

Assylbekova A., Iskakova G.

Managing strategic reform in the frame of the Bologna process

The paper aims at identifying the role of department head in managing strategic reforms in the frame of the Bologna process. The study is based on the academic staff`s and the dean`s views and attitudes towards the role of the head in implementing changes and the effects of these modifications on instruction and learning. This research revealed that while university support and autonomy in decision making are crucial to implement reforms in the department, the head needs to address the main dimensions highlighted in Bologna documents within the scope of given authority. The dean and the faculty similarly understood the role of HOD. Thus, they conceived it dealing with supervision and supporting research in the department. In fact the dean undertook these activities. However, the staff members were expected the HOD to emphasize on managing resources and put more effort on leadership role. The dean actively promoted adoption of the curricula and study programs in line with the Bologna declaration objectives. The Bologna process objectives implementation led to more focus on student-centred learning and increase of students interests to subjects. The research findings suggested that in the framework of new reforms, HOD should put more emphasize on leadership.

Key words: the Bologna process, reform, higher education, department.

Асылбекова Ә.З., Исакаова Ғ.З.

Болон үрдісі аясында стратегиялық реформаны басқару

Мақаланың мақсаты Болон үрдісі аясында жүзеге асырылып отырған стратегиялық реформаларды басқарудағы факультет деканының ролін анықтау болып табылады. Жұмыста профессорлық-оқытушы құрамы мен факультет деканының факультет басшысының өзгерістер енгізудегі ролі мен енгізілген жаңалықтардың оқыту үрдісіне әсері мәселесіне көзқарасы қарастырылады. Зерттеу нәтижелері бойынша университеттің қолдауы мен шешім қабылдаудағы автономия жаңа реформаларды жүзеге асыруда маңыздылығын көрсетті. Факультет декандары Болон үрдісі қағидаларын өзінің құзыреті аясында жүзеге асыру қажет. Факультет деканы мен профессорлық-оқытушы құрамы декан ролін толыққанды түсінеді. Олардың ойынша деканның ролі факультеттің ғылыми-зерттеу жұмысын басқарып, қолдау болып табылады. Дегенмен, факультеттің профессорлық-оқытушы құрамы декан бұған қоса ресурстарды басқарып, өзінің көшбасшылық қасиеттерін көрсете білу қажет деп санайды. Болон үрдісі қағидаларын енгізу студентке бағытталған оқытуды дамытуға және студенттердің оқу пәндеріне деген қызығушылығын арттырды. Жаңа реформаларды жүзеге асыру аясында факультет декандары өздерінің көшбасшылық қасиеттерін дамытуға көңіл бөлу қажет.

Түйін сөздер: Болон үрдісі, реформалар, жоғары білім беру, факультет.

Асылбекова А.З., Исакаова Г.З.

Управление стратегическими реформами в контексте Болонского процесса

Цель статьи заключается в определении роли декана факультета в управлении стратегической реформой согласно принципам Болонского процесса. В работе рассматриваются подходы профессорско-преподавательского состава и декана факультета к роли декана факультета в ходе внедрения различных изменений. А также рассмотрен эффект новшеств в преподавательской деятельности и обучении студентов. Результаты исследования показывают, что поддержка университета и автономия в принятии решений является важным при осуществлении новых реформ. Деканы факультетов могут реализовывать основные принципы Болонского процесса в рамках своих полномочий. Рассмотрены подходы профессорско-преподавательского состава факультета к пониманию роли декана, а также самого декана к его роли. По их мнению, она заключается в управлении и поддержке исследовательской деятельности факультета. Тем не менее, профессорско-преподавательский состав факультета также ожидает от декана усиленной работы по управлению ресурсами и проявления лидерских качеств. Таким образом, внедрение принципов Болонского процесса на факультете привели к развитию студентоцентрированного обучения и усилению интереса студентов к обучаемым дисциплинам. К тому же, в рамках реализации новых реформ деканам факультетов необходимо уделить внимание развитию своих лидерских качеств.

Ключевые слова: Болонский процесс, реформы, высшее образование, факультет

MANAGING STRATEGIC REFORM IN THE FRAME OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to determine the role of department head in managing strategic reforms at History Department at one of Kazakhstani Universities. The department is one of highly regarded structural units of the considered Kazakhstani University. The current research is based on data obtained in 2010.

