Chapter 6
Quality Management and Academic Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Quality management in higher education is one of the measures that institutions put in place to ensure that courses and programs that are offered meet international and accreditation standards. This chapter examines how academic leaders can promote and manage quality in higher education institutions. Higher education institutions and senior faculty members appear to improve performance by ensuring that quality assurance unit enforces effective delivery to increase students and parents' satisfaction. Promotion of quality and the management of quality is not about long service but an exhibition of effective leadership that will help higher education institutions to navigate through the turbulence of challenges facing higher education institutions today. To achieve this, the academic leader is supposed to assist institutions to pursue their vision and mission to enable them to effectively manage quality.

INTRODUCTION

The wind blowing around the world in higher education institutions has raised global concerns about a need to ensure that higher education institutions are well managed and responding to the quality needs of students, parents, employers and governments. The world is changing so are higher education institutions. The changing nature of higher education institutions also calls for educational administrators, human resources departments and heads of departments as well as program coordinators to ensure that the institutions also respond to the dynamic nature of our institutions. The changes taking place in higher education institutions in the recent times raise concerns about the issue of quality management and how academic leadership should respond to the changes while ensuring that quality is well managed in the

higher education institutions. The increasing demand for higher education by many people in several countries has put pressure on higher education institutions to introduce new programs and courses while others have mounted courses that could be studied on part time basis, through distance and online, as well as blended and even through sandwich mode. This initiatives have made providers of higher education to help meet the growing demand so as to allow those working but need higher education to take advantage. However the widening of participation through the introduction of different programs and different study modes cannot be compromised with quality delivery.

Paradoxically, promoting and managing quality cannot happen in a vacuum but needs effective academic leadership to help institutions navigate through such turbulence of change. Higher education institutions in many parts of the world are 'undergoing profound and rapid changes which force educational systems to respond to ensure that the quality of life' in our societies is improved (Maguad & Krone, 2012, p. 10). Institutions are responding to the changes to ensure that there is proper accountability, transparency and value for money for those who invest in higher education. Some countries response to the challenges facing higher education institutions by cutting down non-basic services, introduce part time work instead of full time, outsourcing some positions such as security, cleaners and laundry staff, among others. It is worth to note that there should be academic leaders to give direction to institutions and ensure there is effective management of any quality management initiative to enable the institutions achieve their objectives.

The training of skillful and knowledgeable workforce by higher education institutions to meet national development needs will be very difficult as far as creation of competitive edge for quality enhancement in higher education is concerned (Khan, 2008). This chapter is aimed at examining the concept of quality, and what is quality management in higher education institution? How could academic leaders promote and sustain quality management in their institutions so as to bring improvement? Answers to these questions will help deepen our understanding of quality management in higher education institutions and the role that educational leadership could play to make the quality initiatives in their institutions become a success. It will draw the attention of leaders of higher educational institutions to the importance of honesty and accountable for their stewardship. And to comprehend that to achieve quality, is a process, hence if institutions are to improve through best practices, then the issue of quality management should remain paramount in higher education institutions.

WHAT IS QUALITY MANAGEMENT?

To answer the above question, we will first of all look at the two concepts; quality and management in separate lenses, before examining the meaning of quality management and how it is viewed in higher education institutions. The concept of quality which will be examined in the first lens seem simple to explain but in reality means different to different people and also depends on the context in which the concept of quality is being viewed or perceived. According to Csizmadia (2006) explanation of the concept of quality has a range of overlapping meaning. Some critics view quality as a complex and multi-faceted construct that is very difficult to assign a single definition or interpretation to it (Cheng & Tam, 1997; Becket & Brookes, 2006), but even if an interpretation is offered it will depend on which institution wants quality and what quality agenda they are pursuing. On the contemporary agenda of many higher educa-

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