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14. DEVELOPING A QUALITY CULTURE TO BECOME A WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of excellence is undoubtedly an essential feature of any world-class university and to make progress in that direction, quality systems certainly play a critical role. Due to several influences, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have developed their internal quality systems over the past decades. In this regard, the development of institutional autonomy has increased pressure for accountability in many regions and countries. Moreover, the growth of a higher education market has raised expectations among the "clients" of HEIs (students, employers, other stakeholders). Obviously, globalization of higher education with mobility of students and graduates in the job market has also become an important factor. For instance, it is clear that in the Bologna process in Europe (currently involving 46 countries and intended to increase mobility) quality is a cornerstone of the transformation process.

Being a world-class university obviously has the supposition of international visibility and the ability to attract good foreign students and staff. Even though several of the rankings rely more in fact on research performance, quality of teaching is also crucial. Naturally, to attract Ph.D. candidates from all over the world quality of research is important, however, the quality of doctoral programmes and other support measures is also an influential choice criterion. Indeed, quality affects all aspects of the HEI, which accords with the fact that becoming a world-class university requires developments in different areas (Niland, 2007). In other words, world-class universities must take into account the same demands as other HEIs, but to a higher standard. That is, to achieve excellence means to go beyond basic mechanisms of quality assurance as the indicators normally used in the rankings are only a partial view of these requirements. Excellence can be likened to an iceberg, where the indicators used are the visible part and the quality system is somehow the hidden part. Much as "treating the symptoms" does not guarantee eradication of the illness, indicators that are not based on a "robust" quality system are fragile and can fluctuate widely. The author's conviction is, therefore, that to remain or to become a world-class university, as far as quality is concerned, institutions face real challenges. The goal is not only to create and operate a quality system in line with international standards, but also to develop a coherent system for fostering creativity and innovation, and to create ownership of the system. In other words, it is critical that everyone in the university should see the relevance of

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the various quality processes and be actively involved in their realization, which for the author defines the establishment of a Quality Culture.

In this chapter views about these issues and how they have been addressed in a specific university, the University of Lausanne, are presented. Three questions are addressed: Why should the HEI develop a Quality Culture? What does it mean to an institution? How can development of the culture be monitored? Before addressing these questions, the institutional context is clarified.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE IN CONTEXT

Founded in 1537, the University of Lausanne (UNIL) has recently undergone a reconfiguration and is now composed of seven faculties. From the beginning of the 21st century, the university has been involved in an ambitious project aiming at greater cooperation and development amongst the French speaking universities of Switzerland and in particular with the Federal Polytechnical School of Lausanne (EPFL), situated on the same campus. In this regard, in 2003 two new faculties were founded concentrating on life and human sciences: the Faculty of Biology and Medicine; and the Faculty of Geosciences and Environment. The Faculty of Biology and Medicine is now composed of all those disciplines which have to do with life in all its manifestations and mystery including, for example, the origins of life, its fundamental mechanisms, the evolutionary process and the protection of life. The study skills taught range from basic research techniques to the daily practice of medicine with hospital patients. The Faculty of Geosciences and Environment focuses on human geography, physics and geology, in order to respond to the need of society to understand more clearly the role played by humans in the environment. The goal is to create a dynamic scientific interaction, through the exploration of new fields of research and teaching, particularly those at the interface of two or more disciplines.

By having the aim of grouping together disciplines concerned with the study of mankind and living organisms in their natural and social environment, the UNIL has created an unprecedented break-through in the Swiss university scene. For this cooperation means now there is interdependence of these institutions, with, for instance UNIL giving Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics to EPFL, whilst still needing these fields for other programmes (like medical studies or forensic sciences). On the other hand, EPFL includes roughly 10% of humanities and social sciences in its curriculums and these are mainly offered by UNIL. All together approximately 7,000 teaching hours are exchanged between these two institutions.