After collapse of the USSR, Kazakhstan has lost a number of items won on the scale of modernization in the beginning of 1990s. There was an industrial slowdown, decrease of standard of living and educational level of the population [1]. Instable social and economic situation in the country had a huge destructive impact on a higher education [2]. The rupture of relationship with leading Soviet higher education institutions (HEI) brought about an irreversible change in the entire infrastructure of higher education in Kazakhstan. "Brain drain" (mass migration of highly qualified specialists) and underfunding have threatened the institutions into complete collapse [3]. Thus, to increase competitiveness and human potential the strategic priorities of the state policy became integration into European Higher education Area (EHEA). The country has been implemented the main objectives of the Bologna process in local HEIs since 2001 and was accepted in EHEA in 2010 on the 12th of March [4]. However, a limited scope of independence from central government, lack of resources and nonproductive interconnection between University governance and academic staff in HEIs restricted an adequate implementation of the Bologna process objectives. In these circumstances the department head is expected to be a bridge between HEI authority and the faculty and facilitate introduction of reforms on departmental level [5]. However this issue is underestimated and less explored in Kazakhstan higher education context [6].

Leadership, management and administration

The literature suggests that one of the roles the head of department (HOD) undertakes concern with leadership, management and administration. However, they could be conducted in different order, the preference could be given either to one or to two of them or all of them could be used simultaneously depending on different

context and circumstances. Thus, before investigating the issues of the HOD role it is useful to consider the differences among leadership, management and administration and the dangers of giving preference to one of them.

Theories of educational leadership and management as well as administration intersect with each other. Management is commonly employed in the UK, Europe and Africa, whereas administration term is used in the USA, Canada and Australia contexts [7]. There are no agreed definitions of leadership, management and administration (Bush, 2003) [8]. «In many ways, the continuum from theory to practice with respect to leadership and management in HEIs is dichotomous». This division limits our ability to gain an adequate insight into the these notions (Taylor and de Lourdes Machado, 2006, p. 137) [9, p.137]. However, there would be made an attempt to understand these terms drawing on the literature.

Many authors see leadership as dealing with «values and purposes» [8] or «vision, values and mission» [10, 8 p.]. It is about shaping strategy [11] and encouraging change [12]. By contrast, management is about the organisation's functions, the means by which to achieve the aims [8]. It deals with the practical implications of the leadership strategy (Anderson, 2004). While educational administration applying to management related courses, considered as its alternative [13].

In Australia and USA context, HOD additionally to professorship roles [14] more than 3,5 of their 5 working days are dedicated to managerial duties [15].

Thus, according to literature, the of HOD's functions consist of

- a) Manager
- b) Instructional role
- c) Leader role
- d) Scholar role [16-20], [15], [21].

It was revealed that HODs could have different motivations for taking on the role. In UK context, some of the HODs are neutral to their duties while others are excited. Some of them perceive it as an opportunity to face a contest or feel them more capable to hold such rank than rest of the staff. Their background in tuition and study made them feel appropriate to be appointed to the role of the chair http://multitrans.ru/c/m.exe?t=1912981_1_2 [22]. Whereas in USA and Australia HODs determined the dutiful and aspiration to impact the modification as the reasons of taking up a position of the HOD [15]. However, lack of scope, power and influence on the staff and the frequent cases of faculty

unwillingness to share managerial roles could be obstacles to adequate role fulfilment of the HODs functions [23, p.143].

Departments, being a part of higher education system, additionally to above stated duties are expected to respond to new educational reforms. As, a globalization and the requirements of the knowledge society, which has an impact on higher education all over the world have been transformed into predominant European policies: the Lisbon Strategy and the Bologna Process [24].

Formation of the European Higher education area (EHEA) is significant for higher education institutions within the Bologna Process member states. Though, there are different figures of its objectives implementation. Thus, 95% of member universities have introduced the new degree structure, but in some instances this has not resulted curriculum reform. ECTS keeps on expanding but is not always utilized for both shifting and gathering the credits. The Diploma Supplement is widely employed, but detached from learning outcomes and qualifications frameworks. Similarly, there is advancement in improving national qualifications frameworks (NQF), but importance of the learning outcomes is underestimated in NQF, in promotion of students' and staff mobility and lifelong learning. Nearly all Bologna members have quality assurances agencies (QA) or renewed their QA perspectives. However, they did it without clear link to European Standards and Guidelines or without consideration of the extension of the university autonomy and necessity to supply efficiently to the knowledge of the community. Even though, the significance of providing student service was expressed as a vital issue in facilitating student-centred learning, it was comparatively disregarded by institutions. Thus, to achieve above stated obstacles, HEIs and their leaders as central actors in the Bologna process are expected to promote institutional connectedness into the multi-dimensional reforms and inspire as well as convince the faculty and students. HEIs are supposed to have appropriate conditions to facilitate introduction of the changes [24]. Thus, any significant strategy adoption within HEI and departmental faculty needs «the top-down restructuring to be complemented by a bottom-up process of coherently integrated teaching and learning methods and course design through the clear identification of learning outcomes for the educational process» [25, p.163]. For these purposes, there is a need to define and be aware of the effect of the Bologna process objectives introduction for

