

How Universities in Russia and the U.S. are Working to Improve Quality

Vera Gushchina
Voronezh State University
Voronezh, Russia

and

Stuart Umpleby
The George Washington University
Washington, DC

December 31, 2009

Published in Russian in the journal *University Square*, No. 2, 55-64, 2009
Voronezh State University, Voronezh, Russia

How Universities in Russia and the U.S. are Working to Improve Quality

Vera Gushchina and Stuart Umpleby

In recent years more attention is being paid to the improvement of the quality of education in the Russian academic community. This trend is caused by the need to be integrated into the Bologna process (i.e., to comply with standards that are accepted by the systems of higher education in Western Europe, the United States and other developed countries). This has caused an interest by representatives of Russian Establishments of Higher Education (EHEs) in European, American and other educational models, their methods of quality improvement and the criteria of evaluation accepted in those countries.

According to many ratings of higher education quality in different countries around the world, the first places are occupied by U.S. EHEs. For positions of Russian EHEs in global ratings see Gerasimova (2008). Consequently, it would be useful to become acquainted with the organization of educational processes at an American EHE. Due to modern communication I had an opportunity to have a conversation with a representative of an American EHE, Professor Stuart Umpleby (<http://www.gwu.edu/~umpleby>), who is not merely involved in problems of quality at a theoretical level but who also for many years has worked to improve the quality of life in the Department of Management (where he works) of the School of Business of The George Washington University, situated in the U.S. capital. He is a strong advocate of the ideas and methods of quality improvement. He has taught numerous courses and delivered lectures on this topic at EHEs in Western and Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia.

A virtual dialog with Professor Umpleby was conducted by Vera Gushchina who is Associate Professor in the Cultural Studies Department of the Philosophy and Psychology Faculty of the Voronezh State University (VSU). A few years ago, she studied under Umpleby's supervision at The George Washington University (GWU) supported by the Junior Faculty Development Program of the U.S. Department of State.

Vera Gushchina: At the beginning of our dialogue, it should be noted that in a national ranking of American universities GWU is in the 53rd place. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2004 there were 4,236 EHEs (those which grant degrees) in the USA. According to American standards, GWU is in the top group of American EHEs. According to other rankings, e.g., scientific research, GWU is among the top 25 private universities. Therefore, it could serve as a model at a rather high level model of an American EHE.

American education as a whole and higher education in particular is relatively decentralized and independent of government direction. Support for higher education at the state and federal levels appeared only in the second half of the nineteenth century, and a federal Department of Education was formed in only 1980. However, its powers are severely restricted, and under any circumstances one should not argue that it governs U.S. institutions of education. Its powers encompass the following: it develops a policy of federal financial support to educational institutions (its annual budget amounts to \$68.6 billion), distributes and traces usage of those funds; keeps statistical data on American educational establishments and distributes results of scientific research. It focuses the nation's attention on key issues of education, prevents discrimination and secures equal access to education (see: <http://www.ed.gov/about/>).

Based on the experience of a particular American EHE one should not make conclusions about the U.S. higher educational system as a whole. However, in the U.S.A. there are many institutions such as a national corporation developing standardized tests (the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, NJ), accreditation agencies, etc., which secure continuity between different levels of education, as well as relative uniformity of the educational process, including curricula (Luedtke, 1992). Therefore, the educational process and other aspects of a particular EHE's life

will be differentiated by organizational rules, courses taught, but, on the other hand, EHEs are part of a single process of higher education and are typical for an American EHE.

Shifting directly to the topic of our interest, quality, the first question I would like to ask is, How long have you been interested in quality problems and how long have you been involved in those problems at the department and at the school?

Stuart Umpleby: I became interested in quality improvement methods about 1990 after reading articles in the press. I began reading books and attended a one week course offered by the GWU School of Engineering. I was impressed and continued reading. Later I initiated quality improvement activities in my department and later my School (with the support of administrators). Initially I worked mostly with staff – secretaries, people who made copies, etc. We had some noteworthy successes. Later, with the support of the Dean, quite a few faculty members became involved in this activity. I wrote an article on what we did (Umpleby, 2002).

