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Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>List of Abbreviations</i> | iv |
| <i>Foreword</i> | v |
| <i>Editorial</i> | vii |
| | |
| Academic Leadership in Tertiary Education Institutions (<i>Paul Effah</i>) | 1 |
| | |
| The Governance of Tertiary Education Institutions: Emerging Trends (<i>Michael Shattock</i>) | 21 |
| | |
| Assuring Quality in Tertiary Education Institutions (<i>Ton Vroeijerstijn</i>) | 41 |
| | |
| Higher Education, Governance and Related Matters (<i>G.F. Daniel</i>) | 107 |
| | |
| <i>Publication Policy</i> | 120 |

List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| ASEAN | Association of South East Asian Nations |
| CEC | Commission of the European Communities |
| CUC | Committee on University Chairmen |
| ENQA | European Association for Quality Assurance |
| EU | European Union |
| HE | Higher Education |
| IQA | Internal Quality Assurance |
| ISO | International Standards Organisation |
| PI | Performance Indicators |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| SAR | Self-Assessment Report |
| SWOT | Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats |
| US/USA | United States of America |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| NCTE | National Council for Tertiary Education |

Foreword

Provision of quality and relevant tertiary education continues to be the focus of developed and developing nations, primarily because tertiary institutions produce middle and high level manpower for national development and competitiveness.

In Ghana, increasing social demand for tertiary education and current debates on challenges facing the tertiary education sector such as funding, quality, equitable access, research, management and governance continue to engage the attention of the National Council for Tertiary Education.

There have been a number of memoranda, committee reports, fora, workshops, syndicate group discussions, symposia and others organised by the Council to address pertinent issues in the Sector. Most of the reports, presentations and articles are produced by academics and professionals of high national and international repute.

The publication of the *Ghana Journal of Higher Education* is to bring to the attention of the reading public such reports, presentations as well as research by renowned people on tertiary education.

The introduction of the Journal is also in fulfillment of section 2(1) (h) of the NCTE Act 1993 (Act 454) which enjoins the Council “to publish information on tertiary education in Ghana”.

This maiden issue of the *Ghana Journal of Higher Education* has thought provoking, educative and informative articles. I commend the *Ghana Journal of Higher Education* to the public.

Professor Mahama Duwiejua
Executive Secretary

Editorial

This maiden volume of the *Ghana Journal of Higher Education* presents our readers with four articles on Higher Education listed in the policy statement of the journal: leadership in universities and other higher education institutions; the role, nature and structure of governance in higher education; and quality assurance in higher education. As would be expected the papers overlap in content.

Each contributor is careful not to give the impression that his views on the subject are final; or that there is a universal recipe for governance, quality or academic leadership. All four papers are revised and abridged versions of presentations made at a conference or workshop organised by the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE). Professor Michael Shattock's paper was first presented at the Conference on Repositioning Tertiary Education for National Development (May, 2013). The other three papers by Paul Effah, Dr. Ton Vroeijenstijn and G. F. Daniel were, in their original form, part of the pedagogical material for the workshop on Senior Academic Leadership Training (SALT) in West Africa (March 2013).

The first paper, by Paul Effah, examines the qualities of a leader in general. He then narrows down the concept of leadership and applies it to the more complex structures of higher education institutions. He then poses questions about what is expected of an academic leader — head of department, dean of faculty or vice-chancellor.

In his paper “The Governance of Tertiary Education Institutions: Emerging Trends”, Professor Shattock outlines some of the major trends observed to be emerging in the older universities of the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States and comments on the commonalities and differences among these trends. The paper covers a wide range of subjects central to the core activities of institutions of higher education — governance, accountability, the roles of lay governing bodies, of executive leadership and of management. He concludes that university governance structures are not fixed or uniform, but rather differ from environment to environment.

The paper by Dr. Ton Vroeijenstijn has the title: “Assuring Quality in Tertiary Education Institutions”. He argues that the attainment of

quality has been the goal of all academic institutions since time immemorial. But it is important for those who pursue this goal to be clear at the outset what they mean by quality. This demands asking the right questions. In the first two sections of the paper the author discusses the concept of quality assurance in higher education and proposes sets of instruments for assessing quality. In the next two sections he analyses the nature and uses of self-assessment and its application to programmes in higher education institutions. The final section examines some of the problems encountered in the implementation of internal quality assurance.

The author's checklists on Quality in the Appendices in institutions and programmes should be of practical use to units of quality assessment in institutions of higher education.

"Higher Education, Governance and Related Matters" is the title of the paper by G. F. Daniel. In one of the major sections, with the University of Ghana as his reference point, he describes the salient features that typify universities and other institutions of higher education. The defining points include primacy of research, the research driven curriculum of instruction, institutional autonomy and public accountability. Another major section of the paper discusses participatory decision-making in a hierarchy of committees as a feature of these institutions of higher education.

Academic Leadership in Tertiary Education Institutions

PAUL EFFAH

Abstract

Leadership may be conceptualised in terms of personality traits, behaviour, style, influence or goal achievement. Leadership principles are universal but their application and effectiveness depend largely on the context within which they are exercised. Applied to the academic enterprise leadership is even more complex because of the unique characteristics of the academic environment.

What makes the academic enterprise different from other organisations? Who is an academic leader and why has the need for effective academic leadership become even more urgent now than before? These important questions are addressed in this paper.

Other seemingly ambiguous concepts such as leadership and management, whether or not leaders can be developed or grown, complexity leadership theory and how these concepts may be applied in the academic environment are clarified.

That the role of the academic leader is central to the achievement of quality tertiary education is not left in doubt. The need for a systematic and structured training programme for all categories of academic leaders is reinforced.

What is Academic Leadership?

This paper is about academic leadership, that is, leadership in the complex academic institution where “the goal of the enterprise is not growth or market share, but intellectual excellence; not increased productivity in economic terms, but increased intensity of thinking” (Giamatti, 1988, cited in Chait *et al.*, 1996). Although these are contentious propositions they nevertheless give an indication of the complex nature of the academic enterprise.

Academic leadership takes place in an academic environment such as a university, college or other tertiary education institutions. It is about providing direction and exerting influence towards the achievement of an academic purpose, defined to encompass research, teaching and service. Academic leadership is a complex process with varying degrees of complexity, depending upon the type of institution and tradition on which it has been modelled.

Who are Academic Leaders?

According to Bruce Johnstone (2010) academic leaders include all those who have the capacity to effect change and who form part of the executive team. A key attribute of the academic leader is the ability to understand the institution, to have a future vision for it, and to help bring it about in a consultative manner (Mohammedbhai, 2010). In the context of the university, academic leaders include the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Directors, Deans, Heads of Department, Registrars, Librarians and all other functional managers who can influence policy direction in the institution.

Because principles of leadership have universal application in almost all social settings, the paper begins with the meaning and characteristics of leadership, the distinction between leadership and management, followed by a discussion of the stages of leadership development. These general concepts of leadership are applied to the topic under discussion.

The Meaning of Leadership

Leadership is today's hottest topic (Covey, 2004). It is about inspiring and empowering people. It is about dreaming and visioning, combined with a determination to achieve the dream or vision. Leadership is not an end in itself; it is to take an organisation or any other entity to a different and hopefully better place (Manning, 2004). Saal and Knight (1995) see leadership as a "social influence in an organisational setting, the effects of which are relevant to, or have impact upon the achievement of organisational goals." Two implications emerge from this definition. First, leadership influences the behaviour of other people (social influence). Second, it helps in the achievement of organisational goals (influence on organisational performance).

In the view of Dr. John Edmund Haggai (1986), "Leadership is the discipline of deliberately exerting special influence within a group to move it toward goals of beneficial permanence that fulfill the groups real needs." A number of issues stand out of Haggai's definition. Leadership is seen as a discipline that can be acquired and learnt through practice. It is the result of a deliberate activity. Leadership exerts special (not coercive) influence. This presupposes the existence of a group

and the ability to advance a common objective or purpose. Haggai's definition of leadership resonates with that of Tony Manning (2004) who emphasises the ability to get results through others. Other authors emphasise the ability of the leader to effect change.

Bruce Johnstone (2010), for example, highlights the capacity to make a difference, that is, to effect a change in individuals, institutions or systems of higher education. So also is McKenna (1994) who views leadership as an agency of change, entailing giving inspiration to others to do more than they would otherwise have done or were doing. In business, the focus of leadership is even more striking, making sense in an atmosphere of exceptional ambiguity and, in practical terms, turning business into world-class organisations and doubling economic profits every five years (Rajan, 2002). Stephen Covey (1990) cited by (Lick, 2002) combines the directional role of leadership with the ability to control followers in the following words: "the leader is the one who climbs the tallest tree, surveys the situation, and yells, 'wrong jungle!' But how do busy, efficient faculty, administrators and staff often respond? "Shut up! We're making progress!" This is typical of an academic setting where faculties see leadership as colleagues, where all are knowledge workers, many on the same professional pedestal as the Vice-Chancellor or Dean or Head of Department.

Leadership Characteristics

A number of leadership characteristics may be discerned from the various definitions of leadership. These include; discipline, special influence, followership, shared vision, permanence, change and character. These will be discussed, beginning with discipline. Discipline implies determination and commitment, the ability to translate intention into reality. It also implies that leadership qualities can be acquired and developed through practice. Another characteristic of a leader is the special influence that leaders exert to influence people. The influence should spur on the followers to act on their own. In other words, the urge to function must emanate from within, without being forced. It is the power to inspire, pursue or motivate which moves followers, colleagues or subordinates to act. Where there is leadership, there must be followers, and an understanding of a common purpose of the group. Leaders work through people which is why leadership must understand

the needs and aspirations of their followers so that they can be addressed.

Even more important is the vision of the leader, which must be shared with followers. Leadership must determine what they want and aspire to, without which the organisation would have no future. The leader sets the organisation's vision and direction. The vision, processes, prosperity and success must be felt throughout the organisation. Two things are important in this regard. First is the clarity of the leader's vision. And, second, the ability of the leader to communicate the vision throughout the organisation.

It is for this purpose that the leader needs the support of his line leaders who, in the university, include the heads of department and the deans, the people who amplify and convey downwards what top leadership is determined to achieve. The ability to communicate and the enthusiasm with which the leadership conveys messages count as much as the message itself.

Another important characteristic of leadership is the ability to effect change. Change is inevitable in our lives. The process of change needs to be managed for the change to be effected. Dela Lick (2002) has identified four elements in change management. The first is change sponsorship, the authority to legitimise the need for change. In the university, this might be a Council, Board, Vice-Chancellor, Dean or Head of Department. Next, is a change agent, who is responsible for implementing the desired change. The third element is the target of change, which could be an individual, or group being changed through the change effort; and, the fourth, change advocate, which is the person or group supporting the change without any formal authority to sanction in the change effort. The leader must be able to identify the four elements in the change process and to manage the process to a successful conclusion. A leader plans and directs change that benefits the group or followers.

A leadership characteristic introduced by Haggai (1986) is 'permanence'. This emphasises the need for changes that are continuing, enduring and lasting. Such changes could be harmful or beneficial. Haggai identifies changes which seek goals beneficial to people in an organisation which he terms 'beneficial permanence' as opposed to "malevolent permanence" where goals are detrimental or harmful to followers. History is replete with many examples of leaders whose

actions have wrought untold hardship and calamities on their people. Those are the goals which Haggai refers to as “malevolent permanence”, arising out of malice.

In his book, “The 8th Habit”, Stephen Covey (2004) identifies ‘character’ as an important characteristic of leadership. He supports this view with the outcome of a survey he carried out among over 54,000 subjects in which integrity was listed as the most important attribute, asserting that 90 percent of all leadership failures are character failures. This view is strongly supported by Theodore Roosevelt (cited in Covey, 2004) in the following words, “character, in the long run is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike”. This leads us to the question of whether there is a distinction between leadership and management.

Leadership and Management

The distinction between leadership and management is sometimes blurred, to the extent that some writers use the two terms interchangeably or subsume one under the other. Peter Drucker (Covey, 2004) is, for example, incensed by the attempt to draw a distinction between management and leadership. In his view, separating management from leadership is “nonsense, as much nonsense as separating management from entrepreneurship” He indicates that the two are part and parcel of the same job, conceding, however, that the two concepts are only as different as the right hand is from the left, or the nose from the mouth. They belong to the same body”. Drucker’s view, notwithstanding, Bennis and Nanus (2007) have sought to bring out a sharp distinction between management and leadership. To manage, in their view, is “to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of, or responsibility for; to conduct,” while to lead is “to influence, guide in direction, course, action, opinion”. Leadership, therefore, involves activities of vision and judgment, that is, effectiveness, as against management which is concerned with activities of mastering efficiency. Bennis (cited in Covey, 2004) emphasises compliance, “getting people to do what needs to be done,” and leadership in terms of empowerment “getting people to want to do what needs to be done” This is why managers are said to command and push, while leaders communicate and pull.

Thus, while the leader is a dreamer, envisioning, setting the

direction, creating the environment for change and affecting it, spotting new opportunities, influencing others and charting uncharted paths, the manager is traditionally linked to routine activities and operating under conditions of stability. Thus defined, while management is preoccupied with planning, coordinating, supervising and controlling, leadership is equated with dynamism, vibrancy and charisma (Mckenna, 1994; Whetten and Cameron, 1998; John Kotter, 1990, cited by Northouse, 2004).

This brings us to the question of who university leaders are. Following Bruce Johnstone's definition these would include the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Deans, Directors and Heads of Department, but, the overall responsibility of the institution rests with the Vice-Chancellor who heads the central administration. This explains why academic leadership in the university is considered shared, distributive or multiple, where decisions are taken at several levels including the many boards and committees.

The term management in the university context, on the other hand, may be used to describe the range of functional activities undertaken to ensure that appropriate administrative and specialised services are available to support the academic enterprise. These include: human resource; student affairs; academic affairs; planning; finance; information and communications technology and physical development. Various officers such as the Registrar and his deputies, the Finance Officer, the Physical Development Officer, etc., who co-ordinate these functions would appropriately be categorised as managers in the institution. It is important to add that these officers are, in a sense, leaders because they also provide leadership in their respective departments. Increasingly the term "senior management" is used to describe the top leadership in the institution, both academic and non-academic.

Leadership Development

We next turn attention to whether leaders are born or developed. Bennis and Nanus (2007) do not leave this question to chance. They are emphatic and confirm that, "Great leaders may be born, albeit, infrequently. But effective leaders can be discovered, encouraged, appointed, empowered and protected." Richard Daft (1999) has identified a four-stage process of leadership development. These are 'unconscious

incompetence', 'conscious incompetence', 'conscious competence' and 'unconscious competence'. Non-leaders start from stage one, 'unconscious incompetence' where they are incompetent as leaders because they are not aware of what it takes to be a good leader. The second stage is the 'conscious incompetence' where through training and coaching, a potential leader is gradually exposed to leadership skills such as visioning, team building, strategic thinking, etc. Although one is aware of leadership skills, one is yet to put them into practice.

In the third stage, 'conscious competence', there is both an awareness of, and possession of, leadership skills. Competence is established and leadership is evidenced through achievement of results and feedback. The last stage is 'unconscious competence' where leadership skills will have been so developed that they are exhibited as part and parcel of the leader, who now exhibit these positive traits involuntarily. The leader may be said to have acquired 'extra rational' powers which enable him or her to solve problems intuitively. Leadership skills are exhibited effortlessly, deriving from previous experiences, practice and training. A fifth stage, *reflection*, could be added. But, as one would expect, leadership should be reflective all the time to be able to identify problems and weaknesses for corrective actions to be taken. Therefore, rather than putting this as a fifth stage of leadership development, self-introspection and reflection, should take place at all the four stages of leadership development.

Another way of looking at stages in the development of the leader is to turn attention to Jim Collins and, specifically, to his five levels of hierarchy of leadership (Covey, 2004). Jim Collins identifies level one as 'Highly Capable Individual'; two as 'Contributing Team Member'; three, 'Competent Manager'; four, 'Effective Leader' and, five, 'Executive Leader'. At level one, the individual makes productive contributions through talent, knowledge, skills and good work habits. The level two leaders contribute to the achievement of group objective, working effectively with others in a group setting. At level three, the competent manager organises people and resources towards effective and efficient pursuit of predetermined objectives. The effective leader at level four catalyses commitments to, and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision; and stimulates his group to higher performance standards. The fifth and last stage in Collins model is the 'executive leader; who builds an enduring greatness through a paradoxical

combination of personal humility and professional will. As said of Draft's four stages, there also could be a sixth stage, that of reflection in Collins leadership hierarchy. Again, a process of reflection is best when it takes place at each level in the hierarchy.

Complexity Leadership Theory

The proposition that conditions of stability, hierarchy, planned change and control, which characterised traditional theories of leadership no longer applies to the current turbulent times, has led Nanette Blandin (2007) to postulate an alternative, the complexity leadership theory, to deal with complex situations. This theory has been adequately described by Kauffman (cited in Blandin, 2007) who claims that it is "a systemic state on the cusp between chaos and order, a condition where uncertainty, variety, dependency and inter-connectedness are high". Blandin (2007) links the modern complex organisation to the emergency room in a hospital, a situation which requires direction, teamwork, respect, trust, etc. to deal with. In a typical emergency, where there has been a fatal lorry accident involving a number of casualties brought to the hospital, it is the role of leadership to give appropriate direction, and quickly too. Such a direction would involve assessing the situation and putting red, yellow and green cards to identify the serious, not so serious and very serious cases.

This simple action of the leader would direct the medical team, made up of doctors, nurses and other paramedical and professional staff to patients who should receive immediate attention. Knowles (cited in Blandin, 2007) also equates complexity situations to a jazz quintet at play where everybody is a leader, and creativity and efficiency emerge naturally. In a complex situation, the leader is a facilitator and catalyst as opposed to the one in charge, controlling affairs. He has several abilities including the ability to adapt, change and adjust, and to deal with ambiguities and uncertainties. His attributes include the ability to spot opportunities, good listening skills, high-level communication skills and power of persuasion and reflection. The complexity leader knows no boundaries and has high commitment to diversity and capacity for continuous learning.

Conditions in a modern university are very much akin to the conditions of complexity described above. In the first three months of

the life of one new Vice-Chancellor of a public university, he was confronted with a series of challenges including a demonstration by students against the payment of increased tuition and residential/hostel fees. The Vice-Chancellor was also confronted with what decision to take with students who had allegedly indecently assaulted a lady involved in a theft case in one of the halls of residence, a situation which had attracted public condemnation. Meanwhile, the teachers' association was also unhappy with their salary levels and threatened to go on strike if nothing was done about their complaint. The junior staff, whose salary arrears remained unpaid, had hoisted red flags signalling their intention to take to the streets. This was the situation in which the new Vice-Chancellor began his term of office: a complex set of intricately intertwined issues requiring drive, resourcefulness, strategy, determination, energy and the support of the entire academic leadership and management team to address.

Distinctive Features of Academic Institutions

Academic institutions have distinctive features which give them a unique form and character, dissimilar to those of other organisations. First, authority and responsibility are shared among, more or less, equal partners in contrast to the traditional hierarchical settings in most other organisations. One of the factors favouring to the distributive or shared leadership practice in the academic enterprise is the large presence of academic staff. An institution of higher learning such as the university has, perhaps the highest concentration of intellectual power, higher than what obtains in any of the other types of organisations. Beyond just numbers (faculty and students), there is also a wide spectrum of disciplines or specialisations, making co-ordination relatively more difficult. The department is the knowledge cell, responsible for the generation and dissemination of knowledge of a particular kind. The department is thus the source of all academic matters in a university.

A group of similar or like-minded departments comes to be known as a Faculty or School. The teachers in the department are colleagues with a similar background and training, normally having been trained to the doctorate level. It is one of these academic staff who becomes the head of department, charged with the responsibility for providing academic leadership to colleagues and students in the department.

Similarly, one of the heads of department becomes the dean of the faculty, providing leadership and coordinating academic life in the faculty. A head of department or dean may not necessarily be the most talented or intelligent in the department or faculty. Professorship is the apex of professional development in a particular discipline. Its kind is very rare in any other organisation. This is why professors wield a lot of authority in the department.

Research is a distinguishing feature in most universities. In such an environment, a leader must first learn to undertake research and publish his or her results to win the confidence of faculty. A university that does not promote research and publication will sooner or later price itself out of the international academic community.

Even more complex is the existence of two supreme organs in the university, the Council and the Academic Board. The reason why governance at these levels is referred to as bi-cameral is that Council is a representative body with broad oversight responsibilities, while the Academic Board is a technical committee, responsible for the academic function of the institution.

Not many organisations have as many constituencies as academic institutions. They may include councils, parents, students, faculties, alumni, basic and second cycle schools, business and industry. Communities and governments also have interests in academic institutions. Of these constituencies, the council, students and faculty would probably be the most prominent, together with the senior administrative and professional staff and alumni, the members of the institution, significantly absent in most organisations in the public and private sectors of the economy.

Academic leadership involves harnessing the collective talent and expertise of faculty, students and non-academic staff to generate and disseminate knowledge to students and society. It supervises the development of appropriate curricula and their mode of delivery. Academic leadership also involves providing direction and mentoring of the inexperienced academic and, allocating resources towards scientific enquiry and investigation. Academic leadership is about managing the needs of the human element in the institution, and coordinating the activities of the various stakeholders to achieve harmony in the pursuit of the goals of the institution. It also deals with the international dimension of the institution.

It is this complexity which has led Bartlett Giamatti (1988), President of Yale, (cited in Chait *et al.*, 1996), to define the good of a college or university in terms of increased intensity of thinking. Although much of what Giamatti asserts may be interpreted in different ways, the fact that academic institutions are charged with moulding and processing young minds for the future as well as generating knowledge which is the basis of development, put a lot of burden and responsibility on academic leaders whose role it is to shape and drive the academic enterprise. A dormant academic leader naturally stifles growth and development in the institution.

Academic Leadership for What?

Leadership transcends everything else in the institution, making it possible to achieve the institutional goals. It is, however, necessary to answer the question: **Academic Leadership for what?** In other words, what do we need academic leadership for? Bennis and Nanus (2007), have identified a number of conditions that leaders must meet to succeed in future: These, which also apply to academic leaders, are the ability to:

- Set direction during turbulent times;
- Manage change;
- Attract resources and forge new alliances to accommodate new constituencies;
- Harness diversity of optimism, enthusiasm and commitment among followers; and
- Be a leader of leaders.

Working among knowledge workers, the academic leader must be an expert in a chosen discipline to be able to command respect in the enterprise. In addition to the abilities listed above, the academic leader must be able to envision what he or she wants to achieve and translate them into reality. He or she must be capable of arousing a sense of intellectual excitement and cope with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty, what Bennis and Nanus (2007) have termed 'spastic change'.

Now we return to the question: **Leadership for what?** First, there is the need to understand the academic environment, sufficiently enough

to appreciate the need to defend it. The twin values of academic freedom and autonomy are what immediately come to mind. In many ways it is the leadership which invites intrusion and interference in academic matters. Some university leaders defer to political leadership for solutions to problems on campus, making it possible for political leaders to interfere in campus matters.

Academic leadership is required to promote a research culture. The primacy of research in a university is not in doubt. A university which aspires to a world-class status must have a culture of research. Research and publication, largely determine the image and status of a research university. Academic leadership must create the right atmosphere and provide the resources for faculty to be hungry for research and publication. Sufficient urgency for research must be created in the institution. Bruce Johnstone (2010) has identified other reasons why academic leadership is crucial. These include: promoting the development of appropriate curricula; mobilisation of resources for academic work; building leadership and management capacity, effective communication and overcoming resistance to change.

