Quality Matters

In this Issue

Quote of this issue

"Quality has to be caused, not controlled."

Phil Crosby

Students' Evaluation of their Instructors Conducted

The Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance of St. Mary's University College conducts evaluation of teachers every semester. The objective of the evaluation is to improve quality of the education the University College offers. In addition, teachers will have a feedback on their performance. This, as a result, helps them improve their performance in areas they get low results. Moreover, the UC awards faculty staff with highest performance in a bid to inspire other teachers do their best.

The 2002 academic year second semester regular student evaluation of instructors started on May 3, 2010. It is an online evaluation. The extension division, unlike the regular program, evaluation is paper based and it is currently on progress.■

The 4th Annual Student Research Forum is to be Held

St. Mary's University College will hold the 4th Annual Student Research Forum (ASRF) in August 2010. The forum is envisioned to offer student researchers a unique opportunity to enhance their research and communication skills. The forum is open for students in Ethiopian higher education institutions.■

From the Editorial Desk

The Higher Education Reform Program in Ethiopia aims to overcome challenges of achieving quality in the education system. Among the reforms are the need for increased accountability through state developed testing systems- Certificate of Competency (CoC) for TVET programs, Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) in nine public and some private universities, investment in improving teachers' quality: Higher Diploma Program (HDP) and very recently, TVET Instructors' Competence Assessment.

Also, the government is working on the 3rd phase higher education leadership and management improvement programmes. Indeed, this can be warranted by the need to implement and manage changes in the higher education sector more speedily and effectively on principles of modern and forward looking system of governance. Such initiatives would further enhance strong leadership practices, foster participatory and transparent management system, sustain better systems for financial and resource management, identify course-costs and income-generation that results in profit not loss. In many cases there is a strong need for transformational leadership with greater autonomy and lesser bureaucracy. In this Edition, we have included research articles and interviews on issues of educational quality management. Also, it is a pleasure for us to present you popular web links on educational quality issues.■

Virtual Links

Ministry of Education
Web site: 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 (INQAAHE)
Website: http: // www.inqaahe.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.inqaahe.nl
European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
Website: http://www.enqa.eu
Asian Pacific Quality Network
Website: http://www.apqn.org
Ethiopian Knowledge and Technology Transfer Society (EKTTS)
Website: http://www.ektts.org
Association of African Universities (AAU)
Website: http://www.aau.org

News

TVET Instructors' Competence Assessment Started

The City of Addis Ababa TVET Agency started Instructors' Competence Assessment for level C and B TVET trainers. At present, instructors working at public institutions are undergoing competence assessments. Those who have passed the assessment have been given training on methods focusing on practice-based teaching. Likewise, the Agency has asserted that, as of 2003 E.C., all TVET trainers (public and private alike) will be assumed to have undergone the assessment and the training required for their professions. Accordingly, all TVET trainers working in private institutions are expected to pass through the assessment and training until the end of the month of Sene 2002 E.C.■

Salesmanship in Action held

The Department of Marketing Management organized a week-long annual first year Marketing Management students' trade fair, Salesmanship in Action. This Year the theme of the event is Concern for Ethics in Selling. At the opening Ceremony on 17 May 2010 present were Ato Daniel Wondimu, G/Manager of Waryt and Dr. Nega Lamaga, manager of the Ethiopian Private Higher Education Institutions Association and other invited guests from the industry and the media.■

Hot Seat Competition Conducted

TVET Students' Hot Seat, Question and Answer, competition was conducted on the 7th of April 2010 at Mexico campus. The annual event is held for the second time in the University College. Students from the Faculties of Business, Law and IT took part in the competition which aims to nurture well versed and all rounded students. The program was attended by students and SMUC staff. In the meantime, the programme is believed to sensitize SMUC community on the various institutional regulations of the University College, enhance confidence and public speaking ability of our students. Put together, the programme is part of the university level effort to enable our students have an all rounded personality.■

Research Training conducted

The Academic Development and Resource Unit, in cooperation with the Department of Marketing, conducted a four- day research training for SMUC Faculty and students at Mexico-Campus from February 25 to 27, 2010. The training aimed to give staff and students a continuous refreshing training experience to build-up their research skills. The training, thus, included the following areas: Concepts and Elements of Research, Design and Structure of Research, Data Quality Control and Research Paper Writing – Proposal and Report Writing. The training covers 6 hours in two sessions each for Research Methods and Research Write-Ups.■

Research Corner

Research Title: Standards-Based Education Management and Recognition to Improve Quality of Pre-service Education.

