Towards the Responsive University

The Regional Role of Eastern Finland Universities

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The regional role of universities in the official statutes

- The new university act
  - No reference to regional tasks

- The annual agreements between the universities and the Ministry of Education
  - No specific reference to Eastern Finland (UoJ an exception)

- The regional engagement not strongly figured in the strategic planning processes
The Evaluation Context

- International trends
  - growing concern to regional challenges

- The national situation
  - EF universities have reached a nationally and internationally established position; it is time to evaluate also their regional role
  - the new university act gives universities greater freedom; is the regional role a part of the mission?
The Evaluation Context, cont.

- The establishment of the new polytechnics (AMK institutions) with very strong regional affiliations
  » universities have to react

- Changes in the structure of regional governance
  » regional councils, regional offices of central government departments, EU structural funds etc.
Regional Dimensions of the Universities

- Enrolment profiles

  EF universities’ share of the total enrolment from the EF provinces, development 1977 ⇒ 1995
  - Kuopio province: 25% ⇒ 53%
  - Kymi province: 24% ⇒ 52%
  - Mikkeli province: 24% ⇒ 45%
  - North Karelia province: 45% ⇒ 77%
  - Decrease in Helsinki (by a half)
  - Jyväskylä and Tampere almost the same (N-K!)
Regional Dimensions of the Universities

- Effects on the Regional Economy
  Direct effects (salaries, acquiring of commodities and services, student consumption etc.)
  - 341 M FIM (UoJ) + 207 M FIM (UoK) + 155 M FIM (LUT)
  - 1100 pers. (UoJ) + 1150 pers. (UoK) + 530 pers. (LUT)

  Indirect effects (influence of direct money flows on production, tax incomes, employment etc.)
  - 515 M FIM (UoJ) + 322 M FIM (UoK) + 233 M FIM (LUT)
  - 980 pers. (UoJ) + 660 pers. (UoK) + 480 pers. (LUT)
Regional Dimensions of the Universities

- Universities as regional dynamos
  - Technology villages, science parks, centres for expertise
  - Innovations and entrepreneurship
  - R & D
  - Education and consultancy

- Cultural and social benefits

- Way to internationalisation

- Putting the city on the map
Two models: Eastern Finland vs. Oulu

- The result from a long and hectic political debate in the 1960’s: three separate and independent universities
  - Each university has its own profile
  - Together they form almost a full-service university with 10% share of the Finnish university system (after 30 years)

- University of Oulu has also (after 40 years) a 10% share of the “Finnish University”
  - Same quantitative results with similar resources!
  - Differences in the regional impact?
General Remarks

- The benefits of the universities are highly appreciated by the local stakeholders. They are trade-marked goods for the cities.

- The influence is more local than regional, the effects decrease sharply as a function of distance (especially in rural areas)

- Deficiencies in co-operation between the regional agencies of different ministries
  - MinEdu has no regional dimension in HE
Recommendations for the Universities

- A need for an increased systematism in local and regional external income generation
  - it has been based more on individual activity than on systematic steering by the university
  - financial monitoring of interdisciplinary research groups and projects needs to be redefined
  - external funding should be more closely integrated as a part of the total funding

- A need for more documentary and result-oriented internal fund allocation procedures
Recommendations for the Universities

- Systematic contracting – covering both the use of the human resources and financial arrangements – between the departments and CTD’s should be established.

- Universities and polytechnics should be seen – more than it is done at present – as partners and regional collaborators.

- The university as a whole should share in the ownership of the regional mission.
Recommendations for Central Government.

- An interdepartmental (Min. of Education, Labour, Industry and Interior) review of the role of HE (both universities and polytechnics) in regional development across the whole of Finland should be undertaken.

- It should be considered whether indicators based on regional impact of the institutions could be developed and added to the set of performance criteria (the “third role” of the universities).
The Regional Role as a Part of the Mission of the University

- Do the universities have a dilemma in balancing the endeavours towards
  - a national and international reputation and success
  - regional initiative and development work?

- In order to benefit its region best the university has to fulfil national and international criteria of a high standard in its research and teaching

- Think globally, act locally! (P. Barnevik, ABB)