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Programme Analysis

Higher Education Management Programmes in Europe
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Danube University Krems

1. Preamble

In recent years, university policy in Europe has been characterised by increasing reliance on the differentiation of the university system as a modernisation factor, by the catalytic forces of the Bologna Process toward shifts in thinking and acting within higher education institutions. Meanwhile, these institutions are being granted more autonomy and their behaviour in the resulting competitive situation (Hödl, E.; Zegelin, W., 1999) is expected to become more customer-oriented (Hansen, U., 1999; Nullmeier, F., 2000; Pausits, A., 2006), more cost-aware, and more sensitive towards the needs of society.

The approach adopted by public authorities with regard to universities has essentially transformed, and the shift towards enlarged 'managerialism' (Enders, J. et al., 2005Pellert A., 1999) has been seriously influenced by ideas of 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997) and 'entrepreneurial universities' (Clark, B. R., 1998).

Enders *et al*. developed three different scenarios for the future of higher education in Europe (Enders, J. *et al*., 2005). The characteristics of Centralia – the first model – would include a state-oriented organisation, European integration, synchronisation and big organisations. The second model – Octavia – would harness institutional and economic developments on the way toward a network economy and focus on control by the academic community as its crucial identity. Thirdly, in contrast to Centralia, attention is focused on a market orientation, small organisations and high freedom for decision-making or integration to describe what Enders *et al*. called 'Vitis Vinifera'. Without predicting which "world" will become reality, it is clear that the wind of change has already arrived at the European higher education landscape.

File *et al*. point out that European higher education institutions will act in a setting far less secure than that of only a few decades ago. They will benefit from new self-government, which deals with crucial issues such as student selection, influencing tuition fee levels, setting employees' income policies and

deciding autonomously which programmes to offer. These will be new aspects of the universities' interior "management existence". Modes of competition for students, staff and contracts will increase significantly. More liberal regulations lead to greater financial independence, further chances and higher risks (File, J. *et al.*, 2005). Academic administration and management have become increasingly complex: the institutions have so far become larger and more multifaceted, the tasks have multiplied (modern "multiversities") and therefore the need to provide skilled management and administration has increased (Kerr, C., 2001). More management tasks have to be fulfilled at the institutional level than before. Professional management is an important prerequisite to enable the higher education institution to perceive itself as an autonomous organisation (Bleiklie, I., 2005) instead of being subordinate to central government.

Specific modes of management for a specific organisation have to be developed and new forms of participation have to be created (Hanft, A., 2000; Pellert A., 2000). Another important prerequisite to establishing appropriate forms of management is the appreciation of management (Ruch, R. S., 2001) in the sense of honouring good performance in the field of management and organisation.

The quality of management will depend on the quality of the administrative web that "ties together" different management functions and administrative positions in different parts of the institutions and with different tasks (Cordes, J.; Roland, F.; Westermann, G. H., 2001; Hanft, A., 2000; Hansen, U., 1999).

This new development has its roots in the growing number of professional activities within European higher education institutions and in their relevant environments; however, adequate, practice-oriented degree programmes designed for international target audiences are still comparatively rare.

After the discussion driven by UNESCO in the 1990s on higher education management programs in Europe, especially in the UK (Davies, J. L., 1996; Guildford, P., 1995; Schofield, A., 1996), it seems that the topic lost its appeal for further research. Now, after nearly a decade, the topic has returned to play a

vital role once again. The second background of this paper is a research work on a "synoptical compilation of tertiary-level institutions for higher education management in Europe and their study and training programmes" for the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The research will provide a more systematic exchange of experience and knowledge in issues of higher education management, policy making, leadership, quality assurance and evaluation within the framework of the Dialogue on Innovative Strategies in Higher Education (DIES) programme of the DAAD and the German Rectors' Conference. The synoptical compilation was based on a comparative investigation on European higher education management programmes and on an informal needs assessment by interested professionals in the "Higher Education and Research Management" Master's programme at the Danube University Krems, Austria. This paper analyses the higher education management programmes in Europe and leads to a summary of specific needs and forms of education programmes as well as future tasks and opportunities for programmes in higher education management across Europe.

