

SPOTLIGHT ON REGIONS – Looking for solutions on how to best manage regional engagement

Universities and other higher education institutions can make a significant contribution to regional development. In a globalised economy this role is growing. As cities and regions depend on local strengths to compete in a globalised economy, the local availability of knowledge and skills is becoming as important as physical infrastructure. Unfortunately, all too often, the potential for synergy is thwarted by conflicting agendas or failures of communication. It is also evident that in many countries the regional agenda is a contested terrain. IMHE, in collaboration with the OECD Territorial Development and Public Governance Directorate, is conducting a comparative review of how issues relating to HEIs and their regional engagement are addressed in OECD countries. The project entitled "Supporting the contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development" looks for innovative solutions on how to manage the regional interface.

IMHE launched the project in spring 2004 as a response to a wide range of initiatives across OECD countries to mobilize higher education in support of regional development. There was a need to synthesize this experience into a coherent body of policy and practice that could guide institutional reforms and relevant policy measures such as investment decisions seeking to enhance the connection of HEIs to regional communities. Current practice needed to be analysed and evaluated in a way that was sensitive to the varying national and regional contexts within which HEIs operate.

The focus of the project is on the impact of higher education on regional development. The fundamental aim is to reinforce the partnerships between institutions and regions. Twelve regions (including one cross-border region) across ten countries are already deep in

the process of partnership building and self-evaluation while two new regions are taking their first steps to initiate the process. The whole project is characterized by mutual learning: The participants are not only higher education institutions, but also the regions with which they share a history of joint working, as well as public authorities which are responsible for territorial and higher education development at the national and regional scale.

■ What is there for the regions?

Along with the twelve original partners two new regions – Atlantic Canada and North Paraná, Brazil – recently joined the project. What is then the key motive for the regions to get involved? – We want to improve the relationship, interaction and cooperation between the higher education institutions and regional stakeholders. "We want to identify best practices and new opportunities. To see what works and what does not", Irene Sijgers, the Regional Coordinator of Twente states.

The State of Nuevo León is located at the North Eastern region of Mexico. Its

capital city Monterrey is an important financial and industrial centre. Nuevo León has 43 higher education institutions. Mexico is facing many challenges, but also great opportunities. This is how Dr. Romeo Flores Caballero, Executive Coordinator of the Regional Integration Program of Northeastern Mexican States and



linkages with the State of Texas, USA (INVITE Program), State Government of Nuevo León, sees the situation.

"I am convinced that there is a need to link the

universities with the government and the business sector. These key stakeholders must actively participate in the development and implementation of plans and programs for regional development. This is particularly important in countries like Mexico with an extensive young population soon attending universities. Universities are being forced to restructure their educational plans and academic programs".



John Goddard, Project Leader
Deputy Vice Chancellor and Professor of Regional Development Studies
University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

■ Bringing stakeholders together

The project has already succeeded in one of its key goals: to improve the dialogue between HEIs and their stakeholders. This is how Ron Neller, the regional coordinator of Sunshine – Fraser coast Region describes the process: "It has been an 'engaged' process. A wide variety of regional stakeholders, government, business, and education are jointly funding and undertaking the process. It has created a keen sense of participation and excitement across the region and initiated a set of responses by numerous stakeholders. In this sense the project and the reporting of the level of engagement for the region is in a state of flux and expectations are running high".



Regions in Spotlight

Australia: Sunshine – Fraser Coast
 Brazil: North Paraná*
 Canada: Atlantic Canada*
 Denmark: Jutland-Funen
 Denmark – Sweden: Øresund
 England: The North East
 Finland: Jyväskylä
 Mexico: Nuevo León
 The Netherlands: Twente
 Norway: The Mid-Norwegian Region
 Korea: Busan
 Spain: The Valencia region and
 & the Canary Islands
 Sweden: Värmland

*joined the project November 2005

■ The North East as a model for English regions

The evaluation is being undertaken in a two-stage process: a self-evaluation by HEIs and their regional and national partners followed by an international peer review involving experts in higher education and regional development. The first peer review took place in the North East of England in October. Professor Chris Duke, who led the Peer Review Team, described the views of the team immediately after the review:

"We found the North East to be, as its reputation suggests, strongly and self-consciously distinctive, a self-aware region. It has a keen sense of former importance and glory as a heavy industrial wealth producer, especially of Victorian and post-Victorian England. More recently it shared the experience of devastating de-industrialisation of heavy iron, steel, coal and ship-building, and