those directly engaged in its implication, faculty and students' teaching and learning (Carter, 2006, p.143).

The Bologna process outlines a few matters directly concerning teaching and learning [25]. In Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve communiqué a significance of student-centred learning and instructional duty of the HEIs and the need of curricular enhancement with respect to improvement of the learning effects were asserted [26]. The student-centred learning was identified as a practice to be realized through facilitating an innovative approach to instructional practice and learning, efficient promotion and supervision of learning as well as curriculum stressed noticeably on the learner's needs in all three cycles. According to Trends 2010, there were introduced actions impacted teaching and learning to improve the student's experience [24]. They were: undergraduate degree emphasizing on student-centred learning, flexible learning route, extension the scope of study in Master level across the Europe and increased stress on a supervision and teaching of the Doctoral students. In addition, mass of the rectors in Bologna member HEIs linked lifelong learning with an innovative instructional practice and believed it had a potential to enhance pedagogical practice for all degrees. «Teaching is not any longer «privately owned». A greater stress on quality and accountability makes teaching a point of diversified assessment by the teachers and by others (students, external assessors) [27]. While ECTS implementation facilitated accurate stress and supported interaction in learning [28].

However, some academics state that teaching conditions have declined in the mass (54 percent) of 26 European countries in the period 2005-2009 under Bologna process reforms [29]. Thus, programs adapted to Bologna process principles with multistage grading system supported «factual knowledge and reproduction of knowledge». This led to a superficial attitude to learning in preference to profound attitude [30, p. 191].

To sum up, the literature suggests that although it is commonly accepted that the HOD undertakes leadership, research, instructional and managerial functions, the changing entrepreneurial demands and external assessment of the universities' achievements forced HEIs authority and HODs to give preference for the latter one. However, overstatement of management in the expense of educational goals has a danger of a managerialism, whereas preference for leadership in the institution could make it dysfunctional. But, there is an argument that balance and practice of both leadership and management would lead to efficiency. Being

engaged in creation of an EHEA, participant HEIs leaders and the HODs are expected to promote implementation of the Bologna process objectives through supporting the multi-dimensional reforms and encouraging as well as creating appropriate conditions for the staff and students' teaching and learning. The implementation of the strategy within universities, departments and staff requires directed reforms to be balanced by appropriate reflection of the bottom level (department) taking in a account learning effects on educational process, As, the Bologna process forces changes philosophy of learning and teaching. In some national contexts the Bologna process objectives' implementation had a negative impact on teaching and learning, whereas in some cases it benefited to enhance these practices.

Methodology

To discover staff and the head's perceptions and understanding of HOD role in implementing reform and its effect on teaching and learning a questionnaire was adopted.

The questionnaire was conducted by internet-based software Monkey survey. The research was conducted in 2010. There was adopted a purposive sampling. Thus, there were selected 4 staff (assistant, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor) members and HOD as a sample out of 66 staff members of the department. There were selected 2 male and 2 female staff members out of 39 male and 29 female staff. 2 of them have less than 10 years of experience while 2 have more than 10 years of practice at department. The HOD is a male with 20 years of academic and 3 years of experience in current HOD position. He was assigned by a rector of HEI.

Findings and analysis

The findings of the research revealed that mass of the faculty and HOD had shared vision concerning the following activities within the role of the HOD. All participant staff members and the head associated HOD role with arrangement of teaching process and supporting research of the staff. Thus, 3 out of 4 staff and the dean pointed out that one of the most time demanding activities of the HOD's practices were supervision, monitoring performance, office management and his personal research activities. However, majority of the staff additionally to above stated actions preferred him to generate funds and manage resources. But most of all they would like him to give more preference for leadership functions

such as sharing vision, dealing with the staff matters (encourage professional development, counsel etc.) and implementing changes in curriculum. Interestingly, there were disclosed particular preferences within genders. Whereas female participants emphasized importance of conflict management, male staff members expected the HOD to focus more on managing resources in the department. But these expectations were not noticed in the HOD's prioritized activities. He would like to spend much more time on monitoring performance in the department.

