

Chapter 11

Institutional Transformation and Stakeholders Engagement for Quality Management Model in African Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of cooperative governance in the post-1994 South African higher education system brought complex stakeholder dynamics in the leadership and governance of university governing councils. A major concern of these changes was to institutionalize quality management systems. However, these changes brought its own complexities. Key features of this complexity revolved around cooperation and information sharing in the university governance in spite of ideological differences. Using the concept of culture developed from a multi-theoretical approach and data collected from institutional documents available in the public domain, interviews with members of the university council, and surveys of university staff, the chapter examines the extent of the relationship between public tolerance and different stakeholders involved in the university governance. This is with a view to recommend the need for effective governance and quality management system based on the professionalization of governance practices and institutionalized quality management processes.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the extent to which the relationship between public tolerance and keeping the different stakeholders involved in the university governance process informed about key governance information is contributing to effective governance across historically black universities and colleges. This is due to the discourse about the role of university governing bodies in providing effective gover-

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nance in response to competing stakeholder expectations that has been a source of debate among several higher education researchers and policy makers (Gibbons, 1998; Duderstadt, et al., 2008; Berdahl, 2008; Maassen & Cloete, 2002; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Carnoy, 1999). Across the international scene, globalisation, the post 9/11 terror attacks, the Arab spring, Brexit and the uncontrolled migration into Europe has instigated deep hate and indifference across the affected countries. These discourses have affected the business of higher education and its governance structures in view of the increasing student population, human rights awareness and funding. Furthermore, the university governing bodies nowadays as part of their governance practise have had to respond to politics of race, divisionism, separation and supremacy when handling institutional core businesses of effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, participation and responsiveness. All these have implications on the quality management of universities and other higher education institutions.

In the American higher education system, the majority of Historically Black Colleges and Universities were established before 1964, with a primary mission of providing a quality education to African Americans (Vedder, 2010; Fischer, 2014). Today, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are facing a changed environment in higher education (Duderstadt, & Womack, 2003; Boland, & Gasman, 2014). Along with this changed environment have come many of the opportunities and challenges faced by traditionally White institutions. The nature of these opportunities and challenges include many variables, including demographic changes and changing delivery mechanisms, globalization, new accreditation standards, assessment, participatory governance, changing expenditure patterns, and changing faculty workload, to name a few (Tatum, 2010; Kelderman, 2010). The governance challenge being experienced in the higher education field is more problematic as there are no fixed practises on how to respond to aftereffects to these uncontrolled events. Given this reality, this chapter is not intended to sound defeatist or pessimistic but highlight the precariousness nature of the state of higher education in Africa.

For instance, the historically black universities in the South African higher education system have faced similar challenges at systemic and institutional levels. To overcome these challenges, the education system had to be transformed to be locally relevant and internationally competitive (Jansen, 2004; Jansen et al., 2007; Badat, 2008). As part of the several institutional policies of national transformation, the policy of cooperative governance was chosen to bring change in the higher education system. However, the implementation of this policy has been straddled with conflicting interpretations by different interest stakeholders at institutional level where the changes were most needed. As such it is not surprising that institutional governance by stakeholders across the numerous historically black universities in the post 1994 South African Higher Education System continues to be characterised by conflict and unrest (Council for Higher Education, 2004a). The major governance assumption of cooperative governance is that it should be seen as a social contract between all stakeholders (CHE, 2004a). Another goal was the suspension of sectoral interests in the broader cause of institutional transformation, thus seeking to resolve the campus conflicts that were disabling higher education across the country (Moja & Hayward, 2000). However, this has not been achieved due mainly to quality management challenges. According to the independent assessor reports commissioned by the Department of Education key areas of conflict and unrest between the university staff and the university governing councils have centred on inability of the university councils to adequately respond to several university staff and students' demands and expectations over often protracted periods of time (Department of education report on University of the North, 1997; university of Transkei, 1998; university of Fort Hare, 1999; University of Kwa Zulu-Natal, 2011).

However, we claim that two conditions are central to this problematic. Firstly, poignant absence of a culture of debate and tolerance and secondly, keeping the different stakeholders involved in the univer-

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