THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
GOZO CAMPUS:
TWENTY YEARS ON

Edited by
Joseph Calleja and
Caroline Camilleri Rolls

Published on the Occasion of the 20th Anniversary
of the Establishment of the University of Malta Gozo Centre
1992-2012
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Commemorative Publication
marking the 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary
of the establishment of the
University of Malta Gozo Centre
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On Reaching Twenty

Professor Juanito Camilleri
Rector, University of Malta

Twenty-one years ago the Hon. Anton Tabone, then Minister for Gozo, consulted with the Minister of Education at the time, Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici and with the former University Rector, Professor Peter Serracino Inglott about the possibility of offering University courses in Gozo. He found the support of both the Minister and the Rector. Soon after, Professor Peter Serracino Inglott asked Lino Briguglio to act as Director of the University Gozo Centre, as this campus was originally known. The latter accepted, and without much delay started the ball rolling. Several attempts were made before that year to open a University branch in Gozo, but it was only in 1992 that this became a reality. In February 1992, the statute of the Centre was approved by the University Council, and the first fully-fledged degree course to be offered in Gozo commenced in February 1993.

I am very glad to be writing this piece on the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the University Gozo Campus (UGC). The University is fully aware of the important educational and cultural contribution that this Campus is making to Gozo. The presence of the University in Gozo has made it possible for many Gozitans to follow tertiary educational courses in Gozo, enabling them to enrich their knowledge and improve their career possibilities. The impact of the Centre on Gozitan society, however, extended beyond teaching. It has undertaken research in various subjects associated with Gozo, its economy, physical environment, history and social structure. The UGC’s presence in Gozo has also enhanced Gozo’s intellectual and cultural life, partly as a result of the input made by scholars who regularly visit Gozo to lecture at the Campus.
I am also pleased that the University of Malta has supported and will continue to support the development of the UGC. I am delighted to announce that next year the Campus will offer a new diploma course in Gozo Studies. The course will not only enable students to acquire knowledge about important aspects of Gozo’s culture and history, but will also lead to further research on this small island.

To further strengthen the University of Malta’s commitment to Gozo, this year I have decided to appoint Professor Joe Friggieri to take on the role of Pro-Rector for Gozo, not only to oversee the day-to-day management of the UGC, but also to extend the University’s participation in the social, cultural and economic life of the Island. While thanking Professor Lino Briguglio for his sterling service, I have no doubt that Professor Friggieri will build on past successes to extend the University’s vision for Gozo.
The Ministry for Gozo and the University Gozo Campus

Hon. Giovanna Debono
Minister for Gozo

If there ever was any need of proof, the experience of the past twenty years has clearly demonstrated that the initiative taken by all the stakeholders involved in the setting up of the University Gozo Centre back in 1992 has yielded ample fruit.

The continued collaboration of all these stakeholders throughout the past twenty years, together with the encouraging support and involvement of all those who accepted to offer their services to hold the varied courses and lectures, are a clear sign that the decisions taken back then, and others taken along the way, were and still are beneficial for Gozo. The Ministry for Gozo sustained this initiative, in every possible manner, throughout the past twenty years, during which the UGC was established and continued to thrive.

The Ministry for Gozo’s share in this joint venture could not have been made possible without the support and collaboration of other entities and key persons who also believed in fostering and promoting higher education on the sister island. The proposal made by the then Minister for Gozo, Anton Tabone, was strengthened by the valid support of the University Rector, the late Fr. Peter Serracino Inglott, and by the unstinting endeavours and commitment of Professor Lino Briguglio. Professor Briguglio’s contribution as co-founder and director of the University Gozo Centre, that has now been acknowledged as the University Gozo Campus, has been instrumental in consolidating the endeavours of all stakeholders for the benefit of the Campus’s functionality.

All this comes to mind as we look back and feel justifiably satisfied with the results. Had it not been for the physical presence of the University of Malta on Gozo, it would have been rather difficult for many of those who obtained certificates, diplomas, degrees and other qualifications through the services offered on the Gozo Campus to do so at Tal-Qroqq. It would also have proved to be harder for three
mature students to obtain their PhDs after completing their Master studies in Gozo.

The success of the University Gozo Campus is based upon the personal successes of all the students who were encouraged, guided and assisted in following their studies and achieving their qualifications. The Campus’s mission may also be described as a tangible and valid contribution towards the enhancement of educational services that target further development among the working population on Gozo.

The experiences and results that have been gained present a sound basis for further growth and enable us to look forward with enthusiasm. We welcome the establishment of a Pro-Rectorate for Gozo and have complete trust in Professor Joe Friggieri who has been appointed to this post. We are confident that Professor Friggieri will continue to strengthen and build upon the potential signified by the presence of University services on the island of Gozo.

The Ministry for Gozo is proud of its involvement in this success story, which has definitely given a good return on investment. Past performance in this venture denotes solid foundations that form the basis for further openings and opportunities through which many more Gozitans will be enabled to achieve their own success.
The Gozo Campus of the University of Malta has certainly managed to find its feet and establish itself as an important institution over the past twenty years of its existence. And it is now most appropriate that the people who run it want to celebrate its twentieth anniversary in a fitting manner. This occasion gives all those of us who were involved in its initial stages the opportunity to look back with great satisfaction at the beginnings of the experiment and feel proud of what has been achieved since then. More importantly it gives us the opportunity to look ahead in order to discover further ways and means by which this University Centre may extend its services by providing more lectures, increasing the number of days for their delivery, and organizing courses relevant to Gozo’s current and future needs.

As we reminisce on past years, we cannot forget the difficulties faced by the whole venture in its initial stages. The odds against us were great. The whole project, to those less familiar with Gozitan affairs, seemed preposterous at first. Many considered it a bad joke. This lack of faith in the project had prompted me to say in my speech as Minister for Gozo, delivered on the occasion of the inauguration of the present premises, that often on your way to Gozo you were likely to meet many doubting Thomases who could turn faint-hearted people from potential achievers to outright failures. However, in spite of such attitudes, the Island once more showed its potential, and the political will prevailing at the time managed to overcome all the hurdles.

In my long experience in public life I cannot remember a single instance when a new initiative earmarked for Gozo by clear-sighted and level-headed individuals turned out to be a white elephant. The ongoing success of the Gozo Campus proves my point. The Centre has filled a gap by providing access to tertiary education for the people of Gozo on the Island itself. In so doing it has also highlighted the regional significance of the Island in the Maltese Archipelago, precisely by applying and implementing a regional policy where it was due.

The Gozo University Centre was set up way back in 1992 through the publication of a Statute, later incorporated in a Legal Notice, stating the aims and obligations inherent in the running of the institution. Another milestone in the history of the Centre was the recent appointment of Professor Joe Friggieri.
as Pro-Rector for Gozo on 26 April 2012. The University Council unanimously welcomed the Rector’s decision to appoint Professor Friggieri to the new role and thanked Professor Lino Briguglio for his pioneering work and sterling service over the last twenty years.

Alongside his other duties, Professor Friggieri will be in charge of the running of the Centre as part of the overall plan to develop the Gozo Campus into a fully-fledged and vibrant extension of the University of Malta. The aim is to offer a wider range of services to all Gozitan students and to better cater for their needs. A pilot project to organize some of the degree examinations in Gozo itself was launched in June of this year. This should enable the University to gain a better understanding of the logistical and infrastructural changes that would need to be made in order for this facility to be extended to as many degree programmes as possible. A livelier campus would also serve as a meeting point for the launch of new ideas and projects within the community.

At this point I would like to take the opportunity to heartily congratulate Professor Friggieri on his appointment. I have always counted Professor Friggieri among those who genuinely love the Island, a love he manages to express so beautifully and so well in a number of poems. He has been consistently involved in the Gozo Centre since its beginnings, twenty years ago, and he has never faltered in his firm resolve to turn the Gozo experiment into a worthwhile and joyful experience.

As to Professor Briguglio, I will remain indebted to him all my life for his pioneering role and total dedication in running the Centre as its director ever since it was set up, and for winning, in a very short time, the all-round respect it deserves as an institution of higher learning. I always admired the way in which, in those early days and beyond, he skillfully managed to navigate the stormy seas, not only in his frequent crossings of the Gozo channel, but also in bringing about the necessary logistical, infrastructural and cultural changes in the face of initial resistance to the project. Professor Briguglio’s contribution to the success of the whole venture is truly monumental.

After a gestation period of twenty years and as a result of its new status, the Gozo facility should now be rapidly moving in the direction of becoming an institution on a full-time basis, with a specific budget shared by the Gozo Ministry and the University, providing regular, full-time courses with the help of video links and other means of communication. Emphasis must be placed on the need to provide courses that are relevant to Gozitan society and beneficial to Gozo’s economy. In order to achieve this objective, there must be an ongoing and close collaboration between all the players involved in the project. Without in any way diminishing the great merits of all the previous Gozo Board Members, and while expressing my gratitude to all of them for their work over the years, I envisage a period of renewed vigour and the generation of new ideas, with frequent and regular meetings held throughout the academic year and beyond.

The success of this Gozo initiative fills us all with a deep sense of satisfaction for a job well thought out and diligently executed; but it also gives the lie to those whose knowledge of Gozo is manifestly lacking and who still consider the Island as no more than a Christmas crib (presepiu) and its inhabitants as its little clay figurines (pasturi). I write this because I strongly believe in Gozo’s potential, which is ready to be tapped to turn disadvantages into opportunities, for its own sake as well as for the benefit of the whole country.

The Gozo Campus hosts an Atmospheric Research Laboratory, set up in 1996, which now houses five full-time employees, four of whom are qualified scientists within the Physics Department of the University. The laboratory is equipped with state-of-
the-art instruments acquired from funds made specifically available by German Institutions and the ERDF. Most of the instruments are located at the Giordan Lighthouse, limits of Għasri. The laboratory is currently contributing to a global database on climate change. Once the data is collected and processed locally, it is then made available world-wide.

I am also eagerly looking forward to the day when the Gozo Campus will, as planned, offer a course leading to a diploma in Gozo Studies, preparations for which, I have been given to understand, are at an advanced stage. The history of lace-making, so intimately connected with Gozo’s culture and people, has also, I hear, raised its profile through the presentation of a thesis on the subject by a lady student from Gozo who is currently reading for a PhD after acquiring an MPhil at the Mediterranean Institute of the University. This will hopefully lead to further research in the history and technical aspects of this traditional craft. It all started at the Gozo Centre through the setting up of three-year courses leading to a certificate, which was then extended to a Diploma in Lace Studies, catering for both Maltese and Gozitan students.

I would like to renew the appeal I made at the official inauguration of the present premises for other national institutions, corporations and agencies to follow the University’s example by stepping ashore on Gozo so as to include the Island in their planning and strategies in order to help create more educational and employment opportunities for the local population, especially the young. I am sure that Gozo will not let them down. This is precisely what the then Rector of the University, Fr Peter Serracino Inglott, did when he gave his full support to the idea of establishing a branch of the University in Gozo. His recent demise was a sad loss for all of us. It was as a result of his vision that the highest educational institution of the land managed to gain a foothold on the smaller Island. Gozo and its people are eternally grateful to Fr Peter for his crucial role in giving birth to the Gozo project and for the way he inspired others to carry it through.

