

Higher Education Governance Between Democratic Culture, Academic Aspirations And Market Forces

Introduction to the Conference:
Purpose, Programme, and Expectations

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General Survey

- Purpose of Presentation: Summary of Main Findings of the Working Party Established to Prepare the Conference
- Coverage: 3 Main Points ⇒
 - Purpose of the Conference
 - Highlight Significance of the Issue
 - Explore topics, purposes, and expected clarification of governance (issues)
 - Explanation of Layout of Conference Programme
 - Illustration of Possible Outcomes

I. Purpose of the Conference

1. Significance of the Issue, Confusion of Words and of Emotions

a) Significance

- Omnipresence under numerous guises – some catchwords:
 - optimising institutional structures
 - internal and external participation and communication
 - democratic, legal and monetary steering mechanisms
 - public responsibility and autonomy
 - ensuring quality while minimizing cost
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b) Confusion

- non-English terminology:
shortcomings and vagueness
- complexity and abstraction:
moving from individual elements (catchwords) to overarching concept
- link to entrepreneurship:
emotional barriers

2. Multiple Topics, Purposes and Expected Clarifications of Governance (Issues): a Survey

a) Clarify the concept of governance in higher education

b) Formulate visions of good governance in H. E.,
related to understanding:

- mission, cultures, „mechanics“
(legal, economic, administrative), as seen from the aspects of
- Quality of education and research (as such), individual H. E.
institutions, entire political systems,
- embedded in preconceived notions

c) Concrete items

- correlating H. E. governance issues and political contexts, agendas, cultures, trends, fashions
- exploring practical „hands-on“ elements: understanding and (also) implementing „good“ governance
- job sharing between state, institution, sub-institutional structures, and the individual

3. Purpose I – Proper Sharing of Roles and Responsibilities: Identification of Demands, Choices, and their Challenges

a) Identification of core issues (legal, political, economic)

- models of institutional steering/attributing responsibilities:
 - autonomy – public responsibility
 - overall institutional orientation – principle of subsidiarity
 - central planning – individual freedom
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b) Multi - tier differentiation of roles and their institutionalisation

- levels: H. E. institution – H. E. system
- partners and stakeholders:
 - student participation (et al);
 - civil society (boards);
 - private funding

c) Typology: traditional – and more choices

- entrepreneurial
- collegial
- externally, state - run bureaucratic
- (anarchic) association of free individuals
- stakeholder / civil society institution

4. Purpose II – Correlating the H.E. Governance Issue to its Political Context

a) The conference and the CoE agenda

- Year of Democratic Citizenship through Education – enhance human rights, democracy, rule of law
- link to (conference and debate on) public good/public responsibility
- link to the Legislative Reform Programme

b) Concept and implementation of „democratic citizenship“

- issues of institutional participation – namely students
- democratic citizenship: educational good advocated by CoE
- Bologna Process after Bergen: preparing for „active citizenship“; call for student participation;
- Also Bologna Process: call for H. E. responsibility, managing change and improvement, e. g. in area of quality assurance

c) Links to general paradigm shifts in the public sector

- concept of „new public management“ – steering by contract, objectives, responsibility, and (budgetary) incentives / sanctions
- challenges of funding – mass higher education, inadequate public resources and drive for efficiency
- concepts of H. E. entrepreneurship – „commodification“ (GATS)
- H. E. (institutions) as „job machines“ – employability, technology transfer, the (EU) Lisbon Agenda, global competitiveness

d) Notions of malfunctioning, misunderstanding, distrust?

- (mutual) frustration between state and H. E. institutions?
 - failure of H. E. institutions to deliver?
 - exchange of legal steering and freedom for budgetary interventionism?
 - political correctness versus freedom of research and teaching?

e) A word of caution: do concepts of governance really have an impact on HEI's?

- inherent contradictions: new concepts versus realities of tradition and inertia; institution versus fragmentation; planning versus anarchy; „constructivism“ versus „fuzzy logic“
 - consequence: (change in) governance (at best) slow, but perhaps a (wise?) device to survive „governance fads“
 - need for differentiated analysis: the outer „technical“ elements of governance and management vs. undercurrent of live attitudes and realities
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5. Purpose III – Exploring the Concrete Issues of H. E. Governance \Rightarrow A survey of the concrete elements of the topic

- by providing a first definition of (good) governance
- by asking a basic question
- by deriving and itemizing a few questions in detail

a) An approximate definition:
(Good) higher education governance may be defined as

- that institutional set-up and those processes at strategic level of both higher education and research institutions and of national and international systems
- which are concerned with the identification, validation, and realisation of those prerequisites and consequences and of that culture and those steering devices which pertain to institutional autonomy and individual freedom in their contexts with public responsibility of the institution to be governed,

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- and which must be described and developed for the sake of maintaining and enhancing benefits
 - with regard to the well-being of individuals and society, traditional academic values and objectives, quality and quality assurance, institutional positioning, effectiveness and efficiency of mass higher education and advanced research in democratic societies
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- based on expert competence, on inclusion and participation, on the rule of law, on the freedom of ethically responsible individuals, and on mutual respect,
 - and – to add the notion of “good” governance to the definition of governance of higher education as such – serves these objectives best and at least to an optimum of compromise between conflicting aims and devices
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Basic questions derived from the definition

