



THE 4TH HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM, 2012

GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE QUALITY UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN TANZANIA

By

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INTRODUCTION

University governance includes means and processes which facilitate the functioning of a university in terms of making the right decisions and taking actions at the right time. Laws, policies, strategies, guidelines, procedures and practices all affect the extent to which universities can proactively and positively respond to internal and external challenges. It also refers to both the relationships between internal and external governance structures and actors and the manner in which they influence each other. In addition, university governance incorporates management understanding and interpretation of the scope of power and authority conferred on various management organs of the university, perception of autonomy vis-à-vis external supervision, and appropriate support. However, the rights and responsibilities of staff and students in relation to management may differ from one university to another and hence determine the quality of governance in responding to different challenges. The Fourth Higher Education Forum in Tanzania organized by the Committee of Vice Chancellors, Provosts and Principals in Tanzania (CVCPT), in collaboration with TrustAfrica (<http://www.trustafrica.org>), focused on governance in higher education. The theme has a strong potential for addressing challenges facing universities and higher education in Tanzania, and in Africa, in general. Key challenges facing universities today are: how to cope with resource constraints, amidst massive student enrolments, and challenges emanating from globalisation. Such challenges require a better understanding of the university dynamics as systems and the role of good governance in addressing these challenges.

OBJECTIVES OF THE FORUM

The main objective of the forum was to bring together key stakeholders in the higher education sector to share common experiences and best practices on university good governance as a strategy to address current and future challenges facing university education in Tanzania. The specific objectives were:

- To assess the quality of governance structures and the extent to which they facilitate or hinder good governance in universities;
- To examine challenges facing universities and how good governance may provide solutions;
- To develop joint strategies for improving good governance in universities.

This policy brief is a result of the dialogue and is meant to inform policy formulation, review and implementation by the concerned stakeholders of higher education.

The policy implications and recommendations are given for each of the major sub-areas of governance.

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POLICY ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Governance and Interdependence in Higher Education in Tanzania

The key stakeholders in higher education include the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Ministry of Finance, President's Office, Public Service Management, Tanzania Commission for Universities, Higher Education Loans Board, Controller and Auditor General, and the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals. They also include students and staff of respective universities.

The instruments which establish each of the key stakeholders in university education specify their powers and authority in higher education and the expected interdependencies. For example, the Universities Act 2005 and respective University Charters establish administrative machinery with specified powers and authority, the role of key stakeholders and the interdependencies. Analysis of the same reflects four main issues and challenges emerging from regulatory frameworks and common practices, with important policy implications.

Issue No 1: Decision Making Powers

Despite the fact that each stakeholder is very important and has to play a role in the process of improving access to, and quality of education at the level of universities, colleges and institutes, there are potential regulatory setbacks which seem to limit the powers of Vice Chancellors and Principals to be in control of the direction of their institutions as Chief Executives Officers (CEOs). For example, the university may decide to recruit more qualified staff or improve incentive packages in order to improve teaching and learning effectiveness, and this may not be in line with the regulatory directive from the President's Office, Public Service Management, and even the Treasury.

Policy Implication

The governance structure must objectively provide for an effective means of harmonizing and supporting the interdependencies. The leadership on this has to be with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. The more higher education institutions are autonomous and effectively supported by the rest of the stakeholders, the more likely they are to define and effectively play their roles in improving access to, and quality of higher education.

Issue No 2: Stakeholder Information as Power

Although each stakeholder has independent systems of information dissemination, which is mostly through circulars, Websites, policy documents, strategic plans, brochures, and exhibitions, the systems of sharing strategic information among key stakeholders are inadequate. Hence, the dissemination systems require review so that each stakeholder can easily get relevant, accurate and timely information.

Policy Implication

The establishment of a collective policy and strategy for sharing information is necessary. Tanzania Education and Research Network (TERNET), as one of the stakeholders in higher education, may have a potential role to play in creating a common platform which will bring together updated critical information of common interest for all key stakeholders in higher education. This is critical in reducing transaction costs arising from an information vacuum.

Issue No 3: Transparency and Accountability

Generally, there is lack of adequate focus and clarity on the framework for transparency and accountability. Given this context, each stakeholder needs to be able to account for not only what he/she is entrusted to do towards achieving internal organizational vision and mission within the established reporting relationships, but also beyond such boundaries to include other key external stakeholders where interdependencies are high.