Twente in the Netherlands is one of the regions involved in the project. It is located on the eastern border with Germany and is part of the Euregio, a trans-regional cooperation between the bordering areas. It is a distinctive, self-aware region with clear boundaries, symbols, and a strong sense of earlier importance as an industrial wealth producer. Between 1955 and 1980, the region experienced de-industrialisation with a cut-down of 80% of the jobs in the textile industry. Today, the existing business base is predominantly SMEs with low level of R&D investments. Half of the population of 600 000 is living in the three major cities Enschede, Hengelo and Almelo. Twente has a number of higher education institutions and other knowledge institutions such as the University of Twente, Saxion University of Professional Education, AKI Visual Arts and Design Academy, ITC International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation, Telematics Institute, TSM Business School, and SWOT (business school).

contraction of the Teesside chemical industry. The North East offers a model for less distinct and less well developed English regions to learn about collaboration for development and for other universities to learn from those in the North East with their increasingly well exercised capacity to work with each other and with the other social partners. The regional conversation developed here is like no other in England. It probes deeper into broader social issues beyond the tightly economic. It tends to take a

rather long view. The conversation here includes the universities at regional 'high table', to the point where they are seen as a vital asset for the region to move forward, if not indeed the most vital".

The IMHE project will run through 2006, and will lead to a publication early 2007. Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is supporting the project. More information is available on the web: www.oecd.org/edu/higher/regionaldevelopment

Key Elements of the IMHE Project

- Comprehensive literature review: analysis of relevant research
- Regional reviews against a set of broad principles that include dialogue, stakeholder collaboration, learning, and leadership commitment. The major elements of the reviews will be:
 - Joint self evaluation by HEIs & regional stakeholders
 - A site visit by an international team of experts
 - A peer review report and joint response from the region and its institutions
- Analysis and synthesis by the project task group
- A final report
- Knowledge sharing conferences

The IMHE welcomes the following new members:

- > Universidade Federal do Parana – Brazil
- > National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES) – Mexico
- > Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana (U.A.M.) – Mexico
- > Peoples' Friendship University of Russia – Russia
- > University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC) – United Kingdom
- > Inter American University of Puerto Rico – United States
- > City University, Bellevue, Washington – United States

Seminar on "The role of higher education institutions in regional development", 4-5 October 2005, University of Karlstad, Sweden

The third seminar arranged by IMHE in co-operation with the Nordic university rectors and administrative directors (NUS-NUAS) took place in Karlstad Sweden on 3-5 October. Even if the 140 participants came from many countries beyond Scandinavia, for obvious reasons the discussions focused on conditions in the Nordic countries, since they were well represented. However, speakers from other parts of the world brought in wider perspectives. Professor John Goddard gave the keynote address. The contribution from Travis Reindl, American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AACSCU), is also worth noting. At the same time as he demonstrated that many problems are general and universal, he gave some perspectives that were probably new for most of the audience. It included a process view on how universities could evolve from the traditional role, often referred to as ivory tower institutions, where service and outreach are limited, over a phase where engagement becomes more active, to end in what he saw as the the final, optimal stage of development. That is when universities work actively with regional external partners and serve as catalysts for regional stewardship, understood as the careful and responsible management of something entrusted.

More information and the seminar report are available on www.oecd.org/edu/higher/regionaldevelopment

Conference on "Trends in the Management of Human Resources in Higher Education", 25-26 August OECD, Paris, France

Competence systems and performance management was one of several sub-themes during this summer's "What works - best practices" event on "Trends in the management of human resources in higher education." The conference took place on 25-26 August at OECD in Paris and was attended by 240 persons.

Introducing a session dedicated to the above sub-theme, Professor Michael Daxner from Oldenburg, Germany told his audience that indicator-linked sanctions and rewards, sometimes called sticks and carrots, can streamline systems into conformist insignificance, create longevity and stable mediocrity. Indicator-based systems need additional tools in order for the institution not to end up in immobile inflexibility. Basing his argument rather on general organisational theory than on business administration-inspired management theory, he argued that HE systems ought to be regarded as slow, loosely coupled systems, where an element of abundance – and waste – is needed in order to create surplus.

Another potentially controversial topic, among many others, was addressed by Mats Ola Ottosson, University Director at Uppsala, Sweden. He spoke about tasks which belongs to the more poignant aspects of HR management, namely how to deal with staff redundancies - downsizing in a human way, as the theme was called. One point he made concerned the importance of understanding that a need for both expansion and redundancy may exist at the same time in different parts of a university. This has to do with current fast changes of patterns of funding and of student numbers. They may vary from one part of an HEI to another.