Vera Gushchina: When our EHEs have tried to improve quality, they have established departments (systems, agencies, etc.) for quality. For example, in VSU this department has the name “agency of education quality”. There is a staff here who supervise and direct the activities of other departments – monitoring education quality, strategic planning, and conducting internal audits. Their purpose, I suppose, is to align the EHE with world quality standards in the area of education. As a result, some faculties have been certified as corresponding to those standards. However, one cannot argue that after this procedure something has changed, particularly in a better direction, in our educational system. Moreover, many things in this system remain unclear and cause questions for many of our EHE people.

The activities of the staff in that agency encompass, mainly, creating forms for documents, and then they audit whether chairs and faculties keep their documents in accordance with those forms (see: <http://www.tqm.vsu.ru>). Additionally, they have created a number of new documents and report forms, which should be filled in by the faculty for improvement of educational process quality. For instance, they have introduced an intermediate assessment of students' knowledge, which requires additional hours from a teacher to fill it out, as well as preparing relevant reports, but neither the faculty's teaching load nor the structure of the educational process has changed at our faculty because of these forms in any way. So, the quality effort has become a bureaucratic formality that devours hours from teaching and, therefore, worsens the educational process. I, like many other colleagues, believe that such bureaucratic methods of struggling for quality will not promote the improvement of the higher education system in our country or promote its successful adaptation to the Bologna process.

Because of this I would like to know what are the methods of education quality improvement in the U.S.? Are there any criteria for evaluation of this quality?

Stuart Umpleby: Quality improvement does require additional time. People need to work not only IN the process (their usual work) but also ON the process (improving the existing process). (While I was leading this quality improvement work in our School, I received a small salary supplement from the Dean.) The idea is to train all staff in the use of quality improvement methods. A consultant might be hired to get things started, but very soon people in the organization should be leading the quality improvement effort. Quality improvement is essentially applying the scientific method to improving processes within organizations. People, working in teams, should be continually experimenting with better methods.

Testing ideas for improvement should be done by the people who work in the process, not by others. The goal is to reduce the time to complete a task, reduce errors, and improve the satisfaction of customers (students and employees), not bosses. Transformation to a new quality level implies a cultural change in an organization and in the activities of its employees.

Problems are solved by members of the School, who work through various organizational structures. For instance, at one time there were four committees for improvement of quality in

our School (education, research, service, and facilities maintenance). Each had about 10 members. The School has about 100 faculty and at least 50 staff. Staff includes secretaries, people who maintain audio-visual-computer equipment, people who handle admissions, course catalogues, websites, publicity, fund-raising, alumni relations, graduation ceremonies, advising of students, etc.

Vera Gushchina: What are the criteria for rating U.S. universities?

Stuart Umpleby: Depending on the purpose, different criteria can be used. There are different ratings administered by different organizations. Primarily, ratings are based on a combination of average test grades of students admitted to the university, the ratio of accepted students to applicants, the salaries of graduates, surveys of graduates, the EHE's reputation among other EHEs and educational specialists, faculty publications in leading scholarly journals, etc.

Rating universities as research centers is based on criteria such as amount of money spent for research from its own sources and received from outside sources, the amount and number of grants from sponsors and alumni, the number of academicians who work at a university, prominent scholars and their honors, and candidates who received doctoral degrees and found jobs.

All universities are trying to move up in the rankings, so all are trying hard to improve. About every five years accreditation agencies independent from the state certify that programs are acceptable. Deans from other schools do this work, based on data assembled by the university being reviewed. The data collection required in the self-study is a major undertaking. A university can have accreditation renewed or lose accreditation or be put on probation. Such a procedure is also used for secondary schools [children 15-18 years old], if students cannot pass tests on reading and math.

