. A Method of Entering the Profession

In the interviews, a number of students expressed hope that participation in informal associations would play an essential role in their future career success. Responses of this type are given by members of coding teams and medical volunteers. Coders see a valuable outcome of their self-organization efforts in the lower barriers to entry into the coding profession and the opportunity to get easy credits for the projects implemented. They realize that their self-organized activities are pre-professional in nature, allowing them, in Bourdieu's terminology, to "capture the appropriate way of thinking" and at the same time "get a pass into the profession".

> "You might say this is kind of investment into the future. A simple example: all able students dream of finding a decent job one day. Employers, in their turn, assess not only knowledge but also professional competencies. Participation in extracurricular activities is sort of an indicator of my abilities. <...> This is a challenge that improves your endurance, unlocks your potential, and enhances your professional qualities. Of course, all of this will be useful in both my career and personal life." (1st-year student, member of an IT team)

Responses in the same category of perceived value of informal student groups are often given by administrators and faculty members. For example, a nearly identical substantiation of the value of self-organized activities is provided by the head of the expert council for IT majors who is deeply integrated in the university environment:

> "I would hire these students right now. They have proved themselves not only as good coders but also as being able to solve real-life problems and coordinate the work of their team members. Without these skills, you cannot work in the industry." (owner of a large digital company, head of the expert council of the FEFU Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science)

In addition to the role that informal student groups play in fostering the development of students' competencies, accomplished representatives of professional communities also emphasize that such groups help students internalize the professional culture and develop a relevant way of thinking. This is manifested most prominently in responses about medical volunteering.

> "At one of the meetings of the Coordination Council to Control the Incidence of the Novel Coronavirus Infection, the Minister of Health of Primorsky Krai asked if we could send volunteers to hospitals. I forwarded her call to our students, asking them to participate as much as they could, and I was astonished to see how civic-minded they were, because they came forward instantly. Despite all the risks, they volunteered to provide help where it was really needed. They do what their hearts tell them. I'm sure they will make decent doctors." (Vice President for Medical Affairs, clinician)

There is already some prominent evidence of the effects of participation in informal student associations during the pandemic on professional recognition. For example, students who launched the CODE Work project to help anyone interested prepare for Olympiads in coding received a job offer from a large local digital business, and students who launched the ASAP.Games game development training studio were invited to cooperate with a number of game development companies.

4.2. Maturing, Leadership, and Agency

Another category of responses about the value of informal student groups has to do with maturing and developing autonomy and agency in the process of participation. Responses of this type are especially typical of students admitted in 2020, who transitioned from school to university during the COVID-19 pandemic. For FEFU freshmen, it was also a period when the campus in Russky Island was cut off from the mainland during three weeks in the aftermath of an ice storm.

> "Not only did I enter the university in the midst of the pandemic, my friends and I also had problems communicating and reporting problems on time due to the ice rain. We solved those problems on our own, creating various digital products to make not only our own lives easier, but also those of other students and beyond." (1st-year IT student)

Responses of this category feature both sense of agency ("I can") and the internalized value of community and mutual help.

> "It's curious how people react: some are surprised to see me with an infrared thermometer at the entrance, while others get it instantly, thank me for keeping watch, and ask me questions sometimes. I volunteered most probably for the same reason I enrolled in medical studies: I've always wanted to help and be useful, it's a feature of mine. And since we're now in a situation where help is needed so badly, that's what I do." (2nd-year medical student)

The fact that perceived value of self-organization within informal student groups is associated in responses of this category with the increasing senses of agency and social responsibility and at the same time with the value of mutual help could be considered a specific feature of the pandemic that has little connection to what student groups normally do. However, respondents describing the activities of their groups before the pandemic also make associations between the values of agency and social responsibility.

> "It was only later that I realized that I had learned a lot and had developed professionally. At the moment, I just had that feeling of 'I can do it!' I can help hundreds and thousands of students solve a problem. And you just sit there and try to come up with a solution to make everyone happy. Not about the code lines or the praise you'll get. You live the emotions of people that they'll have when your project is complete." (4th-year IT student, developer of an IT app for students with over 7,000 users)

In some responses, the value of increased autonomy and agency is separated from that of social responsibility and derives solely from the "I can do it" feeling.