More information on: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/higher>

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Higher Education Management and Policy:

Volume 17 Issue 3

Special Issue on Entrepreneurship,

OECD Publishing 2005,

ISBN 9264035656

This journal edited by IMHE addresses administrators and managers of institutions of higher education and researchers in the field of institutional management. It covers the field through articles and reports on such issues as quality assurance, human resources, funding, and internationalization. It also is a source of information on activities and events organised by OECD's IMHE Programme.



University Research Management:

Developing Research in New Institutions,

OECD Publishing 2005,

ISBN 926400694X

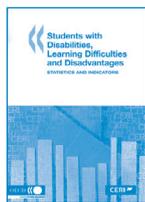
This study seeks to examine the processes and strategies being devised by new HEIs to grow research. By focusing on new HEIs, this book provides a unique profile of the experiences of a group of institutions that has hitherto been unidentified and unexplored. It analyses results drawn from an in-depth study of twenty-five HEIs from across sixteen countries.

Higher Education in Latin America, The International Dimension,

Hans de Wit, Isabel Christina Jaramillo, Jocelyn Gacel-Avila, Jane Knight, World Bank and OECD publication 2005, ISBN 0-8213-6209-7

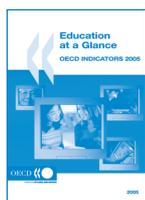
Available online: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLACREGTOP/EDUCATION/Resources/Higher_Ed_in_LAC_Intnal_Dimension.pdf

This book examines the challenges Latin America faces in becoming a world-renowned knowledge center by assessing the overall development of the region's higher education with respect to various factors, including curricula, educational networks, and mobility of teachers and students. Based on studies of higher education in seven countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, and Peru), the volume identifies opportunities for raising Latin America's profile on the global stage.



Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages: Statistics and Indicators, OECD Publishing 2005, ISBN 9264009809

This book provides an internationally comparable set of indicators on educational provision for students with disabilities, learning difficulties and disadvantages. It looks in detail at the students concerned, where they are educated (special schools, special classes or regular classes) and what their level of education is (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education). It also includes information on the physical provision and on student/teacher ratios and discusses policy implications concerning special education.



Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators – 2005 Edition, OECD Publishing 2005, ISBN 9264011900

The 2005 edition of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* provides a rich, comparable and up-to-date array of indicators on the performance of education systems. In doing so,

it represents the consensus of professional thinking on how to measure the current state of education internationally.



Reform and Change in Higher Education, Analysing Policy Implementation. Ase Gornitza, Maurice Kogan, Alberto Amaral. Springer 2005, ISBN 1-4020-3402-4

This book contains a comprehensive international discussion of the state of the art of implementation analysis in higher education and an extensive review of relevant recent literature.



I gotta use words when I talk to you: English and international education, Michael Woolf.

EAIE 2005 ISBN 10090-74721-21-4

The significance of the use of English in international education will never be a matter of consensus. This study, while it draws upon some significant research background, is not intended primarily to offer a scholarly contribution to the field. The object of this book is to debate an area that is informed as much by opinion and, it might be argued, prejudice as it is by research and statistics.

IMHE CALENDAR 2006

10-12 May

Challenges to Academic Medicine: Planning Futures in Partnership, in collaboration with the Medical University of Graz, Austria.
www.meduni-graz.at/academicmedicine/
☞ Contact: jacqueline.smith@oecd.org

24-25 August

Roles and Responsibilities of Institutional Governing Bodies "What works" Seminar, Paris, France.
☞ Contact: jan.karlsson@oecd.org

11-13 September

18th General Conference, **Values and Ethics: Managing Challenges and Realities in Higher Education**, Paris, France.
www.oecd.org/edu/imhegeneralconference2006
☞ Contact: valerie.lafon@oecd.org

Autumn

Project seminar, **Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development**.
☞ Contact: jaana.puukka@oecd.org

Autumn

Funding Systems and their Effects on Higher Education Systems.
☞ Contact: jan.karlsson@oecd.org

27-28 April

Governing universities in the knowledge society, Valencia, Spain.
Contact: cege@upv.es
www.cege.upv.es

27-28 June

Meeting of the Education Committee at Ministerial Level, on tertiary education, Athens, Greece.
☞ Contact: sue.lindsay@oecd.org

5-7 September

SEAAIR Conference Transforming **Higher Education in the Knowledge Society**, Langkawi, Malaysia.
www.seair.info



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OTHER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

30 March-1 April

EUA conference **Funding Strong Universities: Diversification, Student Support and Good Governance**, Hamburg, Germany.
http://www.eua.be/eua/en/hamburg_conference.jsp