One of the academic functions of the university is to develop appropriate curricula for teaching students, the next generation of leaders. This responsibility falls on the academic leadership, the Vice-Chancellor, Provosts, Deans and Heads of Department. The Head of Department generates the curricula of the particular department in a consultative manner and processes them through the Faculty to the Academic Board, which is the supreme academic organ of the institution, before going to Council for final approval. The curricula must be a living document. It should take into account the past, the present and the future. It should also take into account local, national, international and global trends so as to equip the student with the knowledge, skills and tools required to function in the global competitive economy. It is for this reason that the academic staff must undertake research in their fields and to create new knowledge to be imparted to students. It is also for this same reason that academic staff are encouraged to attend conferences to share the results of their research to expand their horizon and be abreast with new trends. Curricula must be reviewed periodically to take advantage of developments in the international academic community.

Mobilisation of resources for academic work is the responsibility

of both Council and Academic leadership. Owing to the importance of this subject, possession of resource-mobilisation skills has become one of the major criteria for the selection of academic leaders, particularly the chief executive, in an academic institution. This is because, all over the world, public funding of higher education is dwindling and it has increasingly become the responsibility of the respective institutions and their leadership to supplement government funding with what they are able to generate internally. The leadership must be very aggressive in seeking funding for basic and applied research, and for other physical and academic infrastructure. Leadership capacity to mobilise financial and material resources for academic work has become a key yardstick for measuring the effectiveness of academic institutions.

Leadership training which was taken for granted in the past, has become a key activity in most academic institutions. In the past, when numbers were low and funding was not a major issue, on the job training for university leadership and management was more than adequate. This situation has changed; university leaders and managers require a range of skills to address modern challenges. All over Africa, academic institutions are seeking to build the capacity of their leaders and managers to position themselves to address the complex challenges, they face.

Universities are traditionally conservative institutions allergic to change, particularly drastic ones. But, the best traditions of universities everywhere are undergoing transformation to enable the institutions to compete globally. Universities need to be aggressive in generating their own funds to attract the best students and faculty. Demand-driven and tailor-made programmes are emerging, bringing the institutions closer to corporate organisations and public sector institutions. There is the need for strong strategic leadership to push the wave of change across the entire spectrum of the institutions. The barriers to change, including non-involvement of faculty and poor communication, among others, need to be addressed by leadership for effective communication is increasingly emerging as one of the urgent concerns on campuses. In recent brainstorming sessions in some universities and polytechnics in Ghana to identify skill gaps in leadership performance, lack of effective communications was among the top three issues raised. A training needs assessment undertaken in Ghana under Senior Academic Leadership

Training (SALT) programme for senior managers of universities in West Africa in 2010 (Effah *et al.*, 2010) showed similar concerns. As noted in earlier sessions, leadership ability to share one's vision depends, to a large extent, on the ability to communicate effectively and persuasively. Mechanisms for promoting effective communication should be set up where they are non-existent, and strengthened and used effectively where they already exist. Communication is a very powerful tool for any change process and academic leaders should do well to use it effectively.

The Role of Academic Leadership in Research

The role of academic leadership in research is tied to the tripartite mission of the university, namely, research, teaching and service. The emphasis put on each of these missions is dependent upon the type of institution. The polytechnic, for example, emphasises research and development and, in particular, hands on, practical and career-oriented skills training. Universities may be classified as research, teaching or technical/professional. The distinguishing feature of the research university is its research, knowledge creation and publication. Leadership role in the promotion of research is, therefore, foremost among all other responsibilities, particularly in universities designated as research universities.

This is because it is research and knowledge creation, more than anything else, which give the research university its reputation and image. Research and publication form a major criterion in the promotion of academic staff and in the ratings and rankings of world-class universities. Through the generation of new facts and knowledge, universities renew themselves, provide the basis for national development and create new material for teaching. A university which does not undertake research to generate new knowledge can die on account of lack of knowledge and be priced out of the community of scholars. This is why leadership of the university should be of a certain level of seniority, combined with the experience required to give the necessary direction and encouragement to promote research (Effah, 2003). Leadership at the institutional levels should promote a culture of research by providing the necessary drive and incentives.

First, the required research infrastructure must be provided. A laboratory for carrying out scientific research, adequately equipped with the appropriate tools and consumables, should be available.

Academic staff must also be equipped with research methodology and writing skills to facilitate proposal writing and the development of appropriate instruments for data collection and analysis. Funding for research must be available. And, above all, there should be a research plan and a strategy to execute it. The research plan should include a strategy for mentoring junior and inexperienced academic staff as well as evaluation and monitoring mechanisms, all of which require effective academic leadership.

Development of Curricula, Teaching and Assessment

One major set of responsibilities of faculty, either collectively as Academic Board or Senate, or individuals, is the development of appropriate curricula, teaching and assessment. It is on account of the importance of this function that the Academic Board is regarded as a supreme organ of the university responsible for academic matters. Council is the other supreme organ, the final authority exercising general oversight responsibility over the affairs of the university.

So strong is the academic mandate of the Academic Board that Council, although a final authority, cannot take a final decision on any academic matter without reference to the Academic Board. It is also the reason why the university cherishes its twin values of academic freedom and autonomy. It is the responsibility of academic leadership to develop curricula together with faculty. The initiative and processes normally begin at the level of the department, the knowledge hub of the university. The head of department has a major responsibility to provide the necessary leadership in coming up with what should be taught in the department.

The inputs of the faculty and, sometimes stakeholders are sought before the draft proposal is sent to the Faculty Board for a review by peers. At this level, the head of department is interrogated by his/her peers. A number of clarifications are sought with regard to how the curriculum fits into the department and institution's vision; who should teach which subject; and whether or not appropriate funding has been sought. The process continues to the Academic Board where there is intense interrogation by a larger group of peers. When the curriculum is approved it is sent to Council for consideration and approval. Some universities have an inter-faculty-committee to discuss proposals coming

from Faculties for purposes of alignment, synergy and synchronisation before going to the Academic Board. The university so much believes in this process that nothing is left to chance.

A curriculum that has been designed and developed is taught or delivered under the general supervision of the head of department. Assignment of teaching schedules, teaching loads and provision of feedback on teaching effectiveness, are among the key responsibilities of academic leadership. Others include examinations related responsibilities such as appointment of internal and external examiners, ensuring the setting of questions, security, conduct of examinations, prompt marking, return of marked scripts, addressing student complaints, and processing of marks, for the consideration and approval of the Faculty and Academic Boards respectively. Other important aspects of the examination and assessment mechanisms are the supervision of interim assessment to reflect performance in a number of exercises spread over the year as well as student assessment of their teachers. Student assessment and provision of feedback to faculty are very useful but sensitive matters which require experienced and mature academic leaders to handle.

Student Matters

Another broad area of responsibility relates to student matters. Students constitute a key component of the university. This is why traditionally students have been referred to as “junior members” to reflect their membership status in the university with the academic staff being the “senior members.” The senior member category has in recent times been expanded to include the senior administrative and professional staff who provide administrative, professional and academic support services to the academic enterprise.

Leadership must understand the university culture and know the range of academic programmes provided. It must understand the university’s admission requirements, in particular, those related to their respective departments. This is important for heads of department, since they have to ensure that all students in their department have satisfied the department’s requirements. The head of department assigns students to academic advisors. The department must know its students; the gifted, as well as those with various forms of disabilities which hinder effective

academic work. This is to ensure that the department addresses any challenges that such students may have. A related leadership responsibility that often receives little or no attention is the preparation of sectional reports on students. These reports should enable the department to identify those of its junior members who have specific needs to be addressed. Other important matters which readily come to attention include managing students' internship, attachment and exchange programmes and attendance at such academic functions as matriculation, congregation and open days.

Staff Matters

Among the many roles of academic leadership is the management of both faculty and staff. One of the major responsibilities in this regard is recruitment of staff at all levels. It is the responsibility of the head of department to ensure that the right calibre of staff are recruited to the department. It is in recognition of this role that university statutes provide that the head of department or his representative is part of the requirement for a quorum for the appointment of persons to the department. Evaluation and verification of the credentials of applicants to the department is an important activity in the process of recruitment which should engage the attention of the head of department. The role of the Registrar through the human resources department or directorate is to counter-check to ensure that due diligence has taken place and that no bad nut escapes through the net.

Staff development and training is another area of responsibility. An orientation programme to acquaint staff with their roles, responsibilities and entitlements is often ignored in academia. New staff have to muddle through darkness to understand how things should or ought to be done. Next is appropriate mentoring or apprenticeship schemes for junior and inexperienced staff. One best practice is to prepare departmental or faculty manual to be used as a basis to facilitate workshop periodically for staff. Institutionalisation of effective staff appraisal schemes and the effective administration of the conditions and scheme of service for staff are both critical and essential. Issues about promotion procedures, prospects and remuneration are among the frequently cited sources of discontentment and conflict in the institution.

Another best practice is to hunt for future stars. This involves aggressive recruits who show promise for future academic work. One way of doing this is to follow young stars pursuing postgraduate studies and, using agreed criteria, identify those with potential and observe their progress in the institution till they graduate. Those selected are put on probation where they are given systematic and structured training. In the course of their duties they are challenged to unearth their abilities. Risk-free avenues such as group work, task forces or participation in ad-hoc committees, presentations at workshops and conferences offer opportunities for developing current and future leaders of the department and the institution.

A number of strategies should be crafted and avenues provided to enhance career development. In addition to orientation and induction into departments and the institution, new staff should be exposed to relevant literature on the institution and in their areas of operation. Where possible, facilities for attachments and internship should be provided. Job rotation, workshops and conferences, study tours as well as professional courses deepen knowledge of staff and their understanding of what is expected of them. These facilities should be made available progressively as staff advance in their careers. Where possible, staff should be given the opportunity to pursue advanced degrees.

It is important to indicate that there are two aspects to the development of talent: individual and organisational, following what John Addair (2004) has called the 50:50 motivational rule. The individual must have drive and the willingness to learn and develop. This kind of motivation must come from the individual staff. But the organisation, through the head of department or a mentor should also be able to identify and recognise talent in the individual and invest in his or her personal training and development. It should recognise and reward achievement ensuring that staff capacity is enhanced through goal setting, effective appraisal systems, coaching and effective feedback mechanisms.

Conclusion

Two statements amply sum up the role of academic leadership in the complex university environment. First, Kotter (1996) holds the view

that leaders in complex organisations must establish direction, align people with that vision; and motivate and inspire them to make a change happen despite the barriers; and, second, Jeremie Kubiack (2011) emphasises the point that positive leadership occurs not by ‘leading’ others but rather by influencing them.

It is the responsibility of academic leadership, in varying degrees, right from the chief executive, to the head of department to enhance the image of the institution and to sustain scholarship and academic traditions. It is the collective responsibility of the leadership of the university to set the direction and to inspire confidence in the university community to achieve the mandate of the institution.

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Governance of Tertiary Education Institutions: Emerging Trends

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Abstract

This paper, which was originally prepared for the National Council for Tertiary Education's (NCTE) Conference on Repositioning Tertiary Education for National Development in May 2013, seeks to establish what the principles of modern university governance are and describes the trends that can be identified internationally. It demonstrates that there is no clear international model. It concludes that Ghana should therefore seek to adapt and reform its current model rather than seek to incorporate new elements from elsewhere and it suggests a number of areas to which consideration might be given.

Why is Institutional Governance Important?

The fundamental theme addressed by the conference, the role of tertiary education institutions in the knowledge economy, is echoed in most other countries today. For example, a major thrust in European Union (EU) thinking is how university reform can contribute to the EU strategy of achieving a more internationally competitive economy. Its key publication in this area *The role of the universities in the Europe of Knowledge* (CEC, 2003) argued that: "Given that they are situated at the crossroads of research, education and innovation universities in many respects hold the key to the knowledge economy and society" and it goes on to point out that universities are responsible for 80% of the fundamental research carried out in Europe, employ 34% of the active researchers and that the unemployment rate of their graduate output stood at only one third of that of people with lower qualifications. The Commission returned to the theme two years later in *Mobilising the brain power of Europe; enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon strategy* (CEC, 2005) arguing that governments should take steps to encourage university reform including reform in their governance and leadership. The Lisbon strategy which was aimed at raising the level of investment in research to US levels (in industry as well as the universities) has stalled with the financial

difficulties in the Euro zone but it is notable that all the major EU countries, including particularly the UK, have sought to protect research and university teaching in the budget cuts that have had to be imposed on public expenditure.

Identifying universities as key contributors to the economy emphasises the need for them to perform effectively and, for what the European Commission describes as “bottlenecks”, to be removed. One of the most critical bottlenecks is governance, a word that in ‘Euro speak’ covers the role of the state as well as the machinery of institutional self governance. This has led to a significant recourse across Europe to what is termed (with some suspicion) the Anglo-Saxon model, and to the US although Europe has no parallel to the US commitment to private universities. The most important characteristics of these two systems is the autonomy of the institutions in determining their own strategies and running their own affairs in comparison with the traditional continental European model where universities were closely integrated with the state, where there was no lay involvement in university governance, where academics were often employed on civil service terms and rectors (Vice-Chancellors) were elected by the faculty. Although there has been a plethora of legislation in the last few years (Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal) reform has in fact, proceeded slowly and the European Universities Association (EUA) has recently created an autonomy scorecard, following very detailed research based on four aspects of governance: organisational autonomy, financial autonomy, staffing autonomy and academic autonomy, which puts the UK convincingly at the top of the table. (Esterman, Nokkala and Steinal, 2011). (Ghana would not, I think, have been far behind). However, this degree of autonomy, especially in an era of austerity, puts an added onus on effective governance, leadership and management. If universities are so closely integrated with state bureaucracy to be virtually a department of the state, institutional governance is essentially in the hands of the appropriate Ministry, but when universities have a high degree of financial and academic autonomy then there is the same requirement for good governance and good management and leadership structures as for a modern company, operating in the private sector. This means they have to have legally defined decision-making structures to approve budgets, appoint and regulate staff, organise teaching and award degrees, provide for and

support research and agree strategies to drive the institution forward. Any breakdown or weakness in these structures leads to a reduction of effectiveness in the conduct of the core business.

Some Principles of University Governance

Academic participation

The core business of universities is teaching and research, and their success in prosecuting them is what determines their reputation and, to a large extent, their financial support. Unlike companies their reputation does not depend on profitability, though they are certainly required to manage their finances effectively, stay solvent, invest in their infrastructure, aim to achieve surpluses to fund new ventures etc., and they do not have shareholders to whom they must pay dividends although they do have stakeholders, governments, students and civil society who they must satisfy; in addition, in financial matters, public institutions are accountable to governments for their expenditure just as other publicly funded organisations are. Unlike companies too they have a long tradition of the participation of their academic staff in the business of governance. As far back as 1213 the Magna Charter of the University of Paris indicated that the chancellor had to obtain the vote of the professors in matters connected with appointments for the teaching of theology and canon law and could not act on his own authority (Ruegg, 1992). Since academic staff are the key knowledge resource, responsible for recruiting and teaching the students and for undertaking the research, they have a key role to play in strategy and internal decision-making. Similar arguments apply to knowledge workers in modern knowledge based companies. The senate represents the traditional vehicle through which the academic perspective on strategy and policy is expressed.

The role of lay governing bodies

While there is a great deal of commonality across international boundaries in the structures of university governance: governing bodies, senates, faculties and faculty boards, and academic departments, the balance of power and authority between these bodies, even where the legal definitions seem similar, can be remarkably different. This is because in spite of their autonomous character universities are affected

by external environmental pressures and by their funding regimes. Changes in the balance of power and authority can occur sharply over time in a single higher education system. A good illustration of this can be found in the changes in the role of governing bodies in the UK. Governing bodies were very powerful in policy determination in the UK universities' early days both because they were in a very real sense the universities' founders and because universities attracted very little state funding. However, from 1945, when the state in effect took over the funding of universities through the University Grants Committee, senates became very much more powerful at the expense of governing bodies, because funding was secure and awarded fundamentally on academic criteria. (Senior university figures even questioned why universities had governing bodies). However, when cuts were imposed on university budgets by the Thatcher Government in 1980–81, a powerful committee, the Jarratt Committee on Efficiency Studies in Universities (set up as part of a scrutiny of cost effectiveness across government departments) called for university governing bodies to “assert” themselves and encouraged the view that it was no bad thing if there should be ‘tensions’ between governing bodies, as the guardians of the institutions’ financial stability and senates as protectors of academic departmental interests (Jarratt, 1985). The Committee went on to recommend that the Vice-Chancellor should be regarded not just as the chief academic and administrative officer but as the chief executive of the university. At one level this was purely a matter of semantics but it took on greater force when the Government began to draw analogies between the reforms in corporate governance in companies stimulated by the Cadbury Report (Cadbury, 1992) and the need for university governing bodies to act more like company boards. This was enacted in legislative form in 1992 when the polytechnics became universities in a new constitutional form, the Higher Education Corporation (HEC). The traditional bicameral structure of a university council and senate, both exercising powers prescribed in university statutes, was abandoned for these institutions their academic boards being stripped of policy making functions except in academic areas, very narrowly defined, and questions of academic strategy being transferred wholesale to governing bodies.

Since then considerable efforts have been made through an organisation of governing body chairs, the Committee of University

Chairmen (CUC), to strengthen the procedural operation of governing bodies in order to exercise their powers more effectively. This has in general strengthened the role of governing bodies although the continual incidence of governance breakdowns in post-1992 universities suggests that running UK universities, as if they were companies, through governing bodies has been much less effective than was hoped. (At the same time the collapse of the banking industry in the UK, which had high profile (and well remunerated) boards of directors, has also raised serious questions about the effectiveness of corporate governance in the private sector). It remains the case that the principle of involving a significant lay element in university governance is deeply embedded in the UK (and in the US) system both to ensure the public has a voice and to introduce an external 'business' sense into the running of university affairs.

Accountability and governance

A significant difference between public universities and public companies is the requirements for their accountability. In both the US and the UK a great deal of attention since the early 1990s has been directed to refining the way public companies are made fully accountable to their shareholders. In the US this has been encapsulated in the wake of the Enron collapse in the Sarbanes-Oxley legislation, while in the UK, which has followed a more consultative route, it has resulted in the establishment of a Combined Code of Corporate Governance to which companies must sign up to join the Stock Exchange. The Code is reinforced by the Smith Guidance on Audit and the Turnbull Guidance on Risk and internal controls (Shattock, 2006). This interest in corporate governance has been extended by analogy to the universities which have themselves, through the CUC, adopted a Code of Governance which was intended, when drafted, to serve a similar function to the Combined Code. In itself this is less significant, because the Code does not override university statutes, than the fact that in a mass higher education system accountability for financial management and for academic performance has become a much more important issue for the state; this has tended to further reinforce the position of governing bodies. Thus in the UK, the National Audit Office, as part of its review of a university's internal financial controls, checks whether it is

compliant with the CUC Code of Governance. A governing body is required to sign that it accepts the terms of a Financial Memorandum drawn up by the Funding Council which commits it to guarantee that the institution “has a sound system of internal financial management control”, that it will ensure that it remains solvent, that approval will be sought for any borrowing above 4% of turnover and that the governing body will inform the Funding Council if for any reason the requirements of the Memorandum are not being met (HEFCE, 2010). It also requires governing bodies to approve formal strategic plans, financial plans and estates and buildings strategies, thus ensuring to the Funding Council that such plans have been appropriately prepared and implemented. Failure to adhere to the conditions laid down by the Memorandum may lead to the chair of council, as well as the Vice-Chancellor (who is designated as the principal accounting officer) being required to appear before the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament.

In the US, where higher education is devolved to the states, accountability to the state legislation and the right of intervention by the state auditor, is often even more onerous. What these accountability provisions do is to lay heavy responsibilities on lay members of governing bodies so much so that it is sometimes not easy to recruit knowledgeable and effective professionals to sit on such bodies. By the same token, however, they have reinforced the role of the governing body in the affairs of the institution and strongly emphasised the principle that there is a need to have machinery by which publicly funded universities can satisfy public principles of accountability while guaranteeing their autonomy.

The role of executive leadership and management

The principles surrounding executive leadership and management and their relationship with governance vary considerably between the US, the European and the Anglo-Saxon models. In the US from the earliest days, a presidential system was adopted with a university president being answerable only to a lay board of regents and serving, without tenure, entirely at the board’s discretion. All executive action is carried out in the name of the president and executive staff, from vice presidents downwards, are answerable solely to him/her. While *de jure* this seems to offer a very efficient system in practice, the president is vulnerable

to dissatisfaction in the academic community and within the board and without tenure can be forced from office by a simple resolution of the regents. (The last President of Harvard resigned when a single School of the University passed a vote of no confidence in him). In the traditional European university the rector was elected from within the institution for a limited term but since the administration was provided by the state the post was almost entirely focused on ceremonial and on academic issues. Reforms have strengthened the rectors' powers over management especially where budgets have been devolved from Ministries to institutions but only a few countries have moved to a system of appointing rectors from an external field. In the UK, practice has always been to appoint rather than elect Vice-Chancellors, and usually to appoint them from outside the university. In the pre-1992 universities the appointment is in practice made by a joint council and senate committee chaired by the chair of council while in the post-1992 the appointment is made by the governing body alone.

The Jarratt redefinition of the Vice-Chancellor's role as chief executive rather than chief academic and administrative officer took some time to be realised in the pre-1992 universities but was made formally explicit in the post-1992. This distinction was reflected in the executive management of the pre-1992 universities in which the position of the registrar as secretary of council and head of the administration was protected in the statutes. This was rarely paralleled in the post-1992 universities which opted for a senior management team reporting to the Vice-Chancellor as *de facto* as well *de jure* chief executive. The most senior members of this team would carry the title of Pro Vice-Chancellor. As a general principle the executive management of the pre-1992 universities remained subject to academic control through the senate while in the post-1992 universities it was very clearly only accountable to the governing body. The implicit dangers in this latter model can be seen in the number of governance breakdowns that have occurred in institutions working under HEC constitutions where headstrong chief executives have not been adequately controlled by their governing bodies or where executive management teams as a group have driven their universities in directions which were inherently unwise. The conclusions reached in a report on an extreme example of this at the London Metropolitan University where "a highly centralised and dictatorial executive led by the Vice-Chancellor...was incapable

of listening to what was going on ...discouraged or ignored criticism and made decisions without consultation...[which had] a dispiriting and demotivating effect on staff” (Melville, 2009) illustrates the issue only too clearly.

The position of the executive in UK universities has been reinforced by the far reaching changes in national funding policies whereby the introduction of tuition fees, initially as an additional £3000 ‘top up’ of normal recurrent funding in 2006, followed by a complete substitution of tuition fees of up to £9000 for recurrent funding from the state from 2012, appear to have greatly strengthened the power of the university executive both at the expense of governing bodies and of senates/academic boards. University executive groups, effectively Senior Management Teams (SMTs) in many universities, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, have become dominant within institutions and as lay governing bodies meeting relatively infrequently, like recent boards of directors in the UK banking industry, have found it impossible to maintain control or give direction in a very fast moving environment. Senates, even in the pre-1992 universities, where the tradition of academic participation has always been strong, have also found it difficult to keep up with the amount of technical detail involved in the running of modern universities and have *de facto* if not *de jure* devolved a significant amount of decision-making to their universities’ executive management teams.