In conclusion I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those friends of Gozo whose support has made it possible for a dream to come true. As to the rest, I sincerely hope that the success of the Campus experience may make them realize that Gozo has the potential, and the Gozitans the ability, to host new and ambitious initiatives and bring them to fruition for the benefit of the national economy and the general well-being of the whole country.
The University Gozo Campus - Twenty Years On*

Lino Briguglio

Twenty years ago, in August 1992, Rev. Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, who was then Rector of the University, asked me whether I was interested in coordinating University courses in Gozo.

I had a reputation of being a Gozo-lover, and I think that was the reason why I was asked to do the job. Coordinating part-time courses is not an easy task in the best of circumstances – but the Gozo assignment was even more difficult, since it required finding Maltese lecturers to teach in Gozo. I presume that Revd Professor Peter Serracino Inglott (or Fr Peter, as he was more familiarly known) thought that the prospect of frequent visits to the Island, involved in this assignment, was enough of an attraction for me.

At first I was inclined to refuse the offer. I was sure that very few lecturers – if any – would want to offer their services in Gozo, given the time and discomfort involved in travelling to and from Gozo. Relying on Gozitan lecturers was not an option, since there were very few of them and in any case, most of them worked in Malta. Finding a solution to this problem was a major challenge for me. After giving some more thought to the matter, I decided to accept the offer. Looking back, I am very glad I did.

The Establishment of the Centre

I was of the opinion that the operation should be organised in the form of a University Institute, with a specific statute, and a Director appointed by Senate and Council. The UGC started to operate in late summer 1992, although the statute was formally approved a few months earlier.

Fr Peter, who, I learned later, was being prodded by Mr Anton Tabone, then Minister for Gozo, to open a University branch in Gozo, was himself very enthusiastic about the idea, and he asked me to start the operation by coordinating a BA course. Unfortunately, such enthusiasm was not shared by many members

* This is an updated version of an article carried in the commemorative publication ‘From Vision to Reality’, published by the UGC on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of its establishment.
of the Faculty of Arts – they did not relish the prospect of going to Gozo after normal office hours. So it was obvious that some sort of incentive had to be devised to attract University lecturers to teach in Gozo.

The solution – like most good solutions – was a very simple one.

I, in consultation with the University authorities, decided that lecture sessions were to be held on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. Included in the package for lecturers, apart from the normal university lecturing fees and refund of travelling expenses, was a free stay at a good hotel in Gozo on half-board basis, so as to encourage lecturers to stay overnight on Friday evenings and deliver lectures on Saturday morning. However, it should be stated, that crossing over to Gozo every weekend or every other weekend for fourteen weeks at a stretch still involved discomfort for the lecturers, especially due to the fact that every trip to Gozo required about five hours travelling, including the frequent long waits at the Cirkewwa Quay on Friday afternoons. During the winter months there was the added problem of inclement weather. The response of the lecturers was however very satisfactory, and the UGC took off, with the first BA course commencing in February 1993.

The Protagonists of the Story

The UGC story would not even have begun had it not been for the initiative and the seminal role taken by the Hon. Anton Tabone who wanted to put his vision into practice. Obviously, the Centre would not have been established without his seminal role and the support and encouragement he received from Revd. Serracino Inglott.

The lecturers who accepted to undertake the Gozo assignment also played a major role in this regard. It goes without saying that without them, classes would not have been held, and the whole project would have floundered. It is not possible to name the lecturers that have given a contribution to the Centre one by one – because during the course of these twenty years, the Centre utilised the services of about 200 different lecturers. As stated, travelling to Gozo from Malta on a regular basis involves discomfort and requires dedication, and I take the opportunity to thank the lecturers concerned for their ongoing commitment.

The first administrator of the UGC, Mr George Aquilina, was my assistant on the ground during the initial years. I could only visit the UGC during the weekends, so the day-to-day administration was in his hands. The Centre owes a lot to George’s dedication.
and enthusiasm. Before taking over the Gozo University Office, he was a guidance teacher, and he used his skills to help students following courses at the Centre, who were mostly adults, to adjust to the rigours of University courses. I must say I also made use of his guidance skills, especially when I needed to understand the Gozitan psychology.

However, the star protagonists of the UGC story were the students. The first group of students that were accepted to join the BA course had made it possible for the Centre to come to life. It is true that they were the main beneficiaries of the service offered by the University, but it was also thanks to them that an idea was transformed into an institution.

I accept the compliment that I played an important part in the success of the UGC. I wanted the project to succeed and I really felt I had a mission to fulfil, namely that of promoting university education in Gozo. But the important driving force was that I loved (and of course still love) Gozo.

The Xewkija Premises

As is well known, the Centre moved into its current premises in 1996 – four years after it was established. Again the University Authorities and the Ministry for Gozo backed the move and provided the necessary support towards this end.

The Ministry for Gozo was particularly generous in this regard, and made available materials and labour, which, within a few months, led to the transformation of a dreary mental hospital into a beautiful cloister-like building, full of light and good feeling.

Before moving into the Xewkija premises, lectures used to be held at the Post-Secondary School at Victoria. We were offered different options as to which buildings to move into. One was a convent, partly inhabited by friars, which I considered to be unsuitable as University premises, for many reasons, not least of which was the incompatibility between short-skirted female students and the hallowed convent cells and corridors. I thought that a more ‘worldly’ building would be more appropriate.

As soon as I saw the Xewkija building I immediately felt that it was the right place. There were some who were not so keen about the idea of moving into a former mental hospital. The rooms seemed too narrow, the windows were barred with metal mesh for security reasons, the central courtyard was mostly used for dumping old mattresses and broken beds – the floors had an acrid smell. The place was obviously not very inviting. But most members of the Board of the Centre saw the potential of the place. We were of course aware of the
predictable joke that the place was going to change from one mental institution into another – but this was a very small price to pay for acquiring such a beautiful building. Admittedly it requires ongoing maintenance, and the shapes of the rooms are not ideal, but we are very happy with this place, and we are very grateful to the Ministry for Gozo for making it available to the University.

A Day in the Life of the Centre

The University Gozo Campus, under my direction which lasted till June 2012, was not an ordinary University Institute. We organised a variety of courses on different disciplines, prepared time-tables, approved payments of lecturers, acted as the University Office when it came to applications for admissions, organised logistical support for courses, including travel and accommodation arrangements for lecturers, kept records of students’ progress, administered tests and examinations, ran the library and liaised with the Ministry for Gozo. Over and above all this, we had to provide for the maintenance and upkeep of the building and its surrounding grounds. We also looked after the welfare of the students and acted as a guidance office. As if this was not enough, we also carried out research and published books on Gozitan affairs, and cooperated with Gozitan organisations on matters of mutual interest. And, in addition to all this, we organised social activities, which, I am glad to say, were considered part of the cultural calendar of Gozo. These activities, I am sure, will continue to be offered and possibly upgraded under the new pro-rectorate.

Expression of Gratitude

There are many people, apart from the ones I already mentioned, who merit appreciation and gratitude for their contribution to the Centre and Campus during my directorship.

Professor Joe Friggieri lecturing during the early years of the BA course offered in Gozo. Before moving to the Xewkija premises the Gozo Centre was housed at the Sir Michelang Refalo Post-secondary School, Victoria.

A meeting with Dr Anton Refalo at the Parliament Secretariat for Gozo in 1986.
The Centre found excellent and constant encouragement from all University Rectors since its establishment in 1992. The Ministry for Gozo (and the Secretariat for Gozo between 1996 and 1998) never failed to extend its support.

The Centre also utilised the services of members of the Office of the Registrar and the administration of the University. We were also serviced by staff at the Gozo Ministry. I also wish to thank all those who provided the services we required. The Centre was run very efficiently – and I often got the credit for this. However, in reality, the credit should go to Mr Joseph Calleja and Mr Marvin Grech, who administered the place in a very professional manner. They were diligent and well-organised, and have made the success of the UGC their own success. They were very respected by the students, lecturers and staff of the Gozo Campus.

The Gozo Campus also engaged the services of librarians, messengers and maintenance persons, who all know the meaning of flexibility in terms of tasks and working hours. I am very grateful for their contribution to the Centre.

Thanks are also due to UGC Board members. Before it was dissolved, the Board was chaired by the University Secretary, Mr Simon Sammut, who I wish to thank for his guidance and support.

The story of the UGC goes beyond lecturing and administration. We have seen many things happening here. Students got married during their studies, others have had babies (sometimes more than one), and still others found their soul-mates here. We passed through joyous experiences, especially when students graduated. We have seen students on the verge of desperation on learning that they failed a study-unit and others in a state of jubilation after getting an A, especially when they expected a lower grade. I presume this is normal for any Institution of higher education – but for Gozo it is only normal because somebody had a vision and found it possible to turn it to reality. I have lived this reality and I hope that, in the coming years, the UGC will continue to flourish.
The Genesis of Tertiary Education in Gozo

Joseph Bezzina

Speech delivered on the occasion of the inauguration of two new lecture halls at the University of Malta Gozo Campus – 17 March 2011.

Introduction

The official inauguration of the Malta University Gozo Campus on 4 May 1996 by the Prime Minister Dr Eddie Fenech Adami signalled the fulfillment of what has been mere wishful thinking for close to four hundred years.

A Missed Opportunity

The first initiative for the establishment of an institution to cater for tertiary education in Gozo dates back to 1618 and the person behind the venture was Nicola-Angelo Macanuzio, also known as Mahnuq, a nobleman of Gozitan extraction living in Valletta.

On 4 September 1618, Macanuzio registered his will in the acts of Giovanni Simone di Lucia. He left the lion’s share of his movable and immovable property – a large portion of which was along the whole length of the Xewkija side of Mgarr ix-Xini Valley – to the Collegium Melitense of the Society of Jesus in Valletta.

The establishment of this Collegium had been authorized through a Brief of Pope Clement VIII addressed to Grandmaster Hughes Loubens de Verdalle (1582-1595) on 28 March 1592. It was a school of Grammar and Humanities and provided for the teaching of Philosophy and Theology. The deed for the actual erection of the Collegium was signed at the Magisterial Palace on 12 November 1592. It is considered the predecessor of the University of Malta, the foundation of which was authorized by the Breve Sedula Romani Pontificis of Pope Clement XIV dated 20 October 1769. The University was eventually founded through a magisterial degree of Grandmaster Emanuel Pinto da Fonseca (1741-1773) on 22 November 1769 (Bezzina, 2002: 145-147; Vella, 1969: 7-10).

