

Quality Matters

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A Quarterly Newsletter of the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA)

St. Mary's University College

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Quote of this issue

“Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent efforts.”

John Ruskin

This newsletter is published every three months by the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance of St Mary's University College (SMUC). The Objective of the newsletter is to inform the SMUC community as well as interested public, private, non-governmental stakeholders about the activities and endeavors of the institution in fostering quality education and research in the Ethiopian Higher Education setting.

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Journal of Business and Administrative Sciences (JBAS) Launched

St. Mary's University College (SMUC) launched the Journal of Business and Administrative Sciences (JBAS) on 14 February, 2009. The first issue of the journal is published and made available for readership. In terms of subject coverage, the journal is the first of its kind in the country and is planned to be published bi-annually. As indicated in the launching ceremony, the journal will have significant importance in the promotion of scholarly works in the area.

The journal will publish research works in various fields of studies such as Management, Accounting and Finance, Business and Public Administration, Marketing, Governance and other related areas.

The launching ceremony of the journal took place in the presence of the President, AVPs (Academic Vice Presidents), Deans, and academic staff of SMUC as well as the editors of the journal and contributors of articles. The ceremony was held at the main campus of the University College. The contributors include scholars and practitioners both from Ethiopia and other countries. ■

From the Editorial Desk

Along with an eternal inspiration and a stubborn tendency to be predictable, my father left me with one important legacy. “When you get to heaven”, he would tell me, “They will ask whose life you made better, whose existence was enhanced by knowing you. You would better have an answer.”

It is ironic that my father – never a generous man – would offer me this advice. It is even more ironic that it stuck with me. But then again, while my dad talked the talk, my mom walked the walk. Today, I follow her example; if I can name few people I have helped without too much heavy thinking, I figure I am doing okay. But again, I have an advantage to work here with brilliant researchers and making people’s lives better is what we are all paid to do.

Those are some pretty dramatic stories. And they do not reflect the real day-to-day impact we have on our students. A dozen school years, hence, might keep a kid out of trouble. We have been in education 10 years now. Who knows how many are financially and emotionally better off today than they might otherwise have been?

So, this season, to celebrate our 10th anniversary, we have collected some of our issues. So do me a favor. Read this issue. Because, when I get to the gates of heaven and they will ask me that fateful question - “What person’s life did you make better?” I would like to add your name to the list. ■

Celebrating a decade of achievement

St. Mary’s University College (SMUC) will celebrate its 10th anniversary this year. The celebration is meant to honor SMUC’s achievements throughout its 10 year history. It will be decorated with show cases of SMUC graduates and students, programmes, and activities in teaching, research as well as community services. It is, thus, a series of forums put forward to recognize outstanding achievements of the University College’s community. Accordingly, faculty research seminar, Student Research Forum, the 7th Annual National Research Conference on Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) are some of the colorful events of the season. The anniversary is also a venue to strengthen partnership with parents, graduates and all the stakeholders of SMUC. ■



News Items

Charting the Roadmap for Private Higher Education in Ethiopia

The 7th annual research conference on private higher education will be held in August 2009 at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN/ECA) Conference Hall. So far, SMUC has organized six conferences in a row on Private Higher Education.

What is unique about this year's research conference, however, is that it is to be held on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the University College. This year's research conference will be a double blind peer reviewed research conference. Its major theme will revolve around "Charting the Roadmap for Private Higher Education in Ethiopia." ■

Graduate Tracer Study Started

The Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA) of St. Mary's University College has recently begun the second phase of its Graduate Tracer Study project for the Extension Division and Distance Education. The first tracer study that covered graduates from the regular program is ready for publication.

The study is one of the essential tools to enable universities offer well designed education and training by obtaining a comprehensive and detailed picture of the labor market where their graduates operate.

This is done in light of the need for institutions of higher learning to evaluate effectiveness of their education and training in terms of preparing their graduates for the industry, further education and life after graduation. ■

Quality Assurance Special Interest Group (QASIG) Workshop Conducted

The Quality Assurance Special Interest Group (QASIG) of pioneer and newly established universities conducted its final workshop on quality assurance. The three-day consultative workshop (1-3 December, 2008) was organized by the Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) of the Ministry of Education.

The Special Interest Group, through a series of consultative workshop, has worked on the production of Quality Care Manual containing various research instruments to be used in quality enhancement programmes, as well as a draft Quality Care Policy. The documents will be used widely in higher education institutions in Ethiopia and will be critical in promoting quality and relevance of higher education in the country.