Date of Publication: A research paper published in the proceedings of the Sixth National Research Conference held in August 2008, UN/ECA Conference Hall organized and sponsored by St. Mary's University College.

Researchers: Tigistu Adamu, et.al

The study is meant to initiate Standards Based Educational Quality Management and Recognition (SBEM-R) in Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions.

Between October 15 and November 25, 2007, Jhpiego conducted onsite orientation workshops on Standards-Based Educational Management and Recognition (SBEM-R) at three public universities and facilitated formation of SBEM-R teams. The teams assessed the status of medical, nursing and midwifery education using the assessment tool in the seven schools under the universities. The tool has 62 Educational Standards in five areas; namely, Classroom and Practical Instruction, Clinical Instruction and Practice Assessment Approaches, School Infrastructure and Teaching Materials and Educational Management. The findings of the assessment revealed low achievement across all areas in the seven schools with a total average of 23.9%. Achievements by schools ranged from 17.9 to 30.6

Computed by area, school infrastructure and teaching materials had the lowest score (11.4 %) followed by assessment approaches (13.3 %). The situation is almost similar across medical, nursing and midwifery schools. These findings lay the ground for the noted subsequent small and incremental quality improvement. The use of SBEM-R will help educators and students to actively participate and institutionalize educational quality improvement, as tools are easy to use, and have both" what to do" and "how to do" components.■

Forthcoming Event

The Second Multi- Disciplinary Seminar is to be held

The second multi-disciplinary seminar of St. Mary's University College is due to be held in August 2010. The seminar aims to encourage academic dialogue and critical debate among experts and researchers of various professions. Besides, it is a forum for scholars from different discipline to share their ideas.■

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 issues of importance in the higher education sector. This edition presents interview with Dr. Wondimagegne Chekol from the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA) on issues of Quality Assurance and Accreditation practices in Distance Higher Education in Ethiopia.

Background

Dr. Wondimagegne Chekol is an Acting Head of the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance in St. Mary's University College. Dr. Wondimagegne earned his PhD in Soil Science from Goettingen University, Germany in 1994. He worked as Instructor in the former Alemaya College of Agriculture, a Researcher and Center Director at the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research. He has also served as a senior expert and Coordinator of Quality Audit of Higher Education Institutions at the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (now Education and Training Quality Assurance and Agency).■

Quality Matters: *Could you share with us your thoughts of Quality Management?*

Dr. Wondimagegne: the concept of quality is not new in our higher education sector. It has always been part of the academic tradition. In every higher education institute, to a certain extent, there are mechanisms to safeguard the quality of education provision. However, this may not be in line with the quality revolution on which the outside world gives emphasis. The quality revolution now- a - days, deals with the changing context of higher education expansion /growth diversity of programs and resulted in:

► Larger class sizes/ declining unit of resources.

► From elite to mass system

► Changing student profile

► Growing state interest; demands for accountability

► Global concern with quality and standards

► Establishment of Quality Assurance Agency

Throughout the world there has been a move to mass higher education, associated with greater diversity of institutions and programs and a large increase in the number and size of universities. All this development has posed challenges for the efficacy of higher education institutions. Internationally, there is a strong move towards having rigorous, internationally recognized ►

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higher education quality assurance processes. Globally seen, Universities are now reshaping their traditional Quality Assurance System by building up new and rigorous Quality assurance mechanisms where by they can check their strengths and weakness periodically.

In this regard, there is a good start of establishing Quality Assurance system in our higher education institutions. I think the establishment of HERQA (now ETQAA) has helped a lot to establish a formal, transparent and credible system of quality assurance at each higher education institution in the country. However, there is a lot to be done by the institutions themselves for quality education, since the institutions are the driving forces to embed quality culture in the teaching learning process in their campus.

Quality Matters: There are now ADRCs and Quality Care Units in many public and some private higher learning institutions. How do you see the progress made thus far in enhancing quality education?

Dr. Wondimagegne: I know that there are ADRC offices in nine public universities which were established with the assistance of EQUIP project with an objective to improve the quality of teaching learning in Ethiopian public universities through the creation of Academic Development and Resource Centers. To my knowledge, in these universities 2-3 staff is appointed to run the office. The majority of these staff received long term training (Masters Level) and short term trainings in different topics related to quality education management system and on Cross- cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS and Gender. Until recently, the ADRC offices were responsible for quality care of the teaching learning processes.