These transformations have given an attractive profile to UNIL which has enabled UNIL to secure important national projects. In fact, there are more than 130 research units currently at work in a wide variety of disciplines, ranging from Greek Numismatics to Cyber-marketing and Developmental Biology. Moreover, within the institutes and laboratories, 2000 researchers, 500 of whom are professors, work daily on research projects of national or international importance. Working on the principle that knowledge transcends boundaries, collaboration between

disciplines is now a priority, in order to explore new fields of research to provide more pertinent answers to the questions posed by society and many collaborations of such a nature are at present under way. Interdisciplinary and inter-institutional cooperation are priorities also for teaching and within many joint degrees. Currently 12,000 students are among them doctoral candidates.

The University of Lausanne has been subject to new legislation since 2005 and as is often the case, nowadays, this gives much more autonomy to the university, with regard to its finance, human resources, programmes on offer, and organization. Its relation with the regional state authority, which covers roughly 50% of expenses, is based on a five-year strategic plan negotiated between the university and the politicians. One of the seven main strategic objectives contained within this plan is the development of a Quality Culture and regarding the quality processes entailed within this process, the right to public funding (at the national and regional levels) depends on a quality audit. In this regard, each university can develop its own internal quality system, as long as it conforms to seven standards which are very similar to the European Standards and Guidelines, Part 1. Every four years the internal quality system of the university is audited by the National Accreditation Agency with the help of external experts. In December 2008, the Federal Secretariat for Education and Research (SER) published the four yearly audit report on the Quality of Swiss Universities, produced by the Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities (OAQ). It concluded

> The quality management system (of the UNIL) is excellent and forms a coherent and integrated whole. Changes undertaken have encouraged the implementation of a Quality Culture at all levels of the university. In conclusion the experts consider that the university conforms fully to the required standards.

THE NEED TO DEVELOP A QUALITY CULTURE

The development of quality assurance (QA) mechanisms in higher education is an integral component of the Bologna process and has become a high priority in many European institutions. Two main issues following from this desire to include quality on the agenda of the construction of the European Higher Education Area: one is to create or adapt a quality system compatible or in line with international standards and the other is to integrate the system into the HEI concerned.

Thanks to national and international standards (e.g. European Standards and Guidelines), institutions have frameworks by which they can create methodologically sound quality systems. However, analysis of the literature shows that this first condition is not necessarily enough to improve quality. Several investigations have suggested, indeed, that some quality processes have had no real effect on the quality of teaching, research or other activities, at least not on par with expectations (e.g. Gosling and D'Andrea, 2001; Newton, 2002). In particular, standard certification procedures do not always result in improved services (e.g. Staines, 2007). Moreover, there have been frequent calls for QA to involve greater adhesion with institutions (e.g. Jones and Darshi de Saram, 2005; Goodlad, 1995, Harvey 2002).

To overcome this lack of quality integration in institutions, the concept of Quality Culture has emerged, which has been promoted in a consistent manner by the European University Association (EUA), the term being:

> chosen to convey a notion of quality as a shared value and collective responsibility of all members of an institution, including students and administrative staff. Quality Culture signals the need to ensure a grass-roots acceptance, to develop a compact within the academic community through effective community building, as well as changes in values, attitude and behaviour within an institution (EUA, 2006).

THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY CULTURE

The concept of Quality Culture, which was formulated as a reaction to bureaucratic approaches to quality, is usually given a relatively warm welcome, with the expression, nowadays, being quite fashionable and it can be found in numerous publications and even some regulations. It is appealing because it would appear to give a human touch to a word ("quality") now associated with cold notions, such as control, assurance and industrial processes. Indeed, the development of a Quality Culture is an extremely relevant alternative to overtly normative approaches, not only because it favours real change, but also because it can take into account the diversity of contexts and leave space for creativity, thereby offering opportunities to create new ways of giving concrete expression to quality.

> Quality Culture refers to an organisational culture that aims to enhance quality permanently and is characterized by two distinct elements: on the one hand, a cultural/psychological element of shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment towards quality; and on the other a structural/managerial element with defined processes that enhances quality and seeks to coordinate individual efforts. (EUA, 2006, p.10).

