

HUMANE

Heads of University Management & Administration Network in Europe

SEMINAR

UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI PAVIA

Friday 15th to Saturday 16th October 2004

Governance

Abstracts

'The Role of the Registrar in the Italian University Management System: Truly a Manager or just an Executor?', Gaetano Serafino, Università Degli Studi di Pavia (IT)

The University of Pavia's Registrar will summarise the role of the Registrar in the Italian University System, including some basic historical background detailing the change in the legal status of the position in recent years. What emerges is a dramatic clash of cultures as the traditional University culture tries to keep pace with the rapidly changing needs of a modern competitive society. In essence, are Italian universities, their Chancellors and all of the various "players" involved (i.e. professors, students, Trade Unions, surrounding communities, etc.) truly ready to adapt to the style and needs of a really innovative management system? Based on the apparent lack of action and concrete results of the past 10 years, it seems not.

Indeed, while great hopes were pinned on the granting of autonomy to individual universities, including the faculty to freely choose their own Registrar and Senior Management staff, what we have seen in terms of results are either the installation of the same old-style managers of yore who in reality do no more than carry out orders and maintain status quo, or the inability of a truly innovative manager to implement serious change in the face of resistance on the part of the University itself and/or its various components.

In the end, what we are faced with is a situation where those afraid of change would like to stay still or even turn back, while those interested in change are being held back by a number of constraints, primary among them the serious ongoing economic crisis in Italy today. But could it be that this apparently chaotic and negative combination of events might lead to a new collaboration between the positive forces present in the Association of Italian University Chancellors (CRUI), the Association of

European University Chancellors (CRE), the Association of Italian University Senior Managers (CODAU) and HUMANE?

'The function of the *Secrétaire-Général* in France: Past, present and future of the profession of head of administration in French universities'

Jean-Pascal Bonhotal, Université Claude Bernard, Lyon1 (FR)

Monique Ronzeau, Université René Descartes-Paris V (FR)

Introduction

- some context issues : history and recent creation of French universities.

- head of administration : a government's representative within the institution or a representative appointed by the President ?

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I- Head of administration as an actor of French university management

1) A recent and imperfect status

- historic background from 1970 onwards
- some comparisons with others higher executive positions in the public sector.
- management of compulsory mobility → temptation of “spoil system”.

2) Decisive role in the implementation of the university policy

- a global competence settled by the law.
- head of administration : expert or manager ?

II- Governance : Precarious balance between “managers” elected and “political” administrators

1) Perfect tandem : President /Head of administration ?

- appearance of the notion of “presidential team”.
- co-management between President / head of administration : disputed competencies? a privileged relationship ?
- political role of Head of administration in the institution strategy.

2) A function that meets difficulties to be recognized

- universities changing, increasing self-government, evolution of the head of administration's tasks.
- training and improvement of abilities.
- a more professional recruitment process.

Conclusion

- important and crucial tasks at the heart of the institution, close to decision-making tasks, in university 's organization.
- highly variable and delicate tasks. To get official recognition as an executive position, the role of head of administration should be clearly understood in its professional and legitimate dimensions.

'Clerks, consultants, policemen or entrepreneurs: The role of the *Secretary and Registrar* in a UK University'

Steve Cannon, University of Aberdeen (UK)

The deadly dull issue of university administration?

Or

Clerk, Consultant, Policemen or Entrepreneur?

Or

the University Secretary IS confused?

OR

The role of the Secretary and Registrar in a UK University

In 1998 John Dearlove wrote

“When universities were well resourced elite institutions much internal university organisation involved little more than the limp administration of dull, steady state, routines. Tighter times in the 1980s encouraged the call for more efficient management and in the 1990s the issue of good university governance has been pushed to the fore. Efficient management and good governance are important but the nature of academic work and the professional sentiments of academic workers mean that management, bureaucracy and governance can only take universities so far in the organisation of teaching and research in turbulent times that call for change and entrepreneurship”

This session will explore the changing role of the Secretary and Registrar over recent years and will, with reference to some classic management texts, propose a series of checklists suggesting the qualities, both personal and professional, required of the modern registrar.

‘The role of the *Gerente* in Spanish universities. Is it possible to put order in chaos?’