Policy Implication

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, there is a need to establish strong policy guidelines for transparency and accountability on matters of higher education, and a common framework for sharing information as part of adherence to the principles of disclosure.

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Issue No 4: Establishment of a Separate Ministry for Higher Education

The current governance framework of higher education in Tanzania is crowded with a multitude of institutions governing not only higher education but also college, secondary and primary education. Although higher education does not operate in isolation from the other levels of education, this creates a potential risk of dysfunctional bureaucracy. As a result, the higher education sector may not receive the attention it deserves and/or some of the governance challenges are not well managed or addressed.

Policy Implication

It is desirable that thorough review of the governance of the education sector be done to provide a better governance structure that can adequately deal with higher education governance challenges in the country.

Students' Own Governance and Leadership Development in Democratization of Universities

While there are several other stakeholders in a university system, students are considered to be one of the primary stakeholders. Therefore, to attain university good governance, the students' own governance, through quality leadership development, must be of the highest standard. However, despite its critical importance, students' leadership in African universities has not been analysed enough by many scholars.

Issue No 1: Manifestation of Democracy

In most instances, the election manifestos and promises are made as the centre of the perceived problems that the student community is facing at a particular point in time. In the course of getting elected to any position in the Students' Government, one has to observe some of the basic principles of democracy. Democracy, as practiced, should be understood by each of the participating community members. Where democracy prevails, there is a popular student government, wherein the supreme power is vested in the hands of students. Characteristics of a credible student government are shown when the representatives and student leaders are acting or functioning on behalf of the student majority.

Policy Implication

Given that students' own governance space provides for future leaders to blossom, universities in Africa should invest the needed resources to ensure that the students are exposed to the intricacies and principles of democracy by being given opportunities to manage their own affairs to the extent appropriate.

Issue No 2: Students' Leadership Development

One of the success factors of student leadership is the self-efficacy or previous leadership experience a leader has accumulated over time. This means that good leaders are made and not necessarily born. Therefore, there is a need for universities to design and run required student leadership development programmes.

Importance of Students' Leadership Programmes

Formal and informal leadership development experiences help individual students place value in and exhibit heightened personal characteristics. Among the key leadership attributes, which students or other people usually look for, admire, and would willingly follow are: honesty, forward-looking, competence, inspirational ideas, intelligence, fair-mindedness, broad-mindedness, supportive attitude, straightforwardness, dependability, cooperation, determination, imagination, ambition, courage, caring, maturity, loyalty, self-control, and independence (Kouzes and Posner, 2002). Kouzes and Posner developed five steps identified as key to successful leadership: 1) model the behaviors sought for others to adopt, words are not enough; 2) motivate and inspire others to develop a vision they feel is their own; 3) show innovation and excitement when handling adversity through the process; 4) encourage and enable others to act and put their ideas into motion on a regular basis; and 5) develop passion and enthusiasm of others through displaying personal passion. Developing these important leadership characteristics and understanding the five steps can improve the likelihood of one's success as a leader.

Policy Implication

Because leaders are basically developed rather than born, it is essential that efforts to develop student leaders be expanded to ensure that basic knowledge and skills required to lead a modern African university students' populace are instilled.

Information and Communication Technologies University Governance

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are widely deployed in Tanzanian universities mainly for the purpose of providing and accessing information and automation of administrative processes. This has been greatly influenced by the steady decrease of the unit cost of computing power and the advent of mobile computing, including smart phones and tablet devices, broadband communication networks and cloud computing. The current state of ICTs presents an opportunity, and if properly utilized, all university stakeholders can have access to digital resources, thus increasing the university's robustness and its accountability to the people it serves, thereby improving governance.

Issue No 1: University Governance

The role of ICTs in driving changes towards good governance in higher education institutions (HEIs) can be analyzed by examining the role of ICTs in promoting institutional robustness and optimal performance in the four key operational functions of a university, namely: research, teaching, community engagement and administration. In view of the very significant role ICTs play in governance issues, one can define e-governance as the application of ICTs in the following aspects in all operational functions of a university: (i) increasing access of the university community to processes of making policy/rules/procedures and to existing policies/rules/procedures; (ii) interaction between university management/administration with internal and external stakeholders; (iii) increasing transparency and accountability in budgetary and financial management, revenue mobilization and expenditure; (iv) monitoring performance of teaching/research and various projects; and (v) simplification of various university processes.

