

THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION UPON THE MODERN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

International cooperation as an integral part of the modern university education, together with all the advantages that result from the well organized department for inter-university cooperation and its influence on the academic process, were studied. Facts that point to the Center for Inter-university cooperation as the most significant part of a successful and productive education were highly visible. Therefore, the newest educational trends, occurrences and activities at the youngest state university Goce Delcev in Stip, Republic of Macedonia were explored thorough the method of deduction.

Key words: international cooperation, university, modern education, importance

1. Introduction

Issues concerning the implementation of new approaches at work could be complex in some society spheres. The rapid transition from one system into another effects the whole population. The model of the system of European Union on how the institutions relate the society is simple as a draft, yet complicated to enforce. However, the strong need and will always play the integral part of this process.

The idea for this paper arouse from the inevitable progress of the Center for Inter-university cooperation at the youngest state university Goce Delcev in Stip, and its impact upon the education and university policy.

2. Reflections of the university international cooperation

The institutions for higher education are the main figures for the successful transition to a knowledge based economy and society. Their cooperation activities with the neighboring countries and the countries within their wider vicinity are an important priority for over passing the university isolation from the happenings in the civil society, as well as the other structural problems like the outdated curricula and skills of teachers. Another importance that

comes out of these cooperation activities is the enhancement of the mutual understanding between the countries. In the today's world, the advanced use of the information technology facilitates the arrangements among higher educational institutions around the world in a sense of transfer and adaptation of the knowledge and research.

Through the centers for international relations which function within the universities, an increasing number of links with other parts of the world are developed, which on the other side contributes to international funding, teacher/student exchange and promotion of international exchange and master programs.

2.1. Centers for inter-university cooperation

International relation centers are the core for every university. Although the largest part of their main responsibility is the administration and the guidance of the international exchange programs, they are also focused to advance the knowledge, learning and mutual understanding. These centers offer program advice and various training and educative opportunities and their services are mostly directed to mobile students, visiting professors and the university staff in charge with designing and developing the new projects.

The effectiveness and positive outcomes from the centers for international relations correlates to the efficiency and professionalism of their coordinators. Working as an international relations coordinator basically requires excellent communicational and organizational skills. By managing the internal work coordination, communication and information flow through academic programs, the international centers increase the understanding for other cultures and strengthen the university role in the international knowledge community.

The vision of the Goce Delcev University is to create an institution that will provide high-quality professionals ready to apply their knowledge in each segment of life, thus supporting the national economic and overall development. Proud of the rapid development, the university aims at internationalization and openness to be of service for the society.

At this point, the Center for International Relations has the main function and role in the international activities. Its daily tasks focus on making agreements for partnerships and cooperation with other universities in order to internationalize the research and educational process, organizing presentations for the students and the staff for the scholarship opportunities abroad, making contacts with international groups and networks, welcoming foreign delegations, helping the staff submit projects to European programs for education and research, and facilitating students exchange. Through this office, the students are well informed about all the programs for study opportunities abroad. The office assists them in

preparing the application, providing them with information on the university they chose, as well as information for the accommodation and language courses.

The cooperation is mostly directed to improving and extending the research base, as well as to develop excellence in teaching. The priority at the Center for inter-university cooperation at the Goce Delcev University is to increase the diversity of the student body so as to enhance the quality of students' experience, enabling interaction with a wider range of cultures, personal encounters, knowledge systems and beliefs. The staff at the Center strongly aims at promoting international partnerships that facilitate international student and staff exchanges and international recruitment, creating a wider range of study opportunities for students, professional development opportunities for staff and enabling greater international benchmarking of University programs. The most significant plan is to promote mobility of staff and students and to introduce joint degree programs. The Center organizes events and information sessions and all the activities are highlighted in the University internal magazine and on the web site.

