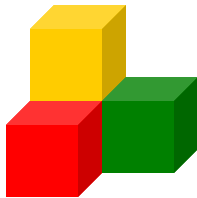


ISSN-1655-8545

Journal of
Philippine
Higher Education
Quality Assurance

A graphic consisting of three 3D cubes. One yellow cube is positioned at the top left, a red cube is at the bottom left, and a green cube is at the bottom right. They are arranged in a staggered, overlapping pattern.

Volume 1 Number 1 January 2003

A Publication of the
ACCREDITING AGENCY OF CHARTERED COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC. (AACUP)

Editorial Board:

Editor-in-Chief: **Roberto N. Padua, Ph. D.**
Mindanao Polytechnic State College

Associate Editors:

Visayas: **Angel C. Alcala, Ph. D.**
Silliman University

Mindanao: **Linda Burton, Ph. D.**
Xavier University

Managing Editor: **Manuel T. Corpus, Ph. D.**
Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges
And Universities in the Philippines, Inc.

Editorial Policies:

1. The Journal of Philippine Higher Education Quality Assurance is an annual publication of the Accrediting Agency for Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP). It accepts articles and essays on the theory, practice and applications of Quality Assurance techniques.
2. All articles submitted for publication are subjected to an external refereeing system. The observations and recommendations of the external referees will be the basis for the acceptance and rejection of an article.
3. The standard journal format is adopted. Authors are requested to submit three (3) copies of the article to:

Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges
and Universities in the Philippines, Inc.
812 Future Point Plaza I
112 Panay Avenue, South Triangle,
Quezon City

4. Only accepted articles will be acknowledged by the Editorial Board

Subscription Rate: PhP150.00 per issue

ISSN-1655-8545

Journal of
Philippine Higher Education
Quality Assurance
(Vol. 1, No. 1, 2003)

Author	Article	Page
M. T. Corpus	Historical Perspective of the Philippine Quality Assurance System	1
R. N. Padua	International Higher Education Quality Assurance	8
B. Taylor	Defining the Location of Responsibility for Institutional Quality Assurance	16
D. Mole and H. K. Wong	Balancing Autonomy and Accountability in Higher Education: Quality Audit at City University of Hong Kong	31
M. T. Corpus	Redesigning the Philippine Quality Assurance System	45
W. Indhapanya	The Thai Standards for Quality Assurance	55
A. Stella and A. Gnanam	Unit of Assessment for Accreditation	64
R. N. Padua	A Quality-Based Normative Financing for State Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines	71
A. I. Vroeijsstijn	Towards a Quality Model for Higher Education	78

Historical Perspectives of the Philippine Quality Assurance System

Manuel T. Corpus
Executive Director
Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges
and Universities in the Philippines (AACCU)

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the universal issue of autonomy versus/cum accountability in quality, or put in another form, the issue of quality assurance; a rivalry or collaboration between the government and non-government mechanisms/institutions. The Philippine experience in quality assurance (the term used here is “accreditation”) provides the specific country case for study.

Keywords and Phrases: quality assurance, accountability, autonomy.

1.0 Introduction

As is the case in most countries, the Philippines is experiencing the phenomenon of mass higher education with the concomitant rise of universities and colleges (public and private) offering a greater diversity of programs, and with varying capacity to deliver teaching and learning services. Unfortunately, as several studies on Philippine education have revealed, the expansion of educational opportunities is inversely matched by a deteriorating quality of education in the country. This

situation has led to an increasing interest in the assessment of the academic program offerings, the manpower and financial capability of educational institutions, and the efficiency of their delivery systems - through a system of accreditation.

Accreditation is seen as a system of evaluation based on the standards of an accrediting agency. It is a means of assuring and improving the quality of education. Its focus is the assessment of programs by external accrediting bodies using peer reviewers.

Unlike the grant of recognition

to operate a school or offer a curricular program which is done by government, accreditation is private and voluntary using standards above the minimum requirements set by government. The private and voluntary nature of accreditation is zealously protected by the accrediting agencies. For indeed, accreditation originated as a purely private initiative.

2.0 The Rise of Accrediting Agencies

Accreditation officially started 46 years ago in 1957 with the establishment of the first accrediting agency, the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities. The general condition of the educational system then must have influenced the birth of an agency dedicated to the promotion of quality in the education sector. It was a time characterized by structural reorganization and the rapid growth of privately-owned educational institutions many of which were uncomplimentarily branded as “diploma mills”.

Two (2) other accrediting agencies followed after almost two (2) decades. The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities-Commission on

Accreditation (PACU-COA) emerged in 1973 followed closely by the Association of Christian Schools and Colleges-Accrediting Agency (ACSC-AA) in 1976.

These three (3) agencies (PAASCU, PACU-COA and ACSC-AA) organized themselves into the Federation of Accrediting Agencies in the Philippines (FAAP) in 1977.

At a much later time (1987), accreditation got initiated in the public sector, among state universities and colleges. Parenthetically, this period was also characterized by the alarming “proliferation” of new state universities and colleges with questionable quality of their academic capability.

The Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) soon sponsored the creation of an independent body, the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP), which was formally organized in 1989 although it had seen its organizational stage two (2) years earlier. In 1995 AACCUP became the fourth member of the FAAP.

Higher education institutions can choose any of the four (4) accrediting agencies for the accreditation of their programs. In practice, however, the agencies cater mostly to their respective clientele, i.e., PAASCU, for the Catholic schools; the ACSC-AA, the Protestant schools; the PACU-COA, the non-sectarian; and the AACCUP, the state colleges and universities. Given the long exposure to accreditation and the availability of accreditation services practically to all types of schools in the country, we would expect a record number of accredited programs to date. Unfortunately, only 15% of the higher education institutions, public and private, have taken advantage of the program of accreditation offered by the accrediting bodies.

It must be noted that accreditation in the Philippines started as a purely private and voluntary undertaking. The framers of the accreditation program stress that the concept thrives on self-regulation that focuses on the internally-driven private initiative to improve the quality of education. No government participation had been conceived to be necessary. The private and voluntary nature of accreditation has been preserved to this day. The accrediting agencies

enjoy autonomy with very minimal accountability to the government.

3.0 Recent Developments and Government Participation

Against the backdrop of a private and voluntary accreditation are developments leading to the necessity of government involvement in a supposedly pure private concern.