Reconciling the basic principles of university governance

What the above account of developments in the UK shows is the difficulty of reconciling the principle of the close involvement of the academic community in university governance with the pressures to create an effective governing body and the need to maintain an academic oversight of strategy when the external funding environment pushes institutions to depend more and more on small, expert, executive groups which can take decisions quickly. One solution, which has gained some support, is to reduce the size of governing bodies to that of a normal commercial board so that they can meet more frequently and exercise more control over the executive but this risks the contrary danger of the development of too close an identity between the governing body and the executive so that the executive is no longer monitored impartially

by the governing body. It raises the question too of whether any group of lay governors could be induced to give up the time required for such a task without some form of remuneration. A diagrammatic presentation of the tensions in university governance in the UK might look something like this (Figure 1)

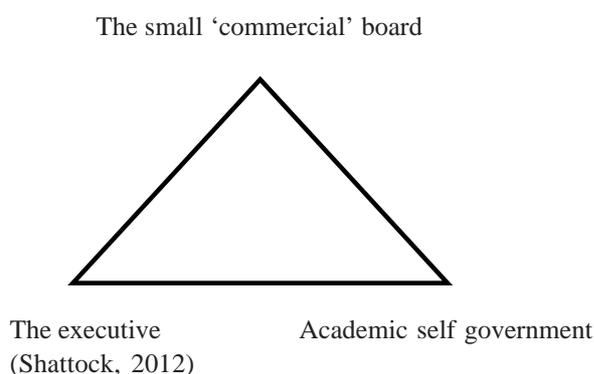


Figure 1: UK University Governance (Shattock, 2012)

International Trends in Modern University Governance

Looking across a broad range of country development, four current trends can be discerned in the governance of university level institutions. The first is a devolution of institutional governance and management powers from central government to the institutions themselves. This is most apparent in continental Europe where universities were traditionally administered from a central government department and university staff held appointments on civil service terms. (In Spain an alternative decision was taken in the 1980s to devolve central governance and management of the university system to provincial governments but university staff continued to be appointed on central government civil service terms. This decision managed to achieve the worst of both worlds: it continued to deprive the universities of the ability to take autonomous decisions and it vitiated any capacity within central Government to create a unified higher education policy). A good non-European example is offered by Japan which, prior to the Koizumi reforms, administered the public universities almost entirely centrally so that, for example, universities did not have individual sets of financial accounts (because they did not have powers of financial self

management) and the registrar was a civil servant seconded for a limited term from the Ministry and then transferred to another institution. The presidents of the universities were elected from within the academic staff for fixed terms. Under the reforms in 2004, however, financial management and individual staff contracts were devolved to the universities themselves and governing bodies and executive boards were created to run the institutions. The presidents, however, remained elected by the academic community. Critics argue that the reluctance of the Ministry to embrace these reforms wholeheartedly, which were dictated personally by the Prime Minister, has resulted in much less autonomy being conferred on institutions than was originally intended. By comparison the recent Sarkozy reforms in France seem to have produced radical change from a previously entirely centralised position.

The second trend, which is closely associated with the devolution of financial decision making to institutions is the introduction of lay governing bodies. In Europe there is no doubt that this has been heavily influenced by the Anglo-Saxon model although cultural and other factors have produced considerable variability in implementation. Thus, in Northern Europe, Scandinavia and the Netherlands, lay governing bodies have assumed roles very similar to those in the UK. In some other countries, France, Germany, Spain and Italy, for example, their introduction has been much less decisive and their powers much less clearly defined. In some cases their roles are only advisory because governments could not bring themselves to impose lay control over academic communities.

By comparison, in the US, where public higher education has under the Constitution always been devolved to state legislatures, governing boards have historically held unicameral powers over their institutions and, even in the most recent period of acute austerity (budget cuts of 20% were imposed by the state on the University of California), have maintained their independence in determining how economies were to be distributed within institutions and how such economies should be mitigated by increased tuition fees. A powerful, Washington based, Association of Governing Boards provides guidance on governance issues, training programmes for new governors and a lobbying arm to Congress. An important caveat, however, needs to be entered in respect to what might appear as the dominant role of the board of regents within US universities. While *de jure* the boards exercise unicameral powers,

that is they have formal control over governance, strategy and academic affairs, de facto a network of academic committees controls the academic agenda and research intensive universities will invariably have a recognised academic body (e.g. the Senate of the University of California), which may not necessarily appear in the statutes, which interfaces with the president and the regents. The term ‘shared governance’ is American in origin and denotes the partnership which, in US eyes, should ideally exist between the board and the academic community. A recent article by Aghion *et al.*, (2010) which has been very influential in European policy circles, has argued that competition for basic research funding which forces universities to make hard strategic choices has been more influential than governance structures in determining the effectiveness of the higher education system.

In the UK, as we have seen above, the position of governing bodies has been strengthened under pressure from Government, and particularly because of the need to ensure accountability. The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Committee) which reported in 1997 argued strongly that governing body membership should not exceed 24, the figure that was laid down in the 1992 legislation for the polytechnics on assuming university status (NCIHE 1997), and this led over time to a reduction of the size of pre-1992 universities from around 40 to smaller bodies, though not always down to 24. This was achieved in part by removing the representation of local authority members and by concentrating more on the need to ensure that governing bodies could draw on an appropriate spread of professional expertise. For the most part these universities only reduced academic representation from their senates pro rata retaining a one third academic membership in contrast to the post-1992 universities which are restricted to no more than two or three academic members.

A third trend is the increasing emphasis being placed on the leadership of institutions. This has always been apparent in US public universities although presidential power must be balanced against the political and other constraints referred to above. In the UK, one of the outcomes of the Dearing Report was the establishment of a government funded Leadership Foundation which has both funded research in leadership and runs a well regarded programme for senior university personnel from the alumni of which Vice-Chancellors tend to be appointed. (The Foundation also provides services to the CUC). One

by product of the existence of the Leadership Foundation has been a legitimisation of leadership at the Vice-Chancellor level and the creation of an accepted field from which new Vice-Chancellors might be expected to be drawn. Having said that leadership styles vary from the explicitly chief executive style in most post-1992 universities to a more nuanced style of academic and managerial leadership in the pre-1992. Similar variations can be found in other countries such as Australia, South Africa and New Zealand where, as in the UK, Vice-Chancellors are appointed not elected but are in general more unconstrained in their leadership style in the newer universities than in the older where a traditional model of academic participation in governance and management is more likely to survive.

An important constraint on Vice-Chancellorial power in the UK and in Australia is the establishment of a more explicit reporting function to the governing body and its chair; this is reinforced by the role of the chair in appraising the Vice-Chancellor's performance and, by the governing body remuneration committee's role in assessing and, as appropriate, rewarding success. (In Australia the chairs' exercise of this role is particularly draconian with some chairs exercising a quasi executive role requiring formal office accommodation within the institution). In spite of these provisions, however, the most serious governance breakdowns in the UK can be attributed to headstrong Vice-Chancellors who have taken a dominant role in relation to their chairs and governing bodies, as well as to their academic communities. In spite of their legal powers, governing bodies have not always proved to be an effective check on the executive and it is generally the academic community which has blown the whistle on Vice-Chancellorial or corporate misconduct. Counter intuitively, some of the most dominant heads of institutions can be found in university systems where heads are elected, where substantial budgetary decision-making has been devolved from central government but where governing bodies are relatively poorly developed. Unless a fixed term appointment is prescribed in the university's constitution the danger is that the electoral system can generate a permanent majority for a given candidate.

A fourth and final trend is the development of strong central management teams. In Europe these were first popularised in Clark's book *Creating the Entrepreneurial University* (1998) which argued that one of the key organisational features of an entrepreneurial (or

‘self reliant’) university was the existence of ‘a strengthened steering core’. Such teams can take the form of a company-type SMT where all the members are essentially appointed for their managerial skills by the chief executive and hold full time managerial posts, or can be a committee of senior academics (some of whom may be elected from within the academic community) and senior professional administrators to comprise what in some universities is known as the executive board. In either case the composition may include deans. (A significant test of how ‘academic’ the business of such a group might be is whether the deans of devolved faculty structures are or are not considered part of the steering core). An important governance issue is whether this body is answerable to the senate as well as to the governing body or only to the governing body; the former case would be usual where the membership is primarily academic, the latter when it is primarily managerial.

One of the features of developments in the UK and Australia is the increase in Pro-Vice-Chancellor positions. Again a distinction must be drawn between full time and permanent pro-Vice-Chancellor posts and posts where their holders are expected to continue part-time in teaching and research. Increasingly these posts are filled by public advertisement rather than through internal promotion. From two or three such posts in medium to large sized UK universities before 2000 the number of what Deem aptly calls ‘manager academics’ (Deem *et al.*, 2007) to distinguish them from professional managers has increased to six or seven. Increasingly too, at least in the UK pre-1992 universities, and as a consequence of expansion and increased management complexity, there seems to be a move towards appointing the registrar as chief operating officer thus explicitly devolving the running of the administration to a manager while locating strategy and particularly academic strategy in a strong academic team.

While forms of organisation and titles of posts may differ, the key trend is for institutions to be managed by a core group, recognised within the institution as some kind of executive team, which steers the university and is responsible for week by week policy making. Such a generic organisational form seems to be as common in continental European universities as in those that trace their governance and leadership models to the Anglo-Saxon tradition and is a reflection of the growing size of institutions, the increasingly complex regulatory

regimes imposed by governments and the need to be able to respond quickly to events outside or inside the university.

Academic Governance in the UK

There are, of course, dangers in the creation of strong central steering teams in that they can become isolated from academic opinion and seen by the academic community as a kind of junta not subject to academic process or open to what management text books call 'constructive confrontation'. A cohesive executive team may also dominate a governing body which by designation, is essentially non-executive in character and which only meets occasionally during the academic year. It is essential therefore that this central team or executive board is transparent in its decision-making, consults academic committees and is properly concerned not to ignore or supplant the role of the governing body which must be the final decision-making body in areas of main strategic or financial importance.

The tendency to concentrate decision-making within SMTs or executive boards has had the effect of undermining the role of senates. Unlike governing bodies where CUC and Government pressure has been to reduce their membership and make them more efficient, senates until recently have had no incentive to reform their procedures and membership. A consequence is that in many universities they have become too large to be effective and meeting once or twice a term they have no chance of keeping up with an expert group or executive board which meets weekly and which is driven by pressures which require speedy decisions. One result is that absentee levels have risen and in many universities senates find themselves without the expertise or background to comment effectively on major strategic issues or on policy issues that involve significant risk. If senates are to play a significant role in the development of strategy and mount a constructive critique of the activities of the SMTs or executive boards, it is incumbent on them to reform themselves by reducing membership numbers and adopting more business-like methods of decision-making.

One further reason for the partial sidelining of the senate is the propensity (one might also suggest mania) in UK universities for restructuring organisation at the faculty level. Such reorganisations have been driven by a wish to devolve resource allocation away from an

overloaded centre, to respond more effectively to competition in the national Research Assessment Exercise or, it must be said, simply because other universities are doing it. Two investigations by Hogan (2005 and 2012) emphasise the point. In the first, he shows that between 1993 and 2002 about 74% of 81 universities studied may have restructured their faculties, sometimes merging them, sometimes merging departments into schools and sometimes eliminating faculties altogether and leaving schools, which have been formed by merging departments, reporting directly to the centre. The majority of restructuring in this period took place in the post-1992 universities but in a second study based on the years 2002–2007, when the pace of restructuring seems to have accelerated, of the 65% of the 72 universities studied about half were from the pre-1992 universities.

The dominant trend amongst the larger universities appears to be towards a reorganisation of faculties into three or four colleges and up to 30 schools in order to achieve a smaller number of larger units. The designation of a college is accompanied by the appointment of a college head, a kind of super dean, who is often also designated a pro-Vice-Chancellor and a member of the SMT/executive board. The college head will normally have line manager responsibility for the school heads within the college and will have resource allocation powers from a devolved budget. College administration will normally be headed by a senior administrator responsible to the college head but will also have a 'dotted line' responsibility to the Registrar.

It is difficult to say in the light of the speed with which these reorganisations have taken place whether the system has moved permanently to a new model or whether this is just a stage on a continuous path of change. There are also signs in some universities that the fear of future austerity has led some universities to withdraw or greatly reduce the level of budgetary devolution to colleges which was a *raison d'être* for the original restructuring. There is also criticism that such reorganisations have increased administrative costs at the expense of academic costs and that the centre — department relationship provided a more economical model than centre — college — school. Two things are clear, however, the first is that institutions have put enormous energy into finding new patterns of organisation that they believe will provide a more effective governance and management structure for universities which have increased their size by about 30% in the last decade alone

model is widely followed in the Far East — Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan — and is also influential in China, but has no purchase in India and could not be described as universal in application. Ghana would be well advised to adopt and reform the governance system it has rather than embark on a wholly new approach. The following points are offered for consideration:

1. Every tertiary education institution should have a strong and effective governing body comprising somewhere between 20 and 25 members. The membership should include a significant minority (around one third) nominated by the senate/academic board of the institution. The ‘lay’ members should be drawn from external bodies representative of the economic, business, social and cultural life of the country.
2. The chairs of the governing bodies should be encouraged to form a committee of chairs along the lines of the CUC in the UK and the AGB in the US (and a similar body in Australia) which would concern itself inter alia with sharing governance issues, offering governor development programmes for governing body members and considering how best to conduct effectiveness reviews and performance reviews. (There might be advantage in opening communication with the UK Leadership Foundation which is closely in touch with professionals, normally former registrars, who serve as external members of UK university governing body effectiveness reviews). A first step might be to consider issuing a Guide to Governance along the lines followed by Australia, England and Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.
3. A key role for the governing body is to ensure that the institution’s financial systems are effective, that risks are appropriately taken into account and that the institution is solvent. On all these and related points it is accountable both to Government and to society. The device of a Financial Memorandum which forms a contract between the institution and the National Council for Tertiary Education in regard to financial and other accountabilities might be useful in defining

those accountabilities. As part of this process the National Council for Tertiary Education should receive copies of institutions' strategic and financial plans at regular intervals.

4. Recognising the role of the Vice-Chancellor/principal as head of the institution and its chief executive, institutions should be encouraged to establish an executive group (which might be called an executive board) comprising pro-Vice-Chancellors, deans and senior administrators to assist the Vice-Chancellor/principal in the management of the institution. This body should be required to report or recommend (as appropriate) to the senate/academic board as well as to the governing body and to communicate its actions widely round the institution.
5. Institutions should be encouraged to initiate reviews as to the effectiveness of their senates/academic boards to ensure that they are able to match the requirements of their constitutions and take appropriate responsibility for the academic work of the institution. The reviews should take account of the size of the membership (not more than 30–35) including student members, the ability to ensure the quality of courses and the effectiveness of the academic regulations.
6. Institutions should be encouraged to review their arrangements to devolve decision-making, including financial decision-making, to deans, directors of centres etc. and heads of departments in the light of the present and future expansion of the institutions themselves. The reviews should ask whether the current structure of faculties etc. meets the expected needs of the institution in the future and whether the support structure is adequate to the responsibilities involved.
7. In any situation where expansion in numbers is in danger of swamping facilities and teaching arrangements it is important to maintain a dialogue with the student body to ensure that pinch points are recognised and that complaints, where possible, can be addressed. In the UK it would be normal to

have departmental staff: student liaison committees to discuss issues regarding courses and at national level there is a questionnaire administered jointly with the National Union of Students addressed to all third year students seeking their comments on teaching, feedback etc. (A similar exercise is carried out in Australia). The results are widely publicised, and inevitably converted into league tables, but are effective in ensuring that institutions are aware of difficulties in individual departments. Every Ghanaian tertiary institution needs to consider what machinery is most effective, in addition to membership of the senate/academic board, to consult students and provide a channel of communication by which institution-wide complaints can be heard.

8. A critical factor in institutional success is the creation and preservation of a positive organisational culture. Good governance makes a key contribution through transparency in decision-making, good working relationships through joint committees between the governing body and the senate/academic board, good communication between the central management and the academic community, and the cultivation of a sense that staff are able to participate, even if remotely, in determining institutional policy and in strategic decision making. It is always important for central decision-makers to remember that the core business of a university is teaching and research, and that it is upon this that the university's reputation ultimately rests. If those responsible for teaching and research feel excluded from the governance of the institution organisational culture will suffer.

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Governance of Tertiary Education Institutions: Emerging Trends

MICHAEL SHATTOCK

Abstract

This paper, which was originally prepared for the National Council for Tertiary Education's (NCTE) Conference on Repositioning Tertiary Education for National Development in May 2013, seeks to establish what the principles of modern university governance are and describes the trends that can be identified internationally. It demonstrates that there is no clear international model. It concludes that Ghana should therefore seek to adapt and reform its current model rather than seek to incorporate new elements from elsewhere and it suggests a number of areas to which consideration might be given.

Why is Institutional Governance Important?

The fundamental theme addressed by the conference, the role of tertiary education institutions in the knowledge economy, is echoed in most other countries today. For example, a major thrust in European Union (EU) thinking is how university reform can contribute to the EU strategy of achieving a more internationally competitive economy. Its key publication in this area *The role of the universities in the Europe of Knowledge* (CEC, 2003) argued that: "Given that they are situated at the crossroads of research, education and innovation universities in many respects hold the key to the knowledge economy and society" and it goes on to point out that universities are responsible for 80% of the fundamental research carried out in Europe, employ 34% of the active researchers and that the unemployment rate of their graduate output stood at only one third of that of people with lower qualifications. The Commission returned to the theme two years later in *Mobilising the brain power of Europe; enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon strategy* (CEC, 2005) arguing that governments should take steps to encourage university reform including reform in their governance and leadership. The Lisbon strategy which was aimed at raising the level of investment in research to US levels (in industry as well as the universities) has stalled with the financial

difficulties in the Euro zone but it is notable that all the major EU countries, including particularly the UK, have sought to protect research and university teaching in the budget cuts that have had to be imposed on public expenditure.

Identifying universities as key contributors to the economy emphasises the need for them to perform effectively and, for what the European Commission describes as “bottlenecks”, to be removed. One of the most critical bottlenecks is governance, a word that in ‘Euro speak’ covers the role of the state as well as the machinery of institutional self governance. This has led to a significant recourse across Europe to what is termed (with some suspicion) the Anglo-Saxon model, and to the US although Europe has no parallel to the US commitment to private universities. The most important characteristics of these two systems is the autonomy of the institutions in determining their own strategies and running their own affairs in comparison with the traditional continental European model where universities were closely integrated with the state, where there was no lay involvement in university governance, where academics were often employed on civil service terms and rectors (Vice-Chancellors) were elected by the faculty. Although there has been a plethora of legislation in the last few years (Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal) reform has in fact, proceeded slowly and the European Universities Association (EUA) has recently created an autonomy scorecard, following very detailed research based on four aspects of governance: organisational autonomy, financial autonomy, staffing autonomy and academic autonomy, which puts the UK convincingly at the top of the table. (Esterman, Nokkala and Steinal, 2011). (Ghana would not, I think, have been far behind). However, this degree of autonomy, especially in an era of austerity, puts an added onus on effective governance, leadership and management. If universities are so closely integrated with state bureaucracy to be virtually a department of the state, institutional governance is essentially in the hands of the appropriate Ministry, but when universities have a high degree of financial and academic autonomy then there is the same requirement for good governance and good management and leadership structures as for a modern company, operating in the private sector. This means they have to have legally defined decision-making structures to approve budgets, appoint and regulate staff, organise teaching and award degrees, provide for and

support research and agree strategies to drive the institution forward. Any breakdown or weakness in these structures leads to a reduction of effectiveness in the conduct of the core business.

Some Principles of University Governance

Academic participation

The core business of universities is teaching and research, and their success in prosecuting them is what determines their reputation and, to a large extent, their financial support. Unlike companies their reputation does not depend on profitability, though they are certainly required to manage their finances effectively, stay solvent, invest in their infrastructure, aim to achieve surpluses to fund new ventures etc., and they do not have shareholders to whom they must pay dividends although they do have stakeholders, governments, students and civil society who they must satisfy; in addition, in financial matters, public institutions are accountable to governments for their expenditure just as other publicly funded organisations are. Unlike companies too they have a long tradition of the participation of their academic staff in the business of governance. As far back as 1213 the Magna Charter of the University of Paris indicated that the chancellor had to obtain the vote of the professors in matters connected with appointments for the teaching of theology and canon law and could not act on his own authority (Ruegg, 1992). Since academic staff are the key knowledge resource, responsible for recruiting and teaching the students and for undertaking the research, they have a key role to play in strategy and internal decision-making. Similar arguments apply to knowledge workers in modern knowledge based companies. The senate represents the traditional vehicle through which the academic perspective on strategy and policy is expressed.

The role of lay governing bodies

While there is a great deal of commonality across international boundaries in the structures of university governance: governing bodies, senates, faculties and faculty boards, and academic departments, the balance of power and authority between these bodies, even where the legal definitions seem similar, can be remarkably different. This is because in spite of their autonomous character universities are affected

by external environmental pressures and by their funding regimes. Changes in the balance of power and authority can occur sharply over time in a single higher education system. A good illustration of this can be found in the changes in the role of governing bodies in the UK. Governing bodies were very powerful in policy determination in the UK universities' early days both because they were in a very real sense the universities' founders and because universities attracted very little state funding. However, from 1945, when the state in effect took over the funding of universities through the University Grants Committee, senates became very much more powerful at the expense of governing bodies, because funding was secure and awarded fundamentally on academic criteria. (Senior university figures even questioned why universities had governing bodies). However, when cuts were imposed on university budgets by the Thatcher Government in 1980–81, a powerful committee, the Jarratt Committee on Efficiency Studies in Universities (set up as part of a scrutiny of cost effectiveness across government departments) called for university governing bodies to “assert” themselves and encouraged the view that it was no bad thing if there should be ‘tensions’ between governing bodies, as the guardians of the institutions’ financial stability and senates as protectors of academic departmental interests (Jarratt, 1985). The Committee went on to recommend that the Vice-Chancellor should be regarded not just as the chief academic and administrative officer but as the chief executive of the university. At one level this was purely a matter of semantics but it took on greater force when the Government began to draw analogies between the reforms in corporate governance in companies stimulated by the Cadbury Report (Cadbury, 1992) and the need for university governing bodies to act more like company boards. This was enacted in legislative form in 1992 when the polytechnics became universities in a new constitutional form, the Higher Education Corporation (HEC). The traditional bicameral structure of a university council and senate, both exercising powers prescribed in university statutes, was abandoned for these institutions their academic boards being stripped of policy making functions except in academic areas, very narrowly defined, and questions of academic strategy being transferred wholesale to governing bodies.

Since then considerable efforts have been made through an organisation of governing body chairs, the Committee of University

Chairmen (CUC), to strengthen the procedural operation of governing bodies in order to exercise their powers more effectively. This has in general strengthened the role of governing bodies although the continual incidence of governance breakdowns in post-1992 universities suggests that running UK universities, as if they were companies, through governing bodies has been much less effective than was hoped. (At the same time the collapse of the banking industry in the UK, which had high profile (and well remunerated) boards of directors, has also raised serious questions about the effectiveness of corporate governance in the private sector). It remains the case that the principle of involving a significant lay element in university governance is deeply embedded in the UK (and in the US) system both to ensure the public has a voice and to introduce an external 'business' sense into the running of university affairs.

