

Chapter 17

Integration of Mission Into Assessment and Assurance of Learning Programs

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ABSTRACT

The concept of transnational education seems to have sprang from dormancy to heightened activity in the last three decades. Higher education institutions (HEI) have been growing and moving from one nation to another in pursuit of realization of certain set goals. These goals have a clear bearing on the mission of the institution. This chapter gives an overview of the perspectives open to HEI, it elaborates on the process of assessment of mission outcomes of an institution on the basis of its strategic fit between its resources and its environment. A more specific comparison of Baldrige criteria as a performance model with the business sector is explored; however, the basic assumption of the writers was that HEI are nonprofit-oriented organizations. Further, through a case study which is a university in Africa with historic connections to the US, the process of assessment is explained. It is through the experience which the team went through as the conducted the assessment that recommendations and conclusions were given.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary institutions of higher education, operations are very dynamic due to the unpredictability of their operating environment which forces them to respond by screening the environment and adopting strategies that position them as viable in the market. Universities' contemporary functions can be classified under four categories of; education, basic scientific research, community service, and train-

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ing a qualified work force, Özdem, (2011) citing Gürüz, Çuhubi, Çengor, Türker, & Yurtsever (1994). Universities can also be classified on the basis of the functions they provide, as “research universities” and “mass education universities”. These functions carried out by the Universities and Higher Education Institutions inform the mission of the same. Ellis & Miller (2014), argue out that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are critical to the delivery of education for all in any nation state. What they believe and what they do are critical components to creating societal impact. But what they believe and do is not always clear. The clarity of the same would have been realized if the mission outcome of the Higher Education Institution would have been clear. Internationally we have a collection of international trade agreements which address the aspect of global provision of educational services. The most notable of these is the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO). As a precursor to the WTO Seattle meeting in 1999, a background note on Educational Services was prepared. This background note specifically identified direct (immigration rules) and indirect (recognition) barriers to education (Vlasceanu & Wilson, 2000). This however does not mean that transnational education began after 1999.

As per Vlasceanu and Wilson (2000), strategies and perspectives to the success of transnational education are many and they have been constantly mutating. They distinguished the following three inter-related perspectives:

The first Perspective relates to the actual delivery mechanisms and arrangements. These can take the following forms:

- **Franchising:** Defined as the process whereby a higher education institution (“franchiser”) from a certain country authorizes another institution or organization (“franchisee”), from the same or from another country, to provide its (i.e. the franchiser’s) educational services (e.g. the whole or a part of one or more of its approved study programs/qualifications).
- **Program Articulations (Twinning etc.):** Referring to those inter-institutional arrangements whereby two or more institutions agree to define jointly a study program in terms of study credits and credit-transfers, so that students pursuing their studies in one institution have their credits recognized by the other, and accepted for transfer in order to continue their studies.
- **Branch Campus:** Established by a higher education institution from one country in another country in order to offer there its own educational programs/ qualifications.
- **Off-Shore Institution:** An autonomous institution which belongs, in terms of its organization and contents, to one particular national educational system, but without necessarily having a campus in the country (or system) to which it belongs, and is established as an institution in another country.
- **Corporate Universities:** Which organize their own higher education institutions or study programs offering qualifications, without them belonging to any national system of higher education.
- **International Institutions:** Offering “international” qualifications that are not part of a specific educational systems.
- **Distance-Learning:** A wide range of learning activities characterized by the separation of the learner from the teacher. These learning activities, or the framework within which they are organised, may or may not belong to the higher education system of a given country.
- **Virtual Universities:** Whose only contact with the student is by remote means (electronic, much more through web based technologies or hard copy).

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