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STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION IN REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM OF QUALITY OF EDUCATION – CASE STUDY OF WULS-SGGW IN POLAND

ABSTRACT

As every system also the System of Ensuring and Development of Quality of Education in WULS-SGGW is subject to constant development. The presented case study shows the changes of a system from effects oriented approach to process driven approach. Such a change bears the hallmarks of revolutionary changes and in this was has been recognized at the university. However this example rises up more general question that might be a case for more universities: taking in mind dynamic changes and needs for adjustments to them should the systems of quality of education be only evolutionary developed or there is a time for revolution, time for reengineering in order to keep them effective?

INTRODUCTION

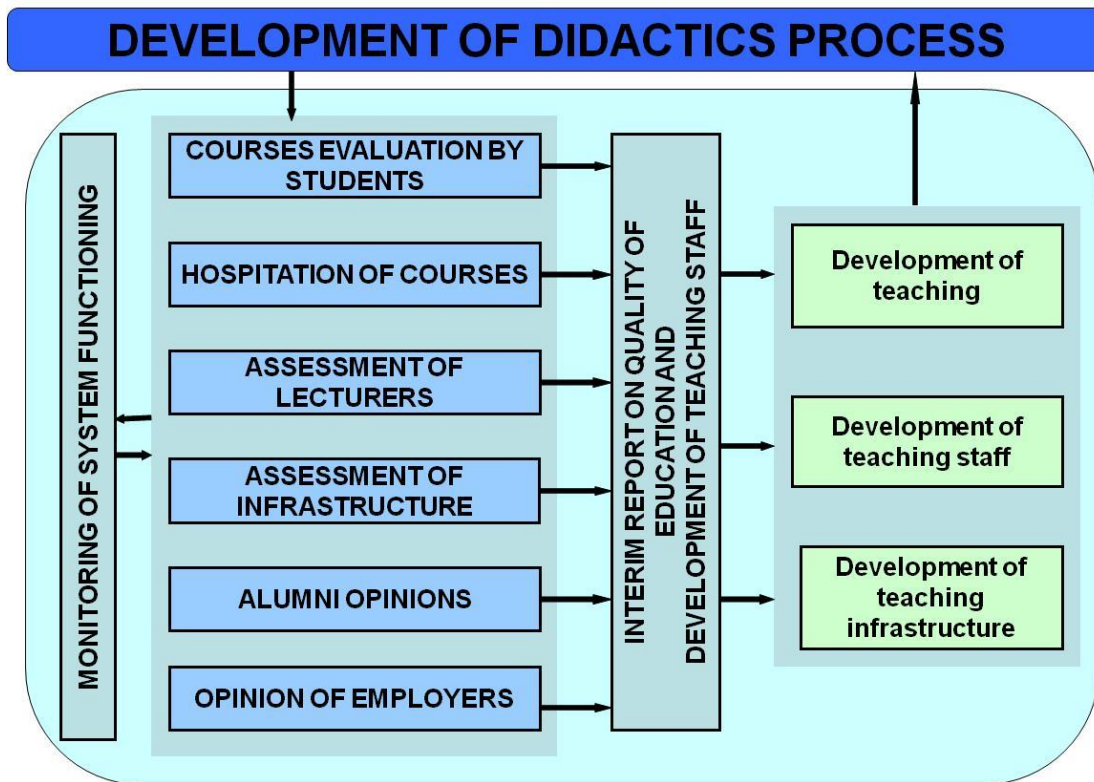
The higher education bases on the systems that are developed since many centuries. They have been changed over times due to different reasons. Today one could observe a rapid process of changes that are driven by the market factors. The university with all its tradition and ethos is becoming not a corporation but the business firm. The paper aims to describe the changes that took place at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences- SGGW with regard to its system of ensuring and developing the quality of education in the years 2009-2013. There was used a case study method.

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EVOLUTION OF THE SYSTEM OF ENSURING AND DEVELOPING QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN WULS-SGGW

Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW) is the oldest agricultural academic school in Poland, its history dates back to 1816. At present it is a modern university of life sciences. Cultivating tradition, the university conducts research, both in the wider field of the natural sciences as well as in economic sciences, humanities and engineering. WULS-SGGW seeks to broaden the research and updating of programs of study. The university plays special attention also to the dissemination of its scientific achievements. In order to meet social needs, WULS-SGGW conducts various forms of education of all higher education levels including post-graduate and e-learning studies. The university attaches great importance to international cooperation through joint research and training, seeing his special role in cooperation with the countries of the European Union and Eastern Europe. Acting at both local and global, WULS-SGGW particularly care about the quality of education, and thus a high level of graduates [Strategy, 2013]. At present, the university consists of 13 faculties, there are 1200 academic staff and 25000 students, whom can research and study 34 major disciplines. The research and education covers the entire field of life-sciences including landscape architecture, biology, biotechnology, economics, finance and banking, regional planning, informatics and econometrics, environmental engineering, forestry, environment protection, horticulture, agriculture, sociology, agricultural and forestry techniques, wood technology, commodity sciences, tourism and recreation, food technology, human nutrition, veterinary and animal science medicine as well as management and production engineering, management and marketing. The basis of the identity and success of WULS-SGGW are values such as professionalism, attention to quality, hard work and innovation.

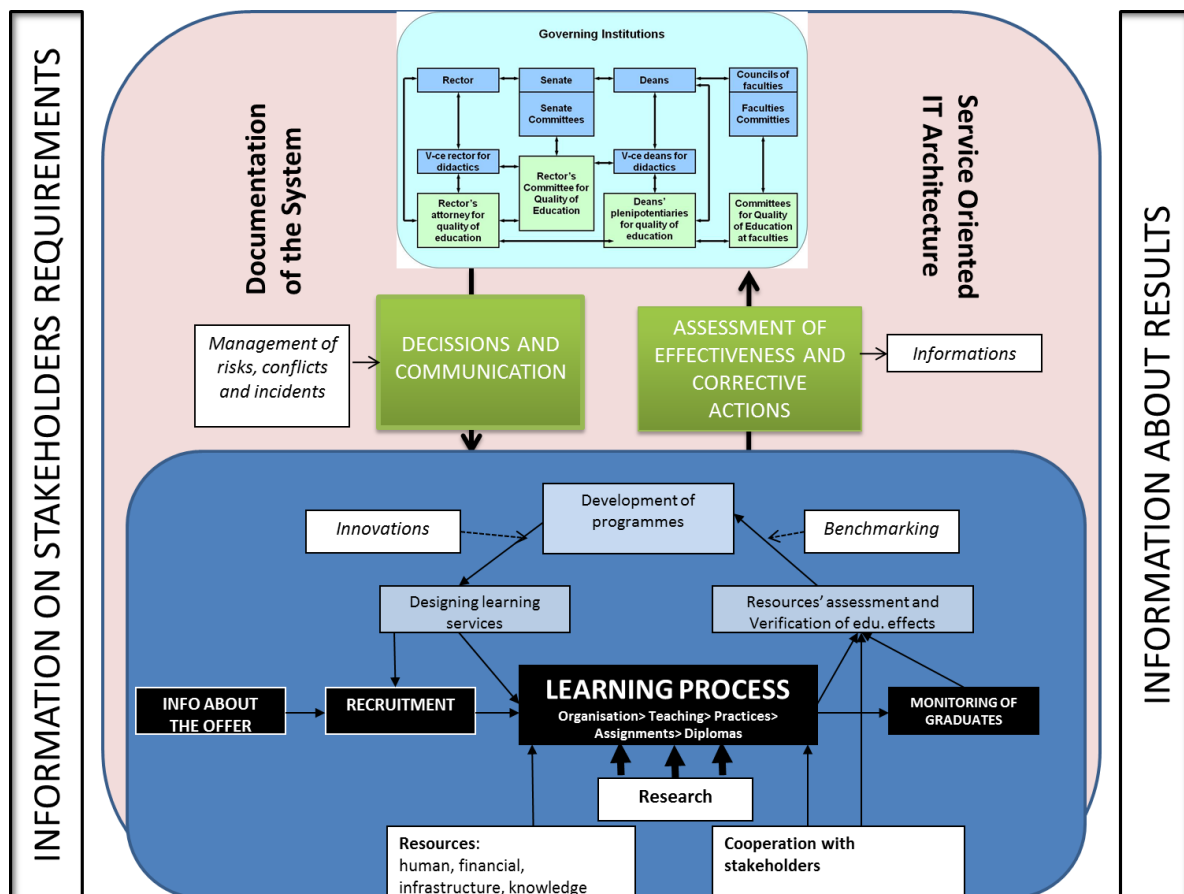
Following the national regulations in Poland described a.a. by Markowski [2012] WULS-SGGW developed in 2009 the System for Ensuring and Developing the Quality of Education. Although the system has been developed based on the regulations from national and European official bodies, guidelines from Bologna process and ENQA as well as study of best practices; it was very much effects oriented and focused on assessment of outcomes of the processes of the quality of education development. The system from 2009 is presented on the picture 1. The system aimed to focus on the development of the teaching programmes, teaching staff and teaching infrastructure. The information for management and development came from evaluation of courses, hospitation of lectures, and the assessments given by students, alumni and employers. From the time perspective and based on the opinions provided by the members of the university's community the system was appropriate to ensure the current highest possible quality of education. It was centrally oriented and this way managed.



