EMPOWERING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS THROUGH INFORMATION SHARING AND IMPROVED GOVERNANCE

B4 Information Sharing and Improved Governance

Experiences in strengthening information sharing systems and quality assurance in Mexico

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents some considerations about the process that Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) in Mexico have developed to strengthen information systems as a basis for better accountability about their performance.
· **Governance** does not imply that only the government makes decisions and carries them out, but also the civil society can and must participate. The IHE become a transmission bridge of paramount importance in processes of transparency, accountability and control.
The basis of governance is undoubtedly transparency, and within this transparency, society must also participate contributing to the proper exercise of the resources and in decision-making. To the extent to which citizens actively participate in the different processes and generate proposals for public policy, there will be a better development of society that will strengthen democratic life.
· **Shared information** makes it possible to know about the activities and results of organizations and public institutions.

· **Transparency** is the public knowledge of the ensemble of activities carried out by different authorities and that gives us the opportunity to learn about the use of resources.
2. BACKGROUND

· The Information System of the Institutions of Public Higher Education (IHE) in Mexico was created in a more systematic way in the early 90's.
· Its origin is associated with the creation of supplementary funding to support infrastructure, education coverage, training academic staff, quality of educational programs, improved management and relationship with society.
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1970

National Council for Science and Technology (CONACyT)

1984

Postgrades of excellence and quality of CONACyT

1991

Born the Social Audit Program

1993

Inter-institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES)

1997

IHE were not audited

1999

For the review of the Public Accounts, the Deputies scheduled two IHE audits

2000

Council for Evaluation of Higher Education (COPAES)

2001

A cooperation agreement was signed between the ASF and AMOCVIES, about audit, so these actions represent an opportunity to add to the IHE the process of transparency and accountability

2004

The National University of Mexico (UNAM) presented to the Deputies its financial statements from year 2000
3. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Given the importance of educational work in our country and the need to raise its academic quality standards with a focus on continuous improvement, IHE are driven to adopt and implement actions that contribute significantly to this aim, based on the following national and international models quality:
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- ISO 9001-2000
- CIEES-COPAES
- CONACYT
- EBC
- Education based on competences/abilities, PMETyC/CONOCER
- System Quality Management for Educational Institutions (IWA-2 International Workshop Agreement 2)
- Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education
- Evaluation and Accreditation of Postgrade
General objectives of program accreditation

1. To publicly recognize the quality of study programs in Mexican IHE and encourage their continuous improvement.

2. To ensure that the quality of academic programs achieve national and international quality parameters.

3. To provide study programs with the appropriate tools to ensure the achievement of their objectives.
4. To foster communication and interaction among different sectors of society to attain education of higher quality and more social relevance.

5. To promote significant changes in institutions and in the higher education system in line with present and future societal needs.

6. To encourage the institutions and academic organizations to fulfill their mission and goals.
APPLICATION OF INTEGRAL QUALITY IN INSTITUTIONS OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

- Evaluation and accreditation of study programs
- Education based on the performance of the teaching staff
- ISO 9001 Process Certification
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- Academic staff
- Curriculum
- Assessment instruments
- Institutional Services
- Students
- Infrastructure
- Research
- Outreach
- Academic and administrative regulations
- Planning and Evaluation
- Administration and Finance

Academic staff
Curriculum
Assessment instruments
Institutional Services
Students
Infrastructure
Research
Outreach
Academic and administrative regulations
Planning and Evaluation
Administration and Finance

- System
- Responsibilities
- Resources
- Implementation
- Measurement

- Courses and assessments
- Teaching materials
- Teaching
- Process evaluation

INDICATORS
SFS - SIN - INEGI - ANUIES - CENEVAL - CUMex
4. TRANSPARENCY, INFORMATION AND QUALITY

- Improving the quality of the IHE is a priority given their growing role in contributing to the economic and cultural development of a more equitable and prosperous society. That is why great efforts are made to plan, measure and improve their quality, as required since this requires having valid and reliable information to guide decision-making.
· One of the mechanisms of quality assurance that is present in many countries and regions, is the evaluation or accreditation of Higher Education Institutions by agencies established or recognized by the governments.