In the author's understanding (Lanarès 2008), the expression Quality Culture can have two meanings. The first of these implies that quality is an organizational priority and it is one of the values of the organizational culture. However, quality as a value has to be defined and there has been a long debate about its definition, with it now considered to be a multidimensional concept and a polysemic word. Moreover, there seems to be general agreement that there can be no consensus on a unique definition of quality (Harvey, 2006). The term Quality Culture itself, therefore, remains quite unspecific, because it is tied to implicit or explicit definitions of quality. That is, in reality, quality as a value incorporates and integrates other qualities or values, such as reflexivity, communication or participation (EUA, 2006), depending on the definition of quality chosen by the institution (e.g. transformation, fitness for purpose, etc). With regards to the second understanding, Quality Culture is seen as a subculture of the organizational culture, where, whatever the approach chosen, quality is always associated with espoused values that form a sub-culture of the institution's own organizational culture.

There is no universally accepted definition of organizational culture, but as a short definition Brennan and Shah (2000) underline three dimensions generally agreed among researchers: "Culture embraces values, attitudes and behaviours" (ibid. p. 341). Since attitudes and behaviours are based on values (Bontis 2006, Hofstede 2001, Klenke 2005, Kowalkiewicz 2007, Schein 1990, Sundrum 2004), we like to see the values as the basic foundations, the heart of the culture. Quality Culture, as a sub-culture, can include several different values, and a different set of values will lead to different Quality Cultures. They will differ by what is more valued: control or development? Specialization of some people involved in quality or ownership by the greatest number of people? Conformity or adaptation? For instance, in some HEIs, quality processes are managed by quality specialists who try to control the conformity of processes, whereas in others, ownership by the largest majority and creativity, are stressed. Both kinds of institutions have a Quality Culture, but these are not the same, for the first is rather normative in nature, whereas the second could be defined as being more developmental (Kowalkiewicz, 2007; Harvey and Stensaker, 2008).

Quality processes should support HEIs in their pursuit of excellence, in particular with regards to creativity and innovation, so as to strengthen their capacity to face new challenges. From this perspective, there are strong links to the notion of the learning organization and drawing on works on the latter and creativity is useful for identifying certain key conditions for reinforcing the development process. In a broader sense, what kind of Quality Culture should be favoured to support development, creativity and innovation in the HEI? Taken as a whole, literature on learning organizations, cultural change and Quality Culture projects (e.g. Birdi, 2007; EUA, 2006; EUA, 2007; McKenna, 1994; Senge, 1999; Short, 2007; Strydom, Zulu and Murray, 2004; West, 1997), shows interesting convergences and underlines certain core values which merit emphasis (in no particular order of importance):

- Raising responsibility - empowerment;
- Reflective process;
- Participation - cooperation;
- Communication;
- Systems thinking; and
- Balance (between stability and flexibility; top-down and bottom up; risk-taking and conformity).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A QUALITY CULTURE

Therefore, developing a Quality Culture implies cultural change, in order to reach a broad convergence of ways of thinking and acting about quality and associated values. It means a new way of doing things, but also a new understanding of these actions. The first step is, thus, the identification of core values and the creation of an adhesion to them. Since values are beliefs, in the sense that it is difficult to demonstrate their superiority, changing the prevailing culture implies conviction-building, the goal being to increase the sense of identification with the adopted values (Kotter and Cohen, 2002). The next step is making sure that the values are translated in both the concept and the practice of the quality system. However,

there is not always a perfect match between declared values and the other latent values, which really influence behaviour and decisions (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, a critical question that should be asked, even if it appears naïve, is how do we prove to others and to ourselves that these values are a priority for us? On which basis are people from both inside and outside the organization able to identify these values as priorities? Of course, as mentioned earlier, several decisions and actions can be based on a single value.