The bequest by Macanuzio to the Collegium was made with a very specific condition – a truly give-and-take donation for the benefit of the youths of Gozo. The Society of Jesus, accepting the donation, would be obliged to open a permanent residence and college on the island of Gozo for the benefit of the inhabitants of that island. He was so anxious to promote the well-being...
of Gozo and the Gozitans that, in another clause, he set aside further property lest the income from the original bequest was not sufficient for the up-keep of the residence and college. In still another clause, he decreed that if the Jesuits did not accept the bequest, it should be passed on to the Order of Preachers, the Dominican Friars, with the same conditions attached.

The Society of Jesus initially accepted the legacy and sent two Jesuit Fathers to Gozo to seek proper premises for the setting up of a residence and a college in Gozo. The ensuing report has seemingly gone lost. It is however certain that the two Society members that came to Gozo were probably taken aback by the state of affairs of the island of Gozo at that time. So much so that, all of a sudden, they gave up the bequest. The Dominicans showed little or no interest in the undertaking.

The attempt of Nicola-Angelo Macanuzio to set up a Gozo Campus of the Collegium Melitense failed.

A University for Gozo

A second attempt vis-à-vis tertiary education in Gozo was made by the British Colonial Office. It was the same Colonial Office that later on was to give strict orders to their representatives in Malta to be as thrifty as possible with the island, lest expenditure exceeded income.

A short time after Malta and Gozo were recognized as a British Crown Colony, the Colonial Office in London was deliberating the opening of a University in Gozo. The proposal was first made by Henry E. Bunbury, Under-Secretary of State, on behalf of Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, to Sir Thomas Maitland, the first British Governor of Malta, in a despatch of 12 February 1815.  

He suggested the setting up in Gozo of “a considerable university which may attract the young men of the most enterprising Greek and Italian families and become at the same time a lasting instrument for the extension of our [British] moral influence through the Levant and at least the south of Italy.” He dwelt at length on other benefits that would accrue. The university was first

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3 Henry E. Bunbury, Under Secretary of State on behalf of Lord Bathurst, to Thomas Maitland (12 Feb 1815) : NAM, National Archives Malta, CO to Gov, 6, 8.
4 Ibid.
and foremost conceived as a hub for the diffusion of Colonial propaganda towards the expansion of the British Empire, rather than a centre for the enhancement of education in Gozo. Just the same, were the idea to materialize, it would have certainly upgraded the standard of education on the island.

It was not to be. Governor Maitland was not a person to promote projects that were not his brainchild and he paid little or no attention to the suggestion. One might assume that Bunbury’s proposal was a fantastic suggestion – a University on a remote unknown island in the middle of the Mediterranean – but time proved that it was not far-fetched at all.

By that time, it was being recognized that Gozo did nurture intelligent people. To try to make it easier for promising Gozitans to pursue tertiary education in Malta, Thaddeus O’Malley, Rector of the University between 1841 and 1842, suggested the building of a hostel in Valletta for gifted Gozitan students. Such a suggestion naturally fell on deaf ears.

At the time, three factors militated against the diffusion of education in Gozo: the Government’s low vote, the language problem, and the little interest shown by the majority. No wonder that up to 1842, the year of the first British census, the Gozitans were still wallowing in ignorance and the number of literate persons was little more than one per cent. In fact, of the boys and girls between the age of seven and twenty living in Gozo at that time, only thirteen per thousand, or 1.3% were receiving some schooling.

**Tertiary Education at the Seminary**

Nonetheless, the proposal made by Henry E. Bunbury in 1815 was not far-fetched, as many might imagine. So much so that fifty-one years later, when the Gozo Seminary opened its doors as a secondary boarder and day-school for boys under the able direction of the Jesuit Fathers, a number of distinguished Sicilian families did send their sons to Gozo.

The Gozo Seminary was inaugurated on 4 November 1866. It was the brainchild of Monsignor Pietro Pace, then Vicar General for Gozo, and a future bishop of Gozo and archbishop of Malta. Pietro Pace, together with Sir Adrian Dingli, Crown Advocate for Malta, were the main promoters of the establishment of the diocese of Gozo (Bezzina, 1985: 225-231).

These promoters were fully conscious of the urgent necessity of upgrading education on the island. One reason why they were pressing for a diocese was precisely because they rightly hoped that its establishment would bring about the opening of a seminary together with a secondary school. The provision for such an institution was indispensable.

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The idea of opening a Seminary in Gozo was indeed a daring project in the middle of the nineteenth century. In the 1860s, around three quarters of the population of 16,000 were directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture. Analphabetism was rife and hardly any secondary education worthy of mention was imparted on the island.

The Bull *Singulari Amore*, that established the diocese of Gozo, stipulated the foundation of the Seminary within the former Saint Julian Hospital and the transfer of all its legacies to the new foundation.\(^6\)

The Seminary was instrumental in enhancing the standard of education in Gozo and the reputation of the school spread far and wide. From the very first year, the sons of the best families in Gozo and many intellectually talented boys from Malta attended the Jesuit-run institution. The Jesuits even succeeded to attract a number of students from Sicily, their island home. In the seminary’s secondary school or Minor Seminary, boys were prepared for the University of Malta Matriculation Examination, and many were those who obtained brilliant results. The faculty of Philosophy and Theology or Major Seminary made a very good name for itself for the seriousness and high standard of its studies and for the number of holy and zealous priests it turned out.\(^7\)

In line with their policy, the Jesuits did not cater only for the intellectual and spiritual advancement of their students. They also sought to widen their cultural interests. In a few years, the Seminary became the centre of the major cultural activities of the diocese and of the whole island of Gozo. The Jesuits held meetings of all sorts for priests, gave public lectures and talks, organized large-scale exhibitions on a variety of subjects, and produced dramatic shows for people at large. Many even crossed over from Malta to participate and enjoy these activities.

It was at the Sacred Heart Seminary, as the institution was called from 1881, that tertiary education was first imparted on the island. Students preparing for the priesthood followed the course of the Scienze Sacre studying Dogmatic and Moral Theology, Sacred Scripture, History of the Church, and Canon Law. Several attempts to obtain the authorization from Rome to confer first degrees failed not because of a lack of intelligent students and knowledgeable professors but as some quarters in Malta were afraid of competition from the smaller island (Bezzina, 1991).

The Seminary was to remain the only seat of tertiary education in Gozo for one hundred and twenty five years.

\(^6\) Pope Pius IX, Bull *Singulari Amore* (16 Sep 1864) 11r-v : ACG [Archivum Cathedralis Gaudisiensis, the Citadel-Gozo], Misc.

\(^7\) *Catalogus Provinciae Siculae Societatis Iesu*, Panormi 1867 onwards.

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*Monsignor Pietro Pace, Vicar General for Gozo, the person behind the opening of the Seminary and the beginning of tertiary education in Gozo. (Photo courtesy: Cathedral Museum-Gozo).*
University of the Air

In the late 1960s – in the post-Independence years – the youths of Gozo became more and more aware of the necessity of tertiary education. The costs involved were however beyond the means of the majority. Well-meaning Gozitans began to nurture the idea of requesting the University to hold some courses in Gozo to make it easier for Gozitans to upgrade their studies. At that time, the number of Gozitans at the University never surpassed thirty.

The proposal was put forward to Sixth Form students at the Gozo Lyceum early in 1968. It was Mr George Cassar, the master of Maltese and a man fully dedicated to the common good of Gozo, who launched the idea and invited students to write a petition to the University outlining such a request. As a student, I was one of the promoters of the petition.

This request was linked with an appeal to the University to stop what was considered its discriminatory action against Gozitan students by compelling them to travel to Valletta to sit for the Matriculation examinations. At that time, both Oxford and London Universities had an examination centre in Gozo to cater for Gozitan students, but not the Malta University. The University at long last acceded to this request.

The holding of University courses in Gozo was a harder nut to crack. The proposal was eventually taken up by the now defunct Gozo Civic Council, a regional government for Gozo. By 1970, two possibilities were being put forward.

The first was to request the University to impart the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science courses to Gozitan students in Gozo. The suggestion was immediately shot down; it was impracticable for members of the Departments concerned to commute frenziedly to Gozo and, besides, there was no library in Gozo to cater for specialized research.

The leader of the Times of Malta (18 March 1970) supporting the idea of the University of the Air. (Photo courtesy: Public Library-Gozo).
The second was the setting up of a University of the Air, a project that was being launched in Great Britain around the same time. Through a sort of closed-circuit radio, students sitting in a lecture-room in Gozo could listen to lectures being imparted at the Valletta University campus with the facility to make questions and participate directly in the debate.

It was Professor Guzè Aquilina, Gozitan and, at the time, vice-Rector of the University of Malta, who seemingly first aired this idea to Dr Anton Tabone, President of the Gozo Civic Council. In the sitting of 19 February 1970, the Council unanimously endorsed the proposal and, on 26 February, it formally tendered the request to Professor Edwin Borg-Costanzi, the University Rector. Professor Aquilina put his full weight behind this second proposal “for the benefit of those who, for one reason or another, cannot settle in Malta to read for a degree” (Jaquil, 1970: 15; Aquilina, 1970: 14). He considered the provision of University facilities for Gozitan students by the adaptation of the British idea to the local situation as the only plausible solution.

Professor Aquilina backed the Gozitan request when it came up for discussion at the University Council. Yet, as often happens, the concept was not pursued further.

**University of Malta Gozo Campus - A Reality**

Anton Tabone, son of Dr Anton Tabone and first Minister for Gozo, took up the idea of an institution of tertiary education in Gozo soon after the establishment of the Ministry for Gozo on 14 May 1987 (Bezza, 1997: 430-431).

The Minister found collaboration both on the part of the University, especially from the Reverend Professor Peter Serracino-Inglott, the Rector, as well as from his colleagues within the Government’s cabinet. Innumerable obstacles had to be overcome before the dream could come true. In the meantime, Professor Lino Briguglio was roped in by the Ministry to promote this foundation. It was not an easy task to convince the University Council and Senate to set up a Campus in Gozo.

The University of Malta Gozo Centre was finally established in October 1992 and courses were inaugurated on Saturday, 6 February 1993 during a ceremony at the Exhibition Hall of the Ministry for Gozo. Lectures were initially imparted at the premises of the Sixth Form in Rabat, Gozo. The new centre in Xewkija began to function from October 1996.

The Centre, now rightly called Campus, is governed by a board chaired by the University Rector and administered by a director, a post that has been held from the beginning – with shining results – by Professor Lino Briguglio.

Throughout the fifteen years of its existence, the Campus served not only for the organization of courses and for research, but also for the promotion of culture. It began by the organization of a five-year part-time course leading to a BA degree and proceeded throughout the years with an innumerable number of courses. The University also uses the Gozo Campus for specialized research on atmospheric and climate change in collaboration with foreign institutions. Besides this, through the Gozo Campus, the University has embarked on a number of research projects concerning Gozo, such as the lace-making industry, agriculture, and tourism.

Mr. Anton Tabone, the former Minister for Gozo and the principal promoter of the whole project, considers the campus as a dream come true. He is also certain that the involvement of the University
in Gozitan affairs was another step towards the emancipation of this island region in national affairs (Cauchi, 2002).

