Good Governance in Higher Education: concepts, implement, and training

Case: Vietnam National University-HCMC

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Former Member of National Council of Education
Former Rector, Cantho University
CONTENT

- Higher education reform
- Issues of University Governance in VN
- Lessons learned
- Training programs in VNU-HCMC
# HE Reforms in Vietnam

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<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>French system</td>
<td>Vietnam war</td>
<td>Reunification</td>
<td>Reform</td>
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<td>▪ Russian (++++)</td>
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<td>▪ Broadening curricula</td>
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<td>▪ French (+)</td>
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<td>▪ More comprehensive university</td>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>French system</td>
<td>▪ American (++++)</td>
<td>▪ Russian (+++)</td>
<td>▪ More practical, less theoretical</td>
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<td>▪ French (+)</td>
<td>▪ American (++)</td>
<td>▪ “Standard” degrees, QA</td>
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<td>▪ French (+)</td>
<td>▪ 2 national, 3 regional, &gt;100 mono-disciplinary, &gt;30</td>
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HE Reforms in Vietnam

Opened door policy from 90s
Transition + fast-growing economics

Old type of human resource
• top-down
• employment: gov.
• public servant => obey

New type of human resource
• bottom-up
• employment: private
• entrepreneurship => create

Leadership
ISSUES OF UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE IN VIETNAM
Lack of international standards, norms, definitions; internationally-accepted common practices => *vague definition/understanding of autonomy*

- Weak linkage with industry/business/society => *unclear accountability*

- Centralized power (example Prof. promotion: confused practices and criteria) => *quality control*

- *Unclear role division* between ministries and universities
University autonomy

Ambiguity in Laws and Legal Procedures

- complex law system related with university autonomy:
  - Law of Education
  - Law of Budgeting
  - Law of Government Officials
  - Law of Auditing
  - Law of Science and Technology,…

- Law of Education (2005): new or clearer defined concepts: autonomy, quality assurance, university governance, credit system,…
University autonomy

Law of Education 2005

Article 14

State (Ministry of Education) responds:

- education objectives
- curricula and contents
- planning
- staff qualification
- testing / exam regulations
- degrees
- quality assurance
- autonomy
- decentralization
Newly, quickly and vaguely evolving concepts

centralized  de-centralized

Not-well-defined/risky zone
4 levels of autonomy

- 2 National universities  
  PM highest
- 3 Regional and 14 Key universities  
  MOET high
- more than 100 other universities  
  MOET + line ministry
- provincial universities  
  MOET + line ministry + provincial authority

Special university charter for the 2 National universities: testing cases for a high-level autonomy
Governance Structure in Vietnam National University HCMC
### Phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Number of institutions</th>
<th>Governance structure</th>
<th>Main issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishment (reported to MOET)</td>
<td>10 universities</td>
<td>“big university”</td>
<td>autonomy of specialized university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-structure (reported to PM)</td>
<td>3 + 2 universities</td>
<td>“small ministry”</td>
<td>extra “layer” of administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development (reported to PM)</td>
<td>6 university members</td>
<td>university system</td>
<td>most suitable but new concept in VN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Role division between VNU and Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>VNU</th>
<th>Members</th>
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<tr>
<td>Steering and strategy</td>
<td>Vision VNU objectives</td>
<td>Mission, inst. objectives, strategic plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Criteria, QA Supervision</td>
<td>Implementation plan Curriculum development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Action plan Internal guidelines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## University autonomy

### Differences between VNU and others

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<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>VNU</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Direct from NA</td>
<td>MOET/LM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Self-decided</td>
<td>MOET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QA</td>
<td>Self-evaluated system</td>
<td>MOET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund raising</td>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>Approval needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VNU structure

VNU Board of Governance

President

Rector
University Member

Rector
University Member

Rector
University Member

Faculty

Faculty

Faculty
University Governance

Board of Trustees

- Less than 5% of Public Universities in Vietnam having Board of Governance
- The first BOG in Vietnam
- University Presidents are Board President
- 30% members of the Board from outside
University Governance

Leader appointment

- President and Vice Presidents: Prime Minister
- Rector and Vice Rectors: Minister of Education

Finance

- Tuition fee: Prime Minister
- Expenditures: University President => Faculty/Staff General Assembly
University Governance

**Student admission**
- Qualification: National University Entrance Examination
- Number: *Ministry of Education*

**Professor promotion**
- National Council of University Promotion
- University appointment

**Staff management**
- “supervised” by *Ministry of Internal Affairs*
- salary scales decided by *Ministries of Internal Affairs and Labor*
“RESIDUE” of autonomy of VNU-HCMC

- MIA: Salary scale
- MF: Budget
- MPI: Plans/Programs
- MOLISA: Vocational Education
- Other M: Specialized programs
LESSONS LEARNED
Lessons learned

1. Transition in university decision-making: centralization $\Rightarrow$ de-centralization = mixture
   - confused by new concepts
   - old habits and traditions

2. Unclear accountability / society responsibility mechanism (University Council/Board of Trustees: few universities, including VNU, well-established + clear functions)
3. Autonomy is THE key word but what’s next after autonomy?

4. Introduce
   - University leadership training => RTC in VNU-HCMC
   - New **Strategic plan**
   - New Cultures
   - Norms,…
5. Clearer role division between State and Institutions

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6. New HE Laws

• **quality assurance** and **efficiency** should be the “core”

• then, **conditions:**
  
  ✓ autonomy and accountability (at least 1 chapter)
  
  ✓ governance: de-centralized
  
  ✓ …

• clear role/responsibility divisions: ministries, city/provincial authority and universities

• **university board of trustees**: role, composition, appointment
TRAINING
DESIGN GOOD GOVERNANCE TRAINING PROGRAM

Good governance system

Effective and Efficient Management

Mid level training

Technical/skill training

Leadership

Management skills

Motivation

CONDITIONS

- vision
- strategic plan
- culture
- action plan formulation
- teamwork
- delegation
- creative environment
- evaluation and incentive
Train the BOG members

• the first to be trained

• to provide **new concepts, norms,**…

• by

  ✓ strategic planning **formulation** workshop =>
    strategic plan approval

  ✓ special report of strategic programs (action plan)

  ✓ study tour, …
Train leaders of university members

- Center of University Governance and Management
- 3 dimensions of training programs
- team building and interaction between levels
- common theme: Total Quality Management
Train university staff and faculty

- young leadership program
- promote quality culture
<table>
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<th>Dean</th>
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<td>Strategic dimension</td>
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<td><img src="image4" alt="Arrows" /></td>
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<td><img src="image7" alt="Arrows" /></td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Arrows" /></td>
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<td>Basic/technical</td>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Arrows" /></td>
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Which one is more stable?
Be aware, in some countries, university leader can be a dangerous job!!!

Thank you