> "I came to FEFU from a small village and I was not aware of what the world needs. I just knew I wanted something related to electronics... In my first year, I already knew FEFU had submersibles, that my groupmate participated, went to a competition in America in the very first year, and even won the championship. So I thought: I should do something, if my groupmate can do it, I can too. I invited a few more guys. We didn't know what we would do, we just wanted to do something. They offered us to make peglegs... I chuckle when I look at my first prototype now, but I've learned how to use 3D-modelling software, and I now know what it means to work in a team." (1st-year Master's degree student, member of a FEFU Project Activity Center team)

Most responses in this category were given by students working at the university's open coworking facilities designed specifically for self-or-

ganization of students into teams: Project Activity Center with access to equipment and expendable supplies for technology projects, and the Boiling Point space that provides organizational and communication support for such informal associations.

4.3. A Means of "Internalizing" the University

In another category of responses, interviewees associate participation in informal student groups with the opportunity to "internalize" the university and become part of the university corporation by building their own educational trajectories with the use of self-organization elements that fit naturally into university life.

> "I founded Da Vinci Operative Surgery Club. The project started with only five people, and now we have 35 participants. Over 130 students have been members of the club throughout its existence, and we only admit medical students. I'm proud of contributing to the training of future doctors." (5th-year student of the FEFU School of Medicine)

There are examples of students essentially extending the scope of formal education programs with self-organization formats, while keeping with the same content logic. For instance, membership in cross-university contest communities for Olympiad coding or robotics adds value to informal associations and legitimates them in the eyes of faculty and administrators. In this case, the student assumes the role of an innovative educator and a member of the university corporation who accelerates its development.

> "CODE Work is a chance to level up yourself, your skills and knowledge, and your ability to work in a team. Competitive programming is now promoted by the top universities and IT companies in the world. Our goal is to create a community of motivated people at FEFU to keep this ball rolling." (3rd-year student, instructor at the CODE Work student organization)

For students in the volunteer corps, the sense of belonging at university is closely associated with the ideas of commitment and mutual help.

> "I was happy to help my instructors and my university in time of need. To tell the truth, though, I did it because I had nothing else to do at all back then. This is the only thing that kept me in Vladivostok, but now it's over and I can go home with a peaceful mind. I hope FEFU will not forget our commitment and will support us students just as we gave it our support." (2nd-year student from the FEFU Volunteer Corps, who assisted faculty members in effectively using distance learning software)

Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic brought some adjustments into the life of informal students groups. In the course of interviews, students

reported having become emotionally closer with faculty members and experienced understanding and empathy in interactions with them.

> "We all found ourselves in a difficult situation during the transition to distance learning. And I can understand teachers who struggle with technology. During that period, teachers became very much like family members to me, and I found pleasure in telling them how to use a program." (3rd-year student from the FEFU Volunteer Corps, who assisted faculty members in effectively using distance learning software)

We believe that "internalization" of the university's learning environment through participation in informal associations allows students to take a new look at their involvement in university life, encouraging them to proactively fill the gaps in education programs and enhance the curriculum. Moreover, for students who approach self-organization this way, it may also be a practice of entering the academic profession, in much the same way as it becomes a practice of integration into non-academic professions for respondents from the first category.

4.4. The Intrinsic Value of Self-Organization

Informal student associations are described quite often as intrinsically valuable not only by students but also by faculty and administrators. A number of respondents from among faculty members and university administrators even regarded the question about the value of informal student groups as trivial.

> "On a Saturday night, I called in to the Project Activity Center and found a few teams working on their projects there. It's extremely valuable that students get together voluntarily to do what they love and what will make a difference." (member of the FEFU Rectorate staff)

Students point out that administrators and faculty sympathize with informal student groups.

> "It matters a lot to us that the university encourages our desire to engage in team projects. We're used to such formats at Pacific Project Schools; they told us we would only attend lectures at the university, but at the FEFU Project Activity Center, we have the opportunity to choose what to do and how to do it, we have access to equipment, and we have mentors. I think that's what a modern university should be like." (2nd-year engineering student, graduate from a FEFU Pacific Project School)

Nine interviewees gave responses that can be classified under the "self-organization as an intrinsic value" category. Therefore, despite the lack of explicit consensus and regulatory framework for supporting informal student associations within the university, a significant

number of respondents agree that such associations have an intrinsic value that needs no additional substantiation. Probably, the value of self-organization is part of the "hidden curriculum" of university education, but this assumption is yet to be examined.