Dr Anton Refalo, Parliamentary Secretary for Gozo between 1996 and 1998, gave his full support to the Campus. In September 1998, with the re-establishment of the Ministry for Gozo, the Honourable Govanna Debono, the new Minister for Gozo, declared her interest in increasing and widening the scope of the Campus from day one. She has never ceased to give the Campus her full support.

On 4 May 1996, during the inauguration of the Malta University Gozo Campus, Prime Minister Dr Eddie Fenech-Adami affirmed that “when the idea of the Gozo Centre was first raised, many thought it was just a nice dream and not practical. But the idea has become a reality because over the recent years we have come to appreciate two things: the importance of university education, and the opportunities for education in Gozo.”

References


The plaque commemorating the inauguration of the University Gozo Centre Premises.
Philosophy at the Gozo Campus

Joe Friggieri
Pro-Rector for Gozo

Twenty years ago, two or three people came up with the idea of opening a branch of the University on the other side of Comino, and I was one of the pioneers responsible for its implementation. It started as a small-scale project that grew and gathered momentum as it progressed.

Twenty years is a fourth of a lifetime, if one is lucky, a bigger fraction for many. For me, at any rate, those twenty years have gone by pretty fast, almost in a flash, or so it seems. I don't think I'm the only one to feel that way. The first batch of students who started coming to my classes in Gozo twenty years ago and ended up with a degree in Philosophy and another subject must feel more or less the same.

It has been shown scientifically that time appears to pass more quickly as one grows older. Stephen Hawking suggests that the perception of time at any particular point of a person's life is a ratio between a unit of time and the time lived up to that point by the perceiving subject. An hour, in other words, appears much longer to a child or adolescent than to an adult, even though the measure of time is the same. From sundials and water clocks to incense sticks and candles, from the hourglass to atomic clocks, a whole range of devices has been invented to measure time. None of them, however, can reverse the arrow of time or stop its flow.

I've been to Gozo so many times since we first started that I really can't count the ferry crossings. For some reason I can't explain, they all seem to merge into one crossing, one view of Comino and the caves (I always sit on that side of the boat), one sight of Mgarr harbour, with the yachts to one side and the fishing boats further in, with Fort Chambray perched on top of the hill and the chapel rising out of the rocks.

"What then is time?" asked St Augustine in the 4th century. "If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain it to one who asks, I know not." Augustine was also one of the first philosophers to see clearly that time and memory are closely related. Memories give us a sense of the past, just as hopes, desires, plans and intentions anticipate the future.

My recent memories of Gozo are closely linked to my experience at the University Gozo Campus, both as co-ordinator of the Philosophy courses and as member of the Board of Studies,
representing Senate. I knew Gozo quite well before that, but I got to know it even better over the last twenty years, teaching three successive groups of mature students, some of whom pursued their studies up to M.A. and even Ph.D. levels. Although most of those memories are blurred, and some have faded away completely, I feel a deep sense of satisfaction at what we managed to achieve over the last twenty years. I might not remember the names of all the students I taught at the University Gozo Centre since it came into existence, but I can clearly remember their faces. Whenever we happen to meet, they always show their gratitude for having been given the opportunity to continue their studies after years of gainful employment and to enjoy the excitement and reap the benefits of a University education. They look back on their years at the Gozo Campus with a great deal of nostalgia, some saying that they were the best years of their adult life.

According to an old and well-established tradition, Gozo was the enchanted island of the beautiful goddess Calypso. In a recent number of Philosophie (August-September 2011), the French philosopher and former Minister of Education Luc Ferry claimed that in order to discover the true philosophical significance of Homer’s Odyssey one needs to start from the encounter between Ulysses and the nymph. It is this episode, in Ferry’s view, that throws light on the origins of philosophy in ancient Greece and manifests the beauty and depth of the subject in the best possible way. By rejecting Calypso’s promise of immortality and eternal youth, Ulysses accepts human finitude, casts away the spell of the past and assumes responsibility for the present, as he pursues the journey that will reunite him with his true self, his loved ones and the world.

And isn't this what philosophy is about or tries to do? It helps us find meaning in the world and in the lives we live, it scrutinizes the basic assumptions of our society, it creates new ways of looking at things and urges us to re-examine what's important and what's worthwhile. In doing this, it can bring about important changes in an entire culture or tradition.

The inclusion right from the start of Philosophy, History and Sociology as core subjects in the degree programmes offered by the Gozo Campus was a clear indication of the importance attributed to the humanities in the setting up of this new branch of the University. While in virtually every other country in the world the humanities are being marginalized or cut away in favour of subjects which are seen as producing higher economic returns, the continued presence of Philosophy and other humanistic subjects at the Gozo campus is something we should all be proud of. It is these subjects that foster critical thinking, generate new ideas and stimulate the imagination. What would a person, a nation and education itself be without such qualities?

The unmitigated success registered by the University Gozo Campus over the last twenty years should make all of us involved in the project look upon the future of the institution with renewed enthusiasm and a determination to make it flourish and achieve the same kind of results in an even wider range of subjects and in other fields of knowledge.
The inauguration of the University Gozo Centre, now the University Gozo Campus, twenty years ago was greeted with a mixture of optimism and uncertainty. This is normal when new projects are launched. The vibrant activity at the Gozo Campus has been evident throughout these twenty years and this testifies to its success.

I believe that it has led to three main achievements: it has spread tertiary education to the island of Gozo, thus making it easier for many Gozitans who missed their chance to attend University at a younger age to return to their studies and obtain a University diploma or degree; it has stimulated research on Gozo leading to an improvement of our knowledge of the island, of its strengths and weaknesses; it has permitted a stream of Maltese University academics to travel regularly to the island and to mix with Gozitan graduates teaching at the Campus and thus familiarise themselves with the special problems of insularity and with the way that Gozitans perceive these drawbacks.

An assessment of the Campus’s past twenty years shows that the successes outweigh its failures, but at twenty the Campus needs to stop a little, take stock of its achievements and carefully plan its future. Success is not automatic in any enterprise and the Gozo Campus is not different in this respect.

As for myself, I am one of the “fortunate” few who accepted the opportunity to involve themselves in this academic enterprise from the start. I say “fortunate” because the area of speciality which I provide, European Studies, is not considered to be a “grande dame” of the academic world just like philosophy, law, history or theology.

However, there has been an ongoing interest in Gozo in the study of European Integration initially generated by Malta’s application to join the EU, subsequently sustained by Malta’s actual EU membership. Structured courses on EU integration have filled a particular void which information provided by the media could never fill.

I found the experience of teaching European Studies in Gozo very fulfilling for many reasons. On average Gozitan students tend to
be mature adults who already hold a job and who are studying to improve their qualifications. They tend to be enterprising, hard working and after a while inquisitive. They are also practical and down to earth which often encouraged me to provide practical applications of the knowledge I was imparting.

There was one rather funny aspect about Gozitan students which caught my attention from the very beginning and which I keep encountering. Almost invariably during the first lecture of the course, they would inquire about the method of assessment and the nature of the examination. I got the impression that most of them tend to be somewhat frightened by the very mention of the word “examination”, even though most of them do well in the end.

In all else and as I shall explain briefly below, Gozitan students are not different from their Maltese counterparts at the main campus in Tal-Qroqq.

In Gozo, as elsewhere, the content of European Studies draws the same initial bewilderment amongst students. My impression is that students join the course thinking that they are going to sit out a discussion on current European affairs, just as they find in the media.

Instead, they have to focus their minds on theories such as functionalism and liberal Institutionalism which are used by political scientists to try and make some sense of the multitude of “facts” or “events” happening out there, what we call the empirical data, some of which is reported in the media. They never imagine that one day they would bump into such alien beings as the social constructivist analysis of inter-state dynamics before they actually do so.

When it came to the EU institutions initially most participants were interested in knowing what Malta’s participation in the institutions would be like and whether Gozo would have a voice in them. Will Malta have the right to nominate a Commissioner? Will it have its turn at the six monthly rotating EU Presidency? Was it true that Malta would have only three seats in the European Parliament? Would a parliamentary seat be allocated to Gozo?

There is absolutely nothing wrong with such questions. But most of the analysis focuses little on these questions and enters the more difficult terrain by probing such issues as “Why do states set up supranational institutions in the first place?”, “What power do they wield?” or “How truly democratic are they?”

After the initial shock of discovering that European Studies is different from what they had imagined, students tend to

Hon. Minister Giovanna Debono awards a certificate to a successful short course participant. The University Gozo Campus attracts students of different ages.
adapt themselves quickly to the content and from there on it is plain sailing.

One of the many, perhaps unmentioned contributions of the Gozo University Campus is that it has permitted the growth of a small but important University library on the island. Lecturers provide the Campus with lists of books which are then catalogued and stocked in the library and made available to students. The gradual expansion of this facility and the improvement of the internet service on campus have enhanced access to knowledge.

Last but not least the success of the Campus can be attributed to a number of what I call ‘human’ factors namely that the people who dedicated themselves to the teaching and supervision of research over the past twenty years really believed in and liked what they were doing. Had it been otherwise, the whole project would have sunk faster than the Titanic.

The second important factor was that the Campus and the courses offered were ably led and managed – much to the credit of the Director and support staff. In this respect a balance was struck between satisfying the educational needs of the island and the available resources to achieve them.

Above all a concerted effort was made at maintaining standards. This has enhanced the Campus’s reputation and provides it with a solid basis for future development.
Climate Change and Atmospheric Trace Gas Monitoring Station at University Gozo Campus Laboratory and the Giordan Lighthouse Station

Ray Ellul

Atmospheric Research Laboratory at University Gozo Campus

The atmospheric research programme at the Gozo campus was established in 1996 and now houses a team of five scientists; the actual instruments are located at Giordan Lighthouse which is in a clean air area and thus enables us to study the Mediterranean background. Location of the scientific team at the Gozo Campus is fundamental, as easy and frequent access to the lighthouse by the team is essential in view of the “state of the art” instruments which need frequent adjustment.

Background

The establishment of a climate change/trace gas monitoring station in the Central Mediterranean arose out of a synergy in 1993 between Prof Raymond Ellul of the Physics department, Prof P Serracino Inglott, Rector of the University of Malta and Prof Paul Crutzen, Director of the Max Planck Institute for Airchemistry, Mainz, Germany (Also 1995 Nobel Prize Laureate in Atmospheric chemistry).

It was realised that the strategic position of the Maltese islands midway between Europe and North Africa in the Central Mediterranean could be utilised to make unique measurements of long range trace gas concentrations transported from both continents as well as further afield and hence contribute to a worldwide programme on climate change. With the added help of Dr Guesten of the IMK, Karlsruhe research centre and the German International Bureau for Scientific affairs in Bonn as well as the impetus of the Max Planck organisation, Giordan lighthouse on Gozo was selected as the ideal and only possible site on the Maltese islands where extremely sensitive trace gas measurements could be made on a routine basis uncontaminated by local pollution.
In 1996 the first monitors were donated by the German institutions in question and installed at Giordan lighthouse. Further equipment was later installed so that the lighthouse today hosts ozone, carbon monoxide, and sulphur dioxide monitors as well as sensors for all meteorological parameters and global radiation measurements.