Quality Matters: As a quality care watchdog of higher education, what measurable achievements have been done by ETQAA (the former HERQA) in enhancing quality of the education, especially in the private higher education sector?

Dr. Wondimagegne: Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency as you know, was established by proclamation Number 351 of 2003 with the aim to address the issue of quality higher education provision in the country. To my knowledge HERQA is doing a good job. Since its establishment, HERQA has engaged itself with major stakeholders in developing a robust quality assurance system in the higher education institutions of the country. The Agency has produced different guidelines, manuals, procedures and protocols. It has audited 14 universities and published the audit reports and made it public. This year HERQA has planned to audit other seven to eight institutions. As far as I know, HERQA has trained around ninety external Auditors in three batches by inviting prominent trainers from abroad. HERQA frequently organizes workshops on cross cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS and on Quality Assurance concepts and principles. HERQA is the one which issues pre accreditation, accreditation and reaccredidation for Private Higher Education Instutions twice a year after assessing the capacity of the institutions. Generally, HERQA seems to me on the right track to enhance quality higher education in the country.■

Perspective

Reflection on Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Ethiopian Higher Education Institutes

By : Melaku Girma,

St. Mary's University College

This research article is prepared with the aim of reflecting on whether Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) value quality, and are committed to continuous improvement and whether there exists some kind of internal quality assurance system within higher education institutes.

Besides the related literature, data is drawn from: (1) Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency's (HERQA's) institutional quality audit reports, the agency so far produced audit reports of nine public universities and five private higher education institutions; and (2) the writer's experience as quality auditor who has been trained and engaged (as team member) in external quality audits of two public universities and one private college.

Internal Quality Assurance is a planned and systematic monitoring and review processes established by a HEI to determine quality of its programs and the appropriateness of its infrastructure. A robust and transparent quality assurance system conveys confidence in quality of service provision of a HEI to its staff, to students, to employers and to other stakeholders. HEIs should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of quality of their programs. Quality in higher education is a multi- dimensional concept embracing all its functions and activities: teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilitates, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment (Rao: 2003). In view of this, higher education institutions from both the public and private sectors are recently under scrutiny. However, critics commonly assert that Private Higher Education Institutes (PHEIs) are of low academic quality and primarily are profit oriented. It is true Ethiopian PHEIs, have not been without problems. This has not been only due to the fact that they lacked quality but also due to the surprise element in their formation, the attitude that the public has had as a result of this, and substantially due to the nature of some dishonest providers who are instrumental to reinforcing the notion that private higher education is "sub-standard" (Wondwosen: 2008). Even though, the general attitude of the public towards private colleges is to perceive them as "diploma mills" and "certificate shops", some studies hinted that the perception is more of idea rather than reality as there are aspects where private colleges even exceed that of government (Bekalu and Maru: 2004, Gebrekidan: 2007, Damtew: 2005, Wondwosen: 2008).

Ethiopia is currently undertaking massive expansion in its higher education. The growth of PHEIs has also been extraordinary enrolling a quarter of the student population. Yes, major growth, significant expansion and development are taking place in higher education in the country. ►►

For this very reason, we need to be worried more about quality. According to The World Bank 2002 cited in Misganaw (2006), many countries that experienced a doubling or tripling tertiary enrollments and increased participation rates for young people in recent decades have seen negative effects of rapid expansion on quality. The World Bank and UNESCO also strengthened the idea by indicating that expansion (of HEIs), public and private, has been unbridled, unplanned, and often chaotic. The results -deterioration in average quality… (Ibid).

Ethiopian higher education institutions generally rely on the individual action, competence and ethics of each instructor to ensure quality of their programs and teaching (Ashcroft and Rayner: 2004). Accreditation in Ethiopia is a very recent phenomena which emerged with the privataization of the higher education sector. Currently, institutional and program accreditation practices applies only to PHEIs and is in-put based. However, the agency is interested, according to Tesfaye (2007) in moving from an input based system to a processes and out-put based system. Tesfaye indicated the same procedure should also apply to public HEIs which so far didn't happened, even if they are established by proclamation as autonomous HEIs.

It is suggested that the function of quality assurance is to hold institutions ultimately accountable for their own performance in teaching and research, and provide learners with a guarantee that they will receive a certain standard of education in return for their investment of time and resources (World Bank: 2004).