Accountability and governance

A significant difference between public universities and public companies is the requirements for their accountability. In both the US and the UK a great deal of attention since the early 1990s has been directed to refining the way public companies are made fully accountable to their shareholders. In the US this has been encapsulated in the wake of the Enron collapse in the Sarbanes-Oxley legislation, while in the UK, which has followed a more consultative route, it has resulted in the establishment of a Combined Code of Corporate Governance to which companies must sign up to join the Stock Exchange. The Code is reinforced by the Smith Guidance on Audit and the Turnbull Guidance on Risk and internal controls (Shattock, 2006). This interest in corporate governance has been extended by analogy to the universities which have themselves, through the CUC, adopted a Code of Governance which was intended, when drafted, to serve a similar function to the Combined Code. In itself this is less significant, because the Code does not override university statutes, than the fact that in a mass higher education system accountability for financial management and for academic performance has become a much more important issue for the state; this has tended to further reinforce the position of governing bodies. Thus in the UK, the National Audit Office, as part of its review of a university's internal financial controls, checks whether it is

compliant with the CUC Code of Governance. A governing body is required to sign that it accepts the terms of a Financial Memorandum drawn up by the Funding Council which commits it to guarantee that the institution “has a sound system of internal financial management control”, that it will ensure that it remains solvent, that approval will be sought for any borrowing above 4% of turnover and that the governing body will inform the Funding Council if for any reason the requirements of the Memorandum are not being met (HEFCE, 2010). It also requires governing bodies to approve formal strategic plans, financial plans and estates and buildings strategies, thus ensuring to the Funding Council that such plans have been appropriately prepared and implemented. Failure to adhere to the conditions laid down by the Memorandum may lead to the chair of council, as well as the Vice-Chancellor (who is designated as the principal accounting officer) being required to appear before the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament.

In the US, where higher education is devolved to the states, accountability to the state legislation and the right of intervention by the state auditor, is often even more onerous. What these accountability provisions do is to lay heavy responsibilities on lay members of governing bodies so much so that it is sometimes not easy to recruit knowledgeable and effective professionals to sit on such bodies. By the same token, however, they have reinforced the role of the governing body in the affairs of the institution and strongly emphasised the principle that there is a need to have machinery by which publicly funded universities can satisfy public principles of accountability while guaranteeing their autonomy.

The role of executive leadership and management

The principles surrounding executive leadership and management and their relationship with governance vary considerably between the US, the European and the Anglo-Saxon models. In the US from the earliest days, a presidential system was adopted with a university president being answerable only to a lay board of regents and serving, without tenure, entirely at the board’s discretion. All executive action is carried out in the name of the president and executive staff, from vice presidents downwards, are answerable solely to him/her. While *de jure* this seems to offer a very efficient system in practice, the president is vulnerable

to dissatisfaction in the academic community and within the board and without tenure can be forced from office by a simple resolution of the regents. (The last President of Harvard resigned when a single School of the University passed a vote of no confidence in him). In the traditional European university the rector was elected from within the institution for a limited term but since the administration was provided by the state the post was almost entirely focused on ceremonial and on academic issues. Reforms have strengthened the rectors' powers over management especially where budgets have been devolved from Ministries to institutions but only a few countries have moved to a system of appointing rectors from an external field. In the UK, practice has always been to appoint rather than elect Vice-Chancellors, and usually to appoint them from outside the university. In the pre-1992 universities the appointment is in practice made by a joint council and senate committee chaired by the chair of council while in the post-1992 the appointment is made by the governing body alone.

The Jarratt redefinition of the Vice-Chancellor's role as chief executive rather than chief academic and administrative officer took some time to be realised in the pre-1992 universities but was made formally explicit in the post-1992. This distinction was reflected in the executive management of the pre-1992 universities in which the position of the registrar as secretary of council and head of the administration was protected in the statutes. This was rarely paralleled in the post-1992 universities which opted for a senior management team reporting to the Vice-Chancellor as *de facto* as well *de jure* chief executive. The most senior members of this team would carry the title of Pro Vice-Chancellor. As a general principle the executive management of the pre-1992 universities remained subject to academic control through the senate while in the post-1992 universities it was very clearly only accountable to the governing body. The implicit dangers in this latter model can be seen in the number of governance breakdowns that have occurred in institutions working under HEC constitutions where headstrong chief executives have not been adequately controlled by their governing bodies or where executive management teams as a group have driven their universities in directions which were inherently unwise. The conclusions reached in a report on an extreme example of this at the London Metropolitan University where "a highly centralised and dictatorial executive led by the Vice-Chancellor...was incapable

of listening to what was going on ...discouraged or ignored criticism and made decisions without consultation...[which had] a dispiriting and demotivating effect on staff” (Melville, 2009) illustrates the issue only too clearly.

The position of the executive in UK universities has been reinforced by the far reaching changes in national funding policies whereby the introduction of tuition fees, initially as an additional £3000 ‘top up’ of normal recurrent funding in 2006, followed by a complete substitution of tuition fees of up to £9000 for recurrent funding from the state from 2012, appear to have greatly strengthened the power of the university executive both at the expense of governing bodies and of senates/academic boards. University executive groups, effectively Senior Management Teams (SMTs) in many universities, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, have become dominant within institutions and as lay governing bodies meeting relatively infrequently, like recent boards of directors in the UK banking industry, have found it impossible to maintain control or give direction in a very fast moving environment. Senates, even in the pre-1992 universities, where the tradition of academic participation has always been strong, have also found it difficult to keep up with the amount of technical detail involved in the running of modern universities and have *de facto* if not *de jure* devolved a significant amount of decision-making to their universities’ executive management teams.

Reconciling the basic principles of university governance

What the above account of developments in the UK shows is the difficulty of reconciling the principle of the close involvement of the academic community in university governance with the pressures to create an effective governing body and the need to maintain an academic oversight of strategy when the external funding environment pushes institutions to depend more and more on small, expert, executive groups which can take decisions quickly. One solution, which has gained some support, is to reduce the size of governing bodies to that of a normal commercial board so that they can meet more frequently and exercise more control over the executive but this risks the contrary danger of the development of too close an identity between the governing body and the executive so that the executive is no longer monitored impartially

by the governing body. It raises the question too of whether any group of lay governors could be induced to give up the time required for such a task without some form of remuneration. A diagrammatic presentation of the tensions in university governance in the UK might look something like this (Figure 1)

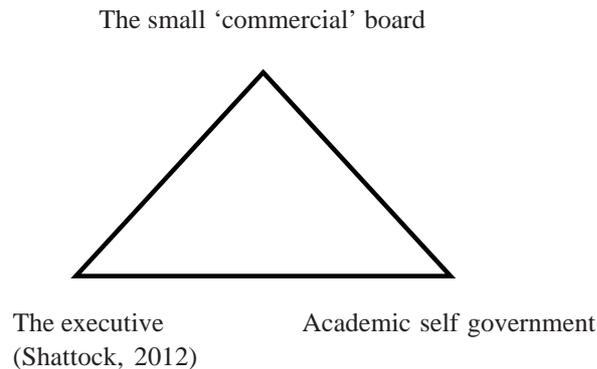


Figure 1: UK University Governance (Shattock, 2012)

International Trends in Modern University Governance

Looking across a broad range of country development, four current trends can be discerned in the governance of university level institutions. The first is a devolution of institutional governance and management powers from central government to the institutions themselves. This is most apparent in continental Europe where universities were traditionally administered from a central government department and university staff held appointments on civil service terms. (In Spain an alternative decision was taken in the 1980s to devolve central governance and management of the university system to provincial governments but university staff continued to be appointed on central government civil service terms. This decision managed to achieve the worst of both worlds: it continued to deprive the universities of the ability to take autonomous decisions and it vitiated any capacity within central Government to create a unified higher education policy). A good non-European example is offered by Japan which, prior to the Koizumi reforms, administered the public universities almost entirely centrally so that, for example, universities did not have individual sets of financial accounts (because they did not have powers of financial self

management) and the registrar was a civil servant seconded for a limited term from the Ministry and then transferred to another institution. The presidents of the universities were elected from within the academic staff for fixed terms. Under the reforms in 2004, however, financial management and individual staff contracts were devolved to the universities themselves and governing bodies and executive boards were created to run the institutions. The presidents, however, remained elected by the academic community. Critics argue that the reluctance of the Ministry to embrace these reforms wholeheartedly, which were dictated personally by the Prime Minister, has resulted in much less autonomy being conferred on institutions than was originally intended. By comparison the recent Sarkozy reforms in France seem to have produced radical change from a previously entirely centralised position.

The second trend, which is closely associated with the devolution of financial decision making to institutions is the introduction of lay governing bodies. In Europe there is no doubt that this has been heavily influenced by the Anglo-Saxon model although cultural and other factors have produced considerable variability in implementation. Thus, in Northern Europe, Scandinavia and the Netherlands, lay governing bodies have assumed roles very similar to those in the UK. In some other countries, France, Germany, Spain and Italy, for example, their introduction has been much less decisive and their powers much less clearly defined. In some cases their roles are only advisory because governments could not bring themselves to impose lay control over academic communities.

By comparison, in the US, where public higher education has under the Constitution always been devolved to state legislatures, governing boards have historically held unicameral powers over their institutions and, even in the most recent period of acute austerity (budget cuts of 20% were imposed by the state on the University of California), have maintained their independence in determining how economies were to be distributed within institutions and how such economies should be mitigated by increased tuition fees. A powerful, Washington based, Association of Governing Boards provides guidance on governance issues, training programmes for new governors and a lobbying arm to Congress. An important caveat, however, needs to be entered in respect to what might appear as the dominant role of the board of regents within US universities. While *de jure* the boards exercise unicameral powers,

that is they have formal control over governance, strategy and academic affairs, de facto a network of academic committees controls the academic agenda and research intensive universities will invariably have a recognised academic body (e.g. the Senate of the University of California), which may not necessarily appear in the statutes, which interfaces with the president and the regents. The term ‘shared governance’ is American in origin and denotes the partnership which, in US eyes, should ideally exist between the board and the academic community. A recent article by Aghion *et al.*, (2010) which has been very influential in European policy circles, has argued that competition for basic research funding which forces universities to make hard strategic choices has been more influential than governance structures in determining the effectiveness of the higher education system.

In the UK, as we have seen above, the position of governing bodies has been strengthened under pressure from Government, and particularly because of the need to ensure accountability. The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Committee) which reported in 1997 argued strongly that governing body membership should not exceed 24, the figure that was laid down in the 1992 legislation for the polytechnics on assuming university status (NCIHE 1997), and this led over time to a reduction of the size of pre-1992 universities from around 40 to smaller bodies, though not always down to 24. This was achieved in part by removing the representation of local authority members and by concentrating more on the need to ensure that governing bodies could draw on an appropriate spread of professional expertise. For the most part these universities only reduced academic representation from their senates pro rata retaining a one third academic membership in contrast to the post-1992 universities which are restricted to no more than two or three academic members.

A third trend is the increasing emphasis being placed on the leadership of institutions. This has always been apparent in US public universities although presidential power must be balanced against the political and other constraints referred to above. In the UK, one of the outcomes of the Dearing Report was the establishment of a government funded Leadership Foundation which has both funded research in leadership and runs a well regarded programme for senior university personnel from the alumni of which Vice-Chancellors tend to be appointed. (The Foundation also provides services to the CUC). One

by product of the existence of the Leadership Foundation has been a legitimisation of leadership at the Vice-Chancellor level and the creation of an accepted field from which new Vice-Chancellors might be expected to be drawn. Having said that leadership styles vary from the explicitly chief executive style in most post-1992 universities to a more nuanced style of academic and managerial leadership in the pre-1992. Similar variations can be found in other countries such as Australia, South Africa and New Zealand where, as in the UK, Vice-Chancellors are appointed not elected but are in general more unconstrained in their leadership style in the newer universities than in the older where a traditional model of academic participation in governance and management is more likely to survive.

An important constraint on Vice-Chancellorial power in the UK and in Australia is the establishment of a more explicit reporting function to the governing body and its chair; this is reinforced by the role of the chair in appraising the Vice-Chancellor's performance and, by the governing body remuneration committee's role in assessing and, as appropriate, rewarding success. (In Australia the chairs' exercise of this role is particularly draconian with some chairs exercising a quasi executive role requiring formal office accommodation within the institution). In spite of these provisions, however, the most serious governance breakdowns in the UK can be attributed to headstrong Vice-Chancellors who have taken a dominant role in relation to their chairs and governing bodies, as well as to their academic communities. In spite of their legal powers, governing bodies have not always proved to be an effective check on the executive and it is generally the academic community which has blown the whistle on Vice-Chancellorial or corporate misconduct. Counter intuitively, some of the most dominant heads of institutions can be found in university systems where heads are elected, where substantial budgetary decision-making has been devolved from central government but where governing bodies are relatively poorly developed. Unless a fixed term appointment is prescribed in the university's constitution the danger is that the electoral system can generate a permanent majority for a given candidate.

A fourth and final trend is the development of strong central management teams. In Europe these were first popularised in Clark's book *Creating the Entrepreneurial University* (1998) which argued that one of the key organisational features of an entrepreneurial (or

‘self reliant’) university was the existence of ‘a strengthened steering core’. Such teams can take the form of a company-type SMT where all the members are essentially appointed for their managerial skills by the chief executive and hold full time managerial posts, or can be a committee of senior academics (some of whom may be elected from within the academic community) and senior professional administrators to comprise what in some universities is known as the executive board. In either case the composition may include deans. (A significant test of how ‘academic’ the business of such a group might be is whether the deans of devolved faculty structures are or are not considered part of the steering core). An important governance issue is whether this body is answerable to the senate as well as to the governing body or only to the governing body; the former case would be usual where the membership is primarily academic, the latter when it is primarily managerial.

One of the features of developments in the UK and Australia is the increase in Pro-Vice-Chancellor positions. Again a distinction must be drawn between full time and permanent pro-Vice-Chancellor posts and posts where their holders are expected to continue part-time in teaching and research. Increasingly these posts are filled by public advertisement rather than through internal promotion. From two or three such posts in medium to large sized UK universities before 2000 the number of what Deem aptly calls ‘manager academics’ (Deem *et al.*, 2007) to distinguish them from professional managers has increased to six or seven. Increasingly too, at least in the UK pre-1992 universities, and as a consequence of expansion and increased management complexity, there seems to be a move towards appointing the registrar as chief operating officer thus explicitly devolving the running of the administration to a manager while locating strategy and particularly academic strategy in a strong academic team.

While forms of organisation and titles of posts may differ, the key trend is for institutions to be managed by a core group, recognised within the institution as some kind of executive team, which steers the university and is responsible for week by week policy making. Such a generic organisational form seems to be as common in continental European universities as in those that trace their governance and leadership models to the Anglo-Saxon tradition and is a reflection of the growing size of institutions, the increasingly complex regulatory

regimes imposed by governments and the need to be able to respond quickly to events outside or inside the university.

Academic Governance in the UK

There are, of course, dangers in the creation of strong central steering teams in that they can become isolated from academic opinion and seen by the academic community as a kind of junta not subject to academic process or open to what management text books call 'constructive confrontation'. A cohesive executive team may also dominate a governing body which by designation, is essentially non-executive in character and which only meets occasionally during the academic year. It is essential therefore that this central team or executive board is transparent in its decision-making, consults academic committees and is properly concerned not to ignore or supplant the role of the governing body which must be the final decision-making body in areas of main strategic or financial importance.

The tendency to concentrate decision-making within SMTs or executive boards has had the effect of undermining the role of senates. Unlike governing bodies where CUC and Government pressure has been to reduce their membership and make them more efficient, senates until recently have had no incentive to reform their procedures and membership. A consequence is that in many universities they have become too large to be effective and meeting once or twice a term they have no chance of keeping up with an expert group or executive board which meets weekly and which is driven by pressures which require speedy decisions. One result is that absentee levels have risen and in many universities senates find themselves without the expertise or background to comment effectively on major strategic issues or on policy issues that involve significant risk. If senates are to play a significant role in the development of strategy and mount a constructive critique of the activities of the SMTs or executive boards, it is incumbent on them to reform themselves by reducing membership numbers and adopting more business-like methods of decision-making.

One further reason for the partial sidelining of the senate is the propensity (one might also suggest mania) in UK universities for restructuring organisation at the faculty level. Such reorganisations have been driven by a wish to devolve resource allocation away from an

overloaded centre, to respond more effectively to competition in the national Research Assessment Exercise or, it must be said, simply because other universities are doing it. Two investigations by Hogan (2005 and 2012) emphasise the point. In the first, he shows that between 1993 and 2002 about 74% of 81 universities studied may have restructured their faculties, sometimes merging them, sometimes merging departments into schools and sometimes eliminating faculties altogether and leaving schools, which have been formed by merging departments, reporting directly to the centre. The majority of restructuring in this period took place in the post-1992 universities but in a second study based on the years 2002–2007, when the pace of restructuring seems to have accelerated, of the 65% of the 72 universities studied about half were from the pre-1992 universities.

The dominant trend amongst the larger universities appears to be towards a reorganisation of faculties into three or four colleges and up to 30 schools in order to achieve a smaller number of larger units. The designation of a college is accompanied by the appointment of a college head, a kind of super dean, who is often also designated a pro-Vice-Chancellor and a member of the SMT/executive board. The college head will normally have line manager responsibility for the school heads within the college and will have resource allocation powers from a devolved budget. College administration will normally be headed by a senior administrator responsible to the college head but will also have a 'dotted line' responsibility to the Registrar.

It is difficult to say in the light of the speed with which these reorganisations have taken place whether the system has moved permanently to a new model or whether this is just a stage on a continuous path of change. There are also signs in some universities that the fear of future austerity has led some universities to withdraw or greatly reduce the level of budgetary devolution to colleges which was a *raison d'être* for the original restructuring. There is also criticism that such reorganisations have increased administrative costs at the expense of academic costs and that the centre — department relationship provided a more economical model than centre — college — school. Two things are clear, however, the first is that institutions have put enormous energy into finding new patterns of organisation that they believe will provide a more effective governance and management structure for universities which have increased their size by about 30% in the last decade alone

Assuring Quality in Tertiary Educational Institutions

TON VROEIJENSTIJN

Abstract

Nowadays, Higher Education Institutions all over the world are confronted with the question of quality. Talking about quality, there are three important questions: Are we doing the right things? Are we doing the right things in the right way? And, finally, are we achieving what we want to achieve? Before we can find answers to these questions, it must be clear what we mean by “quality”. Are we speaking the same language? Therefore this paper starts with a discussion about quality and quality assurance.

But how do we know that our programme or our institution has quality? In this paper, the instrument of self-assessment both at programme level and institutional level is discussed.

Following the rules of self-assessment, one will discover strengths and weaknesses and then it will be possible to develop a clear quality improvement plan.

The self-assessment itself is not a one-time activity, but should be imbedded in a robust quality assurance system. The last part of this paper describes how to install a well functioning system of quality assurance in an institution.

Introduction

Whether we like it or not, quality of Higher Education is in the spotlight. Of course this is not the creation of recent decades. Academia has always paid attention to quality. Every professor or lecturer would like to provide their students with the best possible training. But, during the past few decades the situation has changed. Society, in general, has changed into an evaluative and controlling one. All sectors of society are talking about quality: industry, service centres, hospitals; and, of course, the education sector. There is more public discussion on the quality or perhaps, the assumed lack of quality education. And this of course, includes higher education. It is no longer the academic world which strives at quality. The extra-academic world also emphasises the need for commitment and attention to quality. Several reasons can be given. Below, we can discuss some of these.

Since the sixties and seventies of the last century, Higher Education has had to cope with unprecedentedly massive intakes of students. More and more students are enrolling in higher education, placing pressure on national budgets. Expenditure per student has become increasingly less and less. Governments find it necessary to assure society that this budgetary reduction does not endanger quality. The problem has been aggravated by economic recessions. On behalf of society and the taxpayers, governments want a better insight into costs and benefits of higher education. Higher education is, in the view of many governments, not efficiently run. It costs too much.

The nature of the relationship between higher education and society has changed during the last fifty years. Society has become more and more interested in the problems of higher education. The relationship between higher education and the labour market has also become a topic for discussion. In some disciplines, including the social sciences, psychology and history, there are more students than there are jobs available. The unemployment figures are higher in recent times than before. In other disciplines like engineering there is often a shortage of students: but society could use more graduates from such disciplines. Pressure from such a situation forces higher education institutions to steer the student flow in a direction that favours engineering and similar disciplines.

Quality is becoming more and more important for higher education institutions, because the question now is whether it is possible to deliver the expected quality within the given conditions. There is a 'quality gap': on the one hand, governments are striving to increase student enrolment; on the other hand, we see a continuous decrease in investment. Higher education institutions have to do more with less money. But at the same time quality is expected to be maintained or improved.

Student exchanges and interactional cooperation require insights into quality. There always has been an exchange of students between countries. However, exchange of students is increasing and becoming more or less structural. Therefore it is becoming more and more important to know about the level of quality in the faculty or university to which a student is moving. Questions such as the following have to be asked by prospective exchange students: "Is the course I propose to

take recognised by other universities in terms of quality? Is the content good enough?

In short, society requires accountability and quality assurance and is asking for value for money. At the same time, competition between higher education institutions is also growing. The world is witnessing a number of private institutions, challenging the older public universities and competing with them for new enrolments.

It thus becomes clear why it is so important to understand the concept of quality; the need for quality assurance and the need to learn about the instruments to assure our quality.

This paper is divided into the following five sections:

- Theoretical background of quality and quality assurance in Higher Education
 - The instrument of self-assessment
 - Self-assessment at the institutional level
 - Self-assessment at the programme level
 - The implementation of an Internal Quality Assurance system in an institution
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- **Theoretical background of quality and quality assurance in Higher Education**

We have already used the word “Quality” a number of times. It is a word often used without bothering to explaining what quality really means. However, anybody who thinks about quality and quality assurance is faced with the question of what it implies. In discussions of quality and quality assurance, it is important that all participants in the debate should agree on the meanings of the terms they use. In this section, some general ideas about quality and quality assurance will be explained.

What is quality?

Many discussions on quality start with a quote from the book “*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*” by Pirsig (1974):

Quality...you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is. But that's self-contradictory. But some things are better than others, that is, they have more

quality. But when you try to say what the quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes poof! There's nothing to talk about. But if you can't say what Quality is, how do we know what it is, or how do you know that it even exists? If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes, it doesn't exist at all. But for practical purposes it really does exist. What else are the grades based on? Why else would people pay fortunes for some things and throw others in the trash pile? Obviously some things are better than others... but what's the 'betterness'? So round and round you go, spinning mental wheels and nowhere finding any place to get traction. What the hell is Quality? What is it?

In spite of these reflections by Pirsig, many books and articles have been written to try to describe the nature of quality. But quality is like love. Everybody talks about it and everybody knows what he/she is talking about. Everybody knows and feels when there is love. Everybody recognises it, but when we try to define it we are left standing empty-handed. The same counts for the concept of quality. There is no general consensus on the concept of quality. The question is whether there will ever be a consensus about a final definition of Quality. This is because, just like beauty, quality is in the eyes of the beholder. However, if we would like to discuss, measure and judge quality, we must look for a workable description or definition of the concept; speak the same language and agree upon what it stands for.

The Players in the Quality Game

While the notion of quality in general is already a difficult one in itself, quality in higher education is even more complex, because it is not always clear what the "product" is and who the "client" is. Is the "graduate" the "product" that we offer society and the labour market? Or is it the graduate-to-be, the student, our "client" and the programme that we offer the "product"? A university has a multiple-product system and a multi-client system. Quality assurance in Higher Education is more complicated than quality assurance in industry, because there are many more players in the quality game of the format. Higher Education has many stakeholders and each of them with their own view on quality. We can distinguish the following stakeholders in Higher Education:

- Government or the state
- Employers

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- Professional bodies
 - Academic world
 - Students
 - Parents
 - Society at large

Based on the view on quality, all the players in the quality game have their own specific requirements or expectations. Each stakeholder appreciates different aspects of quality. One stakeholder would put emphasis on the “product”; and another on the process.