This time the consultative workshop focused on the preparation of training material for university community on quality enhancement practices. The workshop drew expertise from nine public universities. St. Mary's University College attended the workshop. ■

Research Corner

Title: Opportunities and Implications of the Higher Education Systems Overhaul (HESO) project for the Leadership of Private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Ethiopia. (proceeding of the second national conference on private higher education in Ethiopia, July 2006)

Research type: Descriptive

Researcher: Dr. Philip Rayner and Prof. Kate Ashcroft

The paper describes some of the opportunities and implications for private higher education sector in Ethiopia. This is done on the basis of the report on Higher Education Strategy Overhaul (HESO) by the Committee of Inquiry into Governance, Leadership and Management in Ethiopian Higher Education System. The report drew on visits to 11 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), discussions with members of the HESO team who were drawn from HEIs and the Ministry of Education, and evidence from five witnesses.

Accordingly, the paper underlines the fact that there are windows of opportunities for the private sector to increase its influence, demonstrate how it can help meet the government's development agenda, contribute to the higher education reforms and improve its management and leadership. The paper, thus, pinpoints what the sector can do as a whole; such as, advocacy, experience sharing, developing and recommending a qualification framework and credit accumulation system to mention a few.

The paper also indicated what individual private HEIs need to do in order to improve strategic planning, organizational and operational effectiveness, communication and human resource management, staff development, system review and cost effectiveness.

Generally, the paper discusses what the government and its agencies can do to support the private sector in particular, develop more incentives for the expansion and support of private HEIs; and, provide access to training to boards. ■

Gender Awareness Training Conducted

The Special Interest Group on Gender (SIGG) in St. Mary's University College organized and conducted gender awareness training for staff selected from various units of the University College on the 6th of January, 2009. The training, which was conducted for a full day was meant to create awareness among academic and administrative staff of SMUC on issues of Gender.

In his opening speech, Ato Wondwosen Tamirat, President of the University College, underscored the need for such trainings towards assuring quality education in the University College. The training focused on gender based motion, gender based mainstreaming, gender analysis, and topical (sensitive) gender issues in Higher Learning Institutions. ■

Interview

This column features interviews of people including government officials, policy makers, educators, researchers, and presidents of universities or colleges as well as students on educational issues. In this edition we interviewed Dr. Eylachew Zewde on issues of Governance, Leadership and Management in higher education institutions. The center would like to extend its thanks in advance for sharing us his thoughts.



Background

Dr. Eylachew Zewde is Dean of the College of Open and Distance learning at St. Mary's University College. The College is one of the largest open learning institutions in the country that engages itself with teaching, research and community outreach services.

Dr. Eylachew has a PhD in Soil Science from the University of Giessen, Germany. Since 1978, he has worked in the higher education system (Haromaya and Jimma Universities and at the Higher Education Strategic Center/HESC) and attained the rank of Associate Professor. He has also worked in the National Soil Research Center of the Agricultural Research Institute. Marcos from CEIRQA talked to him on issues of governance, leadership and management in higher education institutions in Ethiopia. ■

Quality Matters: How do you see the state of governance, leadership and management in today's higher education institutions?

Dr. Eylachew: Well, I spent all my active years in the system, and to tell you the truth I do not feel happy about it. I know there are some higher education institutions that have good governance, leadership and management, but they still have to work very hard to meet the expectation of their stakeholders. However, all in all, the issue depends how the government is addressing the question and how the universities are tackling the range of issues around the governance while preserving a coherent higher education system. On the other hand, the issue of governance and leadership depends on the degree to which the institutes exercise their autonomy as stated in the HE (Higher Education) Proclamation 351/2003 and develop their own internal strengths through the participation of their academic staff. I am not sure how much autonomy is addressed. I feel that the current system of governance, leadership and management of higher education institutions cannot fulfill the national expectation, and, thus it has to change significantly. To satisfy and discharge national goals, we must seriously consider five aspects. First, how much freedom institutions need to have to run their own affairs. Second, the extent to which universities depend on public funding or can draw on other sources.

Third, the changing pattern and means in which the system is subjected to quality assurance and control. Fourth, the national system of strengthening institutional governance, leadership and management should be seen seriously. The fifth aspect is the role of the HE leaders in bringing about national desirable change. I may be wrong, some of these issues have been addressed during the last few years, but the outcomes are not as expected. Thus, higher education institutions must seriously ask the question “why” on the existing system and find answers to it.

Quality Matters: What do you think are the challenges and opportunities of the existing management in higher education institutions?