The key to quality in the U.S. is competition, not trying to do one's best. Yes, people try to perform well as a matter of personal pride and pleasure in a job well done. But the main driver for organizations is competition. Businesses, and universities, must do at least as well as the competition or they will go out of business or decline in rankings or in market share. Cooperation and learning from others is also important. In order to share the methods used by the best organizations a number of national awards for quality in management have been established for businesses, government agencies, health care organizations and educational institutions. The Malcolm Baldrige Award, established in 1987, is the leading national award, and many educational institutions seek to win this award. Even more organizations use the criteria in the award as a guide to improvement. See http://www.quality.nist.gov/Education_Criteria.htm.

Vera Gushchina: As I understand, private donations play an important role in funding higher education in the U.S.

Stuart Umpleby: Yes, people, often those who do not have children, give stocks, bonds, or real estate to universities. They may specify that the money goes for a specific purpose, for example a scholarship for a poor student, or an endowment for a professor in a particular field, or funding to put the donor's name on a building. Money given to non-profit organizations, including universities, reduces the taxes a person pays.

Vera Gushchina: Therefore, thanks to donors, a number of universities now have endowments over one billion dollars. According to a recent report, their number has reached 56. Harvard is the richest university. Its endowment totals \$25.5 billion. Yale with \$15.2 billion is second. Among foreign universities, only the University of Toronto managed to raise its endowment to 1 billion dollars during the previous year. Even Oxford and Cambridge cannot

boast similar figures. (Modern Education, 2006) Unfortunately, in Russia the tradition of private giving to educational institutions has not yet taken root.

Stuart Umpleby: As to internal assessment, organizations choose their own methods of quality evaluation. Questioning customers and employees is essential to improving quality of final products and consumer and/or client satisfaction. Universities, like other organizations, choose different methods for quality evaluation and improvement: "Gap analysis" (difference between what is and what is desired), Six Sigma (control of final product quality), etc. (See: <http://www.quality.nist.gov>). Surveys of students are widely used at universities in the U.S. Among faculty in our School of Business I have used as a tool a Quality Improvement Priority Matrix to identify the problems that are the most urgent in the department or the school (see Appendix).

Vera Gushchina: I have studied the Quality Improvement Priority Matrix that consists of about 50 items and which you use to evaluate the activities of a department. This list of priorities starts with a number of criteria reflecting material and technical support of the learning process (e. g., computer hardware and software, computer laboratories for students and office space for staff, copiers, fax-machines, conference rooms, etc.) and finishes with parking lots for faculty and students, condition of university buildings and grounds. Could you, please, describe technological support for learning and other processes at your EHE?

Stuart Umpleby: In the School of Business each faculty member now has a private office. In the past, before a new building was constructed, sometimes 2 or 3 faculty members shared a room. Staff also often have private offices. Most departments, containing about 15 to 20 faculty members, also have a copier, fax machine, mail room, space for secretaries and doctoral students, a conference room and a kitchen. The department also has a cabinet full of stationary supplies, and faculty members, secretaries, and doctoral assistants can take what they need.

Vera Gushchina: I have read at the site of your computer center about a program that exists for more than ten years. According to this program every year a third of your faculty receive new work stations of high quality. The configuration of those work stations is approved by faculty representatives. Each faculty member can choose among 3 or 4 models.

Stuart Umpleby: Yes, each faculty member and each staff person has a computer and there is almost one computer for each doctoral student. Each member of the faculty and staff gets a new computer every 3 years. This program is called the Faculty Workstation Initiative. People can buy their old computers and take them home. I ask for unclaimed computers for visiting scholars from other countries who arrive for research work under my supervision. All GW computers are connected to a local area net. We have fast internet access. Also, there is good technical support, via telephone and email, for both students and faculty for computers and other electronic equipment - phones, video, etc.