3. Inter-university cooperation and productive education

At this section, the main aspect is on the activities that are undertaken at the International Relations Centers in order to put the university education in service of the society. It is more than obvious that the university will attract more students as long as its studies somehow give a type of insurance to the students that their chances to find job afterwards are higher due to the shortages of such professionals. Moreover, when the university follows the trends and new disciplines, the chances to increase the interest of students and attract them to enroll is higher as well. With it, the university guarantees its own place at the list of the competitive institutions for higher education. In this section we refer to the two integral aspects, which are the attitude of the university staff towards students and the other society sectors and the internal and external communication.

This process then inevitably continues to openness towards society. The university has the capacity to organize educational seminars and workshops for the industrial sector. Among other, we would refer here to the first workshop on HASSP systems organized by the university Center for International Relations for the private and public business companies. The university has arranged for a HASSP specialist, who gave a lecture and ran a discussion. The participants of the workshop were businessmen from Stip, whose companies had either implemented the technology or were at the starting phase of implementation. They were satisfied and keen to spend a day off from the business they ran, just to attend the workshop

and share experience, ideas and opinions. The first workshop proved successful and instantly opened the possibilities for organization of more future meetings. This is how the university gives them an indirect protection and additional power to be more contemporary oriented and rely on it for any intellectual questions and requirements.

Then, on these meetings, more cooperative relations arise between the university and the employers. This process moves on to the other phase which is realization of an internship program. A close type of the today's internship program was popular during the last three decades of the 20-th century. With the independence of Macedonia it became slowly forgotten and repressed. Almost twenty years after the independence the youngest university is actively involved in the internship program, and it mostly functions through the Center for career planning and development, Center for Student standard and the Center for Teaching Evaluation and Quality. Since the last academic year the students are gaining practical experience into one of the institutions from the private or public sector in the country. Yet, what is the role of the International Relations Center at this point? The center is of help here through popularization of the student internship, the canalized and fast access to information, organization of seminars and presentations in companies, professional orientation and training for the students.

The university is an institution which simply needs to be in service for the society. From their close relations there may be only positive outcome and experience, and a brighter future.

The circuit of information and inter communication has endless possibilities in the world today. Effective and successful institutions are those which fully benefit from the development of the technology. Years ago, almost all the institutions in Republic of Macedonia were based on the principle of limited share of information. The useful information used to be a benefit for some individuals only, and definitely not accessible to everybody. The confidentiality was the principal method while using the information. The center for all happenings was its capital town, and the institutions in the rest of the country were simply neglected. Yet, another step forward is the fact that this situation is on its way to be fully overcome.

It is more than obvious that the university can play a very structural role in this process, and face the opportunity to be a model of an open institution. The openness towards society and willingness for cooperation are essentially significant. How has the university Goce Delcev solved this problem? Obviously, that is the Center for International Relations that functions within the university. Through communicating and dealing with foreign offices and

universities, bilateral agreements, working on exchange programs Aside from this, internally, the office constantly uses the search engine in order to find more information on scholarships, conferences and seminars. The office then transmits this information to the employees and the students, but externally, it places the same information on the web site, so that it can be accessed by any visitor of the university web site.

The university has started from the fact that the exchange of teachers and students could only have a positive impact on its status in the country and abroad, and on the society. The university participates in several Tempus projects and has jumped into the opportunities coming from the Erasmus program. Learning foreign languages and experiencing the foreign culture is our open way to European Union integration. Yet, in order to be fulfilled, the circuit of useful information must be irreproachable.

4. Conclusion

Finally, the last point would be the fact that the educational institutions had always been in the position to directly influence the society and to serve as its eminent background. Today that situation is not changed at all. The university could be fully put in function of the society through all its capacity and knowledge. The main cooperation is based on inter communication and building strong working relations of mutual interest. That is how we believe that such a university like ours which was the primary goal of our research is a step forward in over passing the crises and producing talents that are needed for the society today.

Reference:

Goce Delcev University, Stip, 2009, *Statute of the Goce Delcev University, Stip*, pg.55