Comments on the three presentations

What can we conclude about new forms of educational management for QA in higher education? (focussing on Sugimoto's six questions)

Richard James
Centre for the Study of Higher Education
University of Melbourne

Tohoku University CAHE International Seminar, 24 January 2012

Sugimoto's Six (Excellent!) Questions

1. What internal structures and processes are in place for effective QA, especially for maintaining educational quality?

2. What elements and actors, internal or external, are involved in the structure of QA?

3. What internal relationship should be established between senior management and faculties/ departments?

4. What information and data should be collected and utilized in decision-making for educational improvement?

5. What approaches are needed to foster an organizational culture which places great value on QA?

6. What knowledge, competencies and attributes should be developed for senior and middle managers who can demonstrate effective leadership in educational management?

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Some common (or nearly common) themes …

Goals of **expanding access and completion rates** (*the international educational 'arms-race'*) and **improving equity** (*'HE for all'*).

More competitive contexts for individual institutions.

Strong emphases on quality, growing attention to defining and monitoring academic standards — the formalisation, and perhaps quantification, of concepts of standards.

More data-based approaches to institutional planning. Standardised data collection, diagnostic reporting designed to devolve responsibilities within institutions.

Complex interplays between external quality agencies and institutional priorities.   Tensions between quality/standards and institutional diversification.

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The 'big picture' of <u>universal participation</u> in higher education: Martin Trow's remarkable foresight in the 1970s* …

The public questions the special privileges and 'immunities' of the academy.

Boundaries between universities and communities soften and blur.

Institutions diversify, and there is less consensus on standards. Attention shifts to 'value-added' rather than absolute standards.

Management techniques imported from outside the academy. More full-time management professionals.

The breakdown of consensus makes institutional management difficult. Political authority starts to win over academic authority.

1. **What internal structures and processes are in place for effective QA, especially for maintaining educational quality?**

Clear, often distinctive, statements of institutional mission and goals.

Teaching and Learning Committees with QA roles that are charged with driving quality up.

Central, senior academic appointments with quality enhancement responsibilities.

Standardised data collection, standardised internal reporting. Formal cycles of planning, target-setting and evaluation (cycles which may be shortening).

2. What elements & actors, internal or external, are involved in QA?

Institutions, centrally:
   senior staff, QA committees for T&L

Nationally:

   quality agencies provided 'frameworks' and an independent
   'mirror'   (however, Australia moving to a more interventionist
   approach based on articulated standards and assessment of 'risk')

3. What internal relationship should be established between senior management and faculties/ departments?

Challenges here!   Disciplinary/faculty cultures are powerful forces.

Usual approach to relationship is formally devolution through use of plans, targets, KPIs, incentives etc.

4. What information and data should be collected and utilized in decision-making for educational improvement?

Many examples of given of data elements. Obvious elements are:

*progression and completion rates

*Graduate employment rates

*Quality of teaching (where student evaluation data rule!)

Most data at high level of 'generality'.

What to measure?

How to store, extract and report?

How to handle problems of aggregation and relevance?

How to embed in planning and evaluation cycles?

How to act of the data?

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5. What approaches are needed to foster an organizational culture which places great value on QA?

A fine question!

Academics usually have very strong feelings about quality and standards, but these are often difficult to align with management initiatives for quality enhancement. **Formalising** approaches to QA to the major challenge.

6. What knowledge, competencies and attributes should be developed for senior and middle managers who can demonstrate effective leadership in educational management?

Another very good question!!

Non-abrasive personality, yet willing to hold firm in the face of criticism and discord?   Strong skills in harnessing viewpoints and reaching a consensual position?

Competency in interpreting data, and knowing the strengths and limits to generic datasets?

Sound knowledge of the characteristics of good teaching, curriculum and assessment? A personal record of excellence in teaching?

Sensitivity to disciplinary differences in academic cultures and in teaching and learning practices?

www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au

r.james@unimelb.edu.au