Old classrooms have overhead projectors and white boards. Laptops and LCD projectors (for PowerPoint) can be checked out and brought to the classroom by a faculty member and then returned. New classrooms have high tech podiums. They can show DVDs, VCRs, and PowerPoint slides. New classrooms also have internet access. Screens go up and down at the push of a button. Sometimes curtains on windows are electronically controlled. An increasing number of rooms do not have flat floors but rather are semi-circular with steps up, like in a movie theater. This helps students see each other as well as the instructor during discussions.

Operating these high tech podiums is not easy. One must learn not only which buttons to push in what order but also how long to hold the button down and how long to wait for a response. Each podium has a phone, so an instructor can call for help. The equipment is

impressive, but learning to operate it takes time. Of course, some training is provided for faculty members.

Vera Gushchina: Of course, use of this complex equipment requires relevant software, as well as rooms with proper facilities. I would like to stress that this high-tech environment for learning is necessary not only for the teaching of natural science but also for the carrying out of scientific research. That is one of the most fast-developing directions of research in the social sciences and humanities. However, according to our stereotypes, the priority in technical renovation is given to natural science disciplines. The social sciences and humanities remain on the periphery of technological progress, which is a serious obstacle for their development. The volume of information a scholar in the humanities deals with may easily surpass what faces natural science specialists and is, at least, not smaller. Modern social science and humanities fields use not only theoretical but also various empirical, quantitative and qualitative methods of research. Application and elaboration of their results requires using various technical means and the newest ICT [information and communication technologies]. These applications are not possible without special laboratories, classrooms, reading rooms, etc. In our EHEs, however, if one calculates a ratio of the number of computers to the number of students and teachers in humanities faculties, the average level will be much lower than the level in technical and natural sciences departments, and the equipment will be much less diverse and effective and more out of date. Meanwhile, in modern Russian society the social sciences and humanities require priority in development. For our society and culture to advance, achievements in these sciences are needed. Unfortunately, even at natural sciences faculties of our EHEs there is no laboratory equipped with such multimedia terminals. The situation in other EHEs is similar if not worse. The number and quality of computers, as well as software, does not meet the latest standards. Meanwhile, in the modern era technical means of teaching -- information-computer technologies -- are essential for modernization of the educational system and enhancing its quality.

In my view computer terminals for GWU students is worth attention as well. There are a number of computer rooms open for students 24 hours a day on the GWU campus. The computer terminals are equipped with black and white and color printers. Besides these permanent computer rooms, training laboratories equipped with computers are also accessible to students during periods free of classes.

Stuart Umpleby: Our facilities have steadily improved. The business school has a new building as of two years ago. There are many small conference rooms where students get together to study. There are computers in hallways where students check email between classes.

Before the new building, there was not enough space. Faculty shared offices. There were no small conference rooms, no department kitchens. Doctoral students did not have desks, or perhaps a desk in a hallway. Walls were sometimes not recently painted. Rugs were tattered. Complaints increased. GW has lately been building new buildings. Facilities have improved significantly.

Vera Gushchina: Could you, please, tell us with more details about the kitchen? When I had my internship in Oxford, England, their faculty complained that they are not paid enough compared to comprehensive school teachers. However, some colleges have canteens for their faculty, and the value of such lunches is included in their salary and is a subject for discounted taxation. They have explained those lunches as efforts by college administrators to divert faculty from moving to American EHEs. Besides this, there are recreation lounges for faculty where they can drink coffee, tea, juices, etc., read recent newspapers, etc.

Stuart Umpleby: The university does not provide lunches but each department has a fairly large kitchen. Perhaps 10 people can stand in it, close together. It has a refrigerator, sink, microwave, and coffee maker, also cabinets for paper plates, paper towels, etc. We also have a

health and recreation center – all imaginable equipment plus a swimming pool and basketball courts – across the street. Faculty members must pay a monthly fee to use it, but it is less expensive and more convenient than a commercial gym.