Fernando Casani, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (ES)

The *gerente* is the person in charge of the management of the administrative and economic services of the university. He or she is appointed by the Rector in agreement with the Social Council. It is a full time position and the *gerente* cannot perform teaching activities. Law does not require any kind of academic degree to become a *gerente*, but most universities have established that the *gerente* has to have a university degree. He can be either a public official or work under an employment contract. Moreover, he can come from inside or outside the university.

In practice, the mission of the *gerente* is to balance different powers in order to achieve the institutional goals. The main political difficulty comes from the university governance structure, based on university autonomy. On one hand, the *gerente* has to manage, by the Rector’s mandate, issues that affect the interests of working people (teaching and administrative staff) who are the voting body to elect the Rector. On the other hand, agents who are not responsible for revenues take the decisions on expenditures.

Traditionally, administrative and economic services have been entrusted to vice-rectors with different denominations. It is not always an easy task to establish a division between administrative procedures, responsibility of management, and

academic decisions, responsibility of vice-rectors, especially when decisions on the allocation of resources are involved. Moreover, the difficulty of the *gerente's* mission increases when we take into account the fact that he can have responsibilities over other legal institutions (foundations, companies, etc.) that depend on university.

Is it possible to put order in chaos? The *gerente* does not control incomes or the allocation of expenses. He does not have power on teaching staff and he has to lead the administrative and services staff by mandate, without the possibility of incentives. He must establish management procedures that guarantee social accountability and increase administrative and financing efficiency. And he must do all these, without forgetting that the Rector cannot lose the support of the teaching, administrative and services staff that assures his continuity.

As a conclusion, we can say that the *gerente* is neither a general manager nor a simple executor as it is expressed in the title of another communication, but a network manager who has to balance the different interests of the agents, so that they can be included in the objectives established by the institution. The mission of the *gerente* is to manage the network, establishing equilibrium between the different forces, so that the activities flow to achieve the institutional goals, by means of negotiation and agreement.

'Austria. A Big Bang?'

Elisabeth Freismuth, Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien (AT)

Universities are fascinating organisations: Feudal in their appearance, utopian in their objectives, slow to change, lasting centuries and in times of crisis always essential for society.

So why did I choose the title "AUSTRIA. A BIG BANG"

The 1st January 2004 brought Austria a drastic change of paradigm, cultural change, if not shock. The universities became independent bodies subject to common law and therefore autonomous institutions - this means new chances, such as flexible budgets or curricula, but also risks, such as increases in budget, identification, political influence or market orientation. Universities have to develop more self-assurance, appear stronger in social policy, improve their image, extend international networks and found alumni organisations.

The following three main bodies form the autonomous universities: University council - strategy Senate - curricula Rector's office - entitled to delegate tasks and responsibilities concerning teaching to the teaching body and other tasks to the administration. Internal structures were formed autonomously without external influence. The administration was structured into flat hierarchies. By law university directors do not exist any more and the majority of the universities do not have this position any longer. The department heads of the administration, who are responsible for special areas report to the rector or up to four vice rectors. The rector's office is not solely responsible for strategic matters but also of operational tasks, functioning, in the absence of university directors as a resource for the

administration. Most universities do not have a single governing administration unit any more.

The presentation portrays the historical role of the university director, the current situation in Austria, the disintegration of the association of the university directors, potential risks and will identify trends in the structure of inner autonomy. What does this change imply for those who worked for many years in this area of conflict? What does this mean for future tasks (Outsourcing and merger of universities?). The lecture timetable of the University of Vienna from 1837 quotes the Rector Magnificus and the University director. The § 144 of the university act 2002 does not know these terms.

'Sweden. No Big Bang? Or did we miss it?'

John Fürstenbach, Royal University College of Music in Stockholm (SE)

Elisabeth Freismuth will give us insights in drastic real changes in the position of the Austrian Kanzlers, which followed changes in the legal system. The same legal changes came about in Sweden in two steps. In 1983 Heads of Administration were no longer members of the University Board and in 1993 that position was no more mentioned in the Higher Education Ordinance. The latter gave universities the possibility to abolish the position, which happened in just two out of ten institutions. Today a majority of the Swedish universities and university colleges maintain a position as Head of Administration.

In my presentation I will outline the historic background and try to identify factors that explain why there was no Big Bang in Sweden. Or did have one, without noticing? I will also look into some further developments of the role of senior administrators in Swedish institutions of higher education.