

HUMANE SEMINAR

The Academy of Performing Arts,

Prague, Czech republic

(24th and 25th October 2003)

Session 1

Prof. Dr. Jacqueline Cramer, Erasmus University Rotterdam (NL):

Corporate Social Responsibility: A Challenge for Universities

The main goal of this lecture was to explain the meaning of "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR), its importance for universities, its structural embedding in the university organization, and also to concretize its added value.

The lecturer showed with practical examples how smoothly the CSR can be incorporated into the structure and management of the university. She also pointed out that it might be already there, although we either don't know about it or call it differently.

CSR process should start with zero assessment which should give us the idea of where we are at the moment, to make clear both our weak and strong points, to follow motives in all its means – staff motivation, building an imaginative umbrella for both management and organizational level, cost reduction, enhancing reputation and strengthening our positions (which goes hand in hand with improving relationships with important stakeholders), and – last but not least – environmental aspects.

Next steps would be defining short and longer term strategies, setting up monitoring and reporting systems, and focusing on communication – internal, external, including not only external stakeholders, but also the outside world.

Since every subject is more or less unique, the speaker showed just one way how to bring the CSR policy into everydayness, which should serve as a mirror, not as a step-by-step manual. Every university should start with whatever is most relevant for them.

Discussion on Session 1:

The participants mostly agreed that CSR already exists in their universities, although it can be found on different levels and each university is struggling with different problems depending on specific positions and relationships with regard to the subject or the relationship with the outside world and partners.

Mr. Gerry Webber (UK) suggested that it is not important what we do, but what we could do, but for different reasons chose not to do. The top management of the university is usually aware of what is expected (e.g. not obtaining money from tobacco companies etc. on one hand), but there are paradoxes (some controversial partners on the other), and it is difficult to stop the chain which is already in use.

Mr. Dugald Mackie (UK) was wondering how to find an agreement between what universities have to and what they are expected to do / want to do. The answer might be to build up an ethical position for the future.

Mr. Ruud Bleijerveld (NL) pointed out hospitals as being most ahead in being informed, in carrying out the duty to inform and care for being part of the society in its wide meaning.

Mr. Eddie Newcomb's conclusion of the discussion – which later became an unofficial motto of the seminar – was a statement that “the best is the enemy of the good”. Universities have to refine and get better. The level of awareness is increasing (no. 1 is without any doubt medical field), it's not great, but it's generally better than in the past.

Session 2

Betty de Keizer, University of Amsterdam (NL):

Corporate Social Responsibility at the Universiteit van Amsterdam

The speaker shared the experience connected to corporate social responsibility gained at the University of Amsterdam. She started with the beginning phase when there was emphasis on environmental issues followed by a slow move from environmental management (health and safety issues) to corporate social responsibility (more awareness of the financial part of environmental management).

The participants faced the so-called triple P philosophy: people (social well-being), planet (ecological quality), and profit (economic prosperity).

CSR deals with the triple P and universities deal with following processes: education, research, administration, and external relations. The speaker went on with the question of when, how and why the Universiteit van Amsterdam dealt with bringing the CSR into university processes.

One of the most important lessons learned during this process is that

it is necessary to communicate both internally and externally. None of the efforts are effective without support of the top management and people who are enthusiastic and able to motivate others are necessary. Sharing experience (on international basis as well) and translating someone's story to specific cases is helpful. There are new questions coming up every year. It

is impossible to satisfy every area of interest at the same time, don't try it and prepare for a long process.

Discussion on Session 2:

Mr. Eddie Newcomb (UK) suggested that the area his university – and maybe not only his - has most trouble with is education. We have to realize that students are the future decision makers. The first two P's (people and planet) are not that difficult to fulfil as the last one – profit. The question is if we are putting enough effort into that one. There is a difference between the attitude of the top management and the attitude of the students. Deans are usually not interested in environmental issues; it is a weak point of most universities. The “operational” level and top management level is in this case in opposition. The solution might be trying to convince people with arguments and good examples. Universities should set up a plan of influencing the behaviour of staff.

Mr. Ruud Bleijerveld (NL) mentioned his Dutch experience with boards willing to support research, but not education. Luckily, the interest of students is growing, not only in Holland, but also in other European countries.

The conclusion of the discussion was the agreement of all participants to follow the motto “what you teach is what you preach”, count on enthusiastic and active students leaving school, but with others coming, count on a different attitude of students studying in different fields, and be positive, patient, but active, starting in your own territory.

Session 3

Luciano Galán, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (ES):

Cooperation with Copernicus

Mr. Galán's lecture drew a picture of the history of HUMANE as well as the character of Copernicus organization and its cooperation with HUMANE, and set up a basis for discussion about its plans for the future. He gave a comparison of the HUMANE network (ideas) and Copernicus network (institutions).