Vera Gushchina: Besides the high level of material and technical equipment for educational and research processes, there are other factors contributing to high quality in American universities. Some doctoral students are paid as teaching assistants and research assistants. What are their duties?

Stuart Umpleby: Teaching assistants teach undergraduates or help with teaching a large section. I have never had a teaching assistant, since my sections have usually been less than 35 students. We also have some work-study students. These are talented low income undergraduates. The University pays them about \$3 per hour and a federal government program pays them about \$7 per hour. So they earn \$10 per hour doing whatever the department head and faculty ask – making copies, doing library research, creating spreadsheets, editing documents, etc. This is a federal government program to increase income for students attending universities. My department has 3 or 4 each semester.

A research assistant is a doctoral student who is paid to help faculty members do research. They do library research, clean test tubes (chemistry), feed and clean up after experimental animals (biology), administer questionnaires (psychology), enter data into a computer and run statistical tests on data, etc. My research assistants mostly update websites but also do more advanced things with Excel or PowerPoint than I know how to do. Every seven years a faculty member can have a sabbatical -- one semester with full pay or one year with half pay -- to do research.

It should be noted that support for young faculty has improved. When I was hired, the older faculty had privileged positions. They often had smaller classes and more time for research and publication. Now younger faculty members are given lighter teaching loads to help them publish in order to earn tenure.

Software plays a very important role in the modern educational process. In particular, we use “Blackboard” in teaching (<http://www.blackboard.com/>). This is a software product. On it we have syllabi, articles, and lists of students. We use it for email communication and discussions after each class. It can be used to administer tests and post grades. Blackboard is essential for distance education, but we also use it as a supplement to normal classes.

There is also one huge administrative system with budget information for the whole university. When students apply for admission, their names and addresses, etc. are entered into the computer. These records are updated as they take courses and pay their bills. When they graduate, they become alumni, and they are regularly asked to contribute to the university’s endowment. Hence, once entered into the university’s database, a student creates a long digital history.

Thanks to blackboard, the days when we made copies and passed papers out to students have passed. Now students can view documents on the Internet and print them out if they want. I do not limit myself to blackboard. I use all media in my teaching: black/green or white boards, overhead projectors with transparencies, PowerPoint slides, VHS tapes, DVD disks, Blackboard, email, paper handouts, telephone calls and voice mail. What equipment I use depends on what equipment the classroom has and what medium the information is on. If a classroom does not have the equipment I want to use, I sometimes have to check it out and bring it to the classroom.

Due to the new computer technologies, the forms of communication between teachers and students have changed. Students can submit papers to me on-line as an attachment or in class on paper. I print them out, write comments, and pass them back. Every student has an email address. Students use email when conducting group projects. They work as management consultants to organizations. Sometimes their client is overseas. See examples at www.gwu.edu/~rpsol/service-learning.

In American EHEs the educational process is organized in a different way from European EHEs. Different universities have different calendars. At GW the fall semester runs from late August to the middle of December. The spring semester runs from early January to the middle of May. We also have summer sessions. The usual class is 14 weeks, however, we are now experimenting with 7 week classes. These meet twice as often for half the semester.

Faculty members usually teach 5 classes per year. However, release time (e.g., for younger faculty to give them more time to publish and thereby earn promotion) can reduce the number of classes. Also, if a faculty member gets a grant, e.g., from the National Science Foundation, the number of courses per year can be reduced.

Productive senior researchers can also ask the university for summer research support. These policies are new for the last 5 to 10 years. When I arrived at GW years ago, the only summer money was for teaching or grants from private foundations or government agencies.

Vera Gushchina: What is the summer semester?

Stuart Umpleby: During the 3-month summer semester classes meet two times more often than during the fall or spring semester. Summer teaching is optional. One gets paid extra, but very little. Faculty members can do anything they want during the summer – travel to conferences, write articles and books, play golf, do research (ideally with money from a sponsor).

Vera Gushchina: How long are your academic classes? Recently, they have returned us to a standard we already forgot about. Each class is one hour and a half.

