

2nd IAU Global Meeting of Associations – IAU/CPU

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“The Role of Associations in Enhancing Quality of Higher Education at Home and Abroad”

General Report

by

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The Meeting

- 60 participants
- 35 Associations represented (22 national, 8 regional, 5 international)
- Very rich & informative presentations
- 1.5 days, too short?
- Areas covered – too wide?
- Enough room for discussions?

Expectations

- Providing forum for meeting each other, sharing information, learning from each other, emulating good practices, avoiding pitfalls
- Identify shared values
- Identify areas/initiatives for collaboration
- Understand common & different roles of associations at national, regional & international level
- 2009 meeting? What topic? Where?

Why Should Associations be Concerned With Quality?

Members are directly concerned and often need guidance

- Institutions adversely affected by increasing enrolment, diminishing resources
- Dramatic expansion of CBHE, including DE. Quality provided across borders not always the same as that at home.
- Dramatic increase in private (often for-profit) HE
- Accountability to governments which provide funding
- Assurance to students and employers
- Lack of expertise in institutions

Also:

- Competitiveness of institutions and regions because of globalization
- Protect students from rogue providers/degree mills
- Limit brain drain, especially from developing countries

Typology of Quality

- Quality **Enhancement** (QE) (to be promoted, continuous process)
- Quality **Culture** (QC) (to establish, aim for, objective to achieve)
- Quality **Assurance** (QA) (can be internal or external). Also **Accreditation** (usually external)

Types of Associations

- Association of Institutions
- Association of Associations
- Associations of Institutions & Associations (e.g. IAU)
- Associations of Presidents/Rectors/VCs
- National, Regional, International

Issues Raised, Comments Made

- No one single definition of quality
- Different practices leading to same quality outcomes
- QE/QA refer to institutions but also programmes or disciplines. Approach may be different
- QA important for mobility of students inter-institution, inter-region & international
- QE requires resources – financial & human
- Establishing quality takes time – does not take place overnight
- Avoid bureaucratization
- Many actors & stakeholders in QE & QA – apart from institutions and associations

Role of Associations Ref Quality (1)

- Occupying a space between institutions and government
- Advocacy, constituency representation & vigilance
- Promote a platform for a unified voice & secure a favourable position for HE
- Encourage cooperation, networking & information exchange, share best practices
- Promote QE & QC – no direct involvement in quality assurance of institutions
- Associations indirectly ensure quality by setting minimum standards for membership admission – but QA is not their territory (AUCC Canada is an exception)

Role of Associations Ref Quality (2)

- Enhance/develop institutional QA systems
- Build up national/regional expertise in QE & QA
- Create awareness of QE & QA resources (e.g. UNESCO/OECD guidelines, Associations' Statement)
- Serve as help desks
- Provide training in QE & QA for staff in institutions
- Capacity development for national QA systems where this is lacking (small countries).
- “Act first to prevent worst” Herb Kells. Do not leave QA to govt or market – help to develop it within institutions & at national level
- Promote excellence, including developing quality leadership
- Articulate principles, codes, guidelines