



The Dialogue of Higher Education Institutions with Their Partners

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The traditional role of universities

- Autonomous national institutions of HE with only limited goals and accountability to their region and the society in general
- The mission of the universities is to promote free scientific research and to provide higher education based on research
- The universities' basic functions (teaching and research) have aspired to the achievement of national and international reputation and significance





The third role of universities

- The universities have become more active in serving the needs of their regions and society
- The universities have opened up more than before to their partners and external stakeholders
- The increased activity (the third role of the universities) has come together with the emergence of new approaches to institutional management





The old model

- **Key parameters**
 - National (government) funding to meet national labour market and RTD needs
 - Single paymaster and long term security in funding
 - Predictable cohorts of young full-time students
 - Provision of infrastructure to support the pursuit of individual academic research and scholarship
- **Management implications**
 - Limited demands on university management
 - Supports academic self management and collegiality





The new model

● Key parameters

- Mass higher education and life-long learning
- Pursuit of efficiency gains in public funding
- New ICT based modes of knowledge production and distribution outside the universities

● Management implications

- Privileged relations with government undermined
- New intermediaries articulate demands of others
- New requirements for locally relevant knowledge production, gateways to global info resources, adaptable workforce, leadership in regional governance



Regional Dimensions of the Universities

- Increase of the level of education
- Effects on the economic sector
- Universities as industrial dynamos
 - Technology villages, entrepreneurship, spin-off's
 - Education and consultancy, R & D
- Cultural and social benefits
- Way to internationalisation
- Putting the city on the map





The mission of a responsive university

- Do the universities have a dilemma in balancing the endeavours towards
 - a national and international academic reputation and success and
 - bringing an interface with the partners and external engagement into the mainstream of teaching and research?
- In order to benefit their stakeholders best the universities have to fulfil high standard international criteria in teaching and research





Self assessment of stakeholder interface

- **Synthesis:** Does the university recognise that by its very nature the processes in partnership are broadly based embracing economic, technological, environmental, social, cultural and political agendas?
- **Objectives:** Are the objectives of partnerships clear?
- **Collaboration:** Are procedures in place to support inter-university collaboration?





Self assessment ... (continued/2)

- **Mapping and measuring:** Who talks to whom about what? Where do the students come from and go to?
- **Human resource development:** Is the partnership agenda incorporated into HR policies?
- **Focus:** What is the focus of the university in the partnership interface (e.g. regional, nation-wide in a sector etc.) and the distinctive contribution thereupon?





Self assessment ... (continued/3)

- **Geographical identity:** What are the unique features of the region to which the university can contribute?
- **Regional policy and leadership:** What are the main drivers of regional policy? What role does the university play in regional leadership?
- **Teaching and learning:** Have labour market needs and intelligence influenced the shape and contents of teaching and learning programmes?





Self assessment ... (continued/4)

- **Research:** Is the university providing its partners with intelligence for their future planning?
- **Communications:** Are the needs and priorities of the partners communicated through the university?
- **Responsiveness:** Is the university able to respond quickly to unanticipated external needs?
- **Mainstream:** Has the engagement in interface with the partners become a part of the academic mainstream of the university?





Recommendations for an improved dialogue (CRE, EU Comm., ERT)

- In order for the dialogue to be coherent, it needs to be based on a strategy which respects the academic mission of the university
 - the choice of partners (some are automatic choices, stakeholders select, universities can also select)
- Institutionalisation of the dialogue with key stakeholders; long-term development plans for the university in its local, regional, national and even international environments





Recommendations for an improved dialogue, cont. (2)

- representation of important stakeholders on university and research councils; representation of the university on relevant external bodies
- Dialogue needs to be conducted at different levels, depending on the partnership in question
 - a clear policy is needed to create a relevant division of labour between the different levels and assure sufficient and genuine information flows within the university





Recommendations for an improved dialogue, cont. (3)

- Dialogue needs to be managed, marketed, encouraged and developed; the people within the institution must be convinced of its importance
 - a special development officer is needed to facilitate a fruitful dialogue with the stakeholders
- Universities have a responsibility to assist stakeholders to articulate expectations in terms of level, specificity and priority





Recommendations for an improved dialogue, cont. (4)

- partners must become aware of the parameters of autonomy, resources and expertise within which the universities may operate
- Universities must be pro-active in the quest for dialogue with their stakeholders and not just wait for partners to knock at the door
 - universities can learn from their partners in trying to better understand their needs and to present their services





Recommendations for an improved dialogue, cont. (5)

- **Universities and partners need to be sensitive to the dynamics and evolution of partnership**
 - identification of conceptual frameworks to enhance understanding and to accelerate progress in reaching objectives

