Improving the University Governance through the Promotion of a Quality Culture and Institutional Self-Reflection

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Benchmarking institutional performance

Benchmarking is increasingly viewed as a more investigative process, which enables the structured sharing of ideas and good practices on institutional performance.

“benchmarking involves first examining and understanding [...] internal work procedures, then searching for ‘best practices’ in other organizations [...] and finally adapting those practices [...] to improve performance.” Epper (1999:26)

Part of the dynamic of benchmarking is the promotion of quality culture.
Promoting a quality Culture

Quality culture is a process that can be enforced to stimulate shared values and beliefs by structural decisions.

In Europe, quality culture is viewed as “an organisational culture that intends to enhance quality permanently and is characterised by two distinct elements:

- a cultural/psychological element of shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment towards quality
- a structural/managerial element with defined processes that enhance quality and aim at coordinating individual efforts.”

(EUA 2006: 10)

It is increasingly accepted that the creation of quality assurance starts from the establishment of quality culture.
Engaging with change at EPAU in Algiers

EPAU is a public institution of Higher Education.

It has been created in the 1970s to provide higher education in the field of architecture and urban planning.

Its missions and goals have been centrally defined by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

With 900 students enrolled, EPAU is considered in Algeria to be a national pole of excellency.

Tackling worldwide issues related to quality and relevance, also linked to input-based metrics (quantitatively indicated metrics such as study time, amount of student workload, etc.) towards more outcome-based metrics (such as employability and research productivity).
How can we develop an organizational culture committed to quality improvement by involving all stakeholders (leadership, academic and administrative staff, students and researchers) in the task of self-assessment and the consecutive step of developing ways of improving performance and education outcomes?
Engaging with change at EPAU in Algiers

Step 1: Explaining to stakeholders the necessity to rethink accepted beliefs and practices through self-reflection.

Objective: to raise awareness on the urgent need to develop an internal quality culture and, on the other hand, to promote the introduction of internal quality management.
République algérienne démocratique et populaire
Ministère de l’enseignement supérieur et de la recherche scientifique
Ecole Polytechnique d’Architecture et d’Urbanisme

Cellule Assurance Qualité, EPAU:
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Mars 2014
Engaging with change at EPAU in Algiers

Etablissement d’enseignement supérieur : EPAU

Tous les domaines :
- Gouvernance
- Formations
- Recherche
- Vie universitaire
- Infrastructures
- Coopération internationale
- Relations socio-économiques

Politique et procédures pour le management de la qualité

Référentiel qualité national/interne (Charte qualité):
- lignes directrices et objectifs à atteindre (références).

Auto-évaluation : degré d’atteinte des objectifs

Stratégie pour l’amélioration continue de la qualité(niveaux des programmes et des diplômes)

Cellule qualité

- Instances pédagogiques de l’établissement
- Cellule d’information/orientation
- Interface université/entreprises
- Observatoire de l’emploi et suivi des étudiants sortants
**Step 2:** Conducting *institutional self-reflection*.

One key aspect that encourages *honest self-assessment* is to clarify, from the outset, that the *objective* of the exercise is *not set to identify underperforming persons* or departments in order to punish them, but rather *aims at instigating collective self-improvement*. 
Conducting institutional self-reflection

**Domains of self-reflection**

1. **GOUVERNANCE**
   - Organisation et pilotage
   - Ressources humaines
   - Politique budgétaire

2. **FORMATIONS**
   - Participation
   - Qualité de vie

3. **RECHERCHE**
   - Potentiel et stratégie
   - Mise en œuvre et suivi
   - Valorisation

4. **VIE UNIVERSITAIRE**
   - Insertion professionnelle
   - Employabilité

5. **INFRASTRUCTURE**
   - Information
   - Admission

6. **COOPERATION INTERNATIONALE**
   - Insertion professionnelle
   - Employabilité

7. **RELATIONS SOCIO-ECONOMIQUES**
   - Pilotage de l’offre de formation
   - Lisibilité et visibilité
   - Environnement de la formation
   - Démarche qualité pédagogique

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A total of **300 students** were involved in the survey.

The questionnaire that was distributed to **students** focused on their *experience with learning* and on *measuring their satisfaction*.

**All academic staff** were involved in the survey.

The questionnaire that was distributed to **academics** focused on assessing their *satisfaction regarding institutional governance, pedagogy and work performance*.

About **70 administration staff** took part to the survey.

The questionnaire that was distributed to **administration staff** focused on assessing their *satisfaction regarding institutional governance and work performance*.
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Discussing mechanisms of improving quality levels

Step 3: organising a workshop in order to discuss the mechanisms that can help in improving quality levels.

One key aspect that encourages honest self-assessment is to clarify, from the outset, that the objective of the exercise is not set to identify underperforming persons or departments in order to punish them, but rather aims at instigating collective self-improvement.

Establishing a Code of Good Governance Practices
Participation of all stakeholders in the implementation of a quality assurance process based on the instigation of a quality culture is essential.

Developing a quality culture takes time and efforts, because it is deeply related to accepted practices, values, and beliefs.

The complexity of the framework in which internal quality assurance dynamic operate should not be underestimated, as attempts to establish a quality culture could be undermined by factors such as the lack of autonomy, restricting external regulations, financial constraints.
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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