The critical role of leadership in developing a world-class university has been underlined (Hsuan, 2007; Hennard, 2009) and is also crucial to the development of a Quality Culture, in particular in guaranteeing coherence and creating adhesion. To illustrate with an example, at the University of Lausanne an important quality process takes places every four years. This is the self evaluation of the seven faculties, which under the authority of each dean, involves all the staff and all activities in each faculty. Apart from this big effort, there are other ongoing measures, such as the evaluation of teaching by students, recruitment policies, evaluation of dossiers for renewal of contracts, training of teaching staff, and pedagogical innovation awards. These measures are intended, on the one hand, to be coherent with the university's values for Quality Culture, and on the other hand to provide some data for use in the periodic self-evaluation of each faculty.

The main values underlying these first steps in quality processes and which the university wants to maintain are summarized below, with some examples of how these were operationalized.

- Fitness for purpose: In practice this priority is made evident through the self-evaluation methodology, which contains four basic questions intended to explore this aspect (what are the objectives and the priorities of the faculty? How does the faculty know that its objectives are being met? What evaluation has taken place? What are the next steps for improvement?). Another example is the yearly follow-up process through an action plan;
- Responsibility: Examples could be that the faculty is involved in the definition of priorities and of the rules for constructive feedback (for experts, leadership, etc.);
- Participation: The main quality process (self evaluation of the seven faculties) is overseen by a committee, including representatives from all university bodies. The faculty under evaluation organizes a participative self evaluation committee and relevant working groups;
- Reflective approach: The basic process, either at staff or faculty level, is based on open and reflective questions; and
- Balance between autonomy and accountability: This value is made concrete in several ways, one of them being that total access to all data is limited to members of the faculty, and synthetic information is unrestricted.

In summary, a system that promotes the development of a Quality Culture is an entire set of measures which are coherent at different levels, as shown in Figure 1. The starting point is a set of values (1) which are given substance in the principles and modalities of the quality concept (2). These principles and modalities are then implemented in individual and collective practices (3).

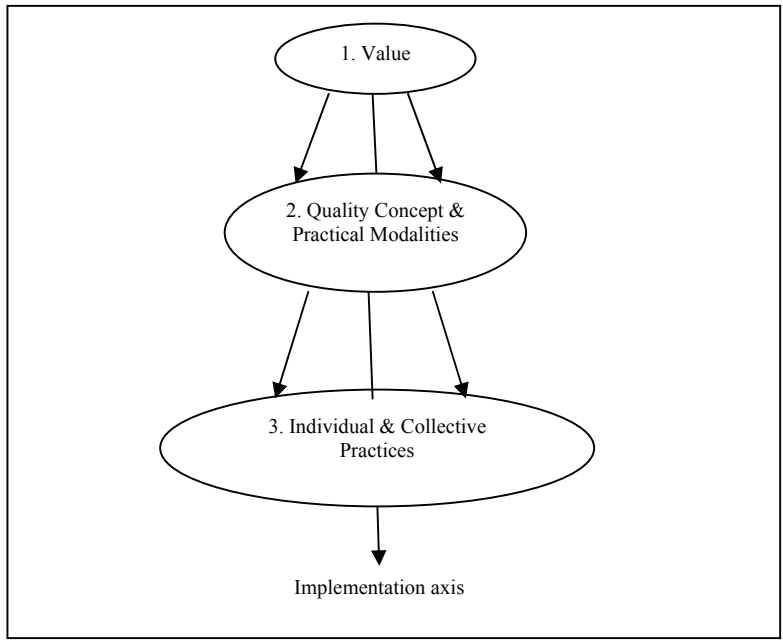

Figure 1. The three levels of quality culture.

OBSERVING OR MEASURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A QUALITY CULTURE

As with any cultural change, the development of a Quality Culture is a long-term process, which is the result of various interactions (Schein, 1990) and of a combined effect of top-down and bottom-up processes. In order to strengthen and support this evolutionary process, it is necessary to observe and in some way monitor the establishment of the Quality Culture, in order to help to evaluate the path covered and determine which specific effort is required for further development.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

From the author's point of view, the development of the Quality Culture can be seen in two dimensions, resembling the development of waves when a stone is thrown into water. At the surface level, it requires observing how people, who are further and further from leadership positions or who are highly motivated, agree with the values and are involved in quality. At the deep level, it concerns the change of behaviours associated with adhesion at the surface level, where the deeper these are the greater the spontaneity of their being integrated into praxis. So, it is a two-fold process that we need to observe the increased number of people who adhere to the culture and the extent to which this agreement is translated into actions, as illustrated in Figure 2.