Stuart Umpleby: Graduate classes are 1 hour and 50 minutes per week. Undergraduate classes are 2.5 hours per week, either one day (2.5 hours) or two days (1.25 hours for each class). My classes (all graduate students until this year) have usually been 20 to 25 students, sometimes less. Undergraduate classes tend to be larger, about 35 students, and the dean wants to increase this to 45 students. Larger classes require different teaching methods – fewer essays, more multiple choice tests. I like to assign essays, to help students improve their writing. But I cannot do this in larger classes. I also assign group projects. For examples and instructions, see www.gwu.edu/~rpsol/service-learning. Graduate students usually get As and Bs, occasionally Cs. Undergraduate students usually get As, Bs, Cs, and occasionally Ds or Fs. When I give exams, there is a midterm and a final. I might use quizzes in the future.

Vera Gushchina: Do I understand correctly, that you can yourself choose what kind of tests you will use in your classes? Does your University have the right to set its own lecture and discussion duration?

Stuart Umpleby: Yes, evaluation of students is done by the instructor alone. There is more centralized control at the kindergarten to 12th grade levels, ages 5 to 18, but not at the university level. Universities make their own schedules. There is no government involvement. The idea that the government would make such decisions is very nearly inconceivable to Americans. The government is too remote to know what works. At GW we have many time bands for classes. It can be very complicated. Undergraduates use the classrooms during the day. Graduate students use the classrooms at night. Many graduate students work during the day. In the past we sometimes taught graduate students from 7 to 9 a.m. Students liked the morning classes, because they went to class before work. At night the 6-8 p.m. classes are ok, but in the 8-10 p.m. classes, students are often tired.

Vera Gushchina: It would be interesting to know how much American faculty earn for their work in such conditions. In the 2007/08 educational year, GWU average faculty annual

salary was 92 000, 102 000 and 131 000 US dollars for assistant professors, associate professors and professors respectively in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences; USD 112 000, 104 000 and 125 000 in the School of Business; USD 66 000, 78 000 and 112 000 in the School of Arts and Sciences; in the Law School associate professors and professors make USD 149 000 and 193 000 respectively (see: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ire/fsas.htm>). A few outstanding professors hold endowed chairs. Their salary is higher than that of an ordinary professor. Moreover a personal secretary is normally assigned to help them.

Stuart Umpleby: Faculty members can receive their salaries monthly (1/12 of annual salary) or for 9 months (1/9 for nine months and nothing for 3 months). Usually people choose monthly payments. Faculty salaries vary by major field, by years of service and by University.

These figures are related to a normal teaching load. Thirty years ago a normal load was six courses per year, three per semester and research work was almost not required. Now the normal load is five courses, and the university expects research publications from faculty members. If I receive a grant, I can get money in addition to my normal salary during a summer semester and / or get some free time during the educational year. For example, if a normal load is five courses, I may teach three of them and receive three fifths of my salary from the university and two fifths from the grant. A part-time faculty member would teach my classes. This arrangement is beneficial for the university because the salary of a part-time faculty member is lower than that of a full-time faculty member. A faculty member may receive an extra payment to a normal salary only if he teaches courses or does research during the summer. It is not permitted to teach at two or more universities at the same time. Doing so would lead to immediate firing. This arrangement is very different from Russian EHEs.

Often Universities pay for a faculty member to participate in one conference within the USA and one abroad each year. Transportation, hotel, and registration are paid, if the faculty member presents a paper or is the organizer and moderator of a conference session.

Vera Gushchina: I would like to underline that American professors' salaries are not the highest in the world. According to a sociological study done in 2005-2007 by the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College U.S. academic salaries occupy the third place among 15 countries covered by this survey with their 5,816 dollars overall average monthly salary, compared to 6,611 dollars overall average monthly salary of Saudi Arabian scholars and 6,548 dollars of Canadian academics. The lowest professor's salary is in China – 1,182 dollars per month, which is lower even than corresponding professor's salary in South Africa (4,076). (Rumbley, *et al.*, 2008) Academic salaries in Russia were not included in this survey.