2. Current situation in European Higher Education Management Programmes

The discussion about higher education management programmes in the 1990s was driven by the increasing impact of management within the institutions (Guildford, P., 1995; Schofield, A., 1996). An important driving force of institutional autonomy is the institutional management. Most of the reforms are therefore associated with a strengthening of management positions. With increasing institutional autonomy, responsibilities arise at the institutional level that were previously part of the sphere of competence of national ministries (Kern, H., 2000; Pellert A., 1999). These must now be assumed by the university itself, which is therefore faced with an increasing need for more professional managerial personnel. Thus, firstly, university management tasks are more strongly concentrated at the level of the full-time university administration, i.e. the traditional university administration must progress in the

direction of management rather than administration (Enders, J. *et al.*, 2005; Nullmeier, F., 2000). Secondly, the academic staff must also become more involved in administrative work because more fund-raising and acquisition of third party funding is required from the individual organisational units. Meanwhile, more intensive communication with the public is also becoming increasingly necessary in more and more fields of science (Cordes, J., 2001; Hansen, U., 1999; Müller-Böling, D., 2000). The trend towards more interdisciplinary work in teams also requires a high management input. Thus, management represents a new or intensified task in the field of academia while "managementisation" also implies professionalisation of the classical university administration. This is accompanied by new, different kinds of responsibility, such as intensified PR work, relationships with former students, international relations, career development, e-learning, fund-raising, and internal and external communication, all of which requires special know-how as well as the involvement of experts. Although persons with the appropriate special expertise have been increasingly attracted to working with universities in recent years, this group is not yet large enough to transform the traditional university administration as a whole in the direction of management orientation (Clark, B. R., 1998). The newly-arrived specialists are therefore confronted with the important task of defining processes of change in their immediate environment in order also to be able to bring their expertise into the university organisation in an appropriate and adequate way.

The endeavour towards professionalisation must be considered from two perspectives: the specialists arriving from outside must be provided with appropriate know-how about the functional logic and specific characteristics of the organisation "university" so that this change-agent function can be perceived. Meanwhile, the members of the traditional administration who are moving towards stronger management orientation must be provided with the specific management know-how they need in order to bring their special knowledge to the organisation in a modern form.

On the academic side it is evident that at the level of the academic functionaries (for example, the rectorate), the acceptance of management

responsibilities is indeed becoming increasingly necessary (Pellert A., 2000), which is also manifested structurally in the full-time nature of these functions. Responsibilities such as strategy development, service agreements, PR concepts, or conversion of the curriculum to the Bologna structure demand "feats of management" for which very few academic functionaries who have achieved their present positions on the basis of their specialist knowledge are prepared. At the same time, it is also important to equip young academic staff right from the start with management know-how appropriate to the new challenges. And it is also essential to provide those academic functionaries who perform this function only as an additional post (for example, deans) and who have full-time, support staff such as faculty managers, department heads and competent administrators with the tools they need to cope with their increasingly complex spheres of responsibility (Del Favero, M., 2003).

In addition, the interface between the state and the institution is shaped by the establishment of more and more committees (boards) (Brown II; Christopher, M., 2000), whose members also fulfil important control and management responsibilities and must therefore also be prepared for this role.

What is being done at present to meet this growing need for qualified management in Europe? Although it is noticeable that special know-how is increasingly being offered in individual spheres - such as internationalisation, controlling, fund-raising, etc. - most offerings tend to come in the form of seminars and do not constitute continuous, associated continuing education; furthermore, there is not always a focus on the specific needs of universities. There are especially few possibilities for people to acquire the specific social skills that would enable them to actually function as change agents; of these few, hardly any are sponsored by the state. This kind of qualification is offered on the general educational market without any specific reference to universities; moreover, these offerings require heavy investments by individual persons (which are almost never justified by the salary structure for administrative staff at public universities). With regard to the academic side of the universities, management qualifications are particularly difficult to integrate in the system since the attitude towards leadership and management is ambivalent. In any

case, systematic preparation for management functions for academic personnel at universities and research institutes is very rare (File, J. *et al.*, 2005; Hanft, A., 2000).

The acquisition of expertise at the level of academic functionaries takes place mainly by means of rectors' conferences and in the form of information events; "skills" training occurs only in very rare cases. When individuals try to learn management techniques, they usually do so on a private basis rather than via channels organised by the university. Finding appropriate approaches for the further training of academic management staff is an especially sensitive topic in the sector of university management.

