

Governance Models of Higher Education Institutions

Authors : Zoran Barac, Maja Martinovic

Abstract : Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are a special kind of organization, with its unique purpose and combination of actors. From the societal point of view, they are central institutions in the society that are involved in the activities of education, research, and innovation. At the same time, their societal function derives complex relationships between involved actors, ranging from students, faculty and administration, business community and corporate partners, government agencies, to the general public. HEIs are also particularly interesting as objects of governance research because of their unique public purpose and combination of stakeholders. Furthermore, they are the special type of institutions from an organizational viewpoint. HEIs are often described as “loosely coupled systems” or “organized anarchies” that implies the challenging nature of their governance models. Governance models of HEIs describe roles, constellations, and modes of interaction of the involved actors in the process of strategic direction and holistic control of institutions, taking into account each particular context. Many governance models of the HEIs are primarily based on the balance of power among the involved actors. Besides the actors’ power and influence, leadership style and environmental contingency could impact the governance model of an HEI. Analyzing them through the frameworks of institutional and contingency theories, HEI governance models originate as outcomes of their institutional and contingency adaptation. HEIs tend to fit to institutional context comprised of formal and informal institutional rules. By fitting to institutional context, HEIs are converging to each other in terms of their structures, policies, and practices. On the other hand, contingency framework implies that there is no governance model that is suitable for all situations. Consequently, the contingency approach begins with identifying contingency variables that might impact a particular governance model. In order to be effective, the governance model should fit to contingency variables. While the institutional context creates converging forces on HEI governance actors and approaches, contingency variables are the causes of divergence of actors’ behavior and governance models. Finally, an HEI governance model is a balanced adaptation of the HEIs to the institutional context and contingency variables. It also encompasses roles, constellations, and modes of interaction of involved actors influenced by institutional and contingency pressures. Actors’ adaptation to the institutional context brings benefits of legitimacy and resources. On the other hand, the adaptation of the actors’ to the contingency variables brings high performance and effectiveness. HEI governance models outlined and analyzed in this paper are collegial, bureaucratic, entrepreneurial, network, professional, political, anarchical, cybernetic, trustee, stakeholder, and amalgam models.

Keywords : governance, governance models, higher education institutions, institutional context, situational context

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020