

How to become a leader in higher education?

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to show how it is possible to create a focused development management strategy, based on innovative case study teaching method. This paper will present an example applied by Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Belgrade, leader in its field. The results achieved by students' teams in past few years, at the biggest international case study competitions, provided Faculty with an opportunity to create a suitable development strategy based upon organizing international case studies competition - BBICC. The work is based on the qualitative results collected by working with students, faculty and company representatives.

Keywords: development management strategy, higher education, case study, competition

1. Introduction

The importance of development management concept has been recognized by leading business schools and universities worldwide. Opportunities for the application of this concept had especially grown in importance with the advent of the growing demand to overcome obsolete ex-cathedra teaching style, and to offer students additional value to their diplomas. In modern world of business, employers are looking for candidates who not only have a good theoretical know-

ledge, but also some practical knowledge. Today, higher education institutions invest immense amount of resources to bridge the gap between theory and practice, and to create an integrated knowledge offer. As an excellent example of the strategic direction in which higher education should head to, is example of Harvard Business School (HBS), the creator of case study teaching and learning method. HBS, went one step further from simple application of case study method. At the beginning of the 2011/2012 school year, HBS launched entrepreneurial projects program in which their students are required to participate, and the aim is to create future agents of progress in the business world and to maintain its leadership position (Harvard Business School, 2012).

2. Literature review

The need for managerial approach in higher education institutions came as a response to the turbulent and changing market needs. Consequently, the development management of higher education plays a very important role in this process, defining the future development direction of universities and colleges (Etzkowitz, 2008). Universities, as institutions that produce knowledge, have evolved into one of the three key players in the process of development management in higher education (Bolton and Nie, 2010). Triple Helix model can serve as a starting point for a discussion of the development management concept in

higher education (Razak and Saad, 2007). In addition to universities, there are two other important players in this model - government and corporate sector. Cooke and Leydesdorff, (2006) outline the combined effect of the interdependent relationships, which are discussed in the Triple helix model, of these three factors together, can affect the development of the national economy and the field of higher education. The modern economy is based on the intensive nature of the need for new knowledge (Schuetz, 2000).

Therefore, it is clear that higher education institutions should focus on some of the following activities, or their combination, and they include: teaching, R&D, and entrepreneurship (Liyanage and Mitchell, 1994). Triple Helix model emphasizes the importance of the role played by the knowledge sector (Lester, 2005, 2007) and of adopting a national strategy that aims to create interaction between academia and companies. Having in mind the growing importance of higher education institutions as agents for promoting innovation and economic change (Tassej, 2005), management of academic institutions are confronted with different "rules of the game" (Park, 2003), in order to achieve partnerships with the corporate sector.

2.1. Higher Education in Serbia

The major changes in higher education system are mainly caused by the turbulent political, social and systemic changes through which Serbia passed in the last twenty years. The general impression is that higher education in Serbia is trapped somewhere between the legacy of past and transitional changes aimed at adoption of European and international standards, and the Bologna Declaration. Analyzing all the above, it is easy to conclude that higher education in Serbia is in quite disadvantage to foreign universities

and colleges, and is losing market "battle" (Damnjanovic, Novcic, 2011). As one of the main reasons cited inadequate curricula and outdated teaching methods at all levels of study. Due to this fact a large number of students go to study (especially the popular master programs) abroad at foreign universities. Some of the higher education institutions in the past few years have recognized these trends and responded very effectively, by opening their offices in Serbia.

As the only answer to the current situation arises, the definition of appropriate development management strategy that takes into account the application of new teaching methods and bridging the gap between academia and corporate sector. This will result in the "manufacturing" of highly educated professional, whose knowledge and skills acquired at the university will be highly valued and required at the labor market. This paper describes how the Faculty of Organizational Sciences has built a strong image and position of the leading higher education institutions in Serbia and the region in recent years, thanks to continuous implementation of innovative teaching methods such as case study method.

3. Innovative case study teaching method

One of the possibilities how higher education institutions should create and implement innovative development management strategy is by organizing student competitions in solving business case studies. Organizing competitions in solving business case studies is an innovative way how universities can integrate and connect teaching staff, students and companies. A large number of top ranked, worlds' leading business schools and universities already apply this strategy (Novcic, et al., 2012). Examples of good practice that Faculty of Organizational

Sciences follows include: Hult International Business School in London, the McGill University in Montreal, Maastricht University in the Netherlands and many others (Novcic, Damjanovic and Filipovic, 2012). Given the many years of experience in working with talented and gifted students in the additional classes, workshops and preparing them for national, regional and global case study competition, as well as based on excellent results achieved in recent years at global competitions in solving case studies, Department of Marketing Management and Public Relations, at Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Belgrade, has designed a framework that links students, faculty and companies, through case study competition (see Figure 1).

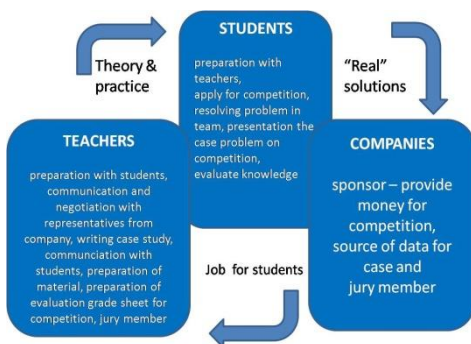


Fig. 1: Framework for Organizing Case Study Competition: The role of teachers, students and companies

Figure 1. shows roles of all three parties included in the framework. Also it is important to understand the objectives of organizing a case study competition should consider: improvement of the relationship between faculty and companies, learning from each other, evaluating knowledge and skills of students and teachers in the „real“ business situation, and employment of students in companies who support competition (Novcic and Damjanovic, 2010). If university wants to properly implement the development management

strategy, it is necessary to provide better facilities and more resources for organizing such competitions at all levels - local, national and international. Under the proposed framework, it is necessary to inform, educate and motivate all participants: teachers, students and companies to actively participate and support such projects. Universities also need to recognize and invest in programs to gain knowledge for the teaching staff, to write and teach with case studies, as well as to invest in upgrading students' skills to learn with case studies. To implement the strategy, it is also necessary to identify the leaders of a new way of thinking in all segments. As the result of many years of working with students, in April 2013 Faculty of Organizational Sciences will be the host and organizer of the World competition in solving business case studies - Belgrade International Business Case Competition (BBICC). Thanks to this competition, the Faculty will be able to use the case study method, in order to make an impact on society as a whole, spreading the idea of generating and sharing knowledge.

4. Conclusion

Today it is not enough that colleges and universities provide only theoretical fundamentals and basic knowledge to students, but they are obliged to give students additional value to their education. This additional value is reflected in better opportunities for employment after graduation, better starting position and higher salary, and ability to immediately after graduation respond to real business situations. In the dynamic arena in which all colleges, faculties and universities around the world compete, the best of them have already recognized the need to carefully approach the development management strategies. Organization of business case study competition is one of the best tools

for achieving this goal. Higher education institution which adopt and implement the strategy will be agents of change and progress around the world.

5. References

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