Since 1998 HUMANE discussed different topics: Ecocampus, energy, transport, space management, best practices and finally CSR. What should be the next steps? Which direction to turn to now? Where to direct activities, efforts and energy?

Discussion on Session 3:

Mr. Ruud Bleijerveld (NL) thought the HUMANE network could improve its way of sharing the information and knowledge, and passing it further on. He suggested to publish more on the internet, and make the website more attractive. He compared the power of HUMANE and Copernicus and analyzed that Copernicus had the power to influence the nation directly, the power to steer. The task should be to find a way how cooperate with Copernicus so that the knowledge finds the target.

British colleagues mentioned a need of finding an extra value of the HUMANE seminars to encourage the executives to move in this direction.

The situation is painful also because it is hard to ask people to do even more than they are already doing. Would it be a solution to pay an extra sum of money for special events?

Mr. Peter Wilson (UK) cut sharp by asking what and where is the influence of HUMANE sessions. According to him HUMANE must be recognized and get recognition.

Mr. Galán suggested preparation of special seminars for friends, but opened again the need for extra money and staff.

Mr. Rafael Zorilla (ES) called for a project for both top managers and technical staff to be involved.

The discussion was closed by Mr. Steve Cannon's (UK) warning for being careful in such thoughts, for considering every step, because they seem to be pointing to a different organization. HUMANE should slowly and considerably analyze its position and continue in its activities as effectively as current status allows, not building up a new structure although it might look natural.

Session 4

Steve Cannon, University of Aberdeen (UK):

Higher Education Partnerships for Sustainability: The Aberdeen Case

Steve explained the term “sustainability” being the UK term for corporate social responsibility and gave the participants a quick background of The Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability as a collaboration of 18 UK universities and colleges which are exploring how to enhance their contribution towards sustainable development, focusing on short term initiatives to create a long term commitment with state financial support.

The University of Aberdeen, which joined the scheme in 2000, reported the progress that has been made (a solid monitoring system is part of the policy) and outlined a draft policy that intends to underpin the future implementation of sustainable development at his university.

An important document called Sustainable Development Education Panel (SDEP) from 1997 recommends that by 2010 “all further and higher education institutions should be accredited to an internationally or nationally recognized sustainable development system standard; to have staff fully trained and competent in sustainable development; and to provide all students with sustainable development learning opportunities” and also that “all professional bodies and industry bodies should have sustainable development education criteria included within their course accreditation requirements”. (The SDEP is highly evaluated by participants from other countries.)

Steve named their “early wins” – effective communication and publicity (good web-site etc.), being green already (paper recycling, green transport policy etc., but also courses and programs already exist), and to support both groups. From “beginners”, the University of Aberdeen has moved to “more advanced”, but there is still a journey ahead...

Discussion on Session 4:

Larry Banks (UK) was excited about the reporting system. It was agreed that it is necessary, but hard to follow and to give objective information. He was curious about the demand of the students in the curriculum embedding.

The praxis in Aberdeen of these days is that the university is not embraced as a whole, but there are pieces, which are very well accepted. The number of students and markets is as “low” as one or two, but that still counts.

Mr. Jerzy Pieszczyrkow (PL) suggested to encourage and engage people who are sympathetic and cherish them (since most of the students and staff are apathetic).

Mr. Ruud Bleijerveld (NL) pointed out the important role of green transport policy and shared the Sydney experience (the management of University of Sydney encouraged students and staff leaving their cars at home by providing – in cooperation with city authorities – free charter buses to the campus).

Mr. Eddie Newcomb's (UK) was more sceptical, since his experience with translating the words (well meant theoretical plans) into action (reality) is usually harder than it seems. The reaction of the government takes longer than we wished, and for an effective cooperation a long-term sustainable position is needed.

Mr. Jerzy Pieszczyrkow (PL) warned about the difficulties with bringing the green transport policy into university life – sometimes it results in anger towards the university (lack of parking lots/no parking lots nearby, etc.)

Session 5

John Lauwerys, University of Southampton (UK):

Campus Security at the University of Southampton. Study of the latent conflict between the University community and local residents

The speaker started his lecture by explaining how local residents feel about university students/staff. Among local residents of university campuses there is a general opinion that university students and staff are privileged and they might be detached from the immediate local residential community. This can emerge in the form of aggression between students and the locals and the abuse of university property. Each university is facing different specific problems depending on the locality, character of local inhabitants, structure of the campus, national habits etc.