While claiming that accreditation is a private undertaking, the accrediting agencies through their federation considered it necessary to gain official recognition and support from government which they have effectively sought and gained. This development diluted the hitherto private nature of accreditation, and signaled the beginning of government involvement albeit the government contributed more in the form of authority to the FAAP, and benefits to institutions with accredited programs, than what it demanded as the accountability from the accrediting agencies. In 1979, two (2) years after its organization, the FAAP was granted official recognition by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECS) as “the body that will coordinate with MECS on policies, programs, standards and

procedures on accreditation...”

In 1984, FAAP was recognized as the official “certifying” agency for the programs accredited by the accrediting bodies. This in effect stripped the accrediting agencies of their natural role to certify the status of programs that they have been authorized to accredit. At best, the certification by FAAP was a redundant exercise taking over or duplicating the certification function from the accountable accrediting agencies.

The FAAP was further empowered in 1987 when the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECS) recognized it as the agency that would certify, pursuant to its standards, the accredited status of schools and programs which desire to avail themselves of benefits (mostly in the form of limited administrative and academic deregulation) extended by the government to accredited programs. This power was extended to FAAP notwithstanding the fact that it is not an accrediting agency.

Meanwhile, the Higher Education Act of 1994 detached higher education from the Department of Education, Culture

and Sports, and created the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) clothing it with authority including the power to monitor and evaluate the performance of programs and institutions for appropriate incentives or sanctions, e.g., the withdrawal of accreditation. The law specifically required the CHED to provide incentives for accredited programs.

The Commission on Higher Education, the new government agency responsible for higher education, re-affirmed government recognition of the FAAP in 1995 with the authority to certify the accredited status of programs granted by the accrediting agencies in accordance with its own standards, although this time, it required that the standards should be “accepted by CHED.”

Accreditation was accorded a well-deserved attention in year 2000 when the Presidential Commission on Educational Reform (PCER), a body created to recommend budget-feasible programs which included among its only nine (9) agenda for reform, a proposal affecting quality assurance. The PCER, while respecting the autonomy of the four (4) accrediting agencies,

recommended the adoption of common standards. More importantly, it suggested that the CHED take a more active role in the oversight of the accrediting system. Very specifically, it recommended that CHED be responsible in certifying the accreditation status granted by the accrediting agencies, thus, proposing to withdraw this authority from FAAP.

4.0 Scheme for Autonomy Cum Accountability

Accreditation originated 46 years ago as a purely private initiative designed to promote self-improvement of private institutions. It was a form of self-regulation. As conceived, there was no thought of government participation.

This private “culture” has, however, been overtaken by events that justified the need for the government. The accrediting agencies themselves actually sought the recognition and support of government.

The recent law on higher education mandated the Commission (CHED) it created to oversee educational programs to assure their quality, even as it specifically required the provision

of incentives for voluntary accreditation. The latest body to study Philippine education, the PCER, recommended a more active role of government.

The accrediting agencies would like to hold on to the autonomy they have traditionally enjoyed, but with the entry of government into the picture of the accreditation system armed with stick and carrot, there is a need for a scheme of defining the roles of the accrediting agencies vis-à-vis the government.

The scheme to provide a system of autonomy with accountability needs a clear definition of the roles of the key players in accreditation. The accrediting agencies will: 1) adopt a program of accreditation services with their own standards, processes and protocols; 2) conduct assessment of programs; 3) grant and certify accreditation status; and 4) be accountable for the quality of their delivery systems as well as their finances. The government’s role will be to: 1) give official recognition to accrediting agencies after qualifying based on its standards; 2) monitor the operation of accrediting agencies; 3) grant incentives to accredited programs and institutions; 4) provide

financial subsidy to recognized accrediting agencies; and 5) use accreditation reports in the oversight of education, and in making decisions where quality is a critical consideration.

As an alternative scheme, this role of government may be delegated to an independent body clothed with authority to accredit accrediting agencies.

The issue of how to preserve autonomy of the accrediting agencies, while at the same time be able to define their accountability is a live issue in the Philippines. Schemes for autonomy cum accountability are being worked out with the assistance of local and foreign experts, and probably learning from foreign models. Nevertheless, it is still unresolved which actually motivated the writing of this paper in search of alternative answers.

References:

Harman, G. (1996). "Quality Assurance for Higher Education" Developing and Managing Quality Assurance for Higher Education Systems and Institution in Asia and Pacific. Bangkok: UNESCO-PROAP.

HKCAA (1995). Institutional

Review Report: Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation.

Indhapanya, W. (2000). "Standard for Quality Assurance: A Case of Thai Higher Education." International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Bangkok, Thailand.

Kogan, M., I. Moses, and E. El-Khawas (1995). Staffing Higher Education: Meeting New Challenges. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Lee, H.C. (2000). "Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Standards and Mechanisms in Korea." International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Bangkok, Thailand, November 2000.

Tavakol, M. (1999). "Higher Education Status in Iran." Research and Planning in Higher Education, 6(4), 1-26."

Vroeijentijin, A.I. (1994). "External Quality Assessment, Servant of Two Masters? The Netherlands Perspectives." in A. Craft (ed.). Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Proceedings of an International Conference.

London: The Falmer Press.

Webb, C. (2000). "Mechanisms for Quality Assurance." International

Conference on Quality in Higher Education in Bangkok, Thailand, November 2000.

International Higher Education Quality Assurance Practices: Situating the Philippine System

Roberto N. Padua
Former CHED Commissioner
Vice-President for Research and International Affairs
Mindanao Polytechnic State College

ABSTRACT

The higher education quality assurance practices of selected countries are reviewed and compared with the Philippine system. The purpose of this review is to determine the feasibility of adopting some of the best practices in quality assurance in higher education worldwide in the Philippine context.

Keywords and Phrases: quality assurance, internal audit, units of assessment

1.0 Introduction

The Philippine higher education system is one of the most extensive in the world. It is composed of one hundred and ten (110) public chartered colleges and universities and one thousand two hundred eighty (1,280) private colleges and universities that serve a college-age population of a little more than two million students. The private higher education institutions are classified as either sectarian (religious) or non-sectarian, the latter often belonging to the category of family-owned corporations. Higher education is, therefore, mainly dominated by the private schools which account for more than eighty percent (80%) of

the entire sector.