In Ethiopia, HERQA (now ETQAA) is still a new organization and appears to be not fully functional and no other fully functional nationally established system of quality assurance in the country. It also noted that there seems to be no systematic quality assurance culture or practice within individual institutions, public or private and although there is evidence of some good practices. However, this is largely on ad hoc and uncoordinated basis. Formulation of an in-built regulatory mechanism for quality assurance will, therefore be necessary. Quality assurance might denote: "All the policies, systems, and processes directed to ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of educational provision within an institution. A quality assurance system is the means by which an institution confirms to itself and to others that conditions are in place for students to achieve the standards that the institution has set" (Rao: 2003). Quality assurance is thus associated with increased institutional autonomy accompanied by greater transparently and accountability. Both internal self evaluation and external review are vital components of a sound quality assurance system to demonstrate accountability.

The need for every HEI to have Internal Quality Assurance System to continuously improve Quality and Relevance of its Education and/or Training. The ultimate goal of internal quality assurance is to have a culture of quality care which ensures that quality is a focus of all the activities in an institution at all levels and is incorporated into the everyday work of the whole institutional community. In view of this, ETQAA institutional quality audit reports, based on

the reference points and threshold descriptors of the focal areas, revealed the following observations on the Internal Quality Assurance System of the HEIs in Ethiopia.

Rhetorically, all HEIs appear to have a commitment to quality. Quality is well embedded in both the vision and mission statements. They all formulated strategic plans, which they have also clearly indicated the provision of best quality and relevant education and training as one of their main strategic goals. They have also set out both directions and implementation schedule for the achievement of the strategic goal.

However, most HEIs seem to have no practical systematic quality assurance culture or practice within the institutions although there is ample evidence of some good practices in some universities /university colleges / colleges/ faculties. This implies that the HEIs are still coming to terms with quality assurance. There is no evidence to claim that HEIs have a well written policy on quality assurance or on quality care. Most HEIs appear to have no quality assurance system or mechanisms in place for establishing, monitoring and enhancing quality. There are no regular quality assessment practices in any of the elements of educational provision for obtaining data that can be used to judge quality of the universities/ university colleges. This is of considerable concern.

The senate legislations, in public universities, do not explicitly assign a responsibility for quality assurance to a specific standing committee or unit.

Consequently, quality assurance does not yet appear in their organizational structure of the universities. Even though some universities stated in their Self Evaluation Documents (SEDs) that there is a plan to establish and very few claimed that they have established an office aimed at assuring and improving quality of their provision and thereby to ensure the attainment of their goals and objectives, there is no evidence produced in support of these assertions.

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It was repeatedly noticed in public universities that the Academic Development and Resource Center (ADRC), funded by EQUIP, has remit for quality care i.e. for promoting quality education. The universities need to understand that this activity is quite distinct from a quality assurance activity. The ongoing and welcome efforts of the ADRC to improve the pedagogical skills of staff are not quality assurance activities but are concerned with quality improvement.

In some universities, the appropriateness of the Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee

(ASCRC), the Academic Standard and Curriculum Unit and the Curriculum Committees in departments to look into the relevance of academic programs at their respective levels is admirable. However, they do not themselves constitute a quality assurance system since they merely focus on one aspect of quality i.e. curriculum.

Though there seems to be some variations vis-à-vis the public universities, private university colleges are just coming to terms with what is involved in quality assurance. As yet the colleges have no policy on quality assurance or any established and fully functional quality assurance system or mechanisms. However, the works of the very few of the university colleges in relation to quality is highly commendable but notes that the focus to date has been on quality assessments. Therefore, they need to build on their excellent work and seek to embed robust quality assurance structure into their practices. Almost all SEDs listed some areas of best practices that could lead to quality enhancement. However there seems to be no systematic ways in which good practices are identified and shared to enhance quality.■

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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 Ext 145 Or email: ceirqa@smuc.edu.et

Photo Gallery

Salesmanship in Action 2010

St. Mary's University College

Call for Papers

The 2nd Annual Multi-disciplinary Seminar

Organized and Sponsored by St. Mary's University College (SMUC)

In its continuous quest for creating a multi-faceted academic dialogue and critical debate, SMUC will hold the 2nd Multidisciplinary Seminar in August 2010. The Seminar is intended for bringing together experts and researchers toward sharing scholarly ideas and employing a multidisciplinary approach to solving problems of every day life. We, therefore, invite the academia to take part in the seminar by presenting papers on a range of issues or themes with multidisciplinary perspectives.

Deadline for abstract submission: - June 15, 2010

Full paper submission date: - July 30, 2010

Abstracts should be submitted to:

St. Mary's University College
Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA)

P.O.Box 18490

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

E-mail: ceirqa@smuc.edu.et

Honorarium will be paid for selected papers