As concerns how the HOD supports implementation of the Bologna process objectives in the department, faculty and HOD's responses revealed that generally the head in provided scope of control fairly managed to do it. Thus, 3 out of 4 staff members defined that HOD fairly supported monitoring quality of internal management in the department and involvement of the students in decision making process.

Next, when respondents were asked to define the level of their familiarity with the Bologna process, it was found that 1 out of 4 staff members was very aware of the Bologna process, while others had a common understanding of this process. This corresponds to HOD assumption that generally staff members were fairly aware of new reforms' features. However, one of the participant staff suggested that HOD should have paid more attention to share information on the Bologna process within the faculty.

As concerns the effect of the Bologna process on teaching and learning in the department, there was disclosed that it has partly promoted student-centred learning. Thus, dean and 3 out of 4 staff participants stated that in last three years the students were more involved in curricula design process, responsibility for learning became shared, scores were allocated only according to assessment results, the students were more able to defend their statements and they developed more open-minded approach. These results partly supported Trends' 2010 findings, that the Bologna process objectives implementation could emerge student-centred learning [24].

So, the role of the HOD was associated with research and supervision activities. However, there is division in staff and head's understanding

the role of the HOD. Thus, the staff expected the HOD additionally to above stated activities and managerial functions to undertake a leader's role, including distributing views, introduction change in curricula and dealing with staff matters. While, the HOD preferred to emphasize on monitoring the achievement of the department. This partly coincides with the statement that increased assessment of the universities forced them to concentrate on the faculty achievement management [23].

The undertaken study was considered to be useful for focusing on the aspects of the HOD role concerning managing reforms, which was underestimated in Kazakhstan higher education. Due to a lack of prior research in this area in Kazakhstan context, the research built a foundation and suggested essential suggestions for further investigations in this area.

Conclusion

The quantitative research facilitated to gain a good conception of the HOD's role in managing reforms and effect of these reforms on teaching and learning at History department at one of Kazakhstani Universities. The study has proposed that the HOD in new educational reforms framework, additionally to research and supervision activities are expected to focus more on leadership role.

The dean and the faculty similarly understood the role of HOD. Thus, they conceived it dealing with supervision and supporting research in the department. In fact the dean undertook these activities. However, the staff members were expected the HOD to emphasize on managing resources and put more effort on leadership role.

The dean actively promoted adoption of the curricula and study programs in line with the Bologna declaration objectives. The Bologna process objectives implementation led to more focus on student-centred learning and increase of students interests to subjects.

The research findings suggested that in the framework of new reforms, HOD should put more emphasize on leadership. Further research is required to explore deeply the issues of different departments' heads' promotion of the reforms.

References

- 1 Ermakhanova S.A., Korel L.V. Experts on the problems of modernization of Kazakhstan society // Sociological studies. – 2009. – № 5. – P. 81-86. (in Russian).
- 2 Karasayeva Kh.O. The quality as a criterion for the integration of Kazakh education system in the world educational area. Collected materials of forth International scientific-practical conference. Innovation economy and education: characteristics,

achievements and prospects. Volume 2. Innovations in science and teaching activities of the University: current status, problems and prospects of development. – Omsk.: 2007. – p.143-147. (in Russian). (URL <http://omeconom.ru/pdf/1061.pdf#page=143>).

3 Asylbayev D.S. The development of higher education and management stages of higher education in Kazakhstan //Bulletin CASU. – 2006. – № 4. (URL <http://www.vestnik-kafu.info/journal/8/277/>). (in Russian).

4 EHEA:European higher education area website 2010-2020. Budapest-Vienna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area. – 2010. (URL http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/2010_conference/documents/Budapest-Vienna_Declaration.pdf).

5 Akhmetova G.K. Reform of the teaching in higher education institution in the context of the Bologna Process. (in Russian). Materials of 39th science and methodological conference of the faculty of Kazakh National University. Almaty: «Kazakh University». – 2009. – p.41-44.

6 Akhmetova G.K. Identification of educational programs in Kazakhstan and the leading foreign universities: criteria and parameters. (in Russian) In: Educational programs of the Bologna process member universities. Almaty: Kazakh University.– 2009. – p. 4-8.