Today we know that the data collected (1996-2006) include the influence of long range atmospheric transport mechanisms not only from Europe and Africa but also from as far away as the United States and South East Asia.

The Gozo centre at Xewkija hosts the laboratory where the data are processed and studied and are made available worldwide.

**International, National and University Use**

In recognition of the importance of the results from the Giordan lighthouse station to the international scientific community the World Meteorological Organisation in 2001 formally recognised this as a regional Global Atmospheric Watch (GAW) station. WMO hosts several hundred such stations worldwide, all located in geographically strategic positions; the results from all such stations are published annually and constitute a detailed record of climate variability with details of greenhouse and aerosol trace gas pollutants contributing to this climate change. Renowned institutes worldwide (eg. MPI, Hamburg, Germany; NCAR, Boulder, Colorado, USA) use these results to extrapolate theoretical model calculations to predict the climate scenarios for the next 50/100 years and form the basis of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports issued every four years by the UN.

The Giordan lighthouse results are included in the results published since 2002 and form the basis of climate and pollution trends for the Mediterranean. This is therefore the Maltese contribution to the UN/International community’s programme on climate change. The formal appointment of the Giordan lighthouse station as a GAW station also implies that the University of Malta is the Maltese agency responsible for the provision of background atmospheric data from Malta.

On the national front these results are used by various organisations including MIA meteorological office, MEPA for reports to the EEA, Civil Protection when major pollution events take place (eg. Etna eruptions) as well as Wasteserv and directly the ministry for rural affairs and the environment who sometimes solicit advice on Mediterranean situations. All these organisations need to relate local data and situations to the wider picture in the Central Mediterranean.
The University of Malta has itself benefited in its role as educator and researcher in environmental matters. The work employs students both undergraduate and postgraduate and several student thesis including an MSc and a PhD have been produced from the ongoing work. More student work is in the pipeline and there is growing interest from Gozitan students for whom the centre is a ready made source of research projects and possible employment.

Most importantly the centre has established an international scientific reputation (see also list of publications) which forms the basis of much cooperative work taking place. Ongoing cooperation takes place with German, Greek, British, Norwegian, French and Italian scientific organisations as well as WMO on a worldwide basis. This scientific reputation is the basis on which future international cooperative programmes can continue to be built particularly with the European Union. In recognition of the work done here Prof. R Ellul sits on several European Commission expert environmental evaluation committees.

It must also be pointed out that despite WMO running many such stations worldwide there is no direct allocation of funds from the UN, WMO programme. Each country takes care of and funds its own individual monitoring stations through the University, research institute or agency responsible.

**Long Term Future**

The Giordan lighthouse station has enabled the University Physics Department and the country to:

- Establish a sound international scientific reputation.
- Is the Maltese direct contribution to the UN’s Climate Change Programme.
- Has enabled us to train scientists in environmental matters.

- Has established important international cooperative programmes around the Mediterranean and the rest of Europe.

**New GAW Station as from 2010**

In 2008 ERDF funds were applied for and successfully obtained. This has resulted in a brand new set of equipment being installed in 2010. We are now able to monitor a vastly increased range of trace gases and aerosols and are able to interact with the global atmospheric community in a much more direct way. At the Xewkija offices we now employ four graduates:

Martin Saliba who did his MSc with us and is now employed as the chief technical officer responsible for maintaining the

Instrument on the roof of the Atmospheric Research Unit at the University Gozo Campus
equipment. Francelle Azzopardi who is a mechanical engineering graduate and is reading for her PhD concentrating on the shipping emissions in the Malta Sicily channel. Alexander Smyth who is doing his Masters with a view to continuing his PhD in aerosol chemistry. Miriam Azzopardi who is a graduate trainee and assists with administration and the collection of data.

The new setup has already attracted further international funds in the shape of an agreement over a project with the Instituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (INGV) of Catania wherein the monitoring of emissions from Etna is now taking place. New equipment for the study of volcanic ash is to be installed in the next six months and this phenomenon will be studied to ascertain its effect on aircraft movements. The total amount of equipment to be finally installed at Giordan lighthouse will be of the order of Euro 750,000 all told.

Publications

Over 40 publications have directly or indirectly resulted from work carried out at the Atmospheric Pollution Monitoring Centre between March 1996 and June 2010. The list includes scientific reports, journal publications, conference publications and associated reports. A few of the more important publications are listed hereunder.


The Lace-Making Programme at the University Gozo Campus

Consiglia Azzopardi
Coordinator of the Lace-making Programme at the UGC

In 1992 the Gozo branch of the University of Malta decided to set up a programme to promote and support the study of Maltese lace.

From the beginning, the main aim of the programme has been to provide opportunities for learning about the traditional Maltese way of making lace, a craft that was fast dying out. In order to revive this skill and preserve it as an important part of our national heritage, academic courses were established to teach the historical, artistic and technical aspects of Maltese lace-making, in the context of related European lace techniques which in the past have influenced the local skill.

The Certificate Course

To join the Lace-Making Certificate Course no previous knowledge of the craft is required. The course is spread over three years – Introductory, Intermediate and Advanced – with four hours of tuition per week, normally on Saturday mornings. It introduces students not only to the actual practice of bobbin lace-making, but also to the history of Maltese lace, the recognition of machine lace imitations, the scientific knowledge of texture and colour of threads, as well as methods of designing lace for current use.

During the three-year course, students are given the opportunity to master the skill while specializing in particular aspects of the technique, such as mounting lace to fabric, combining lace and embroidery, working with silk, copying a design from lace, designing church lace, and so on. By the end of the course, students are able to work individually on creative projects with a certain level of professionalism. This is a very popular course, with the majority of students coming over from Malta. By October 2012, forty-two students will have graduated from the course.

Diploma in Lace Studies

As a result of the success of the Certificate Course, the Diploma Course was created for those who wished to continue their studies. This course is spread over two years and, besides
Maltese lace, students now study the history of European lace, textiles in vestments and costumes, history of art, needle lace, and basic principles of economics, accounting and management. They are also expected to improve their skill of designing patterns for Maltese lace. The project session is held during the summer at the lace workshop, while all taught components take place at the University in Malta. By October 2012, we would have run two diploma courses, by which time there will be eighteen graduates.

Advanced Maltese Lace Class

The Advanced Maltese Lace Class was set up for those who, having acquired the necessary skill, would like to keep in touch with the Lace-Making Programme. The class lasts for four hours, once a week, either as a morning or an evening session. Though the same for the whole class, the project is chosen after discussion at the beginning of the year. Students normally opt for a design which offers challenging features. Working with the best trained students as a team, one can better appreciate the value of such advanced-level lace projects.

Although the high quality of the items that come out of the advanced course is highly appreciated by all, there are only very few customers who are ready to buy them. Consequently they are made to be kept in the family or to be given as presents, and nothing like them will be found in souvenir or craft shops. The advanced level course also teaches students how to clean and restore old lace, prime examples of which are found in parish churches and private collections, as many lace relics from the past are actually being ruined by dilettantes.

Short Courses

Occasionally, short courses are held consisting of around twenty-four hours of tuition spread out over ten days. These courses focus on a particular aspect of the lace-making industry on the international market, which complements the local skill of bobbin lace-making. Usually these short courses take place in the summer, and lessons are held every day. Topics for past courses included stump-work, beading, bucks point, gold-work, tulle lace, sprang, spinning and dying threads and fabrics. Instructors have been invited from the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium and the Czech Republic.

Another popular short course in Maltese lace, also taking place over ten to twelve days, is the International Summer Course, which is held around the beginning of June. At this
time of year, the foreign students who come to Malta to experience the making of lace by the Maltese technique, have the opportunity of touring the Island and seeing the traditional lace in its natural environment, as it is displayed in village feasts.

Gozo Lace Co-Operative and Malta Lace Guild

The Lace Making Programme gave birth to two associations: the Gozo Lace Co-Operative in 1996 and the Malta Lace Guild in 2000. Both are run by students graduating from the Certificate, Diploma and Advanced classes. Seher tal-Bizzilla is a quarterly magazine published in Maltese and English by the Malta Lace Guild. It keeps its readers informed about national craft activities, as well as recording the history of lace in our times.

Annual Lace Day

Lace Day, held in spring, is an open-day where visitors can see what the Lace-Making Programme offers. In collaboration with the Co-Operative and the Lace Guild, as well as OIDFA (International Needle and Bobbin Lace Association), an array of Maltese lace in its present state is displayed. A new set of patterns for bobbin Maltese lace is inaugurated each year on this occasion, and all sorts of tools and materials are available for sale. Moreover, Lace Day serves to promote courses offered by the Lace-Making Programme.

Besides being of benefit to students, the Lace-Making Programme has contributed greatly to the research of the history of Maltese lace of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In a short while the present writer intends to publish a book on the history of Maltese lace, which could be used as a text for the lace studies programme.

In the past, Gozitans took up the craft and developed it as an economic activity because of the hardships experienced on the Island. Today, lace-making in Gozo is considered as an enrichment of the Island’s cultural heritage, and the Lace-Making Programme is making an important contribution towards this.
What about the children?

Gillian Martin

The University of Malta Gozo Centre made it possible for me to read for a university degree while living and working full time in Gozo. I had two very young children when I started in 1998 – little did I know, in those early days, that twelve years down the line I would have a masters degree and doctorate under my belt. It has been an enjoyable and challenging journey characterized by a series of choices and identification of priorities. But what about the children in all of this? How did this ‘deviation’ from the ‘traditional’ mothering role impact on their own education?

With my own experience clearly at the root of my interest in this matter, I explore this issue below by focusing on children of two of my ex-fellow students at the Gozo Centre.

Research clearly shows that parental involvement in children’s education has been consistently linked with higher achievement and better adjustment to the school environment (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003). This is an issue that needs little academic amplification as any mother will admit to being aware of the intense mother – child coaching and revision sessions that are commonly associated with the top performers in primary school classes. Many will admit to feeling intimidated and insecure when listening in to the conversations of those super-organized, highly motivated mothers who gather at the school gate and always know exactly what homework is due when, which colour plastic cover is meant to be on which exercise book and which method of addition of fractions is currently in use.

It is tempting, at this superficial level, to oversimplify the understanding of ‘parental involvement’ and conflate it with homework and revision cramming sessions. There is, however, much more to it than that.

“[Indeed], parental involvement takes many forms including good parenting in the home, [...] the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfillment and good citizenship. (Op. cit. p.4)

Research suggests that the key issue is the enhancement of the child’s self concept and the setting of high aspirations that then go on to motivate academic success in the child. The mother’s level of education is an important (though by no means exclusive) variable in this dynamic process and has been found
to have a strong positive effect on the child’s educational life course (Op. cit.).