Different Views on Quality

In discussions on quality in higher education, an article by Green (1994) is often quoted in which he makes a distinction between:

- *Quality as excellence*

In this concept, the emphasis is on high-level standards: being the best; being excellent. We may say that one thing has quality but another has more quality. People talking about promoting quality frequently mean promoting *excellence*. However, quality is not the same as being excellent. Of course, everybody likes to do their best to deliver quality, but not every university can be a Yale or MIT. A country with only excellent universities does not exist. An institution may choose not to aim for excellence; because its objective is to educate a broad range of graduates and not only the brightest ones. The choice made by a typical regional university with a mission to develop its country is bound to be different from that of an institution like Berkley.

- *Quality as fitness for purpose*

With this concept of quality, the basic question is if the university is able to achieve its formulated goals. It concerns the quality of the processes. This quality concept is improvement oriented. But, will this quality approach assure achievement of the threshold quality because goals and aims are not the issue. An institution might have set its goals too low, through which it can easily achieve them. This means that we not only have to discuss the fitness *for* purpose, but also the fitness *of* purpose.

- *Quality as a threshold.*

According to this view, quality is seen as meeting threshold requirements. This quality concept often forms the basis for accreditation decisions. The problem is that it is not always clear what basic quality is. Setting threshold standards might also hinder innovations. Compliance with the threshold standards does not stimulate innovations.

- *Quality as added value*

This concept emphasises what happens to the student. Education is about doing something *to* the student. Quality means the value added to the student during education and training. It is the method of formulating learning outcomes and realising the outcomes in graduates. The basic quality question is: “What has he/she learnt?”

- *Quality as value for money*

This quality concept has its focus on efficiency. It measures outputs against inputs. It is often a concept supported by governments. The concept is connected with accountability.

- *Satisfaction of the client*

With the rise of the concept of the “student as a consumer”, quality is described as: “something has quality when it meets the expectations of the consumer; quality is the satisfaction of the client”. (Green 1994) It is the fitness-for-purpose that is seen by many quality assurance experts as a meaningful way of defining quality because it includes all other definitions, and embraces all types of institutions, and it is flexible. However, equating Quality (Q) with Fitness for Purpose (FFP) (i.e. Quality = FFP), shifts the problem only from definition of “Quality” to the definition of “Purpose”. What is “fitness for purpose”? In an article published in *Assessment and Evaluation in Education* (Harvey and Green, 1993), the authors, after a thorough analysis of the various concepts, conclude: “*First, quality means different things to different people. Second, quality is relative to processes or outcomes*”. The conclusion of Harvey and Green is in line with the view that quality is in the eyes of the beholder:

- When the *government* considers quality, it looks first of all at the pass/fail ratio, the dropouts and enrolment time. Quality in

the eyes of governments can be described as: “*As many students as possible finishing the programme within the scheduled time with an international level degree at reduced costs.*”

- Employers talking about quality will refer to the knowledge, skills and attitudes obtained during the studies: the “product” that is tested is the graduate.
- Professional bodies are interested in the achieved learning outcomes; and are interested to see that the graduate is ready to enter the profession.
- Quality of education has a different meaning in the eyes of students and their parents. For them, quality is primarily connected with the contribution to their individual development and preparation for a position in society. Education must link up with the personal interests of the student. But the educational process also has to be organised in such a way that students can finish their studies in the given time.
- An academic institution will especially look at quality as “*A good academic training based on good knowledge transfer and a good learning environment and a good relationship between teaching and research.*”

Of course, the different stakeholders are also interested in the other aspects of quality, but with less attention, e.g. an employer is not so much interested in the process, as in the product.

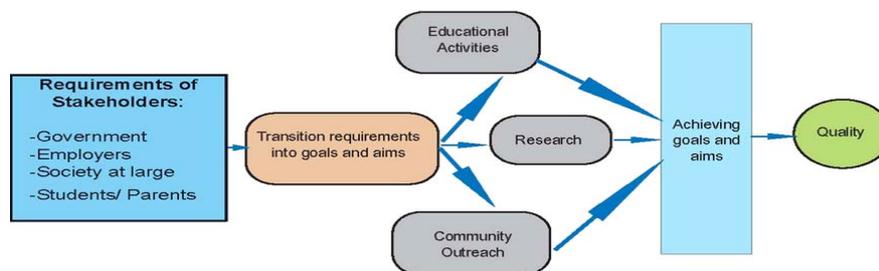
In addition to there being different views, different expectations and different requirements by stakeholders, one also has to look at quality as a multi-dimensional phenomenon: quality of input, quality of process and quality of output. These dimensions have to be taken into account when discussing quality and judging it.

Towards a Workable Definition of Quality

How can we formulate a workable definition of quality, reflecting its different aspects? Quality is not a static phenomenon. Views of quality

are changing continually, because requirements and expectations of stakeholders are changing. It is the universities, which finally determine their own standards for quality, but they have to take into account the requirements and expectations of the government, the accrediting bodies, professional bodies, the labour market, and students' expectations. Therefore it is important that each of the stakeholders makes very clear what the requirements and expectations are. The university or faculty, as the ultimate supplier of service, must try to reconcile all their different preferences and requirements. Sometimes the different expectations converge; but they can also end up in conflict. As far as possible, the requirements of all stakeholders should be translated into the mission and goals of an institution and into the objectives of a faculty and of the educational programme; as well as research programmes. The challenge is to achieve the goals, objectives and learning outcomes. If these are achieved, then we can say that the institution, the faculty or department is of quality (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Stakeholders and Quality in Higher Education



For the sake of a common understanding, the following description or definition can be formulated as a workable notion of quality:

Quality is:

- *achieving our goals and aims*
- *in an efficient and effective way*
- *assuming that the goals and aims reflect the requirements/ expectations of all stakeholders in an adequate way*

Some Caveats

However, in talking about quality we have to take into account the following remarks:

Quality is not always the same as efficiency!

The discussion of quality assessment is often connected with the concept of “efficiency” (saving money, making more rational use of public resources). In assessing quality, an important question will be: “Do we achieve quality at acceptable costs?” An efficiency-oriented approach as such is a good starting point, but the problem is that efficiency is not always defined as being “at acceptable costs”, but often as “at minimal costs”, and this may threaten quality. It may be very efficient to organise lectures for a thousand students, but this may not be effective. It may be considered efficient to have a very structured degree programme with student assessments every four weeks, forcing students to work and to keep up with the programme. However, this method does not necessarily lead to the creation of the “right”, independent, and critically minded graduate. It may be considered efficient to use only multiple-choice questions for student assessment, but this may not necessarily enhance verbal and written communication skills.

Quality is context bound

When striving for quality, another relevant question is: “Do we offer the stakeholders what we promise to offer?” This means that a starting point for judging our quality will be our promises (i.e. goals) and that the verdict “quality or no quality” will be based on these promises. Therefore, we have to relate our quality to context. McDonald’s, for example, will strive for quality, and when we eat a fast-food meal, we will probably get quality. However, this is not the same set of quality as we will get when we have dinner in a restaurant with one or two stars in the Guide Rouge of the best restaurants. So, we cannot assess the quality of McDonald’s with the same criteria and against the same standards as those used in assessing a star restaurant. This also means that we cannot justifiably assess a regional university, like one in South America with the same criteria that we apply in assuring more sophisticated institutions like MIT, Berkley or the ETH Zurich. If a university claims excellence, it may differ from those of a university

whose aspiration is to contribute to the development of the country and the region. We cannot assess the quality of the University of the Amasonas against the standards applied to Berkley. The only important feature is: “Will we get what we may expect?” “Will the university do what it promises to do?”

However, although quality is context bound, all universities would like to play a role on the international stage. This means that an institution has to meet at least the basic standards that are applied to higher education institutions. There is at least a bottom line for the threshold quality, although it is not clear what that bottom line is. This is something that the international academic community has to decide.

The Use of Performance Indicators and Quantitative Data

As already stated, in a simplification of quality assessment we may say: “*define quality and look for a set of performance indicators to measure the quality.*” We are living in an evaluative society which very much likes to measure everything: For example the quality of performance of public health system may be judged by the number of patients treated and the length of the waiting list for surgery. The quality of performance of a police officer may depend on the number of fines and the number of solved cases; and, of course, that of higher education may be judged by the number of graduates, pass rates, average time spent in the university etc. Managers and politicians, in particular, are fond of such quantitative performance indicators (PI). They look for more and more “hard”, statistical data, because this is considered to be more objective. But the question is whether there is a real link between the so-called performance indicators and quality. Do performance indicators tell us anything about quality? Opinion is divided on this. It is evident that when people try to derive quality directly from quantitative data, differences of interpretation arise. Consider, for example, the measurement of the quality of research. Is the total number of publications a true measure of quality? The analysis of information and experience gained elsewhere indicates that this is not always the case. Such performance indicators, like the number of articles, reveal the danger of using performance indicators. Once set, the indicator will be corrupted as soon as possible. Instead of publishing one good article, we see now that the article is split into several articles, because each counts

for the record. Another example from the field of education: the interpretation of success rates. One faculty has a pass rate of 80%, another one has a rate of 60%. But does the figure tell us anything about the performance of the faculty? Does it tell us anything about the quality of education? Is the performance of university Y with a pass rate of 80% superior to the achievement of university X with a rate of 60%? Or has university Y lowered its level? Or is university X more selective in the first year?

A considerable amount of literature exists on performance indicators (PIs). A striking factor in the discussion on these is that there are two opposing parties. It is mostly governments who lay a strong emphasis on the importance of using performance indicators: they are optimistic about the possibility of determining the right indicators. Higher education institutions, on the other hand, are generally very reserved and sceptical about them. Many governments are trying to formulate performance indicators that would be useful in quality assessment, but so far without any success. The following reasons can be put forward:

- *The term “performance indicator” is very confusing*, despite many attempts to explain its meaning and functions. The problem is that a performance indicator does not always relate directly to the performance of an institution, but should rather be considered as statistical data. For example, one of the PIs used in the student population is the male-female ratio. However, this indicator says nothing about the quality of HE institution. It is more often a government indicator that shows how far the objective of “emancipation” has been achieved.
- *People attach different functions to performance indicators*. Without using the term ‘PI’, it will be clear that the use of certain data (enrolment figures, student numbers, number of graduates, unemployment figures) is important. These data play an important role in monitoring and evaluation. Governments, on the other hand, often look to performance indicators as instruments for governing financial allocation. In fact, we can see attempts to establish a system of performance-related funding in several countries.

- *Transforming indicators into standards.* Looking at the various functions attributed to performance indicators, it is not unreasonable to be wary that indicators could be transformed into criteria. The success rates may be an indicator of achieving the goal of “enabling as many students as possible to graduate”. A pass rate of 70% would appear to be more successful than a pass rate of 60%. But the figure says nothing about the quality of teaching. However, there may be a tendency to specify that a success rate of at least 70% should be achieved.

The conclusion should be that all attempts and all discussions so far have failed to produce a generally accepted set of performance indicators. Putting emphasis on the quantitative performance indicators, we run the risk to enforce reality by oversimplifying quality. Quality in higher education is more than a collection of figures and data. Although qualitative aspects are often more difficult to assess, we should not flee into quantitative aspects with fake objectivity. We have to learn to live with the idea that the judgement of quality in higher education is not an objective activity, but rather an activity with a human factor.

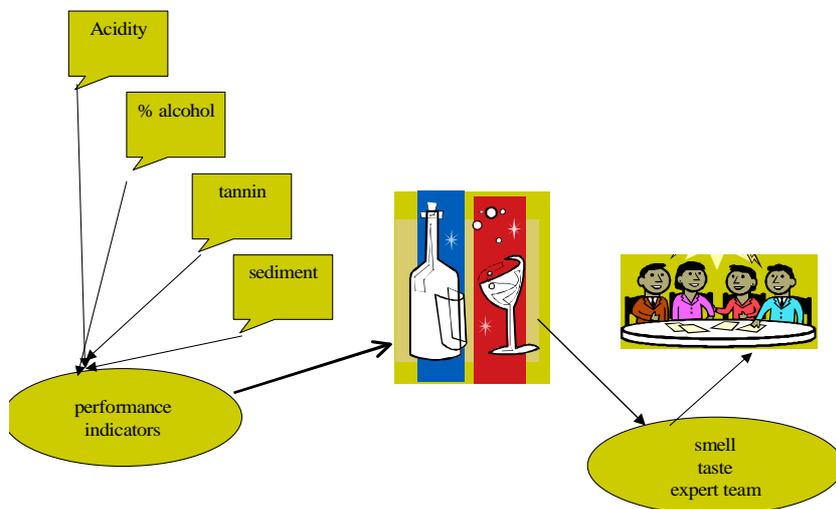
Is there a role for quantitative aspects (PIs) in quality assessment?

What is the value of performance indicators as opposed to peer review or in combination with peer review? Looking at the sets of performance indicators that are often used, we see that quantitative indicators are often basic data, but are immediately decorated with the notion of a PI: They cover numbers of students, numbers of staff, dropout rates, student-staff ratios, etc. When these data are used properly, the “performance indicators” raise questions but never give answers. The so-called qualitative performance indicators may be seen as elements that have an influence on quality aspects to be taken into account when looking at quality. The question is whether we can (or will) rely more on performance indicators than on the subjective judgements of peers. The role of performance indicators in quality assessment is a limited one, as can be illustrated by the following example (Figure 2).

I have a bottle of wine and want to assess its quality. Which aspects are important? First, I have to decide on which aspects I will assess the wine: acidity, tannin, alcohol percentage, and sediment. Of course, I can measure the wine on these aspects,

but still I do not know whether the wine is good or not. Someone has to tell which figure is good and which is not. But there are other aspects more important for the assessment: taste and smell. These aspects are not quantifiable. We need a panel that can judge the taste and smell as fine or not. (Vroeijenstijn, 1995; see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Relationship between performance indicators and expert assessment



Working with performance indicators seems so attractive because it looks like they might provide a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses. But these analyses must be handled very carefully and complemented with other information. PIs play a role in quality assessment, but only a minor one. Performance indicators as the set of quantitative indicators play a role in supporting the opinion of experts. But these performance indicators can never have the last say or take the place of expert and peer review. The opinion of the experts must be based on facts and figures, but can never be replaced by performance indicators. Performance indicators should be used not as ends in themselves to draw definitive conclusions, but to indicate areas of concern and provide a catalyst for further investigation. It will be clear that performance indicators can never speak for themselves, but must be interpreted by experts. Where they seem to be objective, they are not really performance indicators, but only statistical data or management

information. As in the case for the concept for “quality”, it is a waste of time searching for the philosopher’s stone: a set of performance indicators to measure quality.

Criteria and Standards

We have accepted a workable definition of quality. But there is still another question: how do we assess quality? In many cases, the outside formulated standards are more criteria than standards. A *criterion* can be seen as a specific aspect, decisive for the quality. For example, the criterion can be: “the university has a clearly formulated its mission and vision”. A *standard* gives the level that a criterion must meet. Sometimes, a government or an accrediting body can give a clear quantitative figure, e.g. the number of square meters per student must be X. In most cases, the level of the criterion will be described as *must be adequate*. However, adequate is not formulated. In the case of self-assessment by a university, the university has to find out what adequate means. This can be done by a university carrying out a comparison between itself and others that are in the same situation (e.g. benchmarking). In the case of accreditation or external quality assessment, it is left to the group of experts to decide if something is adequate or not. In fact those experts will also use the instrument of benchmarking.

The quest for quality is not an easy one, especially since there is no absolute quality or objective quality. Nevertheless, we expect higher education to assure its quality, to demonstrate its quality and to have its quality assessed by outsiders. And this is happening all over the world. Everyone is looking at more or less the same aspects for assessing quality. In the United States, Europe, South America, Africa, Asia or Australia, the quality experts and universities are looking at more or less the same aspects, also called criteria and standards. Sometimes the wording of the standards and criteria are different, but in most cases they cover the same aspects.

THE INSTRUMENT OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

If we agree upon a concept of quality and the criteria and standards to

measure it, we can ask ourselves: what is the best way to discover our quality?

The Self-assessment

An important tool in the field of quality assurance is a critical self-assessment, also called self-evaluation or SWOT-analysis. In this text the words are used interchangeably. A self-assessment can be done:

- at the level the institution as a whole
- for the main functions of a university i.e. teaching and learning, Research and Development and Community outreach.
- for the internal quality assurance system

A critical self-assessment is important because we are sometimes too eager to accept almost everything as good enough: *“I have been teaching this way for years and my course has never caused problems. My students have always been content and employers have never complained about the graduates.”* This may be true, in general. In an educational organisation, which is a professional organisation, the players should always aim to produce quality. Discussing quality and introducing a quality assurance system does not mean that the existing quality is not good enough. The demand for self-evaluation is not inspired by a lack of quality. What it means is that quality has to be examined in a structured manner, within a well-defined framework with the aim to improve and enhance it.

The notion of self-assessment was introduced in higher education together with external assessment, accreditation or quality audits. In many cases, self-assessment serves as a preparation for a site visit by external experts in the framework of accreditation or licensing. A self-assessment report (SAR) provides the external experts with basic information. However, self-assessment has specific value for the university itself. It is an instrument for discovering its quality. Trying to find an answer to the question *Are we offering quality*, the following key questions are important:

- Why do we do what we do? Do we indeed do the right things?
- Do we do the right things in the right way?

- Do we have a thorough enough master of the process to be able to realise what our goal?
- Do we indeed achieve what we want to achieve?

An effective self-assessment is time-consuming. It requires effort by both staff and students. Often, it will require an investment of time that has to be taken away from other activities. However, the returns and the profits of a good self-assessment are high. The self-assessment will provide information not known to everyone. The information often exists already, but only a small group of people knows it. Often, the facts will have a different dimension when they are connected to one another.

Self-assessment involves staff and students in the discussion on the quality of education. The discussion will be raised beyond the level of the individual who is active in the curriculum committee or administration; and the views on quality of individual staff members and students will be examined together in order to establish a policy for the institution. It also indicates the criteria and consideration on which correct choices are to be made. The information gathered is brought to bear on earlier formulated principles. A decision is reached as to whether a policy should remain unchanged or a new choice should be made.

Principles of Effective Self-assessment

In organising an effective self-assessment, one has to take into account some basic principles:

- In principle, a self-assessment should never be felt as a threat. It should not be used to assess an individual; as a punishment or as a means of reporting blame.
- A self-assessment aims at improvement and enhancement of quality.
- It is necessary to create broad support for the self-assessment and to sensitise staff and students about it. The whole organisation has to prepare itself for it.
- Looking at quality is more than testing performance. It also means

organisational development and the shaping of the institution. Everybody has to be responsible and involved for real self-assessment.

- The management of the institution must fully support the exercise. Relevant information is needed for an effective policy and good management. The self-assessment serves to acquire structural insights into performance of the university;
- A critical self-evaluation demands good organisation. Primarily someone has to coordinate the self-assessment process. It would be useful to charge someone specifically with the self-evaluation project. The coordinator has to meet some requirements: In order to obtain the required information, it is important that the coordinator has good entry rapport at all levels of the institution. Therefore, it is very important that the coordinator has good contacts within the whole university: the central management as well as the faculties and the staff members. The coordinator must have the authority to make appointments.
- It is desirable to constitute a substantive team of staff in charge of the self-assessment process.
- It is important that the team is structured in such a way as to ensure that all sections are involved. The working group is in charge of the self-assessment, gathering data, analysing material and drawing conclusions.
- It is assumed that self-assessment is an analysis supported by the whole faculty and departments. Therefore, it is important that everyone should be at least acquainted with the contents of the self-assessment report and should recognise it as a document from his or her own institution. The working group may organise a workshop or seminar to discuss the draft SAR.

The Organisation of the Self-assessment

The university determines how self-assessment is carried out. However, it is useful to employ experiences gained elsewhere. On the basis of experience with self-assessment in other universities some suggestions may be made that can facilitate the process (The organisation of the process is given in Table 1):

- Self-assessment should never be the work of one single person.
- A group responsible for the task should be appointed
- This group should consist of some three to five members, chaired by a coordinator, and should include students appointed by faculty.
- A clear timetable should be set up. The total period for the exercise should be between five and eight months.
- The topics that have to be considered in the self-evaluation (see Sections 3 and 4) should be distributed among the committee members and each member made responsible for collecting information, and for analysing and evaluating the data from the self-assessment.
- The draft results should be discussed on the largest scale possible. It is not necessary to have a consensus on the report; it is, however, necessary for as many members as possible to be aware of its contents.

TABLE 1

Time Schedule for the Planning of a Self-assessment

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Activity</i> |
|--|---|
| 8 months before a planned external assessment | Appoint the leader of the assessment process Compose the assessment team, including students |
| The following 6 months | dividing up the subjects to be dealt with each person responsible for collecting information and data collects that information Writing drafts of the subjects |
| 4 months after the start | Discussion of the drafts in the group Second draft |
| About 5 months after the start | Discussion of the 2 nd draft with all faculty staff and students during an open hearing |
| 6 months after the start | Edit the comments of the hearing for the final draft |
| 8 months after the start | External or inter-collegial assessment |

The self-assessment aims at finding evidence that the university/faculty/department is meeting the criteria agreed upon. Therefore, one has to examine the criteria and ensure that they have been met:

- give a description of the state-of-the-art of self-assessment
- make a critical analysis of the state-of-the-art
- describe the strengths and weaknesses
- look for evidence that are being met
- provide solutions to weaknesses if there are any

After finishing the self-assessment, one writes down the outcomes of the assessment in a Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The SAR is an important document. On the one hand it contains the basic information for an external expert team that will come for an institutional audit or institutional accreditation. On the other, it is the basic document for the university for the formulation of an action plan or quality plan for the coming years.

The content of the SAR follows the lines of the aspect given in the analysis model. For each aspects to be treated one should:

- Describe clearly the state-of-the art. An outsider must understand the situation.
- Analyse the situation. What is your opinion about it? Are you satisfied or not? If not, why not?
- Do you meet the formulated criteria? What evidence can you provide for this?
- What are the weaknesses of this aspect? What are its strengths?

Talking about the self-assessment and the self-assessment report, one should keep in mind that the self-assessment and the SAR are not a questionnaire that has to be completed. This means that the questions under the heading “Looking for evidence” should not be answered by “Yes” “no” or “I do not know”. The leading questions do not need to be treated separately.

Summary

A self-assessment device is a powerful instrument to discover our

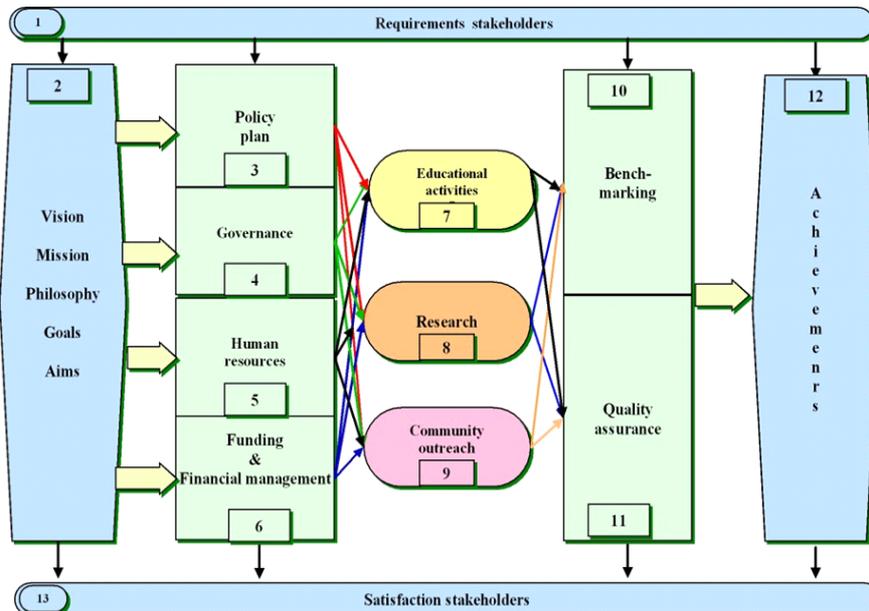
quality. It is a time consuming activity which yields a high profit. It can be done at different levels. In Section 3 the self-assessment at institutional level will be discussed. Section 4 will discuss the self-assessment at the programme level.