Dr. Eyelachew: We must be careful when we talk about challenges and opportunities of the higher education system. There is time that opportunities could be changed to challenges when both are not on the same wave length. Currently, I see the willingness of the government to expand the higher education as one of the opportunities, but if higher education institutions are not ready in all aspects, this opportunity could be changed into a challenge. There are a number of challenges within the system and if one sees them critically, they are opportunity at the same time, but to use these challenges as opportunity, HEIs require capable leadership and good management. Please do not ask me if these are in place in higher education institutions.

Quality Matters: What do you recommend to improve the existing management practices in Higher Education Institutions?

Dr. Eyelachew: The issue of higher education management is a long standing one and if I am not wrong it did not show significant improvement for the last 30 years. The management practices of higher education is intermingled with the management systems of the remaining sectors, and it will be very hard to have perfection only in HEIs, but it may be possible to improve things by bringing dedicated and experienced academicians at the forefront. In higher education, unlike the experience of other sectors, the involvement of the higher education community in recommending leaders plays a big role and under any circumstance due attention has to be given to the democratization process.

Leaders in higher education must serve only for a limited period and the system must be recharged with new blood. The system must also be obliged to give a platform for people with new ideas. I, personally, feel that the higher education system must be dynamic to keep pace with the changing environment. Otherwise, it would be difficult for the country to reach the aspired goals within the planned period. I would like to underline that without good governance, leadership and management it is impossible to improve the education system. ■

Perspectives

Reflection on Governance, Leadership and Management in Ethiopian Higher Education

By:Martha Kibru (CEIRQA)martha.kibru@gmail.com

During the past decade, higher education in Ethiopia became fundamentally a public endeavor with the advanced idea that access to higher education is for the many, not just for the few. This has implications for various important aspects of governance, leadership as well as management. However, not many researches provide a comprehensive glimpse into the critical and yet contextualized governance, leadership and management issues in Ethiopian higher education.

Governance in higher education refers to the means by which higher education institutions are formally organized and managed. It considerably overlaps with management; however, there is a distinction between their definitions - management is seen as the implementation and execution of policies. The function of management is to order and control an organization within agreed objectives. Governance, on the other hand, includes both internal and external governance. While internal governance refers to lines of authority within institutions, external governance refers to relations between institutions and their supervisors (Fretwell, 2001).

The concept of governance in higher education setting predominantly refers to the internal structure, which is generally composed of a governing board, the

university president, senates, or as the case may be academic commissions and a team of academic, technical and administrative support giving staff deemed necessary for the operations of the institution (GoE, 2003).

The Board reviews and adapts the plans and budgets of each institution. The universities have senates, which fall in between the boards and the academic commissions in their powers and duties. The academic commission (AC) of each college faculty deliberates on and submits proposals about programs, plans, courses, certification, promotions, and students' status. The AC receives recommendations from the department council concerning programs of study, curricula, courses, staff promotion, research projects, teaching materials, and examinations.

In public institutions, the presidents and vice presidents of the universities and the deans of the faculties are usually senior staff members of the institution appointed by the government directly or through by the Ministry of Education. The department heads are elected by the department's council or appointed by the deans of the faculties, depending on the institution. Most private universities and colleges in Ethiopia have not departed substantially from the conventional

governance structures of public universities. Their organs of governance and their principal officers go by the same names like their counterparts in public universities. Structural perspectives alone do not fully explain institutional governance. It is also important to understand the function of particular bodies and how they interact (Fretwell, 2001). It is worth to consider both the formal/official/explicit governance and the informal one, which refers to the unwritten rules that govern how people relate to each other within higher education: the respect accorded to professors and administrators, the freedom to pursue research, the traditions of student behavior, to name a few. It is vital to articulate the rights and responsibilities of various actors and to set rules that determine their interaction in a way that is consistent with achieving quality higher education.

It is widely recognized that governance systems are generally quite poor in African higher education institutions (Teferra, 1999). In 2004, the Ministry of Education established a team - 'the HESO team' (Higher Education Systems Overhaul) - to examine and analyze the leadership, governance and management of the higher education sector and to suggest ways that higher education system should be overhauled to enable it better meet the development needs of the country.

An overview of higher education in Ethiopia indicates that the present strategy consists of

decentralizing educational management and making institutions more autonomous as described in the Higher Education Proclamation. Measures have been undertaken to improve governance of Higher Education. But, still, there is a long way to go (Saint, 2004). The HESO team identified critical problems related to governance, management and leadership such as inadequate preparation for the new situation of autonomy and accountability on the part of higher educational institutions, the Government and its agencies, as well as their institutional culture that disables progress.

The HESO team, thus, concludes that these changes all depend upon visionary leadership of the top management, especially that within the Ministry of Education and higher educational institutions. This means that the top priority should be appointing the right people, with the right experience and qualities, for them to develop appropriate qualities, attitudes and skills.