An interesting paradox arises when mothers of young children choose to go back to formal education themselves. Their eventual enhanced educational level should have ripple effects on that of their children. However, would the extra demands on their time lead to them depriving their young child of those precious ‘hands on’ coaxing and coaching sessions that seem to have such beneficial immediate results? Attempting to answer this question would lead to fascinating and complex sociological theorizing – tempting though this may be, this is not the intention of this piece. Rather, what would be interesting here is to explore how children view the issue of their ‘mature student mum’ going ‘back to school’ and to find out what they think of the way it influenced their own educational trajectory. What follows is by no means intended as an academic excursion into this issue – simply an attempt to offer very partial insight through the personal experience of the children of two Gozo Centre Alumni.

Christine and Mark are cousins – their mothers are sisters-in-law, both teachers, who opted to attend the Gozo Centre BA (General) evening course 1998-2003. These mature students both had young children at the time they started their BA and, indeed, one went on to have another child before the end of the course. Both were highly successful and went on to read for an MA in History, graduating in 2010 and have since continued with their teaching careers. Their children, Christine and Mark have ‘grown and flown’ and are now both medical students living independently as Gozitan students do, on mainland Malta.

When asked to describe what it was like for them to be at primary school and have to have a mum who was a student, both Mark and Christine said that they were too young to really be aware of what was going on at first. Mark, however, admits to the fact that it seemed a bit strange to see his mother come home from her teaching job, do all the house chores, only to go back out in the evening for lectures “after all, when you’re young, you think that university is for 20 year olds” he says with a grin. Both Christine and Mark are quick to emphasise that they never felt at a disadvantage because their mother had her own studies “I don’t ever remember needing her help and her not being there” says Mark. Christine emphasized that the same applied to her, however she does admit to missing her mother when she had lectures on Saturday mornings “I missed cooking with her... I missed her company”. She points out that, as the eldest child, she has always been ‘the responsible one’ in the family and admits that she did have to pull her weight and help with caring for her younger brother when her mother was at lectures. She betrays acute sensitivity when she describes how she would see the way her mother had to juggle work, family and study, and how this required determination, stamina and hard work. “In a way this made me realize how important it was for me to study now, while I am young … I could see how hard it was for her juggling with everything … I didn’t want to have to do that”. Mark agrees that his mother also helped motivate him to focus on studying – “when you see someone studying and determined to get good results, then you study too …and when that person is your mother ...well, she is the ultimate role model isn’t she?”

The interesting point worth emphasizing here is that this was not a short episode in their lives - Mark and Christine grew up with mothers who were constantly working towards a degree – with the BA (gen), Masters qualifying and Masters degree stretching over a good 10 year period. It is something that became part of their family routine, and the legacy of this is their heightened sensitivity towards the importance of effective time management. Christine describes how her mother used to have a clear idea of what she intended to do each day “she
used to tell me ... ‘look today I am going to do this and this’... she certainly influenced me in this respect”. Now that they are University students themselves in the high-powered medical course, effective time management is a fundamental part of coping with the demanding programme of studies. They feel that their experience puts them at an advantage in this respect. “I was so used to managing my studies on my own as a child, that now it is like second nature”, Christine explains. To say that Mark was never as reliable as Christine as a child is certainly a gross understatement. He is quick to point out that he was never one to study or do homework willingly – “mum used to be constantly telling me to read or study ... but, as soon as she went out, I would ditch the book” he says with his mischievous sparkle in his eye. “But then,” he continues, “you soon realize that if you don’t do the work, you won’t pass the exams ... and you learn this when you are young ... and now that I am here in Malta, there is no one to help me, I’m on my own, and I know what to do because I’ve been though it already”. This is clearly an interesting issue – while many of their fellow medical students struggle with the pitfalls of their new found independence once at university, Mark and Christine hit the ground running in this respect and have their priorities clearly in focus.

But is it all worth it? I ask - What would Mark and Christine say to those mothers who claim that they don’t have the time to go back to University because the children need her at home? “At the end of the day, what the mothers achieve ... when they eventually graduate... will benefit the children too”, Christine is quick to point out, “they may miss their mother at times, but when the children grow older they will see that the whole family will benefit”.

The advantages she refers to are not necessarily financial. The issue of the mother’s influence as a positive role model is one both children referred to repeatedly. There is also, however, an advantage that is more tangible and practical - both Mark and Christine appreciate the fact that they can turn to their mothers for advice on how to approach some of their course work, especially when it comes to ethics and philosophy. Both admit to turning to them for help with referencing techniques and academic writing. As Christine points out, her mother can really relate to her worries and challenges “because she’s gone through the same stuff that you’re going through yourself now”. This all seems to give credence to the emphasis on “intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfillment” that was described in the literature on ‘parental involvement’ as quoted above – there certainly seems to be more to it than homework and revision cramming in primary school.

Clearly, this positive account is a particular story of two individuals – any generalization would be naïve and untenable. It is also undoubtedly partial, in that things were certainly not always such a bed of roses. There is no doubt, however, that the good memories are the ones that prevail and that the positive legacy is tangible and relevant to Mark and Christine’s current experience as university students with their own graduation clearly in sight.

Graduation ceremonies are always special, but even more impressive if you are eleven years old and your mother one of the graduands. Christine cherishes her photos of the occasion and has strong memories of it being a very special day for the whole family. The same applies to Mark. When asked to describe how he felt as he watched his mother walk up to collect her certificate in her gown and cape, he shifts in his seat and draws himself up taller “Oh ... amazing ... so proud!” he says with long and thoughtful pauses.

Was that a hint of a tear I could see in his eye? No – Mark is far too ‘cool’ for that – it must have been in mine.
Never a Dull Moment

Joseph Calleja and Marvin Grech

We started our working career at the University of Malta, Msida, in different departments. Our duties there consisted mainly of clerical work related to the keeping of students’ academic records. The years spent at Tal-Qroqq gave us considerable experience of University life, so that, prior to our transfer to the University Gozo Centre in 2001, we had already acquired a sound knowledge of the day-to-day running of University faculties, departments and institutes.

Our most important tasks at the UGC are obviously those related to the academic courses offered by the various faculties and institutes of the University of Malta. These courses, which are normally run on a part-time basis, cover a wide range of disciplines. This makes our work somewhat different from that performed by non-academic staff at the University campus in Malta. The main reason for this is that here in Gozo we have to deal with deans, heads of department, officers and other staff of the various faculties and institutes, while our colleagues in Malta are normally attached to only one or two departments. In addition we also have to liaise with a large number of lecturers, all with a different type of temperament.

Since a large number of lecturers who offer their services at the Gozo Campus reside in Malta, lectures are normally delivered on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. This system involves the organisation of a very complicated time-table, given the fact that about ten courses are run every weekend. Every slot on the time-table has to be discussed with the lecturer concerned so as to ensure that the required number of hours is offered for each study-unit. Although this involves a lot of combinations and permutations, it enables us to get to know the lecturers better as we try to solve any logistic problem that may arise. We are always happy when the lecturers concerned appreciate the constraints we face in setting the time-tables. The system also involves the organisation of hospitality and travelling arrangements, and every week we have to make sure that lecturers have somewhere to stay when they come to Gozo.

Lecturing facilities at the Gozo Campus are very good, and this is confirmed by the various lecturers who make use of them. Over the years we have always tried to improve the lecturing facilities through the introduction of the latest technology. At present all lecture rooms are equipped with the basic lecturing
facilities as well as a fixed digital projector and air-conditioners. With the help of the IT Services of the University of Malta, we have managed to equip the campus with a modern computer laboratory, a video-conferencing system and a wi-fi system. Being skilled in IT, and under the direction of the IT Services, we must make sure that our Internet facilities are kept running as they should.

Our duties also include dealing with matters of a financial nature. From time to time we prepare tender documents, issue calls for quotations, process purchase orders, issue payment vouchers, and perform other tasks related to the procurement of goods. Moreover, all claims related to lecturing fees and travelling expenses are processed at our office before they are sent to the Finance Office in Malta for payment. Our office also serves as a cash office for Gozitan students who can settle their fees in Gozo and avoid the hassle of having to cross over to Malta when they don’t need to.

The Gozo Campus does not cater only for Gozitan students following courses in Gozo but also for those who are studying in Malta. Our office offers information about courses to prospective students and serves as a venue when it comes to applications for University admission. This year a pilot project was launched by which a number of Gozitan students following courses at the Msida campus were given the opportunity to sit for the end-of-semester exams in Gozo. We were very happy to be involved in the administration of this new initiative which is likely to expand in the coming years.

At the Gozo Campus we are also responsible for the publication of ‘The Gozo Observer’ and for the distribution of course brochures and other promotional material. We are happy to be involved in the organisation of social activities, such as the annual summer event, and the running of short courses and seminars offered by the campus from time to time. Over and above all this we are responsible for the upkeep of the place, a 200-year-old building that requires continuous attention and maintenance.

The great advantage of the ‘UGC system’, as we like to call it, is its flexibility in terms of tasks and working hours. On Fridays we rarely leave the building before nine at night, and Saturday for us is a normal working day. These weekend commitments allow us to vary our work schedule for the rest of the week. Flexibility means variety, and this is the key factor that makes our work at the campus always interesting, stimulating and worthwhile.

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*The Gozo Observer is published twice a year by the University Gozo Campus. It contains articles relating to all aspects of life in Gozo, including culture, education, business, arts and literature.*
Experiences of a Mature Student at the University Gozo Centre

Mary Rose Vella

Introduction

It all happened when I learnt that a BA course was to be offered on a part-time basis at the University Gozo Centre. Little did I know at that time that I was to complete a BA course which took five years to complete, followed by another three-year course leading to a Masters’ degree.

I decided to start my academic studies at tertiary level in my late forties, a big challenge at a rather mature age, especially as I had a full-time job and a family of three children. At that time I was working at the Foundation for International Studies, an academic institution where scholars, academics and researchers met to hold conferences and workshops in order to present papers and exchange ideas. I was therefore already working in an academic environment, with a very interesting job organising international meetings. This was not a nine to five job, particularly because it involved corresponding with scholars hailing from all corners of the world.

In spite of my heavy home and job commitments, I took the decision to join the BA course. One thing that attracted me most was the fact that the course was to be offered during the weekend. I thought that this was a good opportunity for me because although I resided in Malta I used to spend my weekends in Gozo where I was brought up.

The BA Course

The areas of study offered as part of the BA course were History, Economics, Philosophy and Sociology. I opted for Economics and Sociology since these were more related to my line of work — however I also took extra optional study units in Philosophy and History to fulfil the requirements of the course.

A Typical Weekend

Every Friday after work, I used to rush to catch the ferry to Gozo carrying a school bag containing a pencil box, note paper and books, reminding me of my days in secondary school. Although rushing to Gozo after work on Friday was rather hectic especially when the sea was rough, I still looked...
forward to Friday evenings so that I could attend the lectures and meet my student colleagues. In fact when the course was over, I felt a great void during weekends, and it took me some time to get over it.

The weekend programme generally consisted of two 2-hour lectures on Friday evening and another two 2-hour lectures on Saturday morning, eight hours in all. These were held religiously throughout the whole course, lasting five years. Sometimes we had to attend lectures on Saturday afternoons also. Thus I spent a large portion of my weekends during term-time at the UGC.