- What does this entail in concrete terms?
- How can answers be found and how can answers be translated into reality?
- In particular, how to indentify H. E. objectives of societal and personal benefit, and how to arrive at H. E. governance elements fit for these purposes?

b) Itemizing a few concrete questions

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- Relating – good – governance to an institution's mission, vision, role vis-a-vis internal and external, collective and individual objectives in research, teaching and learning, service to society – as seen from the viewpoint of different partners and stakeholders
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- Assessing, selecting, and developing the type(s) of structures, responsibilities, competencies and processes which best contribute to identifying and achieving valid, mission - related objectives and opportunities -

in particular:

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- shift from focus on institutional layout to perspectives of process and interaction
 - proper definition and sharing of roles, inside (institutional stratification; group participation) and outside (state; civil society; boards; stakeholders) HEI's
 - the „art“ of steering processes – leadership and management, input of expertise, ensuring inclusion, communication setting milestones,, making decisions
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- Managing „unitary“, „federalist“ and individualist“ approaches (institutional corporatism and internal job-sharing) -

in particular:

⇒ identify the role of institutional leadership and the principles of subsidiarity and collegiality

- Establish, distribute, but also intertwine sub-units, their roles and responsibilities adequately
- integrate internal partners (e. g. namely students) and external stakeholders/interest groups/the „civil society“ (boards; also donors and alumni)
- contribute to integrating interests and solving conflicts between the HEI, its component sub-units, the levels of state, individual members
- due balance between democratic „lay“ participation and professionalism, and adequate modes of participation

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- Identify and protect academic freedom of the individual and of minorities
 - a value in its own right
 - a prerequisite for creativity
 - possible clashes with overall policies of the institution
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- Assess governance matters from the viewpoint of ownership and inclusion – „forging jointness of policy“
 - linking members and stakeholders of different interests and at different levels
 - balance between bottom-up and top-down strategies
 - transparency
 - mediation
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- Contextualize HE governance with external factors
 - political (state and stakeholder/group) objectives in general, in research and teaching in particular
 - incentives and constraints due to economics, prevalent value sets, culture, location, and size
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- Explore and validate modern multi-tier institutionalisation
 - „internal“: spin-offs, technology parks, medical clinics, etc.
 - „external“: joint operations – in research and in teaching („networking“)
 - Move towards „partnerships“, „trusts“, „concerns“, „conglomerates“

- Assess tools for designing, validating, and monitoring policies and their implementation
 - overlap of governance and management issues
 - balance between regulatory approach („steering by law“), economic devices („steering by funding and remuneration“), and culture of trust („steering by confidence and conviction“)
 - shift to the „entrepreneurial university“: a reality? Pros and cons?

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- Validate the success of governance objectives, strategies and outcomes
 - the design and role of quality assurance and quality enhancement at institutional level(s)
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II. Layout of the Conference Programme

1. Emphasis on Workshops

⇒ Concept:

- selectivity; comprehensive coverage not feasible
- from macrocosm of context to microcosm of actors in HE
- integrate topic-related presentations into the workshops
- general introductory presentations in plenary to provide overarching perspectives
- concluding panel debate to integrate workshop findings

2. Hence: 4 topical workshops

- The mission of higher education in the changed societal context and its implications for governance;
- The governance of higher education systems;
- The governance of higher education institutions;
- The actors of higher education governance.

3. Suggestion of some points to consider (itemisation)

- Mission and stakeholders: considering more and more diversified missions of higher education institutions, and how this reflects governance models and involvement of different stakeholders in the decision-making process.
- Governance of entire higher education systems: looking into governance of “complete” systems of higher education, i.e. the national – or even European and global – level, including identification of current practices and best practices.

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- Autonomy and external participation: autonomy of an institution and the role of society, state, and other “external” stakeholders in governance.
 - Internal participation and levels of governance and management: concepts of governance within a higher education institution and practical implementation.
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- Interdependence between culture, management and governance: influence of the overall cultural setting on higher education governance, different notions of governance between the strategic policy level and the technocratic management approach, also related to the discussion on legitimacy of representatives in governing bodies and the call for professionalism.
- Stimulating stakeholder participation: from making legal provisions for stakeholder – namely student – participation to ensuring widespread acceptance of opportunities to participate in democratic governance structures.

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- Collectivism in governance and safeguarding academic freedom in research, teaching, and learning: considering the limits of governance and institutional policies vis-à-vis the individual person.
 - The role of higher education governance for fostering democratic culture of tolerance and inclusion: design and examples of positive influence of higher education governance on the wider community, especially in conflict areas
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4. Suggestion of approaches:

- Relate the itemisation to the concrete governance challenges mentioned above
 - Integrate the specific CoE advantage of debate between representatives of state, of HEI's, and of partners/stakeholders
 - Approach complexity of the governance issue from basic, archetypal questions and conflicts
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III. Expected Outcomes

- Conference „per se“:
 - forum for exploring the topic;
 - documentation via publication;
 - possible follow-ups, e.g. workshops on specific issues
- Political Programmes:
 - influence real political decision-making on governance issues;
 - contribute to „European Year of Citizenship through Education“;
 - fostering participatory elements

■ Bologna Process:

link between HE governance and
accepting/developing institut.
responsibility for quality

■ Limits:

total coverage impossible – some
findings, but more debates to come