· Some quality criteria applied in most assessment processes to which accreditation agencies subject the IHE, are the obligation to possess public systems of quantitative, qualitative, objective and impartial information that allow comparability between institutions and they are aligned with the policies and strategic objectives.
The globalization of economy and internationalization of Higher Education, involve a critical aspect related to the development of new information and communication technologies. We live in an interconnected and interdependent world, with all its positive and negative aspects, and no predictable relationship between incidence and consequence. That is how contact and interaction is facilitated between regions and countries, agencies and academic networks, IHE and individuals.
· To the extent that the demand and offer of Education Superior has increased, so does the interest and need to make comparisons and benchmarks to improve the capacity and performance of national systems.

· These changes and challenges have produced structural, financial and political impacts on academic institutions. This is because the answers to the internationalization not only affect departments and offices of international affairs, but the entire institution and their educational activities.
· Many Higher Education Institutions have adjusted to the new challenges, devoting great efforts to establish collaboration with organizations, institutions and companies in their local environment. They have also increased multilateral cooperation and introduced elements of "internationalization at home" (intercultural modules, exchange opportunities and abroad internship programs, courses in English, welcome and integration centers, etc.).
The proposed model

The elements of the Integral Information System are:

· The **Basic Indicator System** consists of four types of relationship referring to context, input, process and product.
· **Strategic Indicators System.** Oriented to quantifying the achievement of objectives, quality comparison and case studies of best practices, contributing to the spread of attitudes and policies based on the analysis of the reality of Higher Education in Latin America based on available evidence.
Principles on which the Information System is based

- **User-friendliness.** It must be able to provide adequate, clear and accessible information to each of the groups of people to which it is addressed.

- **Adaptation to framework.** The design of any system of indicators requires a previous framework conceptual from which the indicator selection is made and these are structured in a hierarchical or related manner.

- **Holistic approach.** The proposed model is a Global Assessment model.
· **Coordination of information.** The information system should include mechanisms to ensure that information is collected, stored, handled and displayed in an optimal way.

· **Continuous Improvement.** The indicators are not direct quality measures, but partial descriptions of an object or phenomenon, so it must be in a continuous improvement process, allowing adaptation of indicators to the changing reality that they seek to measure, maintaining maximum comparability.
· **Scalability.** Allow the successive addition of other indicators when there is the capacity to generate and obtain the necessary data.

· **Information facing ranking.** Profiling institutions and develop indicators that are feasible for all organizations, obtained in their own institutions and integrated into a set of institutional typologies.
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IMPACTS

EFFECTS

PRODUCTS

PROCESSES

RESOURCES

CONTEXT

COMPUTING PLATFORM

STRATEGIC SYSTEM

BASIC SYSTEM
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- **STRUCTURE**: Profile, Offer, Infrastructure
- **RESULT**: Teaching, Demand, Enrolment, Human Resources, Result, Research, Production, Funds Raised, Transfer + Extension, Patents, Lifelong Education
- **CONTEXT**: Structure Economic and Education of Environment
5. CONCLUSIONS

· Transparency and the right of access to information allow society to engage in the different processes that involve public resources. The important thing is to make an empirical hypothesis of performance and to generate monitoring and control of the actions of the different actors.
· Information shared in a timely and reliable manner is an indispensable element for transparency and accountability. The consolidation of compared information databases is a necessary step for securing the Accreditation and Evaluation System of Higher Education in Mexico.
· It is important that the results of accreditation and evaluation be subject to the principles of maximum transparency so that they legitimize the various decisions aimed to enhance academic development.
Parallel to an open government, the consolidation process of the Accreditation and Evaluation System of Higher Education in Mexico, should have as primary objectives knowing, reviewing, analyzing and implementing processes at an international level, with the conviction that the ultimate benefit will always be for society, with a commitment to train young people with the higher educational standards, based on the principles of transparency and accountability.
· Transparency in the different processes performed in governing bodies provide insight into the way financial resources are applied; Furthermore, if there is a clear public participation, trust and positive indicators are generated within the society that impact in society and in recognition of the country, by international organizations.
Mexican Higher Education has the challenge to involve the different actors of society in the key processes of teaching, research, outreach and transfer of knowledge.

Pertinence and good results allow for a better use of resources and strengthen a social and economic policy that increases the levels of productivity, competitiveness and social justice.

We aspire to a democratic society that stands for its active role in decision-making.
If we cannot measure what is valuable, we will end up valuing only what is measurable

Bimbaum