OVER 12 YEARS OF EMBEDDING INTERNATIONALISATION: SOME LESSONS LEARNED

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TO EMBED:
TO PLACE OR SET SOMETHING FIRMLY IN SOMETHING ELSE
QUIZ

Let's say you, as a rector/vice-rector get a letter or email on the "International of X". Is your first instinct to:

- A) Forward it to your international office?
- B) Forward it to the office of X?
- C) Deal with it yourself?
SELECT UH ESSENTIALS

- Long history
- Relatively large
- Research focused
- Several national responsibilities
- Legally bilingual, de facto trilingual
- Faculties have been relatively independent, also in terms of administration
- All the fields of study not in the mainstream of internationalisation
- Central International Office came into being in the late 1980s
  - Was revamped ~5-6 times before being dissolved in 2003
HISTORY AND ESSENTIALS OF EMBEDDING INTERNATIONALISATION

- International Office disappears 2003
  - By-product of an admin reform
  - Classic IRO essentials disseminated
- Hiring of key internationalisation experts 2005-2007
- International Staff Services established 2007
- Mobility management IT system 2007
- Trilingual Admissions Services 2008
- Unified Student Services 2008

- No International Office
- No International Strategy
- No International Committee
- Yes, Vice-Rector for Internationalisation
- Yes, International Advisory Board
Lesson #1: It is all about people

Not about ideas, ideals, organograms etc.
• Lesson #2: Explicit or implicit decision is needed at start
• Lesson #3: Organic works better than enforced, but slower
• Lesson #4: It happens in stages
  • Utilisation of opportunities vital
• Lesson #5: After twelve years, the end of the beginning is in sight
  • It might never be over
DIFFERENT IN DIFFERENT PARTS

• Lesson #6: Central Admin is easier than Faculties
• Lesson #7: Faculties are easier than departments
• Lesson #8: Departments are easier than (some) academics
SUCCESS FACTORS OF EMBEDDING INTERNATIONALISATION

• Lesson #9: Embedded ≠ Invisible or no experts
• Lesson #10: Co-ordination pays dividend
  • Joint activities
  • "Office” meetings
  • Shared budgets
  • Someone with oversight needed
• Lesson #11: There are risks
  • Leadership changes
  • Changes in key positions
  • Units becoming "self-sufficient” over time and no longer in need of co-ordination
• Lesson #12: (Continued) Leadership commitment and support is needed
Lesson #13: Do not advertise this to your partners
Lesson #14: Make sure services (and people) are still relatively easy to locate
Lesson #15 Make sure various services are linked and aware of each other
  • Avoid the: "Not my business"-response
Lesson #16 Be prepared to make compilation documents and other materials
Lesson #17 Language plays a role
BENEFITS OF EMBEDDING INTERNATIONALISATION

- Ability to increase manpower towards internationalisation without needing to hire new staff
- Internationalisation becomes less of an end and more a means
- Internationalisation coupled with the actual substance
  - Benefits for both
- Coupling of internationalisation with the institutional mission
CASE UH INTERNATIONAL STAFF EXCHANGE WEEK

• A week-long administrative visitors’ programme
• In operation since 2009
• Centrally facilitated, relatively easy for units to engage in
• Initially excluded international officers
• Enables the internationalisation of administrative units
  • Materials, describing ones work
• Oversubscribed
• Thematic weeks as spin-offs
  • Library, HR, Academic Affairs
CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

- UH cutbacks and reorganisation of the whole of administration
  - Several former internationalisation experts laid off
  - New teams formed, teams and individuals with new areas of responsibilities
  - Old structures and working methods will need to be replaced
- Yet, internationalisation is every more important and critical to UH mission and vision
- Internationalisation is also increasingly more complex and competitive
- Without mainstreaming/embedding the challenge would be even bigger