John gave the audience a short introduction of the University of Southampton (number of students and staff, number of students in University housing), and similar characteristics of the City of Southampton. By showing a map of the biggest University campus (Highfield Campus) including a neighbourhood context, he enabled everyone to form a picture for him/herself. A short background as well as a description of the current situation of the student security context in the UK followed.

There is a long history of security problems in the Highfield Campus, as is shown by the number of thefts, burglaries, vandalism, youth nuisance, which in years 2001 and 2002 unfortunately increased. The University has to react, and it does. Its security response consists in increase in security patrols, improvements in lighting, extension of CCTV monitoring and smart card locking system, introduction of dog patrols.

Above mentioned measures wouldn't be enough without responding to the root cause in the local community followed by coming up with active solutions, such as encouraging the city staff and students to work as youth workers, tutoring and mentoring in local schools, visiting student unions and producing other cultural and sport projects and events.

The coexistence of both groups is also supported by inviting the community into the University.

There are reasons for optimism (there are signs of some reduction in crime and enthusiasm from local young people to activities is pleasant), but as John said, "it's an ongoing challenge".

Discussion on Campus Security at the University of Southampton. Study of the latent conflict between the University community and local residents

John Lauwerys, University of Southampton (UK)

(half of the group)

The discussion on cases presented by John Lauwerys was very fruitful and brought up a lot of new themes. The discussion lead to an exchange of many new views and experiences between countries:

- Arts Education brings a lot of good results against criminality. Too many security restrictions do not bring good and comfortable feelings (Jamaica ex.)
- In Spain there is a long tradition of university campuses being open to the public, for people use the parks for their free time during the day. Nowadays

it brings a lot of trouble during night and so it might be good to divide the system of security for night and day.

- Criminality is not only outside but also inside of universities. Inside criminality means that some students, teachers or administrative staff members are involved. Security agencies members are sometimes thieves as well, which leads to the question whether it is better to have a special agency or our own staff?
- In The Netherlands it is possible to separate university buildings by water canals which are a natural security system against outside criminality, especially during the night. Inside criminality is partly rescued by spies among students (Secret police) and by special security agencies at the entrance. It is also good to have one special staff member with knowledge of police work (laws, restrictions, etc.). Dutch universities are not responsible for student dorms and students belongings there.
- United Kingdom (University of Teesside) is using a special card lock system for computer classes. Buildings are closed and only the campus itself is open to public.
- Czech universities do not have very good experiences with communication with the police. There is special permission for the police to visit universities just with an agreement of its director.

The university in Grenoble, however, has a good experience with police patrols. They are also organizing common projects between police and students, which improves the relationship.

- Students, teachers and administrative staff are not careful enough with the university equipment and their personal belongings.
- Vandalism between students is solved by strictly applied regulations between students, especially at the student dorms.
- Alcohol sold in student restaurants – in the United Kingdom it is not possible to take it away, but in general alcohol is less and less accepted during working hours. Student unions make a profit from selling alcohol in UK. Universities with chemistry labs do not sell alcohol during working hours because of danger in relation to chemical equipment. Universities with artistic subjects have a special view because between artists alcohol is accepted and creates good atmosphere for new ideas.
- Noisy students at student dorms situated in towns – AMU named one of most problematic students to be a head of the student union responsible for silence after midnight at the dormitory and it works very well.

- Work experience for students at the university is useful for both sides – university and students as well (useful for Curriculum vitae).
- Drug problems are related to criminality.

Conclusion for the workshop – group 2. was:

Criminality outside and inside is a very important problem nowadays. The question is if it is better to close or to open the campus and / or the university.

Discussion on CSR and security, lead by Mr. Jiří Jirka (CZ) and

Ms. Betty de Keizer (NL)

(half of the group)

Participants of the discussion agreed that CSR is rather wide spread in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, in comparison with other European countries. The objections are differing, but it is mostly money and fear of an even stronger bureaucracy (Mr. Jiří Jirka).

Mr. Jean Pascal (FR) acknowledged that in France the so-called CSR is an absolutely unknown concept, and he was enthusiastic about introducing it to his colleagues. Currently, French universities care for safety and security and they are for example saving energy (supported by the government), but it is not their priority.

Prof. Anne-Marie Kumps (BE) also thought the concept is new for her, and added that in Belgium there is the term “sustainable development” being used, not “social responsibility”. The environmental issues are not taken seriously – a special commission in charge of implementation of concrete actions exists, universities sign a chart with the city, and Anne-Marie believes that in two years, Belgium will be able to present a similar system to the one which in Netherlands already exists.

The group came back to Mr. Jirka's concern for growing bureaucracy.