Nonetheless, some study programmes exist in Europe for the professionalisation of university administration and for the trainee manager who can imagine a full-time career in university (middle) management. In recent years, the first postgraduate and basic courses of study have been offered, most of them designed to be completed in parallel with a (full-time) job. Unfortunately, people who enrol in these programmes currently suffer from the fact that they are rarely financed by their employers, because there is still no real career track in university middle management in most European countries. Therefore, it is still not clear to what extent there is any return of investment via increased salaries.

Some of the teaching staff involved in such programmes are university researchers specialized in the international comparison of university systems, the special aspects of university organisations and the major topics of education policy "inspired by Europe". Others are teachers with classical business management knowledge that can be integrated as a new kind of expertise in the new logic of the university as an entrepreneurial organisation.

An important side effect of combined, longer courses of training is also the aspect of networking among the participants and the creation of a communication platform for exchanging experiences. This networking is an important part of the professionalisation of new professions in every sector.

3. Higher Education Management Master's Programmes Throughout Europe – Status-Quo Analysis

The research on which this paper was based concerns a three step model. In the first action, we collected available information about existing higher education management programmes and the universities where these programmes are being offered. We used internet research and the support contributed by international experts in different countries who are involved in the respective programmes. The basic information from the internet and the contribution by the international experts was used for the further development of a questionnaire (step two). After the questionnaire-based survey, we continued our investigation with in-depth telephone interviews with selected experts (step three). Altogether, 19 programmes were examined in the course of the research project. In this article, only 8 Master's programmes are listed as a subgroup as items of the given population. The following summary of the research results is intended as an overview, including our assumptions about why some information was available and some was not.

In their future prognosis for higher education in 2020, Westerheijden *et al*. envision well-developed institutional management with clear career paths, mainly for academics that have taken an additional Master's degree in higher education management (Westerheijden, D. F. *et al*., 2005). Indeed, in the last decade new study programmes for higher education management are being developed at the Master's level, which lead to a university degree. In some instances, the programmes are designed as seminars, courses and workshops that do not culminate in a degree. These two options complete the picture of formal activities in this field. Higher education management programmes have a longer tradition in the UK than in the rest of Europe; the first MBA programme in higher education management was established at the University of London in 1999. The newest, most recently established programmes are in Germany and Austria. The origins of this geographically diverse progress are found in the different

developments of the higher education systems and levels of university autonomy across Europe. Universities in the UK were being faced with the issue of institutional autonomy much earlier than universities in the German-speaking countries or in Eastern Europe.

Very often these international programmes are based on existing networks and personal contacts. The providers of higher education management programmes and the educators in those programmes are pioneers. But in recent years the potential audience for the subject is increasing and with it the demand. As a result, the programmes have become presentable. Ministries responsible for higher education across Europe underline the need of such programmes. Unfortunately, this support is very often only an exercise in rhetoric rather than real political support or responsibility. The same kind of "lip service" is offered at the institutional level; rectors and leaders of higher education institutions do not pay a lot of attention to sustainable and professional personnel development, especially in the form of Master's programmes in higher education management. This is may be a due to their limited terms in a leadership position, usually four to five years. The people in these positions are looking for management know-how during their own tenure, not two or three years later. The newly-established human resource development programmes at universities in Europe, especially in Germany and Austria, could be a good institutional and strategic partner for the Master's programmes. Both sides are looking for acceptance and support.

The latest developments are the Joint European Programmes, supported by the EU, which aim to strengthen the exchange process and cooperation between universities at the European level and close the gap between the countries. The key issues in this process are:

the openness of the relevant universities and organisation,

the compatibility understanding by the partner universities of the criteria levels (design, process, quality and outcomes) of the programme, and

the organisational and managerial understanding between the universities.

Due to the different national systems, the programmes are dedicated to a national or transnational - e.g. for German speaking countries – audience. New

programme developments such as the European Master's in Higher Education Management from the Universities of Oslo, Tampere and Aveiro or another European Master's from London, Maastricht, Speyer and Valencia aim to close this gap. How successful these young trials will be still remains to be seen.

Targeted audiences for all programmes are individuals with management responsibilities in higher education institutions, institutional leaders, members of institutional councils and higher education researchers, as well as teaching and academic staff. Necessary requirements are experience of higher education management, a university degree, and a proven and focused motivation to take part in the programme.