An X-ray of a University: Self-assessment at Institutional Level

Introduction

University managers, should be interested in the quality of the institution as a whole. In most cases the university is confronted with the question about the quality of the institution when it applies for accreditation. Looking at the given model for analysing the quality of an institution (see Figure 3), one will recognise the criteria and standards set by the Accrediting bodies from Ghana and Nigeria. When Accrediting bodies are asking for information about the university, it will be more effective to base the information on a self-assessment of the institution. For a critical self-assessment, this analysis model will be a useful instrument. In the next section the elements of the model will be discussed.

Figure 3: Model for quality analysis of a university



Criteria and Standards

When we try to evaluate the quality of an institution, we have to use criteria and standards. As already stated, the university itself is responsible for the standards it sets. However, while setting standards and defining the criteria are important for ensuring quality, we have to look at the requirements already set outside the university, for example, by an accrediting body or a professional body. Just like the concept quality, there are also no generally accepted and objective criteria or standards (see also p.54). Just like quality, criteria and standard are context bound and dependent on the requirements set by outsiders.

To provide universities with a workable instrument for self-assessment, for each of the elements/cells (1 to 13) of the model a criterion is given that the university should meet. The given criteria are based on:

- The common denominators of the criteria as formulated by the accrediting bodies in Ghana and Nigeria
- The common denominator of the criteria as formulated by different accrediting bodies in East Africa (the Commission for Higher Education of Kenya; the Tanzanian Commission for Universities; the National Council for Higher Education of Uganda)
- The criteria as formulated by other external quality assessment agencies, e.g. European, American, Asian, Australian and South African accrediting bodies, among others

After studying many sets of standards and criteria, a common denominator has been formulated. To verify compliance of its own criteria, a university can use the formulated criteria as benchmark. But it has also to take into account the criteria set by the Ghana or Nigerian accrediting body.

In general, one may say that the criteria formulated in this module can be seen as the minimum criteria.

If needed, **an explanation** and interpretation of the criteria are given.

The basic rules to apply in the self-assessments are:

- *All aspects (segments of the model) need to be discussed. It is not possible to make a selection.*
- *For each aspect the following steps are to be taken:*
 - *description*
 - *analysis*
 - *formulation of strengths and weaknesses*
 - *evidence for meeting the criteria*
 - *action plan for improvement*
- *When it is the first time, do not worry too much about white spots. Include them in the action plan*

The Quality Aspects to be Assessed

Requirements of stakeholders

The university has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of all stakeholders.

Explanation

As pointed out earlier, Higher Education has many stakeholders and each stakeholder has its own ideas about quality: the government or the state, the employers, the academic world, students and parents and society at large. Each stakeholder will emphasise different aspects of quality. Because each stakeholder has its own ideas and expectations, we may say that *Quality is a matter of negotiating between the university and its stakeholders*. Each stakeholder needs to formulate, as clearly as possible, his/her requirements. The university as the ultimate supplier must try to reconcile all these different expectations and requirements. As far as possible, the requirements of all stakeholders should be translated into the expected goals and objectives of the institution. This regards the three core activities: teaching/learning, research and community outreach.

Looking for Evidence

For this, the following questions will be relevant.

- *Does the university have a clear idea about the requirements set by the government?*

-
- *Does the university know clearly the requirements of academia?*
 - *Does the university know the needs and requirements of the labour market?*
 - *Does the university analyse the needs and requirements of students/parents?*
 - *Does the university analyse the needs and requirements of society?*
 - *How does the university balance the requirements of the different stakeholders?*

Mission, Vision, Aims and Objectives

- *The university has a clearly formulated mission statement.*
- *The mission statement is publicly known.*
- *The mission statement is in line with the academic and social context.*
- *The university has a clear vision of its role in society.*

Explanation

Quality assessment and the self-analysis have to start by looking at the formulated mission and vision, the formulated goals and aims, and the formulated expected outcomes (i.e. the standards set by the institution itself or an outside body, like an accreditation agency).

Looking for Evidence

In looking for relevant evidence answers on the following questions are useful.

- *What is the university's vision on the academic training it provides, research activities and its role in society?*
- *What are the views of staff and students to the vision and mission?*
- *Has the vision been translated into a clearly formulated mission statement?*
- *Has the mission statement been translated into achievable and operationalised aims and objectives?*

- *What is the specific profile of this university compared with other universities in the country in question? In the region?*

The Policy Plan

The university has a clear policy plan and strategic plan formulated in line with its mission statement.

Explanation

The mission and vision must be translated in a clear policy and strategic plan. The mission statement must be operationalised in achievable policy goals

Looking for Evidence

The following questions are relevant

- *Does the university have a clear policy in line with its mission and vision?*
- *Has the policy been adequately translated into a strategic plan?*
- *Who was involved in formulating the policy and strategic plan?*
- *Are policy and strategic plan well known to all academic staff and students? Is there general agreement on this?*
- *Does the strategic plan reflect:*
 - *The types of programmes being offered?*
 - *The choice of research fields?*
 - *The priorities set?*
 - *The main activities of the university?*

Governance

- *The governance structure of the university is clear and adequate*
- *The university has a clear management structure in which the decision-making process, competencies and responsibilities have been clearly determined.*

Looking for Evidence

The following questions may be found to be relevant

- *What kind of management structure does the university have: Is it centralised and top down or decentralised and bottom up?*
- *Are the role and functions of the central management, faculty management and the staff clearly described?*
- *Does the academic staff participate in the decision-making process of teaching and research?*
- *Do students participate in the decision-making process in relation to their education?*
- *Has the management structure of the university been endorsed by the academic community?*
- *Is the internal organisation structure fit for its purpose?*
- *What management committees are in place? Are they working adequately?*

Human Resources (HR)

- *The university takes care of high-quality faculty staff and support staff by clearly defining their responsibility, and by evaluating their performance on a regular basis by means of an adequate staff appraisal system*
- *The university provides for:*
 - *a system of staff development to enhance the knowledge and skills of faculty and supporting staff in conducting activities that have a direct influence on the quality of teaching and learning. This should include the formulation of a concrete personnel development plan;*
 - *evaluation of the effectiveness of the provided training*
 - *compilation of records of education, experience, training, and other essential qualifications required of lecturers and supporting staff.*
- *The university establishes an activity plan and evaluates activities to encourage students, faculty members and other personnel to be conscientious in their thoughts and speech.*

The university enhances the professional ethics of its students, faculty members and other personnel.

Looking for Evidence

The following questions are relevant.

- *How does the university select and appoint its academic staff?*
- *Is an adequate staff appraisal system in place for use in evaluating performance and promotion?*
- *How is staff performance evaluated?*
- *What opportunities are given for staff and Human Resource development and training?*
- *How does the university evaluate the efficiency of its staff and Human Resource development activities?*
- *How does the university stimulate the ethics of its students, academics and other staff?*

Funding and Financial Management

- *The university has adequate funding to achieve its goals and aims*
- *The university has an adequate financial management system*

Looking for Evidence

The following questions are relevant.

- *How is the university funded? (What percentage of the budget are public funding, student contributions, external funding?)*
- *Are the sources of financial and the conditions attached to funding stated transparently? Do they restrict the university's decision-making autonomy in teaching and research?*
- *Are the goals and aims realistic and achievable within the limits of funding?*

Educational Activities

Training academics is one of the core activities of a university. To

determine the quality of the teaching/learning process and the quality of curricula, faculties and departments have to evaluate their programmes individually. The outcomes must be used to get a general overview of the quality of the educational provisions. (For self-analysis at programme level see Section 4).

The outcomes of the self-assessment at programme level will be used for assessing the average quality of the core activity of teaching and learning. At the institutional level an analysis can be made from the following areas:

- The programmes
- Student assessment
- Quality of the staff
- Students admission
- Facilities and infrastructure

The Programmes

The programmes on offer in the university:

- *meet the expectations of stakeholders*
- *have clearly formulated expected learning outcomes*
- *are coherent*
- *are up-to-date*

Explanation

Within one or more faculties, the university must offer a broad range and variety of academic programmes. The programmes should be in line with the expectations of the stakeholders and should be in line with the mission and vision of the university. The objectives and the expected learning outcomes must make this clear.

Looking for Evidence

The following points should be taken into consideration.

- *The university has a clear educational policy, clearly*

expressing the principles underlying the choice of the programmes and their profiles.

- *The policy clearly expresses rules for curriculum design and revision. It should involve all stakeholders.*
- *The academic programmes are in line with the mission statement of the university and principles of employability. They should also be appropriate to the award of degrees.*
- *The academic degrees should be internationally competitive.*

Student Assessment

- *The university has well functioning student assessment systems for all programmes on offer and clear rules to ensure quality of assessment.*
- *The university has a clear policy to ensure that examinations are objective, equivalent and trustworthy.*
- *The university ensures consistency in the standard of examinations; and the programmes at all times.*
- *The university has a policy to promote a variety of assessment methods.*
- *The university ensures that examination committees function adequately and performs their statutory tasks.*

Explanation

Student assessment is as important an element in higher education as teaching. The outcomes of the assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and takes into account the extensive knowledge that exists on testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the efficiency of teaching and learner support. It is the responsibility of the faculty and departments to ensure quality of student assessments. The central management must have a good policy and good control mechanism to check decentralised activities.

Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;

- be fit for purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative;
- have clear and published grading criteria;
- take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absenteeism, illnesses and other mitigating circumstances beyond the control of students.
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;
- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures;
- inform students clearly about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

Looking for Evidence

The following points and questions are relevant:

- *To what extent do the assessments and examinations cover the objectives of the courses and of the programme as a whole?*
 - *Do the assessments have clear and published grading/marking criteria? Are the pass/fail criteria clear?*
 - *Are a variety of assessment methods used? What are they?*
 - *Are the assessment/examination regulations clear?*
 - *Are the procedures clear? Are they well sufficiently known and understood?*
 - *Are there any safeguards in place to ensure objectivity?*
 - *Are students satisfied with the procedures?*
 - *Do clear rules exist for re-assessments and are students satisfied with these?*
- A special form of student assessment is the final project (essay, thesis or assignment). This requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and their ability to manipulate the knowledge in a new situation.
- *Do clear regulations exist for the final project/final essay?*

- *Are the criteria for the final project clear?*
- *Is the level of the final project/final essay satisfactory?*

Quality of Staff

- *The staff are competent and qualified*
- *Recruitment and promotion of academic staff are based on merit system, which includes teaching, research and services*
- *Duties allocated are appropriate to qualifications, experience and aptitude.*
- *Time management and incentive system are directed to support quality of teaching and learning.*
- *There are provisions for review, consultation and redeployment.*
- *Termination, retirement and social benefits are planned and well implemented.*
- *There is a well-planned staff appraisal system based on fair and objective measures in the spirit of enhancement which are carried out regularly*

Explanation

The quality of the academic staff is the key to the quality of a university. There will be no quality without qualified and competent staff. Looking at criteria, we have to look at:

- The size of the staff and their qualifications
- The staff and other human resource management personnel.

Looking for Evidence

Answers to the following questions would be useful:

- *Is the academic staff competent and qualified for their job?*
- *Are there any problems with the human resources? For example age requirement, difficulty in filling vacancies. What difficulties are there in attracting qualified staff?*
- *What policy is pursued with regard to the employment of staff, both in teaching and research?*

-
- *How are teachers prepared for the teaching task?*
 - *What about teaching load? The staff/student ratio? The staff/graduate ratio?*
 - *Is staff recruitment based on experience in teaching and research?*
 - *Is there a system of staff appraisal?*
 - *What role do teaching qualifications and teaching activities play in the career of the staff members?*
 - *What does the university think of its Human Resource policy so far?*
 - *What future developments are there?*

Students' Admission

- *The university has clearly formulated admission criteria for undergraduate and graduate programmes*
- *If there is selection, the procedure and criteria are clear, adequate and transparent*

Explanation

It is important to attract the right students and to select the students that can finish the academic training.

Looking for Evidence

The following questions are relevant

- *How do you analyse the development of the student intake? Are there causes for worry? What are the prospects for the future?*
- *What are the admission procedures? Are students selected? If so, how are they selected? What are the requirements?*
- *What policy is pursued with regard to the intake of students? Does it aim to increase the intake or to stabilise it? Why?*
- *What measures are taken to effect the quality and size of the intake? What effect do these measures have?*

Facilities and infrastructure

- *The physical resources for the educational activities including equipment, materials and information technology are sufficient*
- *Equipment is up-to-date, readily available and effectively deployed*
- *University computer centres provide continuously a highly accessible computer and network infrastructure that enables the campus community to fully exploit information technology for teaching, research and development, services and administration.*

Explanation

Facilities and resources should be in line with the formulated goals and aims and with the designed programme. Facilities are also connected to the teaching and learning strategy. For example, if the philosophy is to teach in small working groups, small rooms must be available. Computer-aided instruction can only be realised with enough computers for the students. The main learning resources consist of books, brochures, magazines, journals, posters, information sheets, internet and intranet, CD-ROMs, maps, aerial photographs, satellite imagery and others.

Looking for Evidence

The following should be considered:

Teaching rooms

- *Are there enough lecture halls, seminar rooms, laboratories, reading rooms, and computer rooms available? Do these meet the relevant requirements?*
- *Is the library sufficiently equipped for education at this level?*
- *Is the library within easy reach in terms of location and operating hours?*
- *Are laboratory facilities and support staff sufficient?*
- *Do the laboratories meet the relevant requirements?*

Didactic aids and tools

- *Are there sufficient audio-visual aids available?*
- *Are there enough computers? Appropriate and enough computer programmes (computer-aided education, maths programmes, design programmes, etc.)?*
- *To what extent do the facilities/infrastructure promote or obstruct delivery of the programme?*
- *Is the total budget for aids and tools sufficient?*

Research

The second core activity of a university is research. To learn more about the quality of research, we have to look at two levels; namely, at institutional level and research programme/research unit level. At institutional level we have to analyse:

- The university's research policy
- The university's intellectual property rights policy
- The code of conduct for research
- The code of ethics for research

Regarding research programmes and units, one is interested in the quality of the research and its impact on society. This means that some information can be collected at the institutional level. Other information can only be collected at the level of the research unit itself.

University research policy

The university has a clear research policy, setting the direction of research and deciding about research profile and research activities

Explanation

The University Research Policy sets the direction of research within the university. It specifies objectives of research within the university, research strategies, the code of conduct for research, and the responsibility of the Research Management Unit. In general, the University Research Policy covers the following aspects:

- A mission statement concerning research
- The governance of research
- The relation between academic policies, academic freedom and research
- Objectivity in research policy
- Research approval process
- Research ethics and integrity in research
- How to cope with sponsored projects and sponsored research services; conflicts of interest, conflict of commitment, and research misconduct
- Policy on consultancy
- Policy on undergraduate and graduate research
- Research supervision and research risk compliance
- Policy on environmental health and safety
- Research Development Fund Policy
- Policy on the protection of human subjects in research
- Policy on the use of animals in research
- Research quality and research assessment

Looking for Evidence

The following step is relevant:

Check for yourself how the university's research policy covers the above-mentioned topics. Are you satisfied with the situation as it is?

The University Intellectual Property Rights Policy

The university has a clear policy, for the protection of creative efforts and especially for the protection of economic investment in creative efforts (Intellectual Property Right Policy).

Explanation

Intellectual property is a broad term for the various rights which the law provides to protect creative effort, and especially to protect economic investment in creative effort. It includes copyrights, patents, designs, trademarks, circuit layouts, and confidential information. The

University Intellectual Property Rights Policy has the following objectives:

- To establish a framework for the encouragement of research, innovation, invention, creative work and technology transfer.
- To set out policies in relation to Intellectual Property Rights arising from research, innovation, invention and creative output, and the management, commercialisation and exploitation of such rights.

Research conducted by, or on behalf of, or supported by, the university must comply with the intellectual property rights policy established by the university. In general, the university's Intellectual Property Rights Policy covers the following:

- Policy on copyright ownership
- Administrative procedure for implementing the copyright policy
- Policy and guidelines on the reproduction of copyright materials for teaching and research
- Policy and guidelines on rights to the results of extramural projects or programmes
- Policy to permit use of the university's name
- Policy on patents

Looking for Evidence

The following questions are useful:

- *Has the university formulated a policy to protect intellectual property rights?*
- *Does it function adequately or are there any problems?*
- *How does the university cope with the problems?*

Code of Conduct and Ethics for Research

The university has a clear code of conduct for research, including a code of ethics.

Explanation

A university must be committed to the highest standards of accountability

and integrity in its research practices. Research and development activities should therefore be guided by a code of conduct for research which prescribes standards of work performance and ethical conduct of researchers.

Research Ethics Committees have to be set up to consider applications to conduct research. The objectives of the Research Ethics Committees are to maintain ethical standards of practice in research, to protect subjects of research and experiments as well as research workers from harm or exploitation, to preserve the subject's rights, and to provide reassurance to the public that this is being done. Among other things, the Research Ethics Committees deal with the following:

- Research involving human subjects
- Research involving animal experimentation
- Administration of biohazards
- Research misconduct
- Conflicts of interest
- Secret and classified research
- Management of research data and records

Looking for Evidence

- *Has the university formulated a code of conduct and a code of ethics?*
- *Does the university have a Research Ethics Committee*
- *If no such committee is in place, how does the university cope with ethical questions?*

Community Outreach

The university has clear guidelines for consultancy and community outreach.

Explanation

A university is responsible not only for training academics and research but also for serving society. This will differ from country to country. Consultancy involves a broad range of activities. In general, the term consultancy covers the provision of professional advice or services to

an external party for a fee or other non-monetary considerations. Among other things, guidelines on providing consultancy cover the following:

- Policy objectives
- Policy on key policy principles, compliance, accountability framework, legal and financial protection, conflicts of interest
- Procedures for the contribution to society and the community
- Procedures for university/academic consultancy
- Procedures for private consultancy

Looking for Evidence

The following questions will be found to be useful:

- *What role does the university play in the local, national and international community?*
- *What are the key activities? Which of these lie outside normal teaching or research? How do they relate to the university mission?*
- *What are the non-profit activities of the university?*
- *Is there a clear policy on consultancy and the contribution to society and the community?*
- *How is the income from consultancy regulated?*

Benchmarking

The university uses the instrument of benchmarking for analysing the quality of its core activities and its management.

Explanation

The UNESCO definition of *benchmark* is: A standard, a reference point, or a criterion against which the quality of something can be measured, judged, and evaluated, and against which outcomes of a specified activity can be measured. The term refers to a measure of the best practice performance. The existence of a benchmark is one necessary step in the overall process of measuring quality.

Benchmarking, as a process, enables comparisons to be made of inputs, processes and outputs between institutions or within a single

institution over a period. It is important for a university to compare its functioning with equivalent institutions in the country, the region and internationally.

Looking for Evidence

The following questions are relevant in this connection:

- *Is the university using the instrument of benchmarking? How is it using the instrument?*
- *Does the executive management use the collected information?*
- *What is done with the benchmarking?*

Quality Assurance

A university has an efficient internal quality assurance system.

Explanation

A robust and well functioning system of internal quality assurance (IQA) is necessary to deliver quality and to provide “consumer” protection.

Looking for Evidence

To find evidence that the IQA system is working well, one has to evaluate the IQA system in the framework of the institutional self-assessment. (For self-assessment of the IQA system, see Section 5).

Achievements

A university has the means and opportunity to check whether the achievements are in line with the expected outcomes.

Looking for Evidence

The following questions should be considered

- *Are the achieved outcomes (our graduates; the research*

output; services to society) in line with the formulated goals and aims?

- *How does the university check that it achieves what it wants to achieve?*
- *If the achievement is not satisfactory, what action does the university take?*

Stakeholder Satisfaction

A university has a structured method for obtaining feedback from the stakeholders.

Explanation

After analysing the mission of the university, the management structure, policy and strategic planning, human resource management and the core activities, the university has to analyse the satisfaction of all stakeholders. What do they think about the performance? How do we know that?

Looking for Evidence

The following are relevant

- *Is regular student evaluation carried out? How is it done? Is it adequate/What is done with the results?*
- *Does the university have access to the views of its graduates in employment? Does it have a mechanism of getting a feedback from them?*
- *Are the complaints or feedback from alumni used in formulating changes in the programmes?*
- *Are there any structured contacts with employers and the labour market for obtaining feedback?*
- *How do employers rate graduates?*
- *Are there any specific complaints?*
- *Are specific strengths appreciated by employers?*
- *Does the university have any tools to obtain feedback from society?*

Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis

The self-assessment is followed by a strengths and weaknesses analysis. This serves as a check to see how far the institution is in compliance with given criteria. This is best done with Table 2 and the checklist (see Appendix 2). There are 13 specific aspects for assessment, and 52 sub-criteria in total. The checklist in the appendix specifies all the criteria and sub-criteria. In Table 2, the 13 specific aspects are given. The quality of the different aspects of the programme is assessed on a scale 1–7. The marks have the following interpretations:

- 1 = absolutely inadequate; immediate improvements must be made
- 2 = inadequate, improvements are necessary
- 3 = inadequate, but minor improvements will make it adequate
- 4 = adequate as expected
- 5 = better than adequate
- 6 = example of good practice
- 7 = excellent

TABLE 2

Subjects for Programme Assessment

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 Requirements of stakeholders | | | | | | | |
| 2 Mission, vision, goals and aims | | | | | | | |
| 3 Policy plan | | | | | | | |
| 4 Governance | | | | | | | |
| 5 Human resource | | | | | | | |
| 6 Funding and Financial management | | | | | | | |
| 7 Educational activities | | | | | | | |
| 8 Research | | | | | | | |
| 9 Community outreach | | | | | | | |
| 10 Benchmarking | | | | | | | |
| 11 Internal Quality assurance | | | | | | | |
| 12 Achievements | | | | | | | |
| 13 Satisfaction stakeholder | | | | | | | |

The overall assessment of the different aspects is based on the scores given to each sub-aspect in the category. But, of course, not all sub-aspects have the same weight. This means that you cannot calculate an average mathematically. You have to balance the various sub-aspects and to judge the weighting of each of them. Positive aspects may compensate for some negative ones. Marking each aspect leads to a final verdict on all the other aspects of the model. Filling in the total score in Table 2 produces a fair overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme.

Do not start to complete the checklist, before you have finished the text of the Self-Analysis Report (SAR). ***First the text, and then the marking, and not the other way round.*** By doing so, the marks may help you to see if there is any discrepancy between the marks and the wording.

Summary of strengths

Summarise the points that the university considers to be its strengths and mark the points that you are satisfied with.

Summary of weaknesses

Indicate which points the department considers to be weak and in need for improvement. Also indicate what you are going to do about this.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AT PROGRAMME LEVEL

Introduction

Universities are not only confronted with institutional accreditation. Most universities are also confronted with programme accreditation. But, even when there is no programme accreditation present, it is important to discover the quality of the programmes. It is recommended that there should be a self-assessment at programme level at least once in the 5 years.