Picture 1. System of Ensuring and Development of Quality of Education in WULS-SGGW from 2009.

Source: Resolution of the Senate of WULS-SGGW No. 9-2009/2010 on the System of Ensuring and Development of Quality of Education in WULS-SGG.

As every system of quality management the System of Ensuring and Development of Quality of Education in WULS-SGGW as implemented has been subject to audits and internal and external assessments. Due to those processes as well as taking into account the growing requirements of dynamic and turbulent environment not only in the area of higher education but also in the wider socio-economic spheres, especially on the labour market there was growing need to adjust the system for new challenges. It was decided that there will be new System developed that will address all the challenges and requirements for such systems. New System was developed in the mid of 2013. The new System is presented on the picture 2.



Picture 2. System of Ensuring and Development of Quality of Education in WULS-SGGW from 2009.

Source: Resolution of the Senate of WULS-SGGW no. 1-2013/2014 on the System of Ensuring and Development of Quality of Education in WULS-SGGW.

In the development of the new System there were participating not only members of the university's community as internal stakeholders, such as teachers, students, administration but also external stakeholders i.e. employers, alumni, cooperating organizations, citizens, media, governmental and non-governmental organizations. The System was developed accordingly with and basing on the new Strategy for WULS-SGGW up to 2020. It was assumed that the System will be process driven and will focus on the development of quality of education by the value added and the synergy effects that should be generated inside the main processes and supporting processes as well monitoring and engagement of stakeholders not only in the evaluation but in the processes themselves.

Today the system is working on two levels, first is the university and second, assumed as a mail level is the faculty. The university level is focusing on constituting the general framework, equal for all faculties. Its main procedure names 25 basic processes, that should be in details described by the systems of particular faculties. This is due to the fact that Warsaw University of Life Sciences – SGGW consists of 13 faculties in broad range of life sciences, from biotechnology, through animal sciences, plant sciences, forestry and wood

technology, to social sciences. Such diversity of fields as well as particular requirements concerning the education constituted the need for elasticity. The system should be accordingly comprehensive. Thus, at the faculty's level these 25 basic processes is in details described according to the specific of each faculty. Each faculty designs also the mechanisms of monitoring and development. The results of those mechanisms are taken into consideration by the university's monitoring and development activities.

The transition was preceded not only by the extensive consultations, but also by the risk analysis done by the Rector's Committee for the Quality of Education. For this purposes there were done and consulted with all faculties the analysis based on the hazard and operability study (HAZOP) approach. From these studies it was learned that the biggest risk is connected to the Le Chatelier's principle saying that if a system in equilibrium is subjected to a disturbance it tends to change in a way that opposes this disturbance. As a main factor in the system were identified people. The people were divided into two groups those who will do the changes and those who will be affected by them. It was most important to convince to the changes the first group. Therefore there were organized several workshops for the plenipotentiaries of deans' for the quality of education in order to explain them the need as well as present the basis of new system. Indeed Le Chatelier's principle effect occurred, but the more information was passed the more understanding was found. Within three months new systems at the faculties level were developed. That required 24/7 availability by the main author of the changes in order to help desk those who worked on the developments of faculties systems. At the beginning of academic year 2013/14 new systems should be adopted by the councils of faculties and thus being in force started to be implemented. The implementation has been also assessed using HAZOP approach. Here also the human factor played the biggest risk. Thus appropriate information policies have been ensured. From the perspective of time the transition process went quite smoothly.

CLOSING REMARKS

As every system also the System of Ensuring and Development of Quality of Education in WULS-SGGW is subject to constant development. The presented case study shows the changes of a system from effects oriented approach to process driven approach. Such a change bears the hallmarks of revolutionary changes and in this was has been recognized at the university.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

It is also widely recognised that while processes that aim to assure and enhance the quality of European higher education are in place, there is still need for further work in developing the engagement of the whole academic community in quality, as well as communication and

cooperation with other stakeholders. Described in this paper example rises up a general question that might be a case for more universities. Taking in mind dynamic changes and needs for adjustments to them especially with regard to stakeholders participation **should the systems of quality of education be only evolutionary developed or there is a time for revolution, time for reengineering in order to keep them effective?**

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