Although the programmes have diverse profiles, all of them are organised with a core curriculum plus optional modules. Different learning environments such as classroom work, online interaction, group work, and individual learning are combined for the best learning outcome in most cases. Due to the fact that the programmes are relatively young and it is difficult to achieve their learning goals through conventional skills-based training, broader-than-usual strategies are required in order to integrate both intellectual and applied activities (Zuber-Skeritt, O., 1990). State of the art teaching and learning environments are utilised, usually based on single modules as well as modern didactical principles such as the blended learning or action learning approaches.

In general the common focus of these study programmes is the generalist approach. The programmes do not develop experts in one of the management fields, but professionals who are also able to translate between the top management, scientific and administrative staff. Graduate students of these programmes are like change agents of the transformation and professionalisation of higher education management.

Existing literature on management (Cunnington, B., Trevor-Roberts, B., 1986; Morgan, G., 1988) includes several approaches to the taxonomy of such broader intellectual and developmental skills, mainly in relation to the management of change. There are generally nine common and essential areas: interpreting the environment; proactive managing; leadership and vision; human

resource management; promoting creativity, learning and innovation; skills of remote management, which refers to managing those with whom direct contact may be unusual (Schofield, A., 1996); using information technology as a transformative force; managing complexity; and broadening contextual competencies. In different attitudes and different scopes, these competencies sometimes only arise as sub themes, but they are always part of the programmes.

The questions in the survey most frequently *not* answered were those referring to "Results of study Programmes" and "Networking and Alumni Programme". This is because most of the programmes are very new and still have few alumni, so they are not yet able to reflect on the outcomes of the programmes or alumni activities. Some of the respondents, such as the University of Kassel or the University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück are setting up alumni networks.

As can be seen by the list of universities in question, the geographic distribution is quite limited. Indeed, there are no higher education management Master's programmes in France or the regions of Southern/Eastern Europe.

Providers	Duration	ECTS	Programme Type	Beginning
University of Oslo, University of Tampere, University of Aveiro, HEEM	4 semesters	120	European Master's in Higher Education	2001
University of London	4 semesters	180	MBA in Higher Education Management	2001
University of Bath	2 semesters (full time), 4 semesters (part time = unit based)		MA in Higher Education	2002 Currently not on offer

Danube University Krems	2,3, 4 semesters	30,60, 90	Certificate, Academic Higher Education Manager, Master of Science	2006
University of London, Universitei Maastrich, Deutsche Hochschule für Verwaltungswiss, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia	4 semesters		European MBA in Higher Education and Research Management	(2007)
University of Kassel	3 or 4 semesters	120	Master of Arts in Higher Education	2002
University of Oldenburg	6 semesters (part time)		MBA in Educational Management	2003
Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences and Bremen University of Applied Sciences	6 or 4 semesters (part time)	120	MBA in Higher Education and Research Management	2003

Table: Master's level programmes in Higher Education Management across Europe.

There is a considerable heterogeneity concerning the title, workload and length of the existing programmes in higher education management, and there is also rather large variation in pricing. The market for management programmes for higher education institutions is still very new. Not all of the current programmes focus only on management issues or higher education institutions. For example, the programme at the University of Oldenburg has enlarged its target audience and covers all types of educational institutions. At the University of Kassel, meanwhile, only one third of the programme's content is devoted to the issue of management.

It seems that most of the Master's level programmes in higher education management are still in the try-out phase and participants are acquired on the basis of their interest in this type of further education. Personal experiences with building up and executing such a programme show that at the moment there is quite a broad range of qualifications and responsibilities on the part of the participants. This is a strong indicator that the professionalisation of higher

education management is still at an early stage and that strategic personnel development and career tracks for managers have not developed with much consistency as yet.

4. The future of Master's level programmes in higher education management

The fact that most of the programmes investigated are conducted within a network of partner organisations, or at least with guest lecturers, shows that cooperation is necessary. It can be assumed that most of the universities deal with the same problems, such as reaching the target audience, setting up alumni networks, convincing national ministries to support and promote the programmes, etc. The providers are looking for efficient solutions to establish and run higher education management programmes, so they search for (and find) partners who can help them solve the problems that arise. This shows that the field of higher education management cannot be covered by stand-alone approaches but by cooperative, coordinated further education offers and solutions – which seems to be a good basis for a common European method of resolution and guarantees.

Based on the interviews conducted for this overview, it would appear that the target audiences (the participants of the higher education management programmes) have clear ideas as to which topics and in which form are important for their work. In the development of new programme solutions, it is essential to analyse customer needs. We suggest a systematic customer-needs analysis, which includes a number of experts and also takes a broad audience into consideration.