5. Conclusion

Analysis of interview transcripts and activities of informal student groups before and during the COVID-19 pandemic shows that such groups have a significant value for the university corporation. This value, however, is quite specific: it is not deduced from documents regulating the activities of educational institutions, articulated explicitly in discussions on the social or professional demand for education, or even manifested in routine managerial decisions of the university administration. In fact, informal student groups in Russian universities represent an unspoken value, and constitute part of the "hidden curriculum" which became visible during the pandemic exactly because it was threatened.

We identify a few grounds for considering informal student associations valuable for the university corporation: as a way of entering a profession, as a response to the implicit societal demand for student maturing, as a means of "internalizing" the university's learning environment, and as a value in itself.

Informal student groups as a way of entering a profession represent an obvious value since one of the university's key objectives is to prepare students for professional life. In a number of cases, self-organization practices are recognized by the university corporation as an effective tool for developing a profession-specific way of thinking, and thus as valuable for the educational institution.

The implicit demand that students "mature" and develop agency and ability to make and implement decisions on their own exists in society but is not formalized in education programs. Consequently, it has to be satisfied in informal ways, which is the case with self-organization practices, as it follows from interviews.

Informal associations become a means of "internalizing" the university's learning environment for students. By engaging in self-organization practices, students become co-designers and members of the university corporation, which improves their learning outcomes. By recognizing the role of students as current and future members of the university corporation, educational stakeholders also acknowledge the value of informal student groups.

In a number of interviews, students as well as faculty members and administrators seemed to be baffled by the need to substantiate the value of informal student groups. Such respondents observe the intrinsic value of students self-organizing into teams and being able to define their goals, team up, and achieve what they want. We believe that informal student associations are one of the unspoken self-contained values for Russian universities, underpinned by an equally un-

spoken demand for "collectivist education". This thesis deserves to be examined and discussed further.

Appendix

Table 1. **Characteristics of interview participants**

Students				
Interview #	Field of study	Year	Age (years)	Gender
1	Clinical Medicine	2	19	Female
2	Clinical Medicine	5	23	Male
3	Clinical Medicine	3	21	Male
4	Clinical Medicine	2	20	Male
5	Clinical Medicine	3	20	Male
6	Informatics and Computer Science	2	20	Male
7	Informatics and Computer Science	2	19	Male
8	Informatics and Computer Science	2	19	Male.
9	Informatics and Computer Science	2	20	Male
10	Informatics and Computer Science	2	19	Male
11	Informatics and Computer Science	1	18	Female
12	Informatics and Computer Science	1	18	Male
13	Informatics and Computer Science	3	21	Female
14	Informatics and Computer Science	3	21	Male
15	Informatics and Computer Science	4	22	Male
16	Photonics, Instrumentation, Optical and Biotechnology Systems and Technology	4	21	Male
17	Photonics, Instrumentation, Optical and Biotechnology Systems and Technology	4	22	Male
18	Photonics, Instrumentation, Optical and Biotechnology Systems and Technology	4	21	Male
19	Applied Geology, Mining, Oil and Gas Engineering, and Geodesy	1	23	Male
20	Photonics, Instrumentation, Optical and Biotechnology Systems and Technology	1	22	Male
21	Photonics, Instrumentation, Optical and Biotechnology Systems and Technology	2	19	Male
22	Photonics, Instrumentation, Optical and Biotechnology Systems and Technology	2	20	Male
23	Photonics, Instrumentation, Optical and Biotechnology Systems and Technology	1	22	Male
24	Photonics, Instrumentation, Optical and Biotechnology Systems and Technology	4	21	Female
25	Photonics, Instrumentation, Optical and Biotechnology Systems and Technology	4	22	Male

Students				
Interview #	Field of study	Year	Age (years)	Gender
26	Economics and Management	3	20	Male
27	Law	3	20	Female
28	Mass Media and Information-Library Science	4	22	Male
29	Linguistics and Literary Studies	3	21	Male
30	Linguistics and Literary Studies	3	21	Male

Staff		
Interview #	Position	Age (years)
31	Vice President for International Relations	43
32	Vice President for Medical Affairs	50
33	Head of the expert council of the Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science	46
34	Director of the Project Activity Center	28
35	Head of the Management Board for Development of the University Environment	28
36	Senior Lecturer	30
37	Associate Professor	32
38	Senior Lecturer	27
39	Professor	50
40	Associate Professor	46
41	Teaching Assistant	27
42	Teaching Assistant	25
43	Senior Lecturer	27
44	Teaching Assistant	27
45	Teaching Assistant	28

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