7 Bush T. From Management to Leadership: Semantic or Meaningful Change? //Educational Management Administration and Leadership.–2008.– № 36 (2). – pp. 271-288.

8 Bush T. Theories of Educational Leadership and Management: Third Edition. – London: Sage, 2003. – P. 209.

9 Taylor J. and de Lourdes Machado, M. Higher education leadership and management: from conflict to independence through strategic planning. // Tertiary Education and Management. – 2006.– № 12.– Pp. 137–160.

10 Early P and Weindling D. Understanding school leadership. – London: SAGE, 2004. – P. 224.

11 Anderson L. A leadership approach to managing people and teams in education. In Kydd L., Anderson, L and Newton, W. (eds). Leading people and teams in education. – London: SAGE –2004 – P. 290 – Pp.11-26.

12 Marshall S. Leading and managing strategic change. In Marshall, S.(ed). Strategic leadership of change in higher education. What's new? – New York, NY.: Routledge. –2007.– P. 224 – Pp.1-16.

13 Bush T. The principles and practice of Educational management. – London: SAGE.– 2002. – P. 332.

14 Sarros J. C., Gmelch, W. H. and Tanewski, G. A. The Role of Department Head in Australian Universities: changes and challenges. //Higher Education Research and Development. – 1997. – № 16 (1). – Pp. 9-24. (URL <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0729436970160102>).

15 Hancock T.M. The business of universities and the role of department chair. //International journal of educational management.– 2007.– № 21 (4).– Pp. 306-314.

16 Miller H. The management of change in universities :universities, state and economy in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. – Buckingham.: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press. – 1995. – P. 183.

17 Hellowell D and Hancock, N. A case study of the changing role of the academic middle manager in higher education: between hierarchical control and collegiality? //Research Papers in Education. – 2001. – №16 (2). – Pp. 183-197.

18 Hare, P. and Hare, L. The evolving role of head of department in UK universities. Perspectives. // Policy and Practice in Higher Education. –2001– №6 (2). – Pp.33 – 37.

19 Trocchia P.J. and Andrus, D.M. Perceived Characteristics and Abilities of an Effective Marketing Department Head // Journal of Marketing Education. – 2003.– № 25 (1). – Pp. 5-15.

20 Graham S. and Benoit P, Constructing the Role of Department Chair. ACE Department Chair Online Resource Center, (URL http://www.acenet.edu/resources/chairs/docs/Graham_Constructing.pdf).

21 Gibbs G., Knapper C and Piccinin S. Departmental Leadership of Teaching in Research-Intensive Environments: Final Report.– London.: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. – 2009. – P. 58.

22 Johnson, R. Learning to manage the university: tales of training and experience. // Higher Education Quarterly. – 2002.– № 56 (1). – Pp. 33–51.

23 Jackson, M.P. The role of the head of department in managing performance in UK universities. // The International Journal of Educational Management. – 1999. – № 13(3). –Pp. 142-149.

24 Andrée Sursock and Hanne Smidt. Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher Education. – Brussels.: European University Association publication, 2010.

25 Carter D (2006).What the Bologna process says about teaching and learning development in practice: some experience from Macedonia. In Tomusk, V (ed). Creating the European area of higher education : voices from the periphery. Dordrecht ; London: Springer. – Pp. 141-169.

26 EHEA: European higher education area website 2010-2020. Communique of the conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve communiqué, 28-29 April 2009. (URL <http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=43>).

27 Karseth K. Curriculum restructuring in higher education after the Bologna process: a new pedagogic regime?.(URL <http://www.sc.ehu.es/sfwseec/reec/reec12/reec1209.pdf>).

28 Howard Devies. Survey of master degrees in Europe. European University Association.– 2009. (URL <http://www.eua.be/publications/>).

23. Education International Pan-European Structure. Enhancing Quality. Academics' Perceptions of the Bologna Process. A Study by the Education International Pan-European Structure On the Occasion of the Bologna Process Celebration Conference.– Brussels.: Education International. – 2010. – p. 44. (URL http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/2010_conference/documents/EI_BolognaReport2010_EnhancingQuality.pdf).

24. Dahlgren L.O., Fejes A., Abrandt-Dahlgren M. and Trowald N. Grading systems, features of assessment and students' approaches to learning. //Teaching in Higher Education. – 2009. – Vol. 14, №. 2. – Pp.185-194. (URL <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13562510902757260>).