The higher education system operates in a capitalist, free-economy environment and as such, is subject to the factors that influence the country's market economy. The private schools compete among themselves and with the state-funded colleges and universities for enrollment as well as for government subsidy. Ideally, the presence of a large number of economic players in higher education would have been sufficient to ensure that individual colleges and universities vie for quality. The interplay of market forces would have driven the quality of products and services in higher education to a stable and acceptable market

equilibrium.

Such is not the case in the Philippine setting. The interaction of cultural patterns and state intervention in higher education has posed a tremendous challenge in quality assurance. The typical Filipino family values the college diploma so dearly, regardless of where this diploma is obtained, to the point that cheap, substandard schools are deriving handsome economic returns by taking advantage of the situation. This cultural reality is a factor that cannot be ignored when installing a dependable quality assurance system in the country.

The other factor that poses a serious threat to quality assurance is the perceived competition of the state with the private sector through the former's annual subsidy to state higher education institutions. For FY 2002, for instance, the subsidy given to state colleges and universities amounted to a staggering PhP 12.6B, with most of it going to the University of the Philippines System. The inequitable distribution of this huge government resources to the 110 state colleges and universities coupled with the fact that 80% of this defray the cost of salaries and wages, predictably results in less

than acceptable quality outputs among state-funded schools. With this perception, the private schools are reluctant to invest on quality when even the state does not spend properly for quality education.

While the Philippine higher education system grapples with quality, embarking on program accreditation as a means to achieve quality, the rest of the world continuously improve their respective practices to attain quality education. The issue of quality assurance in higher education is not a new one. It began as a concept in industries as quality control gradually evolving into more refined methodologies on process control and finally into quality assurance. In the Philippines, the adoption of quality assurance began in 1957 when accreditation of higher education programs was initiated by an independent body. Accreditation of programs was conceived of as a voluntary submission of institutions to the tenets and principles of quality.

2.0 Review of Quality Assurance Practices In Selected Countries

A perusal of the current practices of national accrediting agencies of different countries

shows a great deal of variations. They vary in structure, function and nature. Some of them are established and maintained by the State, while others are independent and private agencies and/or institutional consortia. Accreditation is undertaken on a two-point scale (accredited or non-accredited) or may be carried out on an elaborate continuum of scale and characterized by levels. Many of the accreditation systems are confined to assessments of teaching and learning, research activities or both. There also appears to be variations in the methodologies adopted by the different higher education systems in the world. There are reasons for these diversity in accreditation practices and, therefore, one cannot identify a best practice. Nevertheless, for a given context and a reference, it is possible to identify a workable model that will be suitable for the national context.

Units of Assessment

Some countries use the “program” as a unit of measure while others use the “institution” as a unit of assessing quality. In Mauritius, for instance, where there is only one university, the programs offer the most reasonable unit of assessing quality. However, in

India with 245 universities and 11,000 colleges and more than 8 million students, the “program” becomes an unreasonable unit of measure. In a country like the United Kingdom with fewer large institutions, the program was made the unit of measurement. The size of the country’s educational system often dictates the choice of units of assessment. The normal assessment cycle of 4 to 5 years precludes the possibility of using the “program” as a unit of assessment when the system involves thousands of colleges and universities. Program assessment, for instance, is possible in countries like Hongkong and New Zealand where there are very few universities and colleges to be covered, but can be impractical in countries like the United States of America, Russia and India.

In Korea, a new type of University Accreditation has been started since 1994 executed by the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE). The unit of assessment is the University or the institution itself covering six (6) areas: education, research, social service, faculty and instruction, facilities and equipment, and finance and management. Once accredited, the effect holds for a seven (7) year cycle and is widely publicized. Accreditation results

are used in various ways: for supporting universities financially such as subsidy, scholarships or research, for providing universities with more autonomy and for charting the universities' growth and development.

In Iran, the unit of measurement is the institution. The country's higher education system is roughly classified into two: medical university systems (MUS) and non-medical university system (NMUS). For the former case, institutional accreditation is the same as program accreditation. It is only in the latter case where the full difference between institutional and program accreditation can be observed. Higher education in Iran is under tight state control.

In the Philippines, despite the huge number of colleges and universities and the extensiveness of its higher education system, the current practice remains that of "program" level accreditation. Since 1957 to date, only a little over 21% of all higher education programs have had the benefit of an accreditation visit in the private sector and only 65% in the public sector.

Nature and Structure

Accreditation in some countries is done on voluntary basis while in others, the same is prescribed by the State. Iran, and of late, Thailand, have State-prescribed accreditation while countries like the Philippines, United States and UK have voluntary accreditation. Notably, when accrediting bodies begin to demand for government recognition and government support, the accreditation process will, sooner or later, lose its voluntary character.

In almost all countries, quality assurance mechanisms provide for Internal Quality Audit (IQA) by external references. Countries that have long history in higher education, like the United States and the United Kingdom, have strong IQA components. Self-regulation through internal quality control mechanisms are imposed by the universities unto themselves.

In the methodologies adopted by countries like Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, strong emphasis is placed on independent external quality assessors. Despite the extensiveness of the Philippine higher education system, for instance, a major difficulty is encountered in finding the

independent external experts who will audit the quality of the program offerings of institutions. The system's current practice of training a pool of accreditors from their own ranks is a barrier to obtaining an international recognition of supposedly quality-certified programs.

In the United Kingdom, the institutional QA methodology employs academic audits, institution-wide self-analysis, staff appraisal, teaching observations, external examination and monitoring of outcomes. The institutional QA is followed by a national QA where the Quality Assurance Agency conducts institutional review and external audits of subjects. The recent move of UK higher education system to establish a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) was in response to a felt need for an independent external quality team not affiliated with any of the universities in the country.

The ultimate mission of quality assurance is: "to promote public confidence that the quality of provision and standards of awards in higher education are being safeguarded and enhanced" (Webb, 2000). Public confidence is enhanced and promoted if the

clients know that the assessment of quality is made objectively. For this reason, accreditation systems in different countries are constantly being improved in the direction of ensuring external, unbiased and fair assessment. Accreditation, as a process, would fail to generate public confidence if the pool of accreditors or experts came from the same ranks of universities to be evaluated.

The concept of internal quality improvement (IQ) and accountability (A) are clearly stated in the quality assurance documents of Iran. Internal quality improvement refers to the set of activities done at the institutional level to ensure that quality standards are being observed. Accountability refers to the responsibility of the institution to account for the government resource spent on it and this is done through an External Quality Assurance (EQA) mechanism.