The First Lectures and the First Examinations

When I attended the first lecture sessions I felt a bit strange, finding myself sitting on a wooden bench behind a table and frantically scribbling notes, while peering up at a professor. I had not done this for almost thirty years.

I also found it a very somewhat frightening experience to sit for the first examination sessions. I was not sure I could compete with the students, most of whom were much younger than I was. However as the course progressed, my confidence improved, particularly when the grades I was obtaining were generally above average.

Eventually I got used to being a University student, having to read text books and write essays. I learnt to work in a team, as very often the assignments we were given required group work. I also had the opportunity to improve my communication skills and to understand the linkages between different disciplines, given that the course covered two major disciplines.

Study and Humour

All the lecturers were very experienced and were very helpful. Some had a good sense of humour. I remember one of the lecturers always called us by our name. On the first day he met us he asked us our names and wrote them on a piece of paper. We noticed that during all the lessons that followed, he used to look at this piece of paper and address students by their name. When we asked him how he managed to remember them he replied that next to our names he had written a comment related to our appearance (e.g girl with gold framed glasses). He remembered my name because next to it he had written (wife of so and so), since he knew my husband well.

We had all sorts of class experiences. Some lecturers sometimes preached their way through the lessons, as if they were talking from the pulpit, while others sometimes whispered to us – making us wish there was a loud speaker available. Some lecturers resorted to monologues, while others sometimes engaged us too
much in question-and-answer sessions. I say sometimes, because overall we had excellent lectures, delivered by well-prepared lecturers, rendering the weekends at the UGC enjoyable and very informative.

The course also enabled us to forge new relationships with students and lecturers. I had wonderful experiences and made lasting friendships. I met people from all walks of life and of different ages from whom I have learnt a lot even though, as I already stated, most of them were younger than me. During the five years of the course, inevitably, some students got engaged or got married while others got pregnant and had babies. We therefore had many “extra-curricular” occasions to meet socially.

On completion of the course, I graduated BA (General) in November 1996, together with the other students who had followed the BA at the University Malta campus. This was an occasion which I will always remember, mostly because the graduation ceremony marked a major achievement in my life, resulting from five years of study.

MA (Islands and Small States Studies)

The saying that studying is addictive may be an exaggeration, but it does whet the appetite for further study. In my case, I got so much used to studying and reading, that when the opportunity to follow a Master’s course on a part-time basis arose, I took it. In fact not long after I had finished the BA course, I joined a two-year course leading to a Masters degree in Islands and Small States Studies with Economics as the major areas of study and Environmental Studies as the minor area.

Research Component

The Master’s degree was somewhat different from the first degree because it had a teaching component and a research component, where towards the end of the course we had to submit a dissertation on a subject relating to small island states. I chose climate change which I thought would have a major impact on small island states, particularly as a result of sea-level rise.

Communication Skills

As take-home assignments we were required to write essays and prepare presentations to deliver in class and these entailed a considerable amount of reading and research. This also led to interesting class discussion. It enabled us to sharpen our communication skills and to engage in debate about different subjects.

During the Master’s course we had the opportunity to engage in various extra curricular activities. We were expected to attend...
workshops, seminars and conferences relating to small island states that were organised at the University Gozo Centre at that time. We also had the occasion to engage in a video-conference session with students following a Master’s degree in Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada.

In July 2006, the Associazione Culturale Politecnico Teatro, an Italian theatre group, performed ‘The Arbitrant’, a play by Menander, in the central courtyard of the Gozo Campus. The summer cultural activity has now become an annual event.

The Benefits of Research

Perhaps the most important benefit I derived from the Master’s course was that I learnt to appreciate the value of research. As already explained, we had many assignments to prepare for. But most of my research was focused on my dissertation on climate change and small island states. This involved collecting a large amount of information from experts residing in small island states all over the world. I had to process, synthesize and interpret this information, and organize it into a structured dissertation.

During the viva-voce examination, in connection with the dissertation, I had to defend my arguments and conclusions. It was a very frightening experience, both before and during the examination, but this led to a feeling of exhilaration once I got to know that I did well.

Conclusion

Today, looking back, I know that the eight years of study were well-worth the hard work and effort I made. It is a nice feeling knowing that I managed to obtain two degrees with good grades. The two courses enriched my knowledge, which enabled me to understand realities more clearly and helped me improve my job performance. I am now able to communicate better with the academics with whom I relate with at my workplace.

I feel grateful to the University of Malta because through the Gozo Centre, I was given the opportunity to gain confidence in myself and to develop a love for learning, which I will carry throughout my life.
The UGC Library: small but suiting the purpose

Miriam Muscat and Caroline Camilleri Rolls
Assistant Librarians at the University Gozo Campus

Albeit not equipped with all the facilities enjoyed by a fully-fledged academic library, the UGC library offers a number of services that meet the demands of the 160 students following courses at the centre. The gradual progress registered by the UGC over the past twenty years is reflected in the improved services offered by the library to all its users.

‘A library is a large collection of books, and can refer to the place in which the collection is housed’. Although the collection of books at the UGC library cannot be described as ‘large’, the present stock, which adds up to more than 2000 books, is adequate to meet current demands. It is envisaged that the library will continue to be regularly replenished with fresh stocks as has been the case in the past. Regular acquisitions made over the years required the procurement of added shelving and more space. The reallocation process was by no means an easy task, especially when one ‘move’ followed another in less than a few months, due to the restructuring project that has resulted in additional lecturing space.

Given that a number of courses offered at the Gozo Campus relate to Business Studies, the UGC library stock includes a broad, varied selection of books on accounts, economics, banking, management, marketing and quantitative techniques. It also includes interesting sections dealing with EU matters, mainly in relation to financial and economic areas and EU law.

The UGC library’s opening hours stretch over eight hours, from Friday afternoon to Saturday at noon, and prove convenient for students attending the campus as well as others following courses in Malta. Most of the books in the library are available for lending.

The quality and efficiency of current student services offered by the University of Malta have been enhanced, mainly through improved IT services. The quicklinks library portal facilitates searching for book availability at the main library, or libraries at the Valletta Campus, the Junior College, Bighi or the UGC. One may also renew or reserve books through the same system. Access to international journals is possible
through the Internet. We at UGC must thank the UoM library team for their continuous support, especially Mr Kevin Ellul, Ms Joanna Felice and Mr Silvio Cortis for keeping us up-to-date on recent developments, especially those related to enhanced search options through the Library Quick Link. Our collaboration has enabled us to upgrade and update our student services. We must also mention the staff at the Cataloguing Department who meticulously classify, mark and process all our new acquisitions.

Currently ongoing courses at the University Gozo Campus include the BA in Criminology and a BA degree that covers three major areas of study, namely, Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology. In this regard the UGC library is constantly expanding its collection of textbooks related to these subjects as well as the visual arts. A more recent development saw the introduction of Tourism, IT and Banking and Finance Studies within the Bachelor of Commerce Degree Course, which is being financed through the European Social Fund (ESF) under Operational Programme II entitled ‘Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life’. This necessitated the acquisition of textbooks including recent publications on environmental and sustainable development topics.

The increasing number of theses and dissertations that have by now filled a number of shelves in the library stand as testimony to the hard work of those who believed in and sustained the presence of the University in Gozo. They are a clear sign of the way Gozitan students have availed themselves of the opportunities offered by the Gozo Campus to broaden their intellectual horizons through continued learning and to obtain qualifications at tertiary level on their own island.

The Diploma in Lace Studies is uniquely offered at the UGC and our library collection includes a small number of books on subjects related to this course, like textiles, design, traditional and modern art. With the lace room situated next to the library, we often find ourselves listening to the therapeutic clacking of the bobbins in an otherwise quiet environment.

At the UGC library we are always happy to offer advice to students throughout their course and to help them with their research.
Chronology of Major Events

1992

The Centre was established in August 1992, following a process of consultation on this matter between Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, then University Rector, and the Hon. Anton Tabone, then Minister for Gozo. The Rector asked Professor Lino Briguglio to act as Director ad interim of the University Centre in Gozo.

1993

The Statute of the University Gozo Centre was formally approved by University Senate on 3 February, 1993. It was subsequently also approved by Council on 17 February of the same year.

The first Course leading to the BA degree was launched on 6 February, 1993. The course was offered on a part-time basis and was spread over five years. This was the first time that a degree course was offered in its entirety in Gozo. Between February 1993 and May 1996, lectures were held at Sir M A Refalo Secondary School Complex, Victoria.

The first meeting of the Board of the Gozo Centre was held at Tal-Qroqq, on 13 April, 1993.

On 6 October, 1993, Rector wrote a letter to the Minister for Gozo, requesting that the Government makes available the former isolation hospital at Xewkija to be used as premises for the University Gozo Centre. Following the processing of this request, the matter was referred to the Cabinet of Ministers, and the request was approved in April 1995.

1994

The first in a series of Lowenbrau seminars dealing with topics of major interest for Gozo was held on 28 January, 1994. Six such seminars were held dealing with the following themes: “Tourism in Gozo” (1994); “Gozo and its Culture” (1995); “Gozitan Famous Personalities” (1996); “Women in Gozo” (1997); “Education in Gozo” (1998); and “Older Persons in Malta and Gozo” (1999).

The Gozo Centre undertook its first research project to assess the economic multiplier effects of tourism in Gozo. The Centre participated directly or indirectly on various research projects, including the University funded studies on “Regional Statistics”, the EU funded project on the Special Needs of Gozo and the ETC funded study on the labour market in Gozo. In addition, the Atmospheric Research Unit carries out research on an ongoing basis.


1995

The first short course offered by the University Gozo Centre was launched on 28 April, 1995. It was entitled “An Introduction to Public Administration” and was coordinated by Dr. Godfrey Pirotta. The centre organised a large number of short courses, covering a wide variety of subjects, including “Professional Ethics”, “Introduction to Law and Legal Studies”, “The European Union”, “Introduction to Company Law”, “Financial Markets”, “Social Care Work”, “Systems of Knowledge”, “Environmental Science”, “Teaching English as a Foreign Language”, “Basic Concepts of Medicine”, “Prevention of Substance Abuse”, “Conflict Resolution”, “Food Hygiene”, many computer-based courses including “Computer Aided Design”, “Geographic Information Systems”, “Sage Accounting Package” and “Website Design and Development”.

On 27 October, 1995, the Legal Notice promulgating the statute of the University Gozo Centre was issued (LN152 of 1995).

The first series of public lectures were launched in November 1995. They were entitled “A Focus on Gozitan Personalities” and were coordinated by Rev. Dr. Joseph Farrugia. The Centre organised many public lectures touching on various aspects of Gozitan life.

1996

The first two-year part-time course leading to the Diploma in Commerce started in February 1996.

The Gozo Centre moved to new premises at Xewkija on 4 May, 1996. The Prime Minister of Malta officially inaugurated the premises.