It is evident that the participants of the programmes enrol with prior work experience. Their experience makes workgroups manageable, but at the same time the different kinds of experience need to be made compatible before the beginning of the programme. The participants' expertise and prior knowledge has to be built into the higher education management programmes' curricula.

The process of improving programmes has to have a strong international quality orientation, as does the process of implementing new programmes. If European higher education systems should adopt a more common approach, the management of the higher education institutions should be more internationally comprehensive. An annual European conference on higher education management programme providers would help to identify common problems and to develop new solutions in a wider context. The future of these programmes is highly determined by customer needs, relationship management between the participants and the higher education institutions at which they enrol, as well as further programme developments.

No comprehensive investigation of management training and development needs has been undertaken within the European higher education system. It might be useful to undertake such a study in Europe, as is done in countries such as Australia and the UK as part of the modernisation process of the higher education system (Schofield, A., 1996). Such a needs analysis could be useful in determining the extent to which mutual needs exist across diverse higher education institutions and countries. Moreover, in addition to the individual and institutional needs, the diversity of career paths into higher education management should be the object of further research as one of the crucial factors. In the case of Europe, the significant lack of attention to the broader conceptual and intellectual requirements of development must be linked much more to the narrower demands of management training (Schofield, A., 1996).

A European needs analysis would provide a good possibility to shift the view of the higher education management systems from government to institution and staff. It would also point out the key elements of missing skills in a bottom up process (Hirst, P.; Rodwell, S., 1986). This could be seen as an accompanying task of the modernisation of the European higher education area and would serve as a much-needed tool for developing tailor-made programmes.

In the process of lifelong learning and career development, it is important to consider the tuning of the programmes and to set up paths for upgrading qualifications and assistance in the lifelong learning approach. In order to

facilitate such educational pathways, it would be helpful to increase the exchange between Master's and PhD programmes. The programme providers should accompany students and graduate students during the different stages of their careers and lives. This partnership could be based on strategic relationship management between the universities and their target audiences by establishing a common European alumni network. This involves a shift from product (programme) and single university orientation to relationship orientation and to a European network. Such a network would improve educational outcomes and encourage universities to develop a life cycle and process orientation, which leads to a permanent future direction and continuous development process. Such an orientation entails strategic alumni work as well as programme development. The outcomes of education are then highly determined by student cooperation. In the sense of lifelong learning, this cooperation requires strategic development and permanent care throughout the period of real study and the particular programme.

Generally, regardless of regional differences, all higher education management programme directors have a mutual interest in strengthening their programmes' international perspective and networking via various methods, for example: lecturer exchange, sandwich programmes, modules exchange, resources pool. Additionally, more detailed customer related topics were found throughout the higher education management programmes in Europe.

Annex:

List of higher education management programmes in Europe:

- **UK: University of London / Universiteit Maastricht**: "European MBA in Higher Education & Research Management" – www.euroherm.org/index.php?id=40

- **UK: University of Bath**: "Higher Education Management" www.bath.ac.uk/icem

- **UK: University of London**: "MBA Higher Education Management" – http://ioewebserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid=882&882_1=830&var2=MAHEM

- **Netherlands: University of Twente**: "Educational Science and Technology" – http://est.graduate.utwente.nl

- **Norway: University of Oslo**: "HEEM: European Master's in Higher Education" – www.uv.uio.no/hedda/masterprogramme/heem.html

- **University of Kassel**: Master of Arts in Higher Education, http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/mahe/welcome.html

- **University of Oldenburg**: MBA in Educational Management, http://www.mba.uni-oldenburg.de/index.html

- **Osnabruck University of Applied Sciences and Bremen University of Applied Sciences:** MBA in Higher Education and Research Management, http://www.wiso.fh-osnabrueck.de/hwm-mba.html

- **German University of Administrative Science Speyer and Centre for Research and Science Management Speyer:** Science Management, http://www.hfv-speyer.de/studium/Wissenschaftsmanagement/index.htm

- **University of Kassel:** University staff development programme (UNISTAFF), http://www.uni-kassel.de/fb11/isos/isos.htm

- **Danube University Krems:** Certificate, Academic Higher Education Manager, Master of Science, www.donau-uni.ac.at/wbbm/hm

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