Function

Accreditation results are used in various ways in the countries reviewed. Results are used, generally, in three (3) distinct ways: a) as a basis for government subsidy,

scholarships and grants, b) as a basis for informing the public about the quality of education offered by the colleges and universities, and c) as a basis for further improving the educational services of the university.

In the United Kingdom, all three functions of accreditation are observed, but perhaps, with great emphasis on the first. Since the quality assurance system of that country is well in place, reliance on accreditation results is high.

In Iran, public subsidy to higher education institutions is slowly being linked to accreditation. The country has just started with its internal quality improvement for the Medical University System and will soon embark on its External Quality Assurance. Thus, no link has yet been established to connect quality with public subsidy. QA results are therefore utilized mainly for self-improvement of the universities.

Thailand's system of voluntary accreditation in the past has precluded the use of accreditation in determining state subsidy to colleges and universities. With the transfer of

accreditation function from the Ministry of University Affairs to the Ministry of Education, it is expected that accreditation results will be used more extensively by the higher education system of Thailand.

The Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) utilizes accreditation results in all three ways. Efforts are currently being directed towards refining the assessment procedures and mechanisms to make public subsidy more responsive to quality improvements.

In the Philippines, accreditation results are generally used for the grant of more autonomy to colleges and universities. Public subsidy is not linked with accreditation results but to other quality indicators. The Philippine Commission on Higher Education recently published a list of universities granted with "autonomous status" in recognition of their accreditation status.

Countries that have used well established quality assurance systems, generally, utilize accreditation results as basis for public subsidy. Corollary to this, countries which put lesser reliance

on their quality assurance systems use accreditation results in ways that do not involve government funding.

3.0 Summary

Areas of Comparison	United Kingdom	Iran	Korea	India	Thailand	Philippines
1. Unit of Assessment	▪ Program / Discipline	▪ Institutional	▪ Institutional	▪ Institutional	▪ Program	▪ Program
2. Size of higher education system (no. of colleges and universities)	▪ Small	▪ Relatively large	▪ Relatively large	▪ Very large	▪ Large	▪ Large
3. Nature and Structure	▪ Non-voluntary ▪ Internal and external quality audits	▪ Non-voluntary ▪ Internal and external quality audits	▪ Non-voluntary ▪ Internal and external quality audits	▪ Voluntary ▪ Internal and strong external refereeing system	▪ Voluntary ▪ External	▪ Voluntary ▪ Internal system with external audits by accrediting agencies
4. Function	▪ Basis for public subsidy ▪ Basis for grant of autonomy ▪ Basis for institutional improvement	▪ Basis for institutional improvement	▪ Basis for public subsidy ▪ Basis for grant of autonomy ▪ Basis for public institutional improvement	▪ Basis for institutional improvement ▪ Basis for public subsidy	▪ Basis for institutional improvement	▪ Basis for grant of autonomy ▪ Basis for institutional improvement

Table 1. Quality Assurance Practices in Selected Countries

The current quality assurance practices in selected countries are summarized in the table above.

4.0 Recommendations

On the basis of the experiences of other countries, it seems feasible to try out a combination of program and

institutional accreditation in the Philippines, given its huge higher education system. The Commission on Higher Education needs to take a stronger hand in the accreditation process and may consider shifting from pure voluntary accreditation to prescribed accreditation, if public subsidy is to be linked with accreditation results. A more reliable External Quality Assurance

System needs to be put in place in the country's higher education setting.

References:

Barnette, R. (1995). Improving Higher Education (Total Quality Care). London: SRHE.

Bazargan, A. (2000). "Internal Evaluation as an Approach to Revitalize University Systems: The Case of the Islamic Republic of Iran." *Higher Education Policy*, 13, 173-180.

Bazargan, A. (1995). "Internal Evaluation and Its Application in Continuing Quality Improvement.

Research and Planning in Higher Education," 3(374); 1-22 (in Persian).

Brower, M.J. (1994). "Implementing TQM with Self-Directed Teams." in H. Costin (ed.), Readings in Total Quality Management, pp. 403-420. Fort Worth, TX: Dryden Press.

Dhanarajan, G., and A. Hope (1992). "Quality Assurance at the Open Learning Institute" in A. Craft (ed.), Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Proceedings of an International Conference, Hong Kong 1991, pp. 207-220. London: Falmer.

Defining the Location of Responsibility for Institutional Quality Assurance

Bruce Taylor
Project Coordinator, Quality Improvement Team
Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is on defining the location within an institution where the responsibilities of internal quality assurance are lodged. The paper shows three “pure” alternative arrangements for locating these responsibilities, and notes their potential advantages and disadvantages. This is followed by a discussion of arrangements at one institution, the Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong (OLI), which in the past year has undertaken a review of its quality assurance procedures including the question of defining the focus of responsibility for quality.

Keywords and phrases: location of responsibility, quality assurance, Quality Improvement Team (QIT)

1.0 Introduction

As higher education institutions in many parts of the world face rising costs, shrinking resources, and increasing demands for accountability, their faculty and administrators are giving new attention to the quality of the services their institutions offer. Hand in hand with this enlarged focus on quality comes a new attention to quality assurance *procedures*: the various systems through which institutions and their staff assess themselves and their instructional and research activities, with an eye toward maintaining and

improving quality. Reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures, and of the appropriateness of their objectives, have become commonplace in universities. In several countries, procedures for “academic audit” have been introduced, in which an external body (often a national-level regulatory or accrediting agency) reviews an institution’s quality assurance procedures and reports on their appropriateness and adequacy.

These quality systems do not appear from thin air; nor can they be entirely self-regulating

even in an institution where all staff have a demonstrated commitment to quality. Some person or body, either internal or external to the institution, must take the initiative to conceive of and develop a system of quality assurance procedures that is best suited to the context of the institution. Once adopted and implemented, some person or body must monitor the system's functioning: both in the narrow sense of monitoring compliance with the system's procedural requirements (producing reports, etc.) and in the broad sense of determining whether the system provides benefits commensurate with the time and resources invested in its operation. Some person or body must also address the question of follow-up: do academic units, and individual teachers use the outcomes from the system to improve their own performance - or are the various reports given a cursory review and then set aside? Finally, some person or body must review the structure of the quality system itself and propose modifications when needed. In this paper, these various responsibilities are grouped together under the heading "responsibility for institutional quality assurance".

