

Graduate school of Higher Education Management

Talk by Luc WEBER (22.10.2014)

(??Carrier summary)

MESSAGE

- ❖ **The traditional model of universities is challenged and under threat** (only very good and excellent research institutions and those institutions which are agile enough to adapt faster will continue to play an important role; the other – in particular nonprofessional teaching universities – will be threatened by other forms of institutions or deliveries).

- ❖ **Universities have shown an extraordinary resilience over 9 centuries** because they managed to adapt to the transformation of the world (one of the oldest institutions). What makes them adaptable?
 - **“genetic » adaptation capabilities:** academics are “genetically programmed” to narrowly track the development of knowledge in their discipline (necessary condition to survive in research and to be responsible in teaching and learning)

 - **Voluntary adaptation decisions** at the level of Departments, Faculties and University
 - Adaptation of programs, creation of new program, closure of obsolete programs
 - Restructuring of the institution: improvement of the capacity to make decisions, modification of the structure (mergers of Faculties or Departments, creation of new structures, Faculties, Research institute)
 - Modernization of pedagogical methods

- ❖ The challenge : The world is changing much faster and deeper today (last 25 years), than before
 - **Main causes**
 - **Globalization and fast development of many developing countries in Asia, Latin America and... Africa** (move from a cheap labour economy to a mix of cheap labour and high tech)
 - **Burgeoning scientific and technological progress:** ICT, Life sciences and health, material, energy production, finance.....

 - **Consequences**
 - Knowledge society (knowledge has become a production factor)
 - Increasing worldwide competition for human and financial resources (in HE, teachers, researchers and students)
 - Old countries (Europe and Northern America) are under strong competition from new countries (China = world factory)

- The set and form of references in which people live is also changing extremely rapidly: easy access to information, easiness to communicate, to travel; ex.: internet as a rich source of information, as a mean to communicate worldwide,...
- ❖ The question that all universities should ask themselves:
 - Are we agile enough? Is our transformation (adaptation) process fast enough to keep in line with the transformation of the environment ?
 - How to be more agile in order to respond faster?

MAIN TRANSFORMATIONS AND A FEW RESPONSES

- ❖ With respect to the **three university missions**
 - **Teaching and learning**
 - **Endless move from teaching to learning**
 - Edu 1.0: teaching
 - Edu 2.0 : teaching and learning
 - Edu 3.0 :
 - ◆ learning (students do most of the learning by themselves and in groups, possibly internationally) ;
 - ◆ teachers become tutor and facilitators (thanks to the wealth of information available on the net and on MOOCs)
 - ◆ universities have lost their monopoly as single knowledge dispenser
 - **MOOC's**
 - The best when we want it
 - Two unknowns: distant learning is not enough:
 - ◆ confrontation with teachers and other learners necessary
 - ◆ certification
 - **Research**
 - Solitary research is getting less and less important and collective research is becoming more and more indispensable (bigger and bigger groups or networks of researchers: complementarity of disciplines and interest (universities and business))
 - Curiosity driven (blue sky) research is diminishing and planned research increasing (big themes: climate and energy, health and food safety, new materials, society)

- Big Data
- Increasing costs of equipment, methodologies and administration

➤ **Service to collectivity**

- Universities should continue their effort to be open to society (no ivory tower) (consultancy, talks, interviews and debates in the medias)
- Universities should invest more time to solve societal problems : implies planned research (opposed by many researchers who want free research)

❖ **Transversal questions**

➤ **Human resources and internationalization**

- Openness is a necessary condition for quality
 - Melting pot at students and teachers levels
 - Recruitment of the best
- Selection of researchers and teachers (the most important decision)
 - Planning of future vacancies; revisit priorities
 - Definition of profile in line with missions and objectives
 - Open (international) competition (avoid protectionism)
- Young researchers' carrier planning

➤ **Quality assurance**

- Necessary counter-part to autonomy (non-written social compact)
- Powerful tool to help the institution to look at itself and to improve
- Preferred system :
 - Internal evaluation of units (with international experts)
 - Institutional evaluation (agency)

➤ **Finance**

- The serious challenge: In the old world, the state has more and more difficulties to follow; lobby the state, but engage to work for alternatives
- Alternative sources : all private
 - Fees
 - ◆ Private and collective benefits + external benefits
 - Charge only for private benefits as long as this is not a barrier to access (financial support)
 - ◆ Positive consequences
 - Efficiency
 - Justice....

- Philanthropy
 - ◆ Foundation
 - ◆ Individuels
- Contracts
 - ◆ Applied research, consultancy, analysis
 - ◆ Continuing education
 - ◆ Premises

❖ **IMPROVEMENT OF GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

- Universities are very **conservative** institutions = threat in a fast changing environment (always numerous arguments – good and bad – to oppose to change)

➤ **Ways to reinforce decision making power and agility**

- Power sharing between centre and units;
 - federal model (three criteria or principles)
 - ◆ Importance of spill over effect (great for strategic issues, small for many administrative questions)
 - ◆ Intensity of preference for equal treatment of equals
 - ◆ Subsidiarity principle
- Decision process at the top
 - President or presidency (vice-chancellor)
 - Counter power
 - ◆ Shared governance (democratic) thanks to an assembly (can be a source of paralysis)
 - ◆ Support to Presidency: executive board
 - ◆ Senate (assembly of professors)
 - Preparation of decisions
 - ◆ Middle-long term
 - SWOT, benchmarking
 - Revisit missions, vision, objectives, means
 - Strategic plan
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 - ◆ Short term preparation of decisions
 - Committees
 - Many information and discussion meetings
 - Leadership of president (main power: to convince)

- Importance of communication
 - ◆ Internal
 - ◆ External

- ❖ WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THOSE INSTITUTIONS WHICH DO NOT ADAPT FAST ENOUGH?
 - Institutions which do not adapt fast enough:
 - Will become insignificant: lose students of get the weakest ones; have financial difficulties
 - Will lose their quasi monopoly
 - .
 - Other types of institutions will appear
 - Distance learning
 - Certification institutions