

Caribbean Universities and the Global Educational Market: An Examination of Entrepreneurship and Leadership in an Era of Change

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Abstract : If Caribbean Universities wish to remain sustainable in the global education market they must meet the new demands of the 21st Centuries learners. This means preparing the teaching and learning environment with the human and material and resources so that the University can blossom out into the entrepreneurial University. The entrepreneurial University prepares the learner to become a global citizen, one who is innovative and a critical thinker and has the competencies to create jobs. Entrepreneurship education provides more equitable access to university education building capacity for the local and global economy. The entrepreneurial thinking, the mindset, must therefore be among academic and support staff as well as students. In developing countries where resources are scarce, Universities are grappling with a myriad of financial and non-financial issues. These include increasing costs, Union demands for increased remuneration for staff and reduced subvention from governments which has become the norm. In addition, there is the political pressure against increasing tuition fees and the perceptions on the moral responsibilities of universities in national development. The question is how do small universities carve out their niche, meet both political and consumer demands for a high quality, low cost education, fulfil their development mandate and still remain not only viable but competitive. Themes which are central to this discourse on the transitions necessary for the entrepreneurial university are leadership, governance and staff well-being. This paper therefore presents a case study of a Caribbean University to show how transformational leadership and the change management framework propels change towards an entrepreneurial institution seeking to have a competitive advantage despite its low resourced context. Important to this discourse are the transformational approaches used by the University to prepare staff to move from their traditional psyche to embracing an entrepreneurial mindset whilst equipping students within the same mode to become work ready and creative global citizens. Using the mixed methods approach, opinions were garnered from both members of the University community as well as external stakeholder groups on their perception of the role of the University in the business arena and as a primary stakeholder in national development. One of the critical concepts emanating from the discourse was the need to change the mindset of the those in university governance as well as how national stakeholders engage the university. This paper shows how multiple non-financial factors can contribute to change. A combination of transformational and servant leadership, strengthened institutional structures and developing new ones, rebuilding institutional trust and pride have been among the strategies employed within the change management framework. The university is no longer limited by borders but through international linkages has transcended into a transnational stakeholder.

Keywords : competitiveness, context, entrepreneurial, leadership

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