

University management – improvements and dilemma in the context of equal opportunities

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Abstract: Equal opportunity is a relatively new concept which first of all must be understood, and then implemented as a premise and not as a result of current activities. Equal opportunity in organizations is a new way of achieving results and the modern management puts it as a necessary principle among old ones, such as benchmarking, corporate governance, customer relationship marketing, experience curve, strategic alliances etc. This paper explains the equal opportunity in higher education institutions, their improvements and dilemma in implementing equal opportunities.

Keywords: university management, equal opportunity, strategy, discrimination, interested parties.

1. Introduction to University Management in the Contemporary Context

During the last years, most higher education institutions have faced difficulties in managing specific processes and activities since the international financial crisis affected them both directly and indirectly.

The current situation for universities

from the context point of view shows that:

- less resources are allocated from the public budget
- new national normative rules changed the way of many operations
- many measures have been taken at national level under the name of the reform as well as at institutional level which generated frustration and confusion

- lack of human resources in universities both for professors and administrative staff which meant overload and overworking for the current employees
- contradiction in implementing quality management with scarce resources
- huge increase of bureaucracy
- many behavioral changes from all interested parties: students have become more demanding, especially when they pay the tuition, parents have started to claim for better results, professors have complained for too much extra-teaching activities, partners have reduced their involvement, administrative staff has become unable to cope with stress and extra-work etc.

In addition, under these conditions, universities had to take part above all to different projects and to advance financing their activities.

2. University Management and Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunity is not a new concept. During the last years, it has been used as a principle of restructuring different policies at European, national and institutional level. The main idea is that all people should be treated similarly without any barriers or preferences or specific distinctions among them.

Equal opportunity as a management principle promotes the need of identifying most qualified persons for a specific adjective, activity or project among employees.

In higher education institutions, many changes have taken place with regard to equal opportunity. At present, equal opportunities in universities is considered applied most with regard to the students' treatment,

but it is to be considered as well, related to the university staff.

The university management takes into consideration the equal opportunities for students in many ways:

- students are not discriminated in the process of their knowledge evaluation
- students are all beneficiaries of the same learning facilities and infrastructure
- students are not restricted at all to participate to different contests or events.

More than this, universities implementing the quality management system have started to consider the students an interested party and have wanted to understand their expectations in order to better satisfy them. Even so, some dilemmas appeared in this context, such as:

a) -the willingness and actions to integrate into groups those individual students who, from one reason to another, have been neglected, on one side

and

-the new discrimination toward some old members of the groups who have been integrated from the beginning but started to be neglected since the new ones came, on the other side.

b) -the management preoccupation of financial support for students and a more positive attitude to the students coming from families with law resources, on one side,

and

-the discrimination toward students coming from same kind of family incomes, but who couldn't apply for the financial support having income just one unit more than the limit.

At the same time, university management considers the equal opportunity as a principle which must be taken into

consideration as well as for its own employees, both professors and administrative staff.

Equal opportunities among professors mean no discrimination when they have the same characteristics for their promotion, when they are involved in bureaucratically operations, when it is made the schedule for the semester, when it is a chance for a mobility etc. Many times, there is a propensity to feel discriminated and therefore, people become frustrated but just because they have not know the entire judgment.

The dilemmas that can come up are:

a) -professors who are not so much involved in extra-activities and therefore, not supported by management in different activities, such as international mobility, feel discriminated, on one side

and

-professors who are hard working and always present to extra tasks, and therefore, supported and encouraged by management feel also an unfair treatment from their colleagues, since they know they really deserve their appreciation, on the other side

b) -professors who help the administrative staff in different activities, feeling that

they do too much for them, on one side

-administrative staff who contribute to activities for professors feeling that they work too hard and with no compensation in return, on the other side.

3. Conclusions

University management has improved many processes toward equal opportunity principle, but it still faces many contradictions.

More than this, higher education institutions has to accept the equal opportunity as a premise and not as a result. that means that university can develop processes and activities involving equally people according to their competences and at the same time, the management can suggest different actions which will contribute to the achieving of the equal opportunity.

A good university management is that which promotes strategies based on equal opportunities. Besides, university is more than any company, a learning organization and has the willingness to rethink its objectives and methods.

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