He was assured by Dutch experience that the people, once they put their effort and energy into activities connected with CSR, they are happy to prove what's been done. In fact, it sometimes brings even less bureaucracy than usual, since some of the procedures might be the same or similar for different activities (energy savings, waste policy etc.), and they can be used over and over. Mrs. Betty de Keizer thought that "bureaucracy is growing by not doing things, not by doing them."

Then the discussion turned to the position of universities in general. The role of universities is kind of unique – people don't trust governments (and big companies) anymore, and since universities are not part of them either, their position should enable them to give society the values, which are fundamental for it. People trust universities, so far; universities should cherish that fact and maintain independence (of course, there is a certain supervision by the ministry, but it is not that stressing).

According to British participants, universities should provide knowledge transfer supported by exchange programs, but never act like "we know it better".

University teachers and staff should be aware of contacts with young people, who might take a lead in any field in the future, so to give them a good example and support them. (Mr. Jiří Jirka)

Mr. Ruud Bleijerveld (NL) added a need for showing a responsibility for environment, with regard education and research.

Mr. Eddie Newcomb (UK) put a strong emphasis on schools. He thought that although universities cannot heal all what's ill, they could take their part, but couldn't be the only ones who tried. His idea was strongly supported by others. The unambiguous way is the fact that universities are preparing teachers and that is why the need for awareness of being consequential and consistent in lecturing them and trying to translate the subject into every discipline is crucial.

In summary, the conclusions from the discussions are:

- unique position of universities in general
- "do what you preach"
- global look is necessary
- build on what is happening in schools (don't focus on your institution only)
- communicate with local community in all ways you can think of

- make a selling point from being green

Session 6

Cristina Marti Barranco, Universitat Politècnica de València (ES)

Accreditation of ISO 14001 in Environmental Management of a University Building

Ms. Marti started her talk with the background of environmental management in the University and the origins of the project. The University Polytechnic of Valencia (UPV) established the Green Office in the academic year 1993/94. Its initial objectives were to undertake various initiatives, in general terms directed towards an improvement in the environmental policy. This was intended to be put into practice through a variety of activities connected with students, but also extending it to other groups and activities (lecturers, researchers, non-academic staff etc.).

The Green Office took on the responsibility (through a European Union project) to put into practice an environmental system that could be applied to European universities in general in 1997. This project was carried out based on centers considered typical – it 13 pilot units, e.g.

The School of Civil Engineering, Higher Education College, The Laboratory of Agricultural Mechanization, The Central Library, Cleaning Services, Cafeteria and more. These centers and activities were selected to provide a cross-section within the University, but were also common to universities across Europe. This project was completed in July 1998.

From 1999 to 2001 the UPV began putting into practice its commitment to environmental management by drawing up an environmental policy for the university.

Ms. Marti described the implementation phases of the environmental management system as follows: information phase (holding meetings), initial environmental review (visits, interviews with relevant personnel), environmental policy (adopted policy from 1997), structure and responsibilities (establishment of Environmental Committee), identification of environmental aspects (based on results of the Initial Environmental Review), identification of legal and other requirements, environmental objectives and targets, training plan, documentation, document control, records, internal audit, management review (annual review carried out by the site management to ensure its continual suitability and effectiveness), action plans, and certification audit.

During the process the UPV encountered many problems and difficulties starting with the organization structure of the University, bureaucratic nature of the university personnel, decentralization and ever changing nature of University, with difficult monitoring ending.

At present the environmental management system has been certificated in the School of Civil Engineering and in the School of Industrial Engineering. The Green Office is assigned the task of coordinating the implementation of the environmental management system in UPV, with the final objective of gaining a single ISO 14001 certificate for the whole University.

Discussion on Session 6:

The first question was directed to staff's reaction to changes which the implementation of the program brought. Cristina assured everyone that "the staff is happy".

Spanish colleagues were curious about the maintenance of the program and were answered that each school (unit) maintains the program itself, and provides their own technical staff (doesn't pay specials), but the Green Office provides the training. However, there is a lack of staff still, the Green Office would need much more people to have better control on each unit.

According to Cristina, the answer for "What is the motivation of the staff/school?" is simply young people's enthusiasm and personnel's attitude.

Betty was curious about the way the Green Office is getting data for reports. There are specific procedures, some data are estimations, but what helps most is trying to follow each department's system, never trying to change it.

For universities in general – in this context - the main objective should be to have the skills, and go for certificates. One university chooses one way, another one the other... (Mr. Luciano Galán)

Ruud responded that the way in which you reach the certificates is important. Betty continued by saying that having a goal is important, but improving all the time and focusing on improving ourselves is what counts.

British colleagues talked about the positive effects of competition among universities – that universities have to be more conscious about the way they are doing things. Whichever route they take, it must be a defensible, rigorous approach, otherwise the results are not acceptable.