Standards and Criteria to be Applied

In a self-assessment at the programme level, one of the important

questions has to do with the standards to be employed in assessing quality. Here, too, the faculty or department has to formulate its own standards and criteria. But it is essential to take into account other external criteria including those of accrediting and professional bodies. One should therefore take into account internationally accepted standards. Aspects of the assessment of the quality of programmes should include the following:

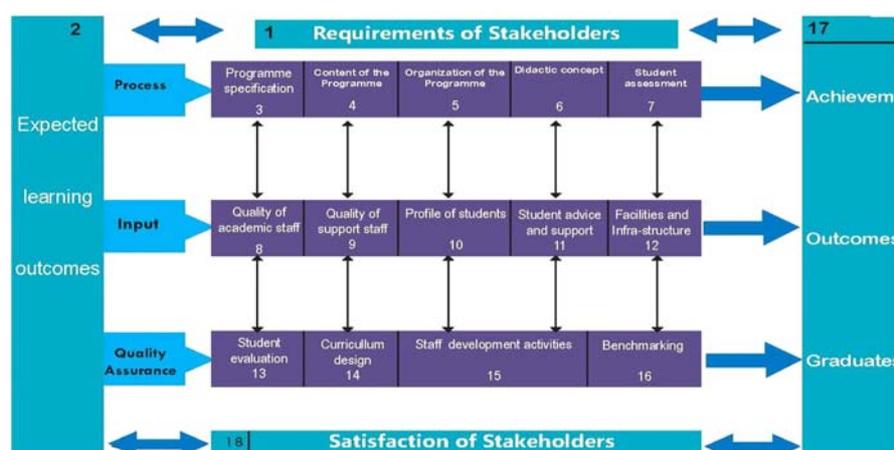
- Goals and objectives; expected learning outcomes
- Programme content
- Programme specification or description
- Programme organisation
- Didactic principles including those accepted for teaching and learning strategy
- Student assessment/appraisal system/examination system
- Staff quality
- Quality of support staff
- Student profile
- Student advice/support
- Facilities and infrastructure
- Student evaluation
- Curriculum design and evaluation
- Staff development activities
- Benchmarking
- Achievements/graduates
- Satisfaction of stakeholders

An Analysis Model for Teaching and Learning

An institution for Higher Education generally has three core activities: teaching/learning, research and community outreach. Of course, the last two activities are important too. However in the training and as shown in this module the emphasis is on the quality of the educational task. To find out the quality of education, the instrument of self-assessment at programme level is used. The object of the self-assessment is the programme.

The starting point for the self-assessment is the model for analysing the quality at programme level (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Model for analysing quality at the programme level



QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

What is Quality Assurance?

As said, nowadays, so much attention is paid to quality that people might think that quality is an invention of the last decades. One may have the impression that Higher Education had no notion of quality before. But, of course, this is not the case. Attention to quality has always been part of the academic tradition. In earlier days universities and academic staff did pay attention to quality, but this was often done in an unstructured way. Nowadays, Quality Assurance is structured.

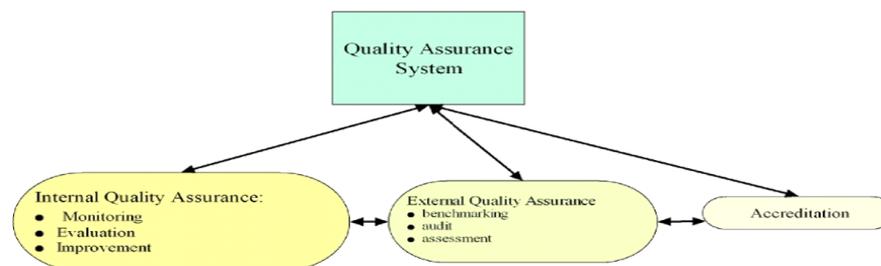
But what do we mean by Quality Assurance? In the glossary at the website of International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), Assurance of quality in higher education is described as *a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements.*

Quality assurance (or quality management) may be described as the systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of maintaining and improving quality. Continuous quality care is a *sine qua non* for quality assurance.

One of the tools in quality assurance is *quality assessment*. By quality assessment we mean *every structured activity that leads to a verdict on the quality of the institution as a whole or one of the core activities: the teaching and learning process, research or community outreach*. It might be based on self-assessment or assessment by external experts. There is no real difference between assessment, evaluation and review. These terms are interchangeable.

Higher Education has developed its own approach to Quality Assurance during a period of intensive self examination through accreditation, internal and external quality assurance (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: The quality assurance system in Higher Education



The Quality Assurance system in Higher Education has internal and external elements:

- The internal quality assurance, including monitoring instruments, evaluation instruments and activities aiming at improvement
- External quality assessment, including benchmark activities, external audit or external quality assessment
- A specific element in the Quality assurance system is accreditation. Accreditation is the touch stone of the Quality Assurance System

Higher Education and the application of the ISO¹-standards

Talking about quality assurance in Higher Education, the question that comes to mind is why Higher Education has developed its own quality assurance model and refrained from applying the ISO-standards. Some

¹ ISO stands for International Standards Organisation.

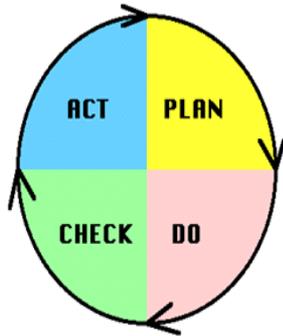
countries are trying to apply ISO. Of course, higher education may learn from industry, but as already explained, quality and the quest for quality in higher education cannot be compared with quality and the quest for it in industry. A university is not a cookie factory. When we talk about the quality of a product or the quality of a service, the definition often used is the satisfaction of the client. The client has certain expectations about the product or service and wants “value for money”.

While quality, in general, is a difficult concept in itself, quality in higher education is even much more confusing. This is because in Higher Education it is not always clear what the “product” is and who the “client” is. A university has a multiple client and a multiple product system. Of course some of the aspects and standards used by ISO are applicable to Higher Education. But the difficulty in applying ISO to Higher Education is that ISO is much more about procedures and processes, while in higher education we aim at both the *quality of the process* and *the quality of the product*. Applying the ISO standard, we cannot assess real content and outcome quality.

Quality is primarily the responsibility of a higher education institution itself. Although government has a special responsibility regarding quality assurance in many countries, it is the university (and especially its staff and students) that is responsible for providing and assuring quality. Therefore, it is important that each university develops an efficient Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system. There is no one model that fits all universities. It is up to each university to decide what model fits it best. However, there are some basic conditions that have to be met. Of course, experience from other universities may also be used in developing IQA system equipped with the basic elements for monitoring, evaluation and improvement. At least the IQA system should cover the Deming cycle: plan, do, check and act (PDCA) (see Figure 6).

External Quality Assurance and Accreditation

A Quality Assurance system not only has an internal aspect. External elements also exist. An external assessment is an important instrument. A university is also accountable to the outside world. The taxpayer must be convinced about the university’s quality. Accreditation is an important accountability instrument by which a university can verify its

Figure 6: Deming Cycle (PDCA)

quality. The United States of America has a long tradition in this field but the rest of the world adopted this concept some decades ago.

There are as many interpretations of accreditation as there are different views on it. There is no general definition endorsed by the whole world. A general accepted description is: *Accreditation is a formal decision, based on evaluation of past performance, indicating that certain standards, certain minimum requirements are met.* Sometimes, accreditation is seen as a bureaucratic process that tries to control higher education; however, it also has its positive effects. It:

- Provide some with a quality label that one can use in competition
- Offers opportunities for benchmarking
- Delivers feedback to the self-assessment

Accreditation is never an end in itself, but should rather serve higher education.

Towards an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system

As pointed out earlier, the university is responsible for its quality and quality assurance. Looking at the developments in the West African region, we see that the universities are at different stages of development. Some of them are still in the first phase of development of a QA system and have many problems and obstacles to surmount. Among those obstacles, the following can be mentioned:

- Lack of quality awareness

- Resistance to innovation
- Resistance from the staff, who feel threatened
- There is not enough knowledge available in the university. Training is needed.
- There may be resistance because the processes are time and money consuming
- It is difficult to define what quality is; the QA indicators are not always clearly defined
- The purpose and the added value are not always clear
- There is often a lack of clarity of communication between staff and management

To overcome the problems it is important to:

- Understand clearly what (International Quality Assessment (IQA) means;
- Know the available instruments;
- Know about the requirements set for an IQA system;
- Design the system very clearly and formulate clear strategies for introducing and implementing it;
- Tune the system to external developments.

If we want to assure our quality, it is necessary to establish a structured quality assurance system that makes it possible to monitor, evaluate and improve quality.

An Internal Quality Assurance system (IQA system) is a system that aims at setting up, maintaining and improving the quality and standards of teaching, research, and community service.

The overall objective is to continuously promote and improve the quality of the core activities and the institution as a whole.

There is no single approach or system that is applicable to all universities. Each university has to build its own system. However, when developing an IQA system, there are some basic conditions that have to be taken into account. The system:

- should be kept as simple as possible;
- should not be a bureaucratic process;
- should have the support of both management and staff;
- must be a right balance between a centralised and decentralised approach
- should employ effective instruments that should be used
- must be tuned to national and international developments.

Internal Quality assurance has a pivotal position in the framework of accreditation. Therefore, in some cases there are requirements formulated for an IQA system, done by the ASEAN² Universities Network and by the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA). Those requirements are applicable not only to the Asian universities or European Universities, but also to African universities. The requirements can be summarised as follows:

Policy and Procedures for IQA

An institution should have a clear policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. The university should commit itself explicitly to the development of quality culture and awareness. To achieve this, the university develops and implements a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have an institutional and formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

A Monitoring System

An institution should have a structured monitoring system to collect information about the quality of its activities. At least the monitoring system should include:

- Student evaluations
- A student progress system
- Structural feedback from the labour market
- Structural feedback from the alumni

² ASEAN stands for Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Periodic Review of the Core Activities (education, research and community services)

An institution should have formal mechanisms for periodic review or evaluation of the core activities: The programmes and degrees, the research activities (if applicable) and community service.

Quality Assurance of the Student Assessment

An institution should have clear procedures to assure the assessment of students. Students are assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures, which are applied consistently. There are clear procedures to assure the quality of the examinations.

Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff

An institution should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff are qualified and competent to conduct the core activities of the institution: Education, research and community services.

Quality Assurance of Facilities

An institution should have clear procedures to ensure that the quality of the facilities needed for student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

Quality Assurance of the Student Support

An institution should have clear procedures to assure the quality of the student support and student counselling.

Self-assessment

An institution should conduct, regularly, but at least once every 5 years a self-assessment of its core activities and of the institution as a whole to learn about the strengths and weakness. This self-assessment should lead to a quality plan.

Internal Audit

A self-assessment might be part of the external quality assessment/ accreditation process and the self-assessment report as an input for the

external review team. If the self-assessment is not connected to the EQA, the institution is expected to organise an audit, based on the self evaluation report.

Information Systems

An institution should ensure that it collects, analyses and uses relevant information for the effective management of their core activities.

Public Information

An institution should regularly publish up-to-date impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards that it is offering.

A Quality Handbook

An institution should have a Quality Assurance (QA) handbook, where all regulations, processes and procedures concerning Quality Assurance are documented. All people concerned (i.e. stakeholders) should publicly know the existence and contents of this handbook.

An Analysis Model for the Internal Quality Assurance System

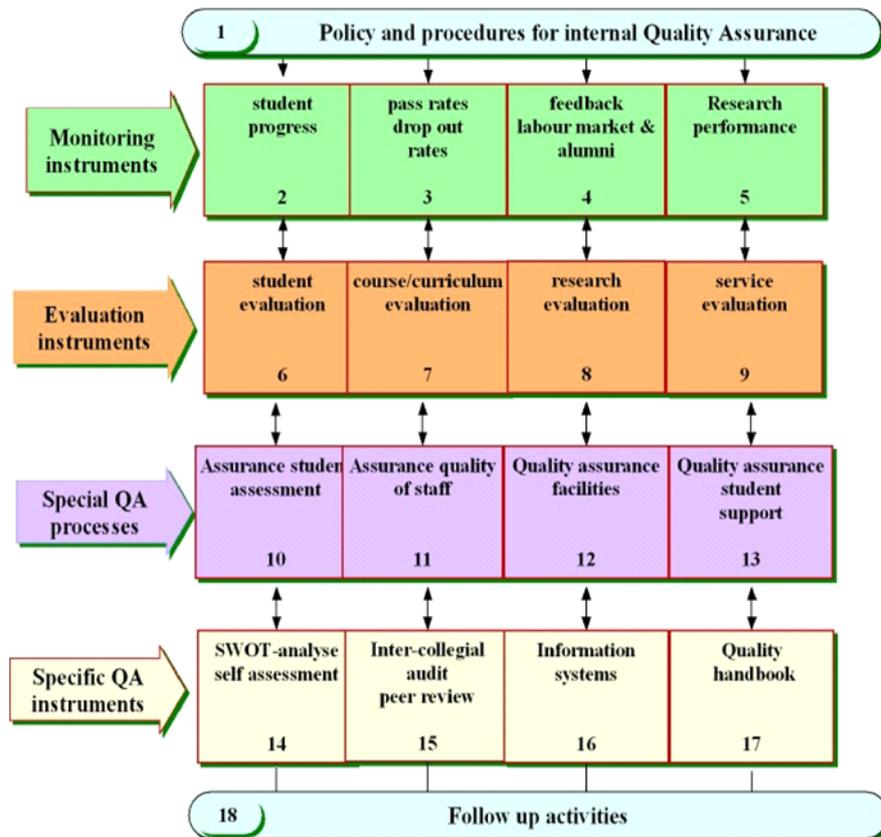
Although there is no Internal Quality Assurance system that fits all universities, common good practice shows that it is possible to develop an analysis model for a well functioning QA-system (see Figure 7). We can identify the following elements:

- *Monitoring instruments*

The monitoring instruments are needed to keep track of performance and developments. Data should be collected on:

- Students' progress
- Pass rates and dropout rates
- Feedback from the labour market and alumni
- Research performance

Figure 7: Analysis model for the self-assessment of the IQA system



As long as the data are in line with set targets, there is no reason to worry. If there are deviations, it might be necessary to take action and analyse the situation.

- *Evaluation instruments*

Evaluation instruments that a university can use are:

- *Student evaluation.* A university should carry out student evaluations. In fact this should be a regular activity in the institution to learn what students think about the programme, the staff, the form of lecturing etc.

- *Course and curriculum evaluation.* Although the students will evaluate the course during the student evaluation, there might also be a need to include other stakeholders.
- *Research evaluation*
- *Service evaluation.*

Evaluation as such does not make sense if there are no actions to enhance the quality and to overcome the shortcomings. Therefore, it is necessary to have opportunities for staff development and staff training.

- *Specific QA processes*

There are some specific QA processes within the scope of IQA that are important for assuring the quality of some activities:

- quality assurance of the student assessments
- assurance of the quality of the staff
- quality assurance of the facilities
- quality assurance of student support.
- *Specific instruments for IQA.*

There are some specific instruments for Quality Assurance:

- *Self-assessment or SWOT analysis.* This might be at institutional level or at the level of the core activities. Self-assessment is a powerful instrument for discovering our quality and finding an answer to the following questions:
 - Are we doing the right things?
 - Are we doing the right things in the right way?
 - Are we achieving our goals?

This instrument will be used once every five or six years. It will mostly be combined with external assessment or accreditation.

- *Inter-collegial assessment*

If there is no formal accreditation, the instrument of *inter-collegial assessment* may be applied.

- Furthermore, an *adequate information management system* is indispensable.
- Finally, the presence of a *QA handbook* shows the maturity of the IQA system.

Figure 7 tries to visualise the above-mentioned instruments. The model contains all the elements of an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system.

Harmonisation of the QA System

It is important to implement an IQA-system inside the universities. It is also important to look for harmonisation of the QA systems in the country and in the region by applying some general accepted guidelines. This does not mean that all universities and all countries are expected to have the same system and the same approach. ***Harmonisation is not the same as uniformity.*** It is a big challenge for the region with all the cultural, political and historical differences to strive for harmonisation, while keeping differences.

Harmonisation means that the system of basics in Quality Assurance we are applying are equivalent, but each university and each country can add its own specific needs and instruments. There are several reasons for harmonisation of Quality Assurance. They include:

- Considering developments internationally and within the region, it is important that university degrees in one country are recognised in other countries. The basic quest for such recognition is the need to know more about the quality and how such quality is assured.
- Regarding student mobility we need to know the quality of the curricula in other institutions. It helps greatly when we know how the quality is assessed and assured.
- Internationalisation of the profession and globalisation offers our graduates a broader perspective for a job. The quality of our graduate should be known and acceptable.

The Implementation of a QA-system

Universities will be in different stages of implementation of a Quality assurance system. The following steps are necessary:

- Earmark budget for Quality Assurance
- Appoint a quality officer or coordinator, if you have not yet done so
- Establish a QA office
- Analyse what you are doing in the field of quality assurance.
- Based on the analysis of the state-of-the art, you will develop a policy for quality assurance and a strategic plan for the implementation of a QA system.

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APPENDIX 1

Checklist on the Quality of an Institution

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The university has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of the government. | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of the labour market. | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of the students/parents. | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of the academic world | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>The mission statement</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clearly formulated mission statement. | | | | | | | |
| The mission statement is publicly known | | | | | | | |
| The mission statement is in line with the academic and social context. | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear vision on its role in society. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>The policy plan</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear policy and strategic plan formulated in line with the mission statement. | | | | | | | |
| The policy has adequately been translated in a strategic plan. | | | | | | | |
| The policy plan regulates clearly the programmes at offer, the research and the community outreach. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |

Appendix 1 (cont'd)

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>Governance</i> | | | | | | | |
| The governance structure of the university is clear and adequate. | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear management structure in which the decision-making processes, competencies and responsibilities have been clearly defined. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>Human resources</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university takes care of high-quality faculty staff and support staff by clearly defining their responsibility, and by evaluating their performance on a regular basis by means of an adequate staff appraisal system. | | | | | | | |
| The university develops the body of knowledge possessed by its academics and support staff to keep pace with changes in each academic discipline. | | | | | | | |
| The university provides for a system of staff development. | | | | | | | |
| The university establishes an activity plan and evaluates activities to encourage students, academics and other staff to be conscientious in thoughts and, speech. | | | | | | | |
| The university enhances the professional ethics of its students, academics and other personnel. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>Funding</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university has adequate funding to achieve the goals and aims. | | | | | | | |

Appendix 1 (*cont'd*)

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| The university has an adequate financial management system. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>Educational activities</i> | | | | | | | |
| The programmes at offer meet the expectations of the stakeholders | | | | | | | |
| The programmes have clearly formulated learning outcomes. | | | | | | | |
| The programmes are coherent and up-to-date. | | | | | | | |
| The student assessment is adequate and efficient. | | | | | | | |
| The student assessment is objective and trustworthy. | | | | | | | |
| Student assessment is consistent in time and between the programmes. | | | | | | | |
| Student assessment is done according to a variety of methods. | | | | | | | |
| The examination committees function adequately. | | | | | | | |
| The staff is competent and qualified. | | | | | | | |
| Recruitment and promotion of staff is based on merit system, including teaching, research and community outreach. | | | | | | | |
| The university has a well functioning appraisal system. | | | | | | | |
| The university has clearly formulated admission criteria. | | | | | | | |
| If there is a selection, the procedure and criteria are clear, adequate and transparent. | | | | | | | |

Appendix 1 (cont'd)

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Facilities and infrastructure are sufficient and adequate | | | | | | | |
| Facilities and infrastructure are up-to-date | | | | | | | |
| The computer facilities are adequate | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>Research</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear research policy, setting the direction of research and deciding about research profile and research activities | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear policy, for the protection of creative efforts and especially for the protection of economic investment in creative efforts (Intellectual Property Right Policy). | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear code of conduct for research, including a code of ethics. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>The contribution to society and the community</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university has clear guidelines on consultancy and community outreach | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>Benchmarking</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university uses the instrument of benchmarking for analysing the quality of its core activities and its management. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>Quality Assurance</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear policy and procedures for QA | | | | | | | |

Appendix 1 (cont'd)

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| The university has an adequate monitoring system. | | | | | | | |
| There is a periodic review of the core activities (education, research and community services). | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear quality assurance system of the student assessment. | | | | | | | |
| The university has a clear quality assurance of the quality of the staff. | | | | | | | |
| Idem and adequate quality assurance of the facilities | | | | | | | |
| The university carries out self-assessments on a regular basis. | | | | | | | |
| The university has a well functioning management information systems. | | | | | | | |
| The university has a Quality Assurance handbook. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>Achievements</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university has the means and opportunities to check whether the achievements are in line with the expected outcomes. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>Stakeholder satisfaction</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university has a structured method for obtaining feedback from stakeholders. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| Overall verdict | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX 2

Checklist on the Quality of a Programme

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. <i>The faculty/department has a clear idea</i> | | | | | | | |
| about the relevant needs and requirements of the government. | | | | | | | |
| about the relevant needs and requirements of the labour market. | | | | | | | |
| about the relevant needs and requirements of students/parents. | | | | | | | |
| about the relevant needs and requirements of academic world. | | | | | | | |
| about the relevant needs and requirements of society. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| 2. <i>Expected learning outcomes (objectives)</i> | | | | | | | |
| The programme has clearly formulated learning outcomes. | | | | | | | |
| The programme promotes learning to include life-long learning. | | | | | | | |
| The expected learning outcomes cover generic skills and knowledge as well as specific skills and knowledge. | | | | | | | |
| The expected learning outcomes clearly reflect the requirements of the stakeholders. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| 3. <i>Programme specification</i> | | | | | | | |
| The university uses programme specifications/programme description. | | | | | | | |

Appendix 2 (cont'd)

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| The programme specification shows the expected learning outcomes. | | | | | | | |
| The programme specification is informative for the stakeholders. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| 4. Programme content | | | | | | | |
| The programme content shows a good balance between general and specific skills and knowledge. | | | | | | | |
| The programme reflects the vision and mission of the university. | | | | | | | |
| The expected learning outcomes have been adequately translated into the programme. | | | | | | | |
| The contribution made by each course to achieving the learning outcomes is clear. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| 5. The organisation of the programme | | | | | | | |
| The curriculum is coherent and all subjects and courses have been integrated. | | | | | | | |
| The curriculum shows breadth and depth. | | | | | | | |
| The curriculum clearly shows the basic courses, intermediate courses, specialist courses and the final project (thesis, etc.) activities. | | | | | | | |
| The curriculum is up-to-date. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| 6. Didactic concept/teaching/learning strategy | | | | | | | |
| The staff have a clear teaching/learning strategy. | | | | | | | |

Appendix 2 (cont'd)

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| The teaching/learning strategy enables students to acquire and manipulate knowledge academically. | | | | | | | |
| The teaching/learning strategy is student oriented and stimulates quality learning. | | | | | | | |
| The curriculum stimulates active learning and facilitates learning to learn. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>7. Student assessment</i> | | | | | | | |
| The assessments reflect the expected learning outcomes and the content of the programme. | | | | | | | |
| Student assessment uses a variety of methods. | | | | | | | |
| The criteria for assessment are explicit and well-known | | | | | | | |
| The standards applied in the assessment are explicit and consistent. | | | | | | | |
| The assessment schemes, the assessment methods and the assessment itself are always subject to quality assurance and scrutiny. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>8. Quality of the academic staff</i> | | | | | | | |
| The staff is qualified and competent for the task. | | | | | | | |
| The staff are sufficient to deliver the curriculum adequately. | | | | | | | |
| Recruitment and promotion are based on academic merits. | | | | | | | |

Appendix 2 (cont'd)

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Duties allocated are appropriate to qualifications, experience, and skills. | | | | | | | |
| Time management and incentive systems are designed to support the quality of teaching and learning. | | | | | | | |
| Accountability of the staff members is well regulated. | | | | | | | |
| There are provisions for review, consultation, and redeployment | | | | | | | |
| Termination, retirement and social benefits are planned and well implemented. | | | | | | | |
| There is an efficient appraisal system. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>9. Quality of the support staff</i> | | | | | | | |
| There are adequate support staff for the libraries. | | | | | | | |
| There are adequate support staff for the laboratories. | | | | | | | |
| There are adequate support staff for computer facilities. | | | | | | | |
| There are adequate support staff for the student services. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>10. The student</i> | | | | | | | |
| The selection of entering students (if there is selection) is adequate. | | | | | | | |
| There is an adequate intake policy | | | | | | | |
| There is an adequate credit points system. | | | | | | | |

Appendix 2 (cont'd)

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| The actual study load is in line with the calculated load. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>11. Student advice and support</i> | | | | | | | |
| There is an adequate student progress system. | | | | | | | |
| Students get adequate feedback on their performance. | | | | | | | |
| Coaching for first-year students is adequate. | | | | | | | |
| The physical and material environment for the student is satisfactory. | | | | | | | |
| The social and psychological environment for the student is satisfactory. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>12. Facilities and infrastructure</i> | | | | | | | |
| The lecture facilities (lecture halls, small course rooms) are adequate. | | | | | | | |
| The library is adequate and up-to-date. | | | | | | | |
| The laboratories are adequate and up-to-date. | | | | | | | |
| The computer facilities are adequate and up-to-date. | | | | | | | |
| Environmental Health and Safety Standards should meet the local requirements in all respects. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |

Appendix 2 (cont'd)

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 13. <i>Student evaluation</i> | | | | | | | |
| Courses and curriculum are subject to structured student evaluation. | | | | | | | |
| Student feedback is used for improvement. | | | | | | | |
| The department provides the students with feedback what is done with the outcomes. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| 14. <i>Curriculum design & evaluation</i> | | | | | | | |
| The curriculum was developed as a joint enterprise by all the staff members. | | | | | | | |
| Students are involved in the curriculum design. | | | | | | | |
| The labour market is involved in the curriculum design. | | | | | | | |
| The curriculum is regularly evaluated. | | | | | | | |
| Revision of the curriculum takes place at reasonable time periods. | | | | | | | |
| Quality assurance of the curriculum is adequate. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| 15. <i>Staff development activities</i> | | | | | | | |
| There is a clear vision on the needs for staff development. | | | | | | | |
| The staff development activities are adequate to the needs. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |

Appendix 2 (cont'd)

| <i>Requirements of stakeholders</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 16. <i>Benchmarking</i> | | | | | | | |
| The faculty/department uses the instrument of benchmarking to get a better view on its performance. | | | | | | | |
| The faculty/department uses the instrument of benchmarking for curriculum design. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| 17. <i>Achievements/the graduates</i> | | | | | | | |
| The level of the graduates is satisfactory. | | | | | | | |
| The pass rate is satisfactory. | | | | | | | |
| The drop out rate is acceptable. | | | | | | | |
| The average time for graduation is in line with the planned time. | | | | | | | |
| The graduates can find easily a job. The unemployment rate is at an acceptable level. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| 18. <i>Feedback stakeholders</i> | | | | | | | |
| There is adequate structural feedback from the labour market (employers). | | | | | | | |
| There is adequate structural feedback from the alumni. | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| Overall verdict | | | | | | | |

Higher Education, Governance and Related Matters

G. F. DANIEL

In the last two hundred years, Higher Education has outgrown previously known confines, becoming more varied and more inclusive. In a changing landscape, the profile should still be recognisable, the better for integrated national systems which can also be part of an emerging global network.