Good governance is not a panacea, but it sets the parameters for management and is certainly necessary for achieving high quality. No mismanaged enterprise can flourish, and institutions of higher education are no exception. Specifically, higher education institutions are challenging to govern given their unique nature. They have societal, personal and economic objectives, which cannot be considered in isolation. The leaders of higher education institutions have been confronted with challenges in trying to develop new modes of governance and leadership so that institutions will be able to navigate

the existing problems in ways that are both innovative and productive. I believe, a better leadership with a collective endeavor of the various stakeholders can infuse a new fetus of life, creativity and dynamism into the university.

Let's hope that higher education stakeholders including policy-makers will start to make better use of the tools of good governance so that they will start the process of achieving sustainable and far-reaching improvement. ■

References

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Fretwell, E.K.(2001), "More than Management-Guidelines for State Higher Education System Governing Boards and their Chief Executive" Charlotte, the University of North Carolina.

Government of Ethiopia (2003), "Higher Education Proclamation. No. 351/2003". Addis Ababa.

Ashcroft, K. (2004), "Report of Higher Education Systems Overhaul Committee of Inquiry into Governance, Leadership and Management in Ethiopia's Higher Education System." Addis Ababa, Ministry of Education.

Saint, W. (2004), "Higher Education in Ethiopia: The Vision and Its Challenges". Vol.2, No.3, pp.83-113. ■

Virtual Links

Ministry of Education

Web site: [http:// www.moe.gov.et](http://www.moe.gov.et)

Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (Ethiopia)

Website: www.higher.edu.et

PROPHE- Programme for Research on Private Higher Education

Website: www.albany.edu/dept/eaps/prophe/

International Network for Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (INQA/AHE)

Website: [http:// www.inqahe.org](http://www.inqahe.org)

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK)

Website: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

Center for International Research on Higher Education

Website: http://bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe

Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia

Website: <http://www.qsae.org/>

International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

Website: <http://www.eric.ed.gov>

International Network for Higher Education in Africa (NHEA)

Website: <http://www.bc.edu>

International Network for quality assurance Agencies in higher Education

Website: <http://www.inqahe.nl>

Fun corner

Two guys took a course and did pretty well on all the quizzes and mid-terms. They were so confident going into the final that the weekend before finals week, despite the final being on Monday, they decided to go out of town to party with some friends. They did this and had a great time. However, with their hangovers and tiredness, they overslept all day Sunday and didn't make it back until early Monday morning. Rather than taking the final then, they found the professor for the course after the final and explained to him how they missed the final.

They told him they were out of town for the weekend and had planned to come back in time to study, but they had a flat tire on the way back and didn't have a spare. They couldn't fix it for a long time and were late getting back to campus. The professor thought this over and agreed that they could take the final the following day. The two guys, elated and relieved, studied that night and went in the next day at the time that the professor had told them. He placed them in separate rooms and handed each of them a test booklet. He told them to begin. They looked at the first problem which was simple; it was worth 5 points. "Cool," they thought, "this is going to be an easy final". They then turned the page. They were unprepared, however, for what they saw on it. The question contained only two words: Which tire? (95 points)■



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If you have comments on this issue of the newsletter or would like to contribute to future issues please contact our office on 011 553 8001
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Photo Gallery

The launching of Journal of Business and Administrative Sciences (JBAS)



Ato Goitom Abrham, Dean of the Faculty of Business



Partial view of attendants of the ceremony.

Gender Awareness Training



“CHARTING THE ROADMAP FOR PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA”

The Seventh National Annual Conference on Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Ethiopia,

August 2009, Addis Ababa.

The conference focuses on the following issues:

- ◆ Educational policies, rules and regulations in Ethiopian higher education
- ◆ Private higher education: international and local issues and experiences
- ◆ The need for entrepreneurial universities in the Ethiopian context
- ◆ Lifelong learning
- ◆ Cost-sharing and income– generation schemes in higher education institutions
- ◆ Continuing education and professional development
- ◆ Distance education and its delivery in Ethiopia
- ◆ Public- private partnership in higher education
- ◆ The practice of research in higher education institutions
- ◆ Outreach and community services in the Ethiopian higher education system
- ◆ Issues of educational quality and relevance in the Ethiopian higher education system
- ◆ ICT in higher education
- ◆ Industry– university linkage, and
- ◆ Cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS, environment and gender in higher education.

Deadline for submission of abstracts: April, 2009

Deadline for submission of full paper: June, 2009

Abstracts should be submitted to:

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Honorarium will be paid for selected papers