HEIs need to articulate ICT governance structures and make them part of the overall university governance structures**Policy Implication**

ICTs cut across every aspect of the university and given the fact that ICT-related costs and risks are high, management decisions with regard to ICT deployment should be carefully considered. They should not be made solely by those responsible for deploying the technology or by those who will be its primary users. HEIs need to articulate ICT governance structures and make them part of the overall university governance structures.

Issue No 2: ICT Governance in Universities

ICT governance involves policies, plans, projects and priorities. It defines roles, who does what in ICT and when, who advises those who make decisions and how and where that advice is provided. ICT governance is seen to be situated at multiple levels in the organization, i.e. at the strategic level where the board and related higher bodies are involved, and at the management level with the involvement of executives and operational level

with ICT and business management. This implies that at all these levels, university business and ICT organization people need to be involved in the ICT governance process and should understand their individual roles and responsibilities. The main challenge in Tanzanian universities, as far as ICT governance is concerned, is to ensure alignment of the university's objectives and the objectives of the ICT organization (i.e. ICT Directorate, Computing Centre, etc.), generally referred to as business alignment (BA). This requires a formalized and goal-oriented cooperation between top management, business operations and ICT management. BA is the principal and most important control mechanism for a University's ICT operations. The other challenge revolves around ICT Service Management. The primary objective of Service Management is to ensure uninterrupted business operations. This requires a reliable and well-documented service environment, standardized end-user solutions with secured support, strict compliance with governance processes, as well as adequate knowledge of information systems and hardware. For certain ICT services, universities purchase services from a specialised service provider.

Policy Implication

ICTs are increasingly becoming one of the strategic and critical resources for a university, next to financial and human resources. Therefore universities have to articulate ICT governance structures, including the establishment and strengthening of ICT organizations/units and articulate their respective mandates in line with university goals and objectives. The primary responsibility is planning services, ensuring business continuity and managing services roll-outs (in cooperation with service providers if services are outsourced). Universities will need to develop various strategies to ensure recruitment and retention of the required ICT management and technical staff.

Issue No 3: ICT Trends

The main trend is a continuous decrease in the unit cost of computing power. Laptops, tablet computers, and smart phones are widely used by staff and students for accessing digital resources. The Internet platform has stimulated an explosion of publicly available social networking applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Google-Docs, etc. which

are being adopted in the teaching and learning environment.

Policy Implication

This trend towards mobility coupled with ever-increasing capacity of mobile devices, now guarantees that everybody in the HEI owns a device with which he/she can access network resources. As such, technology is solving one of the main problems faced by universities in the recent past; that is ensuring universal access to network resources by all students at any time and any place. Since all students (digital natives) own mobile phones and use them for personal purposes, it is high time faculty (digital immigrants) explored how the mobile technology and social networking applications could be applied in the teaching and learning environment in Tanzanian Universities.

Issue No 4: ICTs in Teaching, Research, Community Engagement and Administration

The use of ICTs in academic research has been growing in all universities. This includes the use of powerful computers for complex calculations, use of communication tools and the Internet. With regard to community engagement, ICTs have not only provided the tools for universities but have also extended the scope of such engagement and reinforced the direct role of universities in community development. ICTs enable universities to facilitate and be part of developmental effort and to do so without overextending their human, time and financial resources. ICTs in teaching and learning are more pronounced in institutions that have adopted Learning Management Systems (LMS). LMS generate and manage various student support services and products. Virtual library and open courseware allow students to get content at no or low cost instead of acquiring expensive textbooks, reference materials or journals. Various Management Information Systems are deployed in universities in the area of administration. The key challenge, however, is to integrate these systems and enhance their capacity to support strategic decision making.

Policy Implication

Universities in Tanzania need to form a strong collaborative Institution (e.g. TERNET) in order to solicit investment from government for the required sustainable broadband connectivity, various software applications and technical expertise. Such an Institution should establish

a National Virtual Library to promote access to recent publications and to provide opportunity for research dissemination through online e-journals. Adoption of online teaching and learning involves significant investments in time and money and requires changes in pedagogy. Approaching this jointly through an institution like TERNET would result in significant savings. The current global trend is towards mobile technology and social networking, and therefore HEIs should integrate these technologies into their programs and strategies. ICT applications deployed in HEIs will enhance good governance, efficiency and transparency. And it should be noted that the accumulated massive data will only be useful for decision making and forecasting when data warehousing and data mining technologies for big data analytics are deployed in HEIs or across the higher education sector.

