

Seminar on ‘The social dimension of the EHEA and world-wide competition’

January 27th and 28th 2005

La Sorbonne

Mr. Michel LEVASSEUR’s presentation :

Outline

The social dimension of the EHEA through Cné-made evaluations

After reminding of the French academic framework’s main features, namely :

- the French higher education is mostly embedded into the framework of a ‘*service public*’ (public service) ensured by public institutions enjoying a certain degree of autonomy in management
- Its vocation is to welcome all the ‘*baccalauréat*’ holders in the training course they chose
- It essentially makes students trained and enables them to get national degrees which requirements are set by the ministry
- Moderate tuition fees are set at the national level by the ministry ;

the presentation’s purpose will be to underline how the national evaluation Committee (Cné) cares for social dimensions within the framework of its actions. More particularly, the following points will be developed :

- as soon as the initial diagnosis is made, the Committee sets up the framework and in particular puts forward :
 - the social role the institution must fulfil in relation to the way its student population is characterized : grant holders ratio, distribution on the basis of ‘*baccalauréat*’ ’s options when students are first admitted, types of study courses, foreign students population ...
 - its capacity to meet these expectations in relation to the evaluation of resources available : number of students/teacher ratio and number of students/administrative and maintenance staff ratio, financial resources/student ratio, average surface area per student ;
- then the Cné is particularly careful to check that the institution was able to manage its educational offer in order to meet better its student population’s expectations :
 - capacity to make its education offer change (new degree courses, removals, changes...) and possible analysis of innovation processes (responsiveness to changes in the environment)
 - institution’s capacity subsequently to change financial allocations to be invested in
 - institution’s capacity to measure its performances and to set up corrective measures (failure rates, support, guidance ...)
 - institution’s capacity to follow up its graduates’ future (surveys) and to make their integration into the labour market easier ;

- the Cné pays a specific attention to the students' working conditions :
 - quality of buildings and appropriateness
 - quality of libraries and other documentation centres (accessibility, evolution of funds...)
 - quality of computer resources and of new media available
 - sports policy and sport facilities available
 - cultural and community life
 - university medical care and assistance to students faced with serious difficulties ;
- the Cné evaluates the importance given to students in the institution's governance :
 - students' participation to elections and to the institutions' democratic life
 - students' representation in the institutions' governance (students' vice-chairman(woman)ship)
 - management of specific funds (FSDIE) and financing of students' activities.

As a conclusion, the speaker will remind of :

- the many inequalities acknowledged as a matter of fact
 - inequalities between institutions (for some, social environments have a deep impact...)
 - inequalities between subject fields (some, more than others, have to welcome weaker populations)
 - inequalities between vocational training courses and others
- and the necessity to make vigorous but detailed recommendations