2.0 Alternatives for Locating

Responsibility for Quality

Within the organizational structure of a typical higher education institution, there are a number of possible places to lodge responsibility for academic quality assurance. Three conceptually distinct (so-called "pure") arrangements, in particular, suggest themselves. These are discussed in turn, with an indication of the favorable and unfavorable consequences that might arise in an institution as a result of their adoption.

a) One arrangement entails assigning responsibility for academic quality assurance to a senior academic officer - perhaps a provost or pro-vice-chancellor, who might assume the additional title of "Director of Quality Assurance" or something similar. This officer becomes the focal point for the institution's quality assurance activities, and assumes responsibility for monitoring their functioning and assessing their performance. Such an arrangement can be termed "managerial" or "executive", in the sense that administering academic quality assurance becomes, under these conditions, principally a management function.

Pros and cons of this arrangement might include the following:

- The presence of an individual with responsibility for the functioning of academic quality assurance allows for a uniform and coordinated institutional response if, say, external pressure to demonstrate “accountability” is applied by a funding agency or an accrediting body.
- There is no question as to accountability, or ultimate responsibility. In the eyes of the institution’s chief executive and its Council or other governing board, the responsibility for maintaining academic quality is clear.
- By virtue of his/her senior position, this officer can act as a powerful champion within the institution for development of a culture focused on quality. Proponents of Total Quality Management agree that to be successful, an institution’s efforts at promoting a quality culture

must receive strong, visible endorsement from the managers who stand at the top of the organization.

- Depending on the attitude of the individual in the position and the constraints placed upon him/her by the institution’s governance structures, there may be considerable latitude for him/her to experiment, innovate, carry out pilot investigations or case studies, and so forth. (Care must be taken, however, that new or innovative procedures do not become “the Director’s thing” - implying a lack of ownership on the part of the affected staff).
- With so much authority for quality assurance matters invested in a single, highly visible “quality czar”, there is an understandable tendency for staff to consider quality as “that person’s job”, when it is more appropriately viewed as each person’s job.
- The inevitable tendency for decisions on quality to be centralized and

personalized under this arrangement runs contrary to the view that effective implementation of a quality assurance system requires a professional commitment by all participants in the system - and the empowerment of those participants to demonstrate that commitment.

- Problems may arise in communication if the manager is unable to articulate effectively to other staff the purposes served by academic quality assurance processes, or the benefits gained from them. In the extreme, this may lead to a loss of legitimacy for the entire quality assurance system.

b) A second arrangement gives responsibility for academic quality assurance to the central body regulating academic affairs (often called a Faculty Senate or Academic Board), or to a subcommittee reporting to such a body. This arrangement might be termed “collegial”, in that it builds on pre-existing structures of collegial governance present in most institutions - oftentimes already empowered with certain

review functions, in areas such as the curriculum - and enlarges their responsibilities to cover the entire spectrum of academic quality assurance activities.

This arrangement also has its favorable and unfavorable aspects:

- Ownership of academic quality assurance procedures by the key academic body fits well with the traditional form of governance accepted in universities, wherein the teaching faculty assume responsibility for decisions made on academic matters.
- If it is accepted that at its heart, quality teaching and learning ultimately depend on the attitudes of individual staff (and students), collegial assumption of responsibility for academic quality assurance makes evident to staff the unbroken line of responsibility extending from the individual (who addresses quality issues affecting his/her own teaching) through the academic unit and the

institution seen as whole. Quality assurance systems are less likely to be viewed as “impositions” and more likely to be viewed as flowing organically from a consideration of the institution’s academic mission.

- A collegial arrangement also favors the development of critical, continuous internal review procedures for the institution’s academic activities, carried out by those who are closest to the processes of teaching and learning.
- Collegial decision-making bodies may be especially effective in monitoring developments in areas where they traditionally have held authority (for instance, review of the curriculum). They may be less effective in addressing questions regarding, say, the effectiveness of follow-up actions by academic units, owing to a natural reluctance to sit in judgment concerning the actions of their peers.
- In most institutions, the central academic body has multiple responsibilities and considerable demands on its time. In many governance structures, the membership of such a body is disproportionately composed of senior academic administrators (e.g., Faculty/School Deans) who also have burdensome administrative responsibilities. It might be questioned, especially in a large institution, whether the Senate or Academic Board can offer effective oversight of academic quality assurance processes. Even a subcommittee can easily be swamped with responsibilities.
- Many (not all) collegial decision-making bodies seek to attain consensus, or at least to minimize disagreement, and in this respect are inherently conservative. One might expect that under these conditions, incremental modifications to well-established quality assurance procedures would be favored over new

initiatives that represent a significant break with tradition.

c) In a third model, academic quality assurance becomes the responsibility of an independent group created specifically for this purpose (a “Quality Assurance Committee”). Such a group typically operates autonomously \, under authority granted by an institution’s senior managers, or the central body regulating academic affairs, or both. Almost invariably it is interdisciplinary in membership; it may also have a complement of members from outside the institution, and it may include representatives of such constituencies as students, graduates, or employers.

Like the other two approaches, this one has its pluses and minuses:

- The “empowered team” approach embodied in this arrangement is one that finds favor with many proponents of Total Quality Management in both business and educational settings (e.g., Brower, 1994) - who cite the ability of such teams to

bring multiple perspectives to bear on the task of making institutional processes work better, and overcome restraints created by bureaucratic control systems in their pursuit of their own and the institution’s goals.

- The sharing of experiences among members of the group is an aid in disseminating knowledge of good practice to all teachers, administrators, and managers in the institution.
- The potential involvement of representatives of a range of constituencies, including student “customers”, as an integral part of the academic quality assurance process can only benefit the institution - at least in the long run.
- Unless a Quality Assurance Committee enjoys genuine autonomy and a grant of executive authority, it may have to rely on other governing bodies (for instance, a Faculty Senate) to implement its

recommendations. This may lead to problems if the group is not represented as of right on those governing bodies, and must depend on the good-will of sympathetic members to place its findings and recommendations on their agenda.