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Challenges in Workload Allocation Models

One of the challenges facing the governance of universities across the world is how to appropriately manage human resources and attain excellence in the core result areas of the universities' mission, teaching, research and public service. In many universities in Sub-Saharan Africa, the management of academic staff is further complicated by increased student enrolments that are not matched by staff recruitment and characterized by sub-optimal use of ICT technologies in academic delivery (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2012). This has not only resulted in inefficiency in handling high student/staff ratios but has also meant heavy teaching and administrative responsibilities that are affecting the quality of education, while crowding out research and other non-teaching academic activities (Mohamedbhai, 2011). Universities in Tanzania have not been spared this challenge. Barrett and Barrett (2008), correctly note that the emphasis on institutional interventions regarding the allocation of workloads to staff should go hand in hand with interventions to improve university finance and quality.

Issue No 1 : Higher Education Space and Workload Implications

Tanzania has experienced a rapid expansion of space for higher education, with the number of universities increasing from 24 to 50 and student enrolments increasing from 38 to 140,000 between 2005 and 2012. These expansions have, however, not been matched by requisite academic staff recruitment and development, and optimal IT use for alternative curriculum delivery.

There should be a minimum standard workload for universities in Tanzania, aimed at harmonizing the variations in the workload standards.

A preview of workload policies in universities globally has revealed a number of issues. First there is a variation across universities on the workload standards, not only in Tanzania but also globally (from the cases reviewed). Variation has been noted in five attributes: (1) philosophy between partial and integrated approaches; (2) fixity or variability in the weight attached to the teaching component according to rank of the academic staff; (3) fixity or variability in the weight attached to the research component according to rank of the staff; (4) extent of provision for teaching preparation; and (5) the length of academic year. The variation in Europe is also seen to be experienced across departments because of the mandates given to specific departments to design their own frameworks.

Policy Implication

There should be a minimum standard workload for universities in Tanzania, aimed at harmonizing the variations in the workload standards, even though the challenge will still remain, taking into account differences in disciplines.

Issue No 2 : Workload Allocation and Performance Management

Even though performance management in universities was resisted when first introduced in some countries (Ruth 2000, Parsons, 2002), its adoption seem to be one of the ways of attaining fairness and equity in workload allocation. This is because performance agreement is participatory, jointly agreed between the supervisor and supervisee in a transparent manner. This means that through joint planning and dialogue, one should be

expected to handle only what is realistic.

If done correctly, an individual performance agreement has to map the agreed academic staff's workload for the referenced period, covering teaching and/or research and other non-teaching academic activities.

Policy Implication

There should be a very close link between the workload and the individual's performance agreement. If a university is to realize its strategic objectives, all key result areas of the university, including research, should be integrated within workload allocation models, as these are cascaded. An annual picture, rather than a semester-by-semester view should be taken.

The second implication of this is that a relatively long cycle, of at least three years, should be taken when assessing staff contribution to the organizational objectives in teaching and research. This should imply that in the course of planning workloads and therefore performance agreements, in a three-year cycle, the two core functions should be balanced.

One fact needs to be made clear when combining workload with performance management that the workload models and frameworks should be taken only as guides. In situations where there are staff shortages, in a given year some staff may probably be engaged in only one activity, which in most cases involve teaching. The real situation on the ground should be used to plan the workloads and performance agreements. This is certainly a possibility in cases with staggered semesters, where applicable.

CONCLUSION

From the forum it was noted that there are many challenges facing higher education in Tanzania, Africa, and elsewhere. These include inadequate financing, inadequate quality and quantity of staff, inadequate quality and number of those who join higher education, and poor infrastructure and technology. Some of these challenges may better be addressed through better governance. However, good governance does not only depend on the quality of governance instruments, but perhaps

much more on how they are used to balance power relations and effectively utilise opportunities and synergies among and between institutions and governance structures in higher education. Effective management of stakeholder partnerships and interdependencies, achieving harmonious and positive staff and students relationships, effective human resource utilization, and the use of ICT in facilitating governance are some of the key areas where higher education institutions, the government and other stakeholders can start to open better opportunities for efficient, effective and sustainable higher education in Africa.

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