Institutional Reform of Higher Education: from the Perspective of Siauliai University, Lithuania

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Universities in Lithuania

- n 15 public, 1 private university
- n More than 20 colleges
- n Siauliai University – classical, regional
- n Established in 1997 by merging Siauliai Pedagogical Institute and Siauliai Polytechnic Faculty of Kaunas University of Technology
- n 60 years of experience as a higher education institution
- n 12000 students, 1000 employees, 600 teachers and 40 full-time scientists

Autonomy: status or legal entity

- Autonomy of university in Lithuania is stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, 1990
- Law on Higher Education, 1998, progressive
- Status of university - budgetary, non-profit (public institution), private
- University must have a special or non-profit status since budgetary status causes many problems

Autonomy: property

According to the Law on Higher Education, University can be the owner of real estate (buildings, land) if:

1. it is bought for the special programme's money or donated,

2. it is given by the state on the "trust" background

If the ownership does not correspond to the Law on Real Estate of the budgetary institutions, the university is not allowed to be the owner.

Autonomy: finance

n State funding – lump sum is given for teaching (60% for the number of students and study programmes), for science (20% calculated from University's achievements), 20% for administration

n Special programme – study fees, contracts, projects - 50% of all the budget, 40% for the year 2008

n EU structural funds 20%, approved projects

Governance

n University Board – 5 members of the Board are delegated by the Minister of Education and Science, 5 – by the Senate, 5 – by the Rector

n Senate: election of the Rector, election of vice-Rectors and deans from the rectors proposed candidates, annual approval of Rector's financial activities' report, pedagogical degrees (assoc. prof, prof)

n Rectors administrative board (rector, 4 vice-rectors, deans, the chairman of the Senate, 1 student)

Quality assurance

- National quality assurance centre, accreditation of new study programmes, evaluation of existing study programmes (experts), nostrification of qualifications (diplomas)
- University's qualification committee performs the assessment of pedagogic and scientific personnel every 5 years, and election procedure for a new position

University structure

- n Teaching departments, 8 faculties, 45 departments
- n Scientific centers
- n Science and technology park, university's gymnasium, carrier centre, botanical garden, university's gallery, innovation centre (technological and administrative)
- n University's autonomy allows to have its own academic and administration structure

Students

- n Bachelor studies - 4 years, Master studies - 2 years and PhD studies - 3 years, given by the Un. Sc. Field Q C
- n During 10 years number of students has increased from 5000 to 12000, teaching staff – from 500 to 600 (first achievement)
- n 4 types of students (fully state financed, partly state financed pay the fee of 150 EUR/semester, part-time students or those who study not full study programme pay the full fee)
- n The debates on fees are still in progress
- n Rector's position

Accountability

- n To the state like all budgetary institutions, very complicated, extra value, taxes
- n Faculties, scientific centers and administrative departments have financial freedom, every month they get fact sheets about their incomes and expenses with the indicated differences of the planned estimates of the year (second my biggest invention makes the annual report easier)

Conclusions

- n Do not wait for justice from politicians, increase power of institution and make it competitive
- n Increase not only academic but institutional autonomy as well (finance, real estate)
- n Use innovations, be active in HE reforms
- n Focus on goals, let vice-rectors and deans act
- n Think globally (attend conferences), act locally