- Defining the membership of a Quality Assurance Committee must be done with care. If it is top-heavy with Deans and senior academics, it may be viewed with cynicism as simply an extension of the established academic hierarchy. If its members are mostly junior academics (who may in any event be reluctant to serve in such a potentially time-consuming capacity, given the need in many institutions to focus on research and publication), there is a risk its suggestions will not be taken seriously.
- Although most academics are used to serving on committees, the concept of autonomous, self-directed, interdisciplinary teams will

be new to many. To avoid conflicts and misunderstandings, participants need to be educated as to the proper functioning of teams, the boundaries of their authority, and the extent of their accountability. This implies that the decision to create an independent group to oversee academic quality assurance should only be taken after careful study. Members of such group will also benefit from opportunities to educate themselves, to build up both their own and the group's competencies and, over time, to enable them to contribute to the review and modification of the group's own operating procedures and, indeed, its overall mission.

In practice, most institutions will operate with a mixture of these three "pure" arrangements. For instance, a Faculty Senate may assume ultimate authority for decisions relating to the institution's instructional function, but rely for advice on a permanent Quality Improvement Team chaired by an academic vice-president. The

precise balance of authority will depend on the institution's size, its history, the degree of centralization or decentralization evident in other administrative processes, and other unique aspects of its context.

Particularly interesting to observe are cases where changes in conditions lead to changes in the balance of responsibility for quality assurance within an institution. Changes may result from internal factors: a period of rapid growth, say, or a shrinkage in resources. Or changes may stem from the external environment in which an institution functions: say, a demand on the part of a government funding agency for "accountability", perhaps manifested in formalized procedures for quality audit or even assessment of outcomes. Recent trends in any higher education systems towards managerial and market-driven, rather parallel changes may occur in both the operation and the ultimate ownership of academic quality assurance systems. Shifts from one balance of responsibility to another always bring the potential for difficulties. In some cases they may call into question fundamental premises of institutional governance and the nature of relationships between faculty

members and administrators - a recipe, quite often, for open conflict within an institution.

3.0 An Example: The Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong

Opened in 1989, the Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong (OLI) is Hong Kong's distance learning institution. The OLI offers some 36 different academic programs at degree and sub-degree level to mostly working adults. Its enrollment as of early 1996 was slightly over 20,000 students (or about 4,900 FTE). OLI makes use of a combination of locally-developed and externally-developed course materials: the largest provider of external courses is the Open University in Britain. The Hong Kong Government requires the Institute to be self-financing in respect of its operating budget: this means that the full-time academic staff complement is relatively small (68 staff as of April 1996, supplemented by more than 750 part-time tutors who are the main point of contact for students). OLI's self-financing status also means that a continual tension exists between achieving its mission of offering high quality learning opportunities on the one hand, and accepting the limits of

financial reality on the other - including the need to keep fees at a level that local students can afford, in light of the Institute's commitment to offer education for all.

Assuring the quality of its academic programs has been a key concern of the OLI since even before the start of operations in 1989. In an inherently conservative community, many had difficulty accepting that an institution that did not impose strict entry requirements could offer a high quality education. Also the concept of distance learning was basically new to Hong Kong and was met with some degree of skepticism. To overcome these concerns the Institute undertook from the outset to demonstrate that its educational offerings were equivalent in standard to those available elsewhere. It did so by a variety of means (Dhanarajan and Hope, 1992): inviting external participation in the review of program content and of the standards of locally-developed courses; using External Examiners to monitor course assessment practices; developing a quite elaborate hierarchy of internal review committees at program, School, and Institute-wide levels; and welcoming external review of

its overall quality assurance systems by outside bodies (initially the UK's Council for National Academic Awards, later the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation). Speed was of the essence in OLI's academic program planning, and quality assurance systems were at the early stages mainly imported from other institutions - notably the Open University in Britain - where they had demonstrated their validity (see Michael Robertshaw's paper contributed to this conference).

Under the OLI's original structure, ultimate authority over decisions relating to the academic program, and to instructional matters, rested with the Academic Board (the central academic body). The Associate Director (Academic) oversaw the operations of OLI's academic quality assurance systems and produced a twice-yearly report on the standards of course presentation for consideration by the Academic Board. In a 1992 restructuring, the post of Associate Director (Academic) was eliminated and its quality-related responsibilities were transferred largely to the academic Deans, who now serve dual (and somewhat contradictory) roles: as the responsible officials managing quality assurance processes

operating within their Schools, and as coordinators and facilitators of Institute-wide quality mechanisms, some of which function as checks and balances on the activities of Schools.

A further quality-related initiative occurred in 1994, when the OLI created a Quality Improvement Team (QIT) with the declared goal of promoting the establishment of a “quality culture” throughout the Institute. The QIT, composed of middle-ranking academic and administrative personnel and chaired by a long-serving member of the academic staff, undertook to educate colleagues on matters relating to quality and carried out pilot projects which reviewed both academic and administrative processes. One such project, for instance, focused on the OLI’s procedures for reviewing and reporting semester by semester on the standards achieved in course presentation. QIT’s creation, though helping to raise the profile of quality issues within the OLI, did not alter the balance of responsibility for quality matters. QIT was not invested with any implementation authority, and recommendations on academic matters derived from QIT projects had to receive assent from

Academic Board.

Such was the situation when in June 1995 the Institute underwent an Institutional Review conducted by the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA), for the purpose of determining whether it should become a “self-accrediting” institution (i.e., one with the authority to validate its own degree programs). In its report of the Institutional Review, the HKCAA expressed a concern that OLI had no individual or group with specific responsibility for academic quality. QIT’s activities were noted, but its lack of authority to initiate or stimulate change was also highlighted. The report elaborated:

... “the panel recommends that the OLI creates a focus of responsibility for its quality assurance activities... (I)t is considered that it is crucial to locate a focal point for its quality assurance efforts, where authority goes together with commitment and responsibility, and where improvement and innovations can be coordinated.” (HKCAA, 1995)

Clearly this was a suggestion that OLI designate a single official with overall responsibility for academic quality assurance, along the lines of the “managerial” arrangement presented above. This call did not meet with universal acceptance at the OLI. “In establishing the Quality Improvement Team we opted to follow the growing trend in quality assurance which emphasizes the ‘bottom-up’ rather than ‘top-down’ approach”, wrote the Deputy Chair of the OLI Council, in the Institute’s official response to the HKCAA’s report. “Currently the focus of responsibility for quality assurance within the academic arena lies with the Academic Board and ultimately with the Director”. The Institute’s HKCAA Institutional Review Project Team was also skeptical in its Final Report:

... “we should... work towards developing an institutional culture in which self-reflection and critical analysis of our systems and procedures are institutionalized - not in the sense of being reduced to rituals of little meaning, but in the sense of becoming second nature. The recommendation... that the OLI establish a focus of responsibility for its quality assurance activities needs to be

viewed in the light of this larger purpose, in that it is all too easy to abdicate all concerns over matters relating to quality to the person or group who is the ‘focus of responsibility’. A focus on quality cannot be seen as ‘their’ job; it must be everyone’s job.”