There are many other interesting details, which were not covered in our interview but represent specific features of American EHEs, like completely computerized library "card catalogues," and there is open access to all books and journals. Librarians help with on-line searches for articles and books. There are small, separate rooms for doctoral students and other researchers.

I hope that as a result of our conversation readers have gotten an impression about the level of the learning environment in American universities: the material and technical equipment, teaching load and salaries, etc. The work environment is the reason why many European teachers try to, at least temporarily, work in an American EHE in order to obtain the highest level of professional qualification. Of course, not all American EHEs are the same, but all of them continually try to achieve higher positions in national rankings by improving all aspects of EHE life.

Unfortunately, in our case in accord with a long bureaucratic tradition, quality improvement is understood as the establishment of new positions for "commissioners on quality", who produce an enormous quantity of documents. A high quality of performance is understood as a correspondence of certain documents to other documents, up to a comma. However, at the same time, no one is interested in how those documents relate to the real

situation. My personal opinion on this matter, as well as the opinion of many of my colleagues, is that the money, time, and resources spent for this work should be invested directly into improving technological resources, decreasing the teaching load (which invisibly increased almost by a half during recent years), increasing faculty salaries, creating conditions for improvement of faculty qualifications, purchasing foreign scientific literature and periodicals, etc. These changes would bring real benefits to our EHEs. It is also desirable to evaluate EHEs' quality based on the same criteria of material equipment for the educational process, social protection of faculty, the quality level of recruited students, salaries of alumni, etc. as are used in other countries such as the U.S. However, in our case already opposite trends have appeared – a cut in the number of faculty. It is not difficult to predict the results of this action for the quality of education.

Stuart Umpleby: I would be pleased, if the information about the quality management methods in our university, its criteria, faculty working conditions, etc. proves to be interesting and useful for Russian colleagues.

Vera Gushchina: P.S. In conclusion, during our virtual discussion the GWU computer system was continuing to develop. During this time, the faculty were notified that beginning in spring 2009 it is required to put dissertations on the university web portal. For this purpose, special workshops to instruct doctoral students how to do so have been organized. The workshops imply discussion of questions which might appear in the process of creating electronic versions of dissertations.

Moreover, in GWU all students now have an opportunity to have consultations on resume and CV writing. In addition the Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships offers consultations on programs, which support doctoral students and fund research. The Office of Research Support is responsible for administering research grants and also provides consultations on how to find federal and private sources for financing scientific research and how to improve grant proposals.

As a rule, workshops are free of charge or a symbolic charge is levied, e. g. \$5, in order to know for sure how many people are going to participate.

Methods of quality improvement are continuing to develop.

References

- Gerasimova, E. (2008). "Real grade or 'anti-Russian conspiracy,'" in *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*. 18 Sept. - http://www.ng.ru/education/2008-09-18/12_top100.html.
- Luedtke, L.S. (ed.) (1992). *Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States*. Washington, Forum Series, pp. 282-295.
- Umpleby, S.A. (2002). "Creating and Sustaining a Quality Improvement Effort in a University," in Russell J. Meyer and David Keplinger (eds.), *Perspectives in Higher Education Reform*, Volume 11, Alliance of Universities for Democracy, Texas Review Press, pp. 31-36.
- "Modern education" (2006). [\("СОВРЕМЕННОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ", № 3 \(108\), March 2006\)](http://www.edit.muh.ru/newspaper/so_2006/03/st7.html) http://www.edit.muh.ru/newspaper/so_2006/03/st7.html.
- Rumbley, L., Pacheco, I., and Altbach, P. (2008). *International Comparison of Academic Salaries*. http://www.bc.edu/be_org/avp/soe/cihe/salary_report.pdf.