Introduction

British trade missions that set out from the shores of the Gold Coast to engage Ashanti to the north in the early part of the 19th century found at the King's court Islamic scholars who, contemplating the esoteric could foretell the future; who provided amulets and talismans for protection in war. Those clerics had links to a long tradition of scholarship that grew within the mosques at Fez, Al Azhar, Timbuktu and Sankore from the 7th century. Preceding the mosques was the museum and library at Alexandria, whose patrons included Archimedes and Euclid among others; whose contributions would blossom into the European Renaissance, long before comparable institutions would show up in Europe, and not before the 12th century.

In Europe as in the North of Africa, sacred education was the initial focus of higher learning. It is instructive that the advances to usher in the technological age of today owed nothing to Higher Education (HE). The industrial and agricultural revolutions of the 19th century were led by individuals unconnected with HE; true also of aviation, rail transportation, automobiles or telephony. As recently as the 19th century, Cardinal J. H. Newman, so credible a face of academia, was confident in his view that for being distractions from the engagement of quiet contemplation, studies involving measurements, weighing and other forms of hands-on activities in or outside laboratories did not belong with the intellectual in the same place. Indeed, historically, in England, medicine could be had only on the hospital floor while

engineering, architecture and other professions were taught under royal charter away from the university.

It was on the other side of the Atlantic that things could happen differently, and not before the Land Grant colleges of the 19th century, whose mandate was the study of land utilisation, as well as the agricultural and other vocational arts for ensuring food and security in a hostile environment. The Pilgrim Fathers who boarded the “Mayflower” in the 16th century and others who followed included some who, on account of religious belief or gender, could be refused admission to university in England. They could not get away fast enough, but no different from the institutions back home in their curriculum, Harvard and the Ivy League colleges of the east coast were not immediately ready for them until the Morrill Act of 1862, gave birth to the more inclusive Land Grant colleges.

The Land Grant initiatives served the population well. It was to bring the US to global attention in less than two hundred years. As nothing sells better than success, the rest of the world has had to take notice of America’s social infrastructure, not least education. Here, with the high school diploma for threshold, students can access purely academic or intellectual programmes of study running *paripassu* with the professional or vocational. The design of programmes and graduation requirements allow students to advance, each at their own pace, while grade portability makes for student mobility across programmes and campuses. Enrolments are high and the age-group is more mixed.

Wherever its origins, Higher Education (HE) comes to Africa via Europe. Vestiges of the church connection still show in some of the designations in use, among them, rector, chancellor, provost, dean, registrar, and congregation. Given their different mandates, the University of Ghana and the rest of the country’s public universities are as different from each other as they are from the non public. The Polytechnics, now 10, are as different from the universities as they are from the teacher training colleges, some 38 now, and the nursing training colleges; as all of them must also look different from the Kwadaso Agricultural Training School or the Pong Tamale Veterinary Training School, both vocational. Ghana’s delivery of HE must be different from what obtains in Britain’s former colonies in North America, Canada, Australia and South-East Asia. While everywhere there is so much variation in HE,

there must still be common ground or elements that identify all of HE's institutions as belonging to one stock.

Higher Education (HE)

What is HE? In the wake of Africa's decolonisation, a conference of Africa's Ministers of Education was convened for the first time in Tananarive, Malagasy, in 1962. Products of different colonial traditions of education, the Ministers needed some common understandings, the better for cooperation and collaboration. *Post high school* engagement for the age group of 18 and beyond was what could be agreed for HE. Coming long after Cardinal Newman's *Idea of a University*, the conference was not unaware of developments in North America where, following the passage of the Morrill Act, 1862, Land Grant colleges had come into being; where also the study of land utilisation including agriculture and other practical engagements had joined the intellectual on the curriculum, making HE more extensively comprehensive, less intimidating, more welcoming, and more inclusive. For accessing different types of programmes, the threshold could not be set too high.

Besides the high school diploma for threshold, other defining points of HE include the *research-driven agenda*. *Required* to advance the frontiers of knowledge, faculty must have research capability. Academic staff often work in the same laboratory, not unusually, on the same subject, to lead to jointly authored publications. Faculty are colleagues in their working relationships. It is how *collegiality* also defines HE. *Institutional autonomy* or freedom to appoint staff, select students, organise teaching, graduate students, and provide certification embossed with its own seal of sovereignty remains the battlefield from which academia refuses to retreat. *Participatory decision-making* is the mode of engagement familiar to HE, also the more appropriate for colleagues. It is also a fact of HE that many students do not matriculate and stay to graduate in the same institution. Increased mobility necessitates the *globalised curriculum* from which students carry transcripts of their academic record to the next campus and the next to graduate at another without loss of time.

Thus far, HE is identified by the research-driven post high school engagement; faculty who are collegial; who share the burdens of decision-making in statutory and other committees; who are free from

external control, subject only to the governing council. For the convenience of its global clientele, HE aspires to be global in its offerings, structuring of programmes, and manner of doing business.

HE has goals, knowledge production, its dissemination and community service in that order, for which the vehicles include research, teaching and the extra mural engagement. HE also has its enabling instruments, beginning with the law establishing the institution. It is that instrument, which sets the stage by articulating mandate, identifying basic infrastructure and lead actors or “principal officers”. Among basic infrastructure, academic board or senate is the assembly of faculty for setting the academic agenda. To consult about developments generally, the academic board may be joined by other faculty or senior members to constitute convocation while convocation enlarges to congregation when joined by the general public at graduation.

Besides the formal mandate, opportunities and challenges within the environment drive some of the things that engage HE. Thus, the environment is as good a mandate while creativity to take advantage of other opportunities, not least access to the global market, enlarges mandate. If it happens to be too far from everywhere, HE assumes responsibilities that otherwise might be left to the municipal authority or private service providers. Faculty must inspire while students must feel motivated. Institutional mission, location and players must be mutually complementary. But, there is little any institution can do without assured funding. Investments with appreciative returns provide stimulus for the bold initiative. Subvention, endowments, alumni support, tuition, contracts and consultancies are among the regular sources of investments.

The power to award degrees resides nowhere else than in the basic law or charter. Including honorary degrees, all awards must be captured by the law or subsidiary legislation, namely, statute or regulation. Admissions, examinations, graduation, staff appointments and other operations involve processes that are regularly set out by statute. When congregation convenes for graduation, it should be possible to tell by their costume who are “members of the university”; or who among them are faculty or students. The design and colour scheme of academic robes are appropriate themes for capture by statute. The institutional motto and logo are also usefully captured by statute.

Without attention to such detail, a mix of the incongruous is the result. The institution's identity is the poorer for obfuscation.

Governance

The law provides for a **governing council**, listed before any other. Also in the law, council is constituted by representation from "members of the university", joined by the general public or civil society, which makes council very inclusive. It is also quite diverse, considering the different routes travelled by members. Some constituencies appoint their representatives; others come by nomination; and there are elected others. Not left to happenstance, some laws are careful to stipulate gender. "Four members appointed by government, one of whom shall be a woman" may not be the most elegant piece of drafting, but thankfulness for small mercies identifies realists among gender activists. *Ex officio* others, such as Vice-Chancellor, add to the list of members of Council.

Less inward-looking is the council that embraces the different types of HE by cross-representation. For tapping into experience worldwide, some laws provide also for extra territorial representation. Since amended, the University of Ghana Act, 1961 (Act 79), provided for two such, to come from Africa, and outside Africa. Worth the attendant costs of transportation is the useful publicity derived from linkage to the recognisable name. Often too busy to travel down for meetings, extra territorial members provide the occasional written comment to the agenda that enriches proceedings.

It does not happen that they come from any constituency to Parliament House to sit in for the Member of Parliament, if he happens to have other engagement. Somehow, some members of council begin to think they could ask others to deputise, and are surprised when the surrogate cannot access the council chamber. Of course, membership of council is not transferrable. When let into the council chamber, out of courtesy or other consideration, "in attendance" is where any surrogate is acknowledged in the minutes while the substantive must be factually reported "absent". Membership of council is for a fixed term. Without confirmed terms, representation could be so manipulated that attendance could change from meeting to meeting.

In many laws, council is the "supreme organ". Curiously, however,

council does not appoint its chair; and there is a secretariat in place already. Nor is council able to devise its own procedures for the conduct of business. The minimum number of meetings in a year and the intervals between them are stipulated in the law. Requirement for notice of meeting, agenda and quorum are other stipulations. A simple majority is stipulated for decisions, with a casting vote by the chair for breaking ties. Given these many constraints, supremacy of council begins to sound hollow. Yet, aggrieved staff who go to court discover that they must first exhaust avenues for redress up to and including council.

Unlike Parliament, council is nobody's full time work. Some laws have it that members of council may not be remunerated except for reimbursement of expenses. Council is part-time. The majority of council is lay; advisedly, lest a faculty majority becomes a law unto itself, approving conditions of service for itself. Part-time, lay majority and unremunerated is also the hint that, by no means self sufficient, council has need of assistance; wherefore, it is required to act on advice. Council may not substitute its judgment for the academic board's with respect to academic policy and content, though it may withhold approval of the academic board's initiatives until further and better particulars are forthcoming.

Besides the academic board, other specialised statutory committees are available for consultation. Far from diminishing its authority, the requirement to act on advice ensures that council is nearly always right; and if ever faulted, opportunity for self-review makes amends. Travelling different routes from different constituencies, none big enough to constitute a quorum, and protected by a fixed term, members of council are not delegates who come with constituency mandates; nor are they in any danger of capricious removal for not following instructions. It is, indeed, the troubling matter that, in spite of so much going for insulation from manipulation, council becomes a delegates' conference or some constituency's puppet. Often, not knowing its own powers is council's real problem.

When it comes into view, the council of resilience comprises individuals from constituencies recognised by the law establishing the institution. It is diversely inclusive and tenured. Council's majority is lay. A regulated schedule of meetings, notice of meetings, quorum, and a record of proceedings are statutory requirements. Regeneration through regulated replacements is also statutory while continuity is assured by

overlapping tenures, besides the *ex officio* presence and a permanent secretariat. Obligated to consult, council still has what it takes to be independent. In sum, inclusiveness, lay majority, tenure, continuity, self-renewing, and independence identify the council of promise.

Top of the agenda of council is the appointment of **Vice-Chancellor**. Chair of academic board and other statutory committees, the Vice-Chancellor is the link between council and campus. Pending council, to which he reports at regular intervals, the Vice-Chancellor, as “chief administrative, academic and disciplinary officer” is as good as council, exercising the powers of council in full. The only principal officer full time on campus, the bridge between council and academic board, chief executive, public face of the institution, official mouthpiece and chief public relations officer is the profile of the Vice-Chancellor. Trusted by “members of the university” and showing the commitment that is not eroded by distractions of the extraneous identify the Vice-Chancellor of promise. Public goodwill makes a difference to outcomes; so does connectivity to the global network. The literature reports of a president at Harvard, C. E. Eliot, who was in office for forty years, 1869–1909, the period that saw the foundations that sustain that university’s solid reputation. Eliot’s tenure notwithstanding, the Vice-Chancellor’s is not a career appointment. There are more candidates than one kind.

Besides provision for the Vice-Chancellor to be chief executive, the basic law provides also for a Pro-Vice-Chancellor to act for the Vice-Chancellor; and a registrar to be secretary to council. This is all the **administration** obligated by law. Assisted by colleagues with expertise in finance, human resource, public relations and other professions, the registrar as secretary collates, analyses, and reviews for viability options for consideration in a committee-run system. The registrar is also a manager. He manages implementation of decisions for eventual reporting to council. The campus must be rid of distractions of whatever kind for the core business of HE to prevail. As campus-wide manager, the registrar must see to that. So close to both chair of council and Vice-Chancellor, the registrar is available on tap for advice. Whatever the discipline of his training, the registrar is more useful if he is also a student of HE.

Accountability is a requirement of governance. Mechanisms for holding HE accountable are provided for by the law establishing the institution. Publishing the annual report and audited accounts six months

into the ensuing year is statutorily required. Fidelity to participatory governance must require publication at the beginning of the academic year of a calendar of meetings, showing membership of the various committees, terms of reference, venue and time. Whether or not meetings were held during the year requires the further step of the two-page report to the academic board and council at the end of the year. For being public funded, HE is not exempt from public policy prescriptions respecting procurement, employment, retirement, gender, equity, the environment, or ICT, by no means the exhaustive list.

There are also voluntary mechanisms for providing to the public accounting of the institutional effort. Among these are matriculation, graduation, inaugural lectures, exhibitions, open day and other staged public events which also provide opportunity for HE to advertise or market itself. From the brochures that are made available, the public should be able to raise questions, including departures from the institutional focus when an institute of technology graduates more in arts and the social sciences than basic or applied science. Issues of cost effectiveness can also be raised when faculty regularly exceed student enrolments in any discipline.

Fidelity to the standards and norms of HE and statutory obligations besides sensitivity to public expectations are the different dimensions to accountability. Convocation is the in-house accountability, when the Vice-Chancellor invites comment or questions after delivering the academic equivalent of the “state of the union” address. Accountability to the community at large is measurable by the amount of community support and cooperation.

Matters Arising

The Conference of African Ministers of Education at Tanararive was in 1962. It was not until two decades after Tanararive that Ghana could confirm high school diploma as the threshold for HE, now enlarged by the admission of the country’s polytechnics, colleges of education, nursing training colleges, and the agricultural training colleges at Kwadaso and Pong Tamale. Governance structures, as provided by law, are the mere bare bones. Fleshing up is by statute, if not convention. Together, the law, statute and convention should be as consistent with each other as with the imperatives of HE and its emerging global profile.

Who must be represented at council and tenure throw up residual problems; as does the Vice-Chancellorship; an ever growing administration; and what could happen differently while remaining recognisable as HE.

For **representation on council**, “principal officers” must have reference to the institution’s sponsors or majority shareholders. It used to be a short list, namely, chancellor, chair of council and Vice-Chancellor. Come to notice is effort to extend the list to Pro-Vice-Chancellor, registrar and finance officer. “Principal officer” is not to be confused with importance of office, surely? As happens to be the case, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, registrar and finance officer report to the Vice-Chancellor, who must be presumed adequately briefed on everything to do with the administration. “Members of the university” used to be another short list, referring to “senior members” or faculty; “junior members” or students; and assimilable others, such as management staff, and graduates of the university or alumni. They are the categories that regularly consult with the governing council on the mission of the institution and the delivery.

Support staff, service providers and benefactors are useful to any institution, but membership of the university is not thereby extended to “former members of council, honorary degree holders, pensioners, and employees”, or everybody who has had anything to do with the institution, as proposed in one document cited for revision of the law of one university. Representation of academic staff unions, and separate unions for senior staff, junior staff, management and professional staff and still counting, ensure a rather heavy labour presence on councils. It is how formulating policy for the core business easily takes second place to wrangling over staff welfare and entitlements. Splintering occurs also at the student front, counting graduate students versus undergraduates, for now, all of which seek representation.

Parliament has tenure or recurring cycles of life. Every 4–5 years, one cycle comes to an end, when parliament is emptied for elections for a new house to be inaugurated. Unlike parliament, council is without tenure. It is the membership of council that has tenure. Once elected, members should be able to serve a full term. It is, indeed, the guarantee of a full term that makes for overlapping tenures and continuity. Where council does not have the life that is limited by tenure, “unexpired” portion of tenure must be a misnomer, surely? Neither resignation nor

death gives reason for reduced tenure for the replacement. It is also fair argument that, if known in advance, candidates who, for any reason, cannot serve a full term should not be admitted to the starters' blocks, in the first place.

The law does not provide qualifications for **Vice-Chancellor**, only the job profile of "chief academic, administrative and disciplinary officer". For being more familiar with the academic terrain and the temperament of academia, professional academics are in the inner lane. Considering also that the most unlikely candidates have been known to make phenomenal impact, writing the statute that excludes other professionals is of no particular advantage. Fishing from the mixed pool must be the more promising for the better catch, surely? An audit of energy levels before confirmation is useful.

Earlier appointments were for two terms of 7 years each, subsequently becoming two terms of 5 years each. Two terms of 6 years altogether is currently the prevalent statutory provision. A second term is earned rather than guaranteed. With an eye to returning to the classroom, some who come to appointment are anxious to move up the academic ladder. As the smell of conflict of interest hangs thick in the air, the University of Ghana has the policy that precludes processing applications for promotion for the Vice-Chancellor while in *situ*. The Vice-Chancellor's salary that becomes personal to a former Vice-Chancellor is generous, but has little justification. If only for transparency, a statute for transition from one Vice-Chancellor to another must have merit over other arrangements that begin to look ad *hominem*

Familiar in political theory, separation of powers is for providing reciprocal oversight of the performance of the principal actors in governance. Somehow, in corporate business, the board chair who is also chief executive happens. It is claimed that the friction that sometimes characterises relations when those positions are in different hands is thereby abated. The University of Ghana has the statute listing offices which may not be encumbered jointly. It precludes the combination of chair of council and Vice-Chancellor. Also precluded is the francophone tradition where the rector who is also council's secretary is possible. But reeking of conflict of interest is the situation in which the Vice-Chancellor is chair of a national regulatory body. Chair of council who sets up shop or shows up too frequently on campuses not unfamiliar.

When it happens, staff are tempted to press their various suits directly, occasioning erosion of the Vice-Chancellor's authority.

In response to growth, **administration begins** to proliferate, counting within its ranks a large variety of professionals, adding considerably to administrative costs. Not obligated by any law, many operations could be out sourced, sooner when town and campus come within reach of each other for the municipal authority and the private sector to take up functions that devolve on HE by default. Often, HE is slow to take advantage of opportunities for divestiture or out sourcing. Otherwise, the central administration could contract or reduce to the "Registrar's Offices", which used to be a mere set of rooms, where staff were engaged in writing manuals for campus-wide use, servicing committees and collating or analysing data that the governing council may require for policy intervention, the size that can be accommodated by the NCTE norm of six per cent of budget.

Because the Vice-Chancellorship has a limited tenure, arguments are readily found for term limits for the registrarship, but there is a difference. The registrar's is a career appointment. Counterparts in the public service hold appointment to retirement. Both in the public service and HE, there are procedures for early discharge of office-bearers who become a liability. For now, the case for term limits is short on the advantages. There are disadvantages, however. Discontinuity is one. Another is undue dislocation from the rapid turnover.

The Constitution of Ghana's First Republic provided for the President of the Republic to be Chancellor of all public HE. Including blockage of faculty appointments, developments that were perceived to be politically motivated were common in many allegations. It is the reason separation of the presidency from HE has advocates. The Constitution of the Fourth Republic has confirmed vestment of appointments in the governing council of HE. Lately, however, by an Act of Parliament, public service remuneration is to be centrally determined. Ensuring "equal pay for equal qualification, and equal work" for fairness all round is the argument for centralisation.

HE's is unlike any other work. No bureaucrats, faculty are distinguished by capacity to break new ground in their work. While there are formal qualifications for appointments, it is instructive that the pioneer faculty of the performing and visual arts at the University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

respectively included some whose CV showed credits other than formal qualifications. Including computer technology, many disciplines on campus have those kinds of talent among the general public, available for service. Suggestion that faculty may be remunerated relative to formal qualifications or the popularity of their disciplines begins to subvert collegiality. Again, competition for the best possible faculty around the globe often requires exceptional remuneration packages. Consistent with institutional autonomy, the governing council, not any fair waged commission is the best judge in these matters.

The governing council of HE is not supposed to be dissolved, ever. Somehow, public ownership of public HE is equated to government ownership. It is how otherwise discerning members of the public begin to imagine that it is in order for government to intervene in proceedings at council, or to shut down council. It is how institutional autonomy remains fragile, even in the Fourth Republic. It is the warning that identification with HE in its essentials is not settled once for all times. It is an abiding challenge.

Conclusion

From developments that go very far back already, both in concept and scope, HE is different from what it was known before. Availability of both public and private investments in post independence Africa adds to the changing landscape. Coordination for integrated national, regional, or even global systems gives added value. Cross-border mobility across institutions is one obvious advantage. For that, aims and processes of HE may not be taken for granted, but must be re-stated for understanding all round. There is a lot still to be agreed by discussion. Debate is truly joined when everybody's contribution is welcome.

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