Even before the Institutional Review, some members of QIT had formed the view that existing quality assurance processes were adhered to ritualistically, without a true sense of ownership by the academic staff who dutifully produced descriptive (not, for the most part, “self-reflective and critical”) reports but had little understanding of the purposes of the system or how their actions contributed to achieving those purposes. QIT itself adopted early on the premise that achieving “quality” does not mean attaining a fixed target or a set standard and maintaining that level of accomplishment: rather, it is more concerned with achieving constantly improving standards. Incentives to attain this latter goal are precisely what are felt to be lacking under the current system. From this standpoint, the adoption of a managerial model for the centralized control and monitoring of academic quality assurance processes represent a potentially

retrograde step - certainly not one in keeping with recent moves within OLI to develop responsibilities for quality assurance systems, at least at the level of the individual course, to the staff of individual programs who bear the most responsibility for delivering those courses (a more "collegial" approach). If countervailing forces of centralization and devolution pull staff in two directions simultaneously, the danger is that academic quality assurance processes will lose whatever focus they have and degenerate into a tangle of related, uncoordinated reporting activities.

Balanced against these concerns are practical questions regarding the workload imposed on academic staff. For financial reasons, OLI has always operated with a lean staffing structure. Heavily involved with their course-related responsibilities, OLI's academic (and administrative) staff are skeptical of committing themselves to ventures - even those with the best of intent - that consume their scarce time. Thus the desirability of empowering staff to critically review their own activities with an eye toward their continued improvement must be weighed against the time

commitment required: at least a sizable minority of colleagues believe they cannot afford the luxury of engaging in leisurely critical reflection even on their own work, let alone on the broader purposes of the Institute. (The same argument can be made in relation to Institute-wide reviews of quality systems, as Robertshaw has noted in his paper contributed to this conference). At the senior level, the workload problem is even more acute, given that Deans have myriad administrative duties - traceable partly to the fact that the growth of Schools has not been accompanied at OLI by the creation of "departments" with formalized powers and responsibilities, as well as to the devolution of time-consuming supervisory responsibilities formerly belonging to the Associate Director (Academic), as noted above.

The Quality Improvement Team raised other issues in its January 1996 report of activities over its first year. One of its concerns was that at its creation QIT had been superimposed on top of, rather than integrated into, OLI's existing structures of governance. (It is not an "empowered team", to use the phrasing introduced earlier). For instance, the QIT is not represented

as of right on the Academic Board. Beyond this, there was a sense that in excluding Deans and administrative unit heads from its membership - a purposeful decision at the time the Team was created - QIT was marginalizing those colleagues who were potentially the strongest advocates within the Institute for building a culture of quality (the “champion” effect noted previously). The Team also questioned whether a separately-constituted, permanent Quality Improvement Team could make a significant independent contribution to the OLI’s objectives in the area of quality assurance, above and beyond what its individual Project Teams contributed through their activities and their reports.

The QIT’s proposals to address these concerns were radical: in essence, the Team called for its own dissolution and reconstitution in a different form. It proposed that the Chair of QIT (or co-Chairs: the Team left open the possibility for joint academic and administrative heads) be a staff member ranking at the level of Dean or above. This person would assume overall responsibilities for Institute activities in the area of quality assurance, including the QIT’s own project activities. When required, the Chair would be

assisted by an ad hoc team of advisors drawn from the Chairs of active Project Teams, who would themselves be drawn from the ranks of unit heads (academic and administrative). As a result, a permanently constituted Quality Improvement Team would no longer exist, although the group of advisors to the Chair(s) might take that title. Through these proposals, the QIT hoped to cement its place (or its successor’s) in the life of the Institute more firmly, and bring quality-related issues to center stage at a time when, perhaps for the first time in the Institute’s short history, there might be the chance for critical reflection on how the OLI chose to organize itself to carry out its academic quality assurance activities.

The initial response to this proposal by Deans was that they had no time to take on the responsibilities for institutional quality assurance, as the QIT was suggesting. This is probably a fair assessment given the present demands on Deans’ time. Not commented on, but somewhat ironic given the context, was that QIT was advocating the designation of an individual (or two) as the focal point for the Institute’s quality assurance activities - the “managerial” model, essentially, despite the fact that

much the same arrangement had been criticized earlier by Institute staff including members of QIT! The tension here is perhaps best viewed as one between idealism (the recognition that an Institute-wide commitment to building a culture focused on quality requires a professional commitment by all staff to that end, and the creation of systems that facilitate making and keeping that commitment) and practicality (the recognition that governance of the Institute is centralized, and that at present there is a reluctance to consider “empowerment” [even of the high-profile QIT] to the extent that would allow for the flourishing of a culture where the individual or small work unit can effectively address quality issues independently, as envisaged by the mostly Western proponents of TQM in higher education). Given a conflict between the two, the Team has opted for practicality as a means of ensuring that quality issues remain, so to speak, “in the public eye”.

4.0 Postscript

At the time of writing, the question of locating the responsibility for institutional quality assurance at the Open Learning Institute remains unresolved. The latest development

is a proposal to reinstate the post of Associate Director (Academic), partly as a means of liberating the OLI’s Director for more externally-focused activities. If this suggestion is adopted, the Associate Director (Academic) might assume the quality-related responsibilities proposed by QIT for the Chair of that body. Further action on this front must await the deliberations of the OLI Council, the Institute’s highest governing board.