The Atmospheric Research Unit of the Physics Department was set up within the University Gozo Centre in December 1996.

1997

The first course leading to the Diploma in Education (Administration and Management), commenced in February 1997.
The Lace-making Programme was established as part of the University Gozo Centre in June 1997. The Programme organised a number of courses, including a 3 year part-time course aimed at developing future teachers of lacemaking, covering historical, cultural and technical aspects of the craft.

The first Summer Social Evening was organised at the central courtyard of the Centre in August 1997.


1998

The second course leading to the BA degree and the second course leading to the Diploma in Commerce commenced in October 1998.

On 14 November, 1998, the Diploma in Commerce was conferred on 17 students who had followed the course at the University Gozo Centre. On 21 November, 1998, the BA degree was conferred on 28 students who had followed the BA course at the University Gozo Centre. This was the first time that Graduates of the University of Malta obtained their degrees or diplomas after having followed a course in Gozo.

1999

In May 1999, the Centre issued the first edition of the magazine The Gozo Observer, edited by Professor Maurice Cauchi. Issue No. 26 was published in June 2012. The magazine is also available on the internet.

In October 1999, Part 2 of the course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce degree was initiated. The course was offered on a part-time basis and spread over three years.

2000

In January 2000, the Centre organised two teleconferencing events, utilising equipment loaned by Maltacom. The experiment was successful. Teleconferencing equipment at the Centre is likely to be installed in 2003.

In June 2000, the Board of the Gozo Centre allocated an office space to the Malta Red Cross. A fully equipped emergency ambulance has been stationed at the Centre.

The second course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce and the third course leading to the Diploma in Commerce commenced in October 2000.

In November 2000, the Diploma in Commerce was conferred on 8 students who had followed the second course leading to the Diploma at the University Gozo Centre.

2001

In February 2001, the second course leading to the Diploma in Education (Administration and Management) commenced.

In October 2001, the course leading to the Master of Education commenced.

The Course in Pre-tertiary Certificate in Education for Learning Support Facilitators was also initiated in October 2001.

2002

The first course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce and the third course leading to the Diploma in Commerce came to an end in June 2002. All students who sat for the final examination passed.

In August 2002, the Gozo Centre celebrated the 10th anniversary of its establishment.

2003

The BA (General) Course came to an end in June 2003. Twenty-two students completed the course successfully.

The Bachelor of Commerce Course also came to an end in June 2003. Five students completed the course successfully.

Two students following the Masters of Education Course completed the course successfully.

October 2003 saw the commencement of the following courses; a 5-year course leading to the degree in Bachelor of Commerce with 12 students and a 3-year course leading to a Masters Degree in Islands and Small States Studies with 14 students.

2004

Between the 1st and 3rd March 2004, the University Gozo Centre hosted an International Workshop organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of Malta. The focus of the workshop was economic vulnerability and resilience building of small states.

On 20th August 2004 the Centre held its annual summer activity entitled, ‘An Evening with Walter Micallef u l-Ħbieb’.

In October 2004 the University of Malta through a Sixth Framework Project called ‘Twister’ offered for the first time a Diploma
in IT course simultaneously in Malta and in Gozo using the ‘virtual classroom concept’ through video conferencing.

2005

Between the 7th and 9th March 2005, the University Gozo Centre hosted a workshop organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of Malta. It was attended by twenty-five experts from different countries and the focus was on the economic resilience of small states.

On 3rd September the Centre held its annual summer activity entitled, ‘An Evening of Traditional Maltese Music … and Beyond with NAFRA’.

Four new courses were inaugurated at the University Gozo Centre in December 2005 which form part of a project which was being carried out under the EU’s Structural Funds for Malta 2004-2006. The courses included agricultural studies, business studies, e-commerce and IT.

Professor Lino Briguglio, director of the University Gozo Centre, was awarded the Ġieħ Ġhawdex award in recognition of his contribution to higher education in Gozo.

2006

In July the Centre held its summer activity. The Associazione Culturale Politecnico Teatro, an Italian theatrical group, performed ‘The Arbitrants’, a play by Menander, in the central courtyard.

The Masters in Islands and Small States Studies came to an end and fourteen students completed the course successfully.

The Diploma in Information Technology also came to an end and three students completed the course successfully.

2007

January saw the commencement of a course leading to a Diploma in Facilitating Inclusive Education. Seventy-four students attended the course.

In April the Italian Ambassador for Malta, H.E. Paolo Andrea Trabalza, paid a visit to the University Gozo Centre.

In April HRH Princess Benedikte of Denmark also paid a visit to the University Gozo Centre.

In August the annual summer activity was held at the University Gozo Centre entitled, ‘Woodwinds for Summertime’ with The Victoria Clarinet Quartet.

In October four new courses commenced including a course leading to the Diploma in Commerce, a course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce, a course leading to the Masters of Islands and Small States and a course leading to a European Masters Degree in Mediterranean Historical Studies.

In November a set of courses, offered by the Ministry of Gozo and co-financed by the European Social Fund under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006, commenced at the University Gozo Centre. These courses included Basic English, Basic Maltese, Basic Reading and Writing Skills, Organic Farming, Soil Conservation, Rabbit Production, Sheep and Goat Cheese Production, Animal Health and Welfare, New Standards and Product Quality, and Plant and Health Pathology.

In April, the Italian Ambassador H.E. Paolo Andrea Trabalza paid a second visit to the University Gozo Centre.

Ms Kate Gonzi visited the 12th edition of Lace Day at the University Gozo Centre.

In July Professor Juanito Camilleri, Rector of the University of Malta, accompanied by the Hon. Giovanna Debono, visited the University Gozo Centre.

In September the Centre held its summer activity entitled, ‘An Evening with Island Brass’.

In October two new courses commenced, namely the Diploma in Commerce and the Masters in Islands and Small States Studies.

In November forty-two students successfully completed courses at the University Gozo Centre receiving their certificates for courses in Masters in Islands and Small States Studies, Post-graduate Diploma in Education, Administration and Management, Bachelor of Commerce and Diploma in Commerce.
2009

The Senate of the University of Malta approved that the University Gozo Centre be given the status of campus and be renamed ‘The University of Malta - Gozo Campus’.

May saw the launch of the new webpage of the University Gozo Campus.

In May, the Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi paid a visit to the University Gozo Campus.

In June the Alliance Française de Malte Méditerranée officially opened its new branch at the University Gozo Campus.

The annual summer activity took place in August with a tribute to composer Charles Camilleri in an evening of music and song chosen from his wide repertoire.

In October the University Gozo Campus opened a record number of courses.

The courses included the Diploma in Commerce, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Criminology, Bachelor of Commerce, Master of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies, Masters of Arts in Hospitaller Studies (being held for the first time entirely through the video conference system), Master in Translation and Master in Business Administration (Executive).

Eighty-eight students successfully completed courses in Masters in Islands and Small States Studies, Diploma in Commerce and Diploma in Facilitating Inclusive Education.

Additional space was allocated to the Climate Change and Atmospheric Pollution Research Programme which is located at the University Gozo Campus.

2010

In June the International Ocean Institute – Malta Operational Centre of the University of Malta held a launching event to promote an initiative entitled ‘IOI-KIDS Spot the Jellyfish’ at the University Gozo Campus.

As part of the activities in connection with the generation of Green Energy, the University of Malta submitted a proposal for ERDF funding for the installation of a photovoltaic system on the roof of the University Gozo Campus.

The summer social activity of the University Gozo Campus consisted of an evening with the Versatile Brass ensemble under the direction of Mro. Paul Borg.

Three new courses commenced at the University Gozo Campus in October including the Diploma in Commerce and the Diploma in Facilitating Inclusive Education.

A course leading to the Higher Diploma in Public Accounting and Finance offered at the University of Malta is also being followed at the Gozo Campus through the video conferencing system.

As part of the preparatory works for the installation of photovoltaic panels, the main roof of the Gozo Campus was waterproofed. This project was financed by the Ministry for Gozo.

2011

On 29th April, Professor Joe Friggieri was appointed Pro-Rector for Gozo.

In May the project of the installation of a photovoltaic system on the roof of the University Gozo Campus was completed.

In June development works commenced for the embellishment of the backyard of the Gozo Campus. This project was financed by the University of Malta.

The University of Malta carried out a pilot project where Gozitan students following courses at the Msida Campus had the opportunity to sit for the end-of-semester exams in Gozo.

On 1st and 2nd April, Professor David E. Cooper, Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at the University of Durham, gave two philosophy sessions at the University Gozo Campus under the title ‘Meaning, Language and the Understanding of Cultures’.

This year’s summer activity in August was entitled ‘An Evening with Chasing Pandora’.

Two new courses commenced at the University Gozo Campus including the Diploma in Commerce and the Diploma in Facilitating Inclusive Education.

A course leading to the Higher Diploma in Public Accounting and Finance offered at the University of Malta is also being followed at the Gozo Campus through the video conferencing system.

On 5th and 6th November the Malta University Holding Company in collaboration with the University Gozo Campus organised a seminar entitled ‘The Maltese Economy – Structure, Performance and Future Prospects following the Global Financial Crisis’.

2012

On 29th April, Professor Joe Friggieri was appointed Pro-Rector for Gozo.

In May the project of the installation of a photovoltaic system on the roof of the University Gozo Campus was completed.

In June development works commenced for the embellishment of the backyard of the Gozo Campus. This project was financed by the University of Malta.

The University of Malta carried out a pilot project where Gozitan students following courses at the Msida Campus had the opportunity to sit for the end-of-semester exams in Gozo.
On Reaching Twenty

“I am very glad to be writing this piece on the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the University Gozo Campus (UGC). The University is fully aware of the important educational and cultural contribution that this Campus is making to Gozo. The presence of the University in Gozo has made it possible for many Gozitans to follow tertiary educational courses in Gozo, enabling them to enrich their knowledge and improve their career possibilities. The impact of the Centre on Gozitan society, however, extended beyond teaching. It has undertaken research in various subjects associated with Gozo, its economy, physical environment, history and social structure. The UGC’s presence in Gozo has also enhanced Gozo’s intellectual and cultural life, partly as a result of the input made by scholars who regularly visit Gozo to lecture at the Campus.

I am also pleased that the University of Malta has supported and will continue to support the development of the UGC. I am delighted to announce that next year the Campus will offer a new diploma course in Gozo Studies. The course will not only enable students to acquire knowledge about important aspects of Gozo’s culture and history, but will also lead to further research on this small island.”

Professor Juanito Camilleri
Rector, University of Malta

“The success of the University Gozo Campus is based upon the personal successes of all the students who were encouraged, guided and assisted in following their studies and achieving their qualifications. The Campus’s mission may also be described as a tangible and valid contribution towards the enhancement of educational services that target further development among the working population on Gozo... The Ministry for Gozo is proud of its involvement in this success story, which has definitely given a good return on investment. Past performance in this venture denotes solid foundations that form the basis for further openings and opportunities through which many more Gozitans will be enabled to achieve their own success.”

Hon. Giovanna Debono
Minister for Gozo