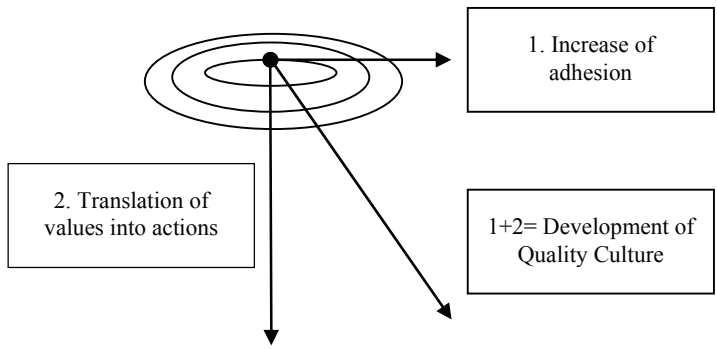

Figure 2. Schematic development of a quality culture in two dimensions.

Since cultural change is a long term and somewhat implicit process, it is necessary to find ways to track the development of the Quality Culture. However, very few papers have been devoted to identifying the relevant measures to observe this development or have described such evolution. Since this is a critical issue for each institution, it be interesting and useful to develop tools to track the establishment of the Quality Culture and because it can be considered as being an organizational subculture, one option is to explore more widely how organizational culture is measured in practice. However, if it is efficacious to observe the development of a Quality Culture, it must be acknowledged that this cannot be a straightforward process, for it involves a complex process in the sense that several interactive variables are involved, making it difficult to identify clear causal relations in quality matters (Stensaker, 2008; Newton, 2002). Moreover, choices of measures are determined by definitions of quality, approaches to organizational culture and other considerations (Scott, 2003). In other words, one must be clear about the fact that there is no absolute measure or definitive observation of a Quality Culture, but an observation grid can provide good food for thought.

Analysis of the literature reveals that most studies rely on what people say about their values or actions (e.g. Cook and Lafferty, 1989/2003; Koslowsky and Stashevsky, 2005; Koufteros et al., 2007; Kowalkiewicz, 2007; Meglino et al., 1989; Waldman et al., 2006; Javidan et al., 2006) and generally espoused values can be good measures of organizational cultures (Javidan et al., 2006). At the behavioural level, several studies show the link between values and choices (Javidan et al., 2006; Koufteros, 2007; Waldman et al., 2006), thus demonstrating that decisions could be good indicators of the culture. In particular, innovations represent a specific case of decision and action and seem to be related to cultures (Jaskyte, 2004). In short, three main categories of measures are used: what people say about their values and beliefs, what people say about what they do, and what people do or the results of their actions.

Most studies rely on what people say and in this regard since culture is about adhesion to values, what people say is useful but not sufficient considering that there are discrepancies between values and practices (Javidan et al., 2006; Waldman et al., 2006). Moreover, agreement on values does not imply satisfaction as far as concretization of values is concerned (Telford and Masson, 2005) and therefore it is necessary to include observations about what people actually do. Based on our review of the literature and our experience at the University of Lausanne we propose a grid (see Table 1) for creating a tool to observe the "grass rooting" of a Quality Culture within an HEI. We use this framework to observe the development of the Quality Culture in our university and by way of illustrating a sample of the indicators we employ is described in Table 1:

Table 1. Draft grid for creating an observation framework

	What people say	*What people do*
Individual Level Leadership Staff Students	- Commentaries about quality processes - Percentage of people who adhere to the institutional quality approach and values	- Involvement in quality processes. - Spontaneous evaluation of teaching - Responses to teaching evaluation
Collective Level Institution Faculty Unit	- Quality concept of UNIL - Evolution of quality regulations	- Annual innovations in relation to quality - Application of regulations - Research Policy

Depending on the measure chosen, the analysis will rely either on one-off events (like new regulations) or the evolution of quantitative data (such as the number of spontaneous evaluations of teaching).

AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

We have started to use this grid to observe the development of Quality Culture in our university and have identified some of the measures we employ as indicators of this in the four segments of Table 1, examples of which are described below.

1. What people say at the individual level:

– Answers to questions set by external experts during the governmental quality audit (for example, the experts' report underlines that whilst people found self-evaluation quite demanding, they all said that it was interesting and useful).
– Discussions in specific committees: minutes of participative committees involved in quality processes at university or faculty level contain comments about their relevance, the evolution of practices, the involvement of various types of actors in the discussions and the development of ownership of quality issues.

2. What is said at the collective level:
- Quality concept of the university: there is a public and fully developed document about quality policies and processes at all levels of the university (university, faculty, central units, staff, etc.).
- Evolution of regulations: several regulations, for instance those dealing with faculties' contracts renewal, have been modified to be in line with the values of the Quality Culture.
- Appointment of a vice rector in charge of quality, which has been a clear sign of the importance given to quality issues.

3. What people do at the individual level:
- How students answer teaching evaluation questionnaires (qualitative analysis of comments which shows mainly constructive comments).
- Whether teachers complete their reports spontaneously (evolution of their reflexive involvement in writing their reports for renewal of their contracts).
- Involvement in self-evaluation of faculties (participation level, etc.).
- Involvement in teaching evaluation (answering rate, number of answers to open questions).

4. What is done at the collective level:
- The "rules of the game" of the quality process are in line with the values of the Quality Culture.
- Modifications of the action plan of the faculty following self-evaluation, indicating that quality processes are not bureaucratic activities but are used in daily governance.
- Communication about self-evaluation (for instance, self-evaluation that reflects on the academic year).

CONCLUSION

To promote excellence in order to contribute to the establishment of a world-class university, the HEI must not only have a good internal quality system but must also develop a Quality Culture, so that everyone in the institution sees the relevance of quality processes and is actively involved in their realization. Moreover, the author considers that the Quality Culture is a subculture of the organizational culture, underpinned by generally espoused values. A key issue in creating or developing it is to make explicit these values and priorities, so that they are infused into the organization, thus influencing collective and individual practices. The development of a Quality Culture is a long-term process, requiring the means to track its development and to assess whether there is real ownership by the participants. Regarding the latter, evaluation of ownership has to be based on what people say and do, because both aspects are important for "grass rooting" a Quality Culture.

A grid has been proposed to assist in the development of practical tools for tracking the establishment of such a culture and, although it still needs clearer definition, it certainly has proved useful at the University of Lausanne. Further, it has taken time to see the emergence of a Quality Culture at our university, but thanks to this grid we have been able to observe the beginnings of desirable

concepts and attractive behaviours (e.g. increase in student satisfaction, pedagogical innovation, more research projects, more money from external funds for research, etc.).

We have no ambition to promote undeniable truths or to tout undisputable measures for the development of a Quality Culture, but rather we seek to find some relevant indicators that are commensurate with achieving such a goal and that can provide useful information on progress towards this end. Of course, if these indicators are, in theory, to be applied to other settings, they will probably need to be contextualized. The metaphor of an iceberg could be applied to the concept of Quality Culture, in that it is not a completely transparent phenomenon, because for the most part it is submerged within an HEI. That is, the relation between values and behaviours, which is at the heart of the notion, is a complex issue involving hidden links that can therefore often lead to unpredicted outcomes with regard to the progress that is achieved. Moreover, extending the iceberg analogy, Quality Culture can be seen as having a number of different interpretations, depending on the angle from which it is surveyed.

Given the complexity of creating a Quality Culture, in this chapter we have provided an assessment of the intermediate steps that need to be undertaken if such an outcome is to be realized. It is only by identifying and addressing the obstacles to increasing the quality of research, teaching and services, which are the ultimate goal of QA processes, that an institution will be able to claim the accolade of being a world-class university.

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