Certain aspects of the OLI’s situations are of course peculiar to it: the constraints imposed by the Government’s self-financing requirement, the need to demonstrate quality to a skeptical community to guarantee the Institute’s survival, the impetus given by external reviewers to the Institute’s reconsideration of the operations of quality assurance systems. There are several elements of the OLI’s recent experience, however, that are likely to have broad relevance to institutions elsewhere. These include:

- the conflicting impulses to make quality processes, as well as other administrative processes, more “efficient” (often meaning under more centralized managerial control) versus more

“inclusive”

- the concern among academic staff that their empowerment to address quality issues serve a meaningful purpose that justifies the time taken from their immediate responsibilities
- the need for an investment in “quality time” - in reflection, thought, and critical analysis - by senior staff in particular to ensure the success of a “quality culture”
- the role that independent teams are able to play in considering quality matters, if these are created without reference to the existing system of institutional governance
- the value in many contexts of an institutional “champion” for quality-related issues - no matter, perhaps, that he or she is a senior administrator in an already-centralized governance system.

As institutions of higher education choose, or are compelled, to address the quality of their educational provision, they will

have to make their own choices as to where to locate the responsibility for academic quality assurance. The choices will oftentimes be confusing; their relative merits not clear; yet the requirement is compelling - for, in the end, quality does not arise spontaneously, but must be brought to life through the work of an external hand.

References:

Brower, M.J. (1994). “Implementing TQM with Self-Directed Teams”. in H. Costin (ed.), Readings in Total Quality Management, pp. 403-420. Fort Worth, TX: Dryden Press.

Dhanarajan, G. and A. Hope (1992). “Quality Assurance at the Open Learning Institute”. in A. Craft (ed.), Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Proceedings of an International Conference, Hong Kong 1991, pp. 207-220. London: Falmer.

HKCAA (1995). “Institutional Review Report: Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong.” Hong Kong: Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation.

Kogan, M., I. Moses, and E. El-Khawas (1995). Staffing Higher Education: Meeting New Challenges. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Balancing Autonomy and Accountability in Higher Education: Quality Audit at City University of Hong Kong

David Mole and H. K. Wong
City University of Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

The emergence of different styles of quality management raised a positive and normative issue. The focus of the paper is to make clear why City University of Hong Kong adopted as its particular strategy of quality management an aggressive drive toward quality assurance, and to argue that this strategy has generally supported the strategic objectives of the University.

Keywords and phrases: quality management, quality audit, quality assurance

1.0 Introduction

“Quality management” has become an inescapable project for university staff and for university managers in Hong Kong, as it has in other parts of the world (Barnett, 1990, 1992; Caldwell, 1992; HKCAA, 1994; Loder, 1990; University of Northumbria, 1993; Vroeijenstijn, 1993). Quality management at a university may fall into three main patterns: accreditation, assessment, and quality assurance. Accreditation provides for an internal, or external, estimate of whether the unit, or programme assessed has reached a threshold standard. Assessment provides an evaluation on some scale of the quality level being

achieved. Quality assurance seeks to establish systems that ensure continuous improvement (Ashworth and Harvey, 1994; Bourke, 1986; Craft, 1992; Harris, 1990; Vroeijenstijn and Acherman, 1990).

The positive issue is the role of the particular circumstances and history of university systems in leading them to adopt one of the three quality strategies. The related normative policy issue is the merit of these strategies in achieving the objectives of stakeholders in the university system across a variety of conditions.

The centerpiece of the paper is an account of the City

University's experiment with "quality audit" as part of its quality assurance system. The first section of the paper outlines the context that led to the adoption of a quality audit scheme. This is followed by a general account of the operation of quality audit at the University, and an assessment of the benefits of the system.

2.0 Quality Management

Increased attention to the quality of teaching and learning in higher education, alongside research activities, has become an international trend. This trend is the result of a number of pressures. The most obvious pressure is from governments seeking to ensure that they get value for money from the universities they fund. Other external pressures have come from employers, and the broader community. As university education becomes accessible to more of the population, more expensive, and more important for economic and social development, these pressures are bound to grow.

The external pressures are complemented by significant internal pressures. Modern universities have been forced to adopt a managerial approach to their operations. Greater

expectations are now placed in academic managers, and greater claims are made by these managers. Managing quality has come to be seen increasingly as a necessary project for a university administration.

The quality of teaching and learning has moved steadily up to the agenda of universities for two other reasons. Firstly, a gulf has opened between the professional aims and incentives of academic staff, on the one hand, and institutional aims and incentives on the other. While academic staff have an incentive to gain the kind of academic reputation, and even survival, that comes only through active research, universities must show that they are serving their core function of providing undergraduate students with a high quality educational experience.

Secondly, there has been a general loss of confidence in traditional styles of teaching. "Chalk and talk" and standard methods of assessment have come under increasing scrutiny, to be replaced by an emphasis on "learning" and the "student experience". An emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning has been an important mechanism for making an appropriate adjustment

to this changing pedagogy.

Hong Kong universities have to varying degrees felt all these pressures. In particular, the Hong Kong government has taken public sector reform very seriously, making client orientation, performance pledges, and value for money key features of these reforms (Hong Kong Government, 1995). Closer to home, the University Grants Committee, the arms-length agency through which local universities are funded, has set in motion a series of “teaching and learning quality process reviews”.

Quality Assurance and Quality Management

City University’s decision to move toward quality assurance as a style for managing the quality of its teaching and learning was in large part driven by some basic conditions shared by most universities in Hong Kong and overseas. Three factors are worth noting.

Firstly, the economics of tertiary education are such that the service provided is very difficult to value. Measuring value added requires measurement of the value of both inputs and outputs. A

university has only very imprecise measures of the value of its raw material - the fresh intake of students, and a similarly imprecise measure of the value of the output (Bibby, 1993). Nor can there be any certainty about the contribution of the university to any observed increment in value. Students grow up whatever the university does.

This problem of measurement might in other circumstances be resolved by the establishment of a market valuation, but the extent of public subsidies of both schools and students make this impossible. Certainly these market signals are very weak in Hong Kong which is without private universities.

Thus, the economics of the university means that assessment is a difficult and controversial enterprise. It is convenient to shift the focus of quality management away from outcomes and toward processes (Higher Education Quality council, 1994). It is worth noting that this “solution” gives rise to deeper difficulty, that of making rational judgments about the use of resources to increase ‘quality’.

Secondly, as organizations, universities group together

professional staff whose privileges and claims as experts must be taken into account in any move to assess quality, or evaluate a process. In these circumstances, the only way forward is to make “self-assessment”, or “peer assessment” the cornerstone of quality management. In Hong Kong, the professional privileges of academics are widely respected, perhaps more widely respected in society