IS DEVELOPING ELITE UNIVERSITIES A TOP PRIORITY AGENDA FOR HE IN ROMANIA?

Paul Șerban AGACHI, Camelia MORARU, Romana CUCURUZAN,
Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj Napoca, www.ubbcluj.ro

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Key questions

Policy agenda towards promoting excellence in research and elite or excellence universities

- Is developing elite or excellence universities a top priority agenda for Romania?
- Measures that have been taken in order to sustain this development at governmental, regional and institutional level?
- How do we represent at national level the concept of WCU and the possibility to sustain a WCU at national level?
Romanian HE context

IMPORTANT CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS:

a. in the funding system
   - increasing requirements and diminishing financial allocations per capita
   - increase in HE investments allocations – seven times increase in 2007 in comparison with 2001
   - increase of the research funds, four times in 2008 compared with 2004)

b. high increase in the number of public and private new HE institutions

c. diversification of the educational offer

d. increase in accessibility for other than traditional target groups

e. massification

How to achieve high standards of performance while promoting equal opportunities and increased accessibility at all levels of studies?

WCU - Romania Case

Romanian HE context

- Debates and revision of institutional mission
- Redefinition of the university community understanding

Questions to be answered

What type of relevance do we want to attain? At what level?

What type of community we should primarily served?
Evolution in the HE institutions missions

- At international level
  - Challenges and multipurpose mission – but still fully encompassed the triad – teaching, research, public service (Scott, 2006; Altbach et al, 2009)
  - Internationalization as support mission

“The mission of a university should constantly describe the way in which university, as a whole, with its own defined and distinct identity, is seeking and formulating answers to the challenges that are constantly rocking the humanity (Scott, 2006)”

Evolution in the HE institutions missions

- Developing cutting edge research, internationally relevant
- Sense or wish of belonging to a special class of universities
- Universities that are shaping the humanity destiny in terms of future developments

World Class University Concept
Evolution in the HE institutions missions

- At national level

  - a difficult process of reshaping the structure and functions of post communist HE institutions
  - the education and research were defined by the relevant public HE institutions as core missions
  - in the last decade – focus on research and on defining a funding system for HE institutions based also on research results / performance

Missions of Romanian universities

The selection of the universities that have been taken into consideration was based on two criteria:

1. Institutional relevance at national level;
2. Geographical distribution of the institution
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Core values of the mission statement</th>
<th>Main focus of the mission statement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babeș-Bolyai Cluj Napoca</td>
<td>systematic and innovative knowledge</td>
<td>Focus on the HE triad: Innovative research, teaching and support services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>multidisciplinarity</td>
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<td>permanent and innovative learning culture</td>
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<td>personal and moral development</td>
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<td>active attitude and participation</td>
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<td>integration in diversity and for globalization, in terms of respecting the identity and reciprocity</td>
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<td>Tehnicali Cluj Napoca</td>
<td>focus on educational mission</td>
<td>Creativity and innovation in teaching, research and training</td>
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<td>training provided for larger target groups</td>
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<td>high quality standards in research</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Al. I. Cuza” Iași</td>
<td>focus on students’ development</td>
<td>Commitment to excellence in teaching, learning and research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>excellence in research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>innovation in teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gheorghe Asachi Iași</td>
<td>teaching and research, and dissemination of results</td>
<td>Focus on teaching, including life long learning programmes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>life long learning for larger target groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transilvania Brăşov</td>
<td>focus on teaching, research and support services for society</td>
<td>Multipurpose mission, focus on the HE triad: teaching, research and support services</td>
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<td>alignment to the Romania as well as European developments in HE</td>
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<tr>
<td>din Craiova</td>
<td>continuous improvement of teaching, research and training programs</td>
<td>Focus on the HE triad: teaching, research and support services</td>
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<td>development and diffusion of culture and civilization’s values</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contribution to the development of the civil society</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politehnica București</td>
<td>focus on training in science and technology</td>
<td>High standards in research in S&amp;T</td>
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<td>preservation of the Polytechnic School prestige in research</td>
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<tr>
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<td>support services for local community and for the society, as a whole</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>București</td>
<td>contribution to the national and international science and knowledge</td>
<td>Society’s development through knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>preservation and diffusion of culture and civilization’s values</td>
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<td>support for academic freedom, critical thinking, renewal and development of knowledge</td>
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<td>training and development pf the skilled and highly skilled staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>de Vest Timișoara</td>
<td>training for academic and non-academic staff</td>
<td>Focus on the HE triad: teaching, research and support services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>development and diffusion of culture and civilization’s values, with respect to multiculturalism and pluralism</td>
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<tr>
<td>de Științe Agricole și Medicinal Timișoara</td>
<td>contribution to rural and agricultural development in Romania</td>
<td>Commitment to teaching, research and consultancy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>high standards in training and development of students and academic staff</td>
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Steps towards excellence universities

- Differentiation of HE institutions based on performance and excellence - successful introduction of quality indicators in the university financing mechanism - quality criteria have been constantly developed (2008 -30% of the total budgetary financing amount)

- The first set of quality indicators (IC1 – IC4) proposed (Nica, 1998, 2000) reflects the quality of academic staff (IC1), the quality and impact of the scientific research (IC2), the infrastructure quality (IC3) and the quality of the academic management (IC4)

- In 2008 the number of the indicators used became sixteen (IC1-IC16)

IC6 Indicator

- Dedicated to measure the level of performance in scientific research.
- The aggregated indicator is based on 10 sub-indicators:
  - number of grants and contracts;
  - value of grants and contracts;
  - number of scientific papers (ISI, IDB, national);
  - number of PhD theses finalized;
  - number of books edited in national and international publishing houses;
  - number of patents obtained;
  - number of centers of scientific research;
  - representation in Academies;
  - number of national prizes in science, technology and arts.

- Percentage of this indicator in the total quality based financing - 7% out of 30%
Figure 1. IC6 Score – 2007 - 2008

Figure 2. IC6 – Academic Year 2008 - 2009
Figure 3 – 3.1. Score – ISI Articles 2007 - 2008

Figure 3 – 3.1. Score – ISI Articles 2008 - 2009
The ranking proposed in 2005 takes into consideration 5 indicators and 21 sub-indicators. Out of the 5 indicators, 4 were taken from the Shanghai Ranking, the supplementary indicator added in Romanian classification being the institutional prestige – reputation.

CNCSIS (National Council for Research in HE) - ranking of the universities from the point of view of their scientific research activity, but the public debates around it were so vivid that the possible continuation of the initiative was not perceived as a desirable outcome.

CNFIS (National Council for Financing HE) ranks universities according to own concept of quality.
Latest developments

At the governmental level - three major initiatives were launched:

1. The Romanian National Research Strategy for 2007 – 2013 - goals: production of knowledge and international visibility; economic development through innovation. The amount allocated for RDI increased from 0.18% of GDP in 2004 to 0.79% in 2008 as a result.

2. UEFISCSU, CNCSIS and CNFIS launched five strategic projects, aiming to develop important multilevel strategic mechanisms that should support institutional excellence.

3. Two legislative proposals were launched for the new law of education, proposals that sustain different perspectives on the approach of the excellence in higher education system but approach the issue as a part that should appear in the fundamental educational law.

Projects Quality & Leadership and Doctoral studies in schools of excellence propose two types of rankings:

i. general to classify universities in several categories – excellence/world class, national relevance, local relevance; (Q&L)

ii. on scientific research - field based (35 fields) classifying universities in each field as international relevance/national relevance (DSSE)

and programs of excellence
Conclusions

- Developing excellence universities - major debate - a consensus at governmental level – a major reform at the HE level
- Important steps at formal and informal level - support mechanisms for excellence
- Causal relation between the amount of national and international funds attracted and the research results produced

Main drawbacks in reaching the excellence status (becoming a WCU):

- The budget dimension;
- The conditions of developing high level researches
- Institutional level – commitment to become an excellence university
- Political commitment and funding mechanisms
THANK YOU!

Camelia MORARU
University Babeș-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca

www.ubbcluj.ro
cameliamoraru@staff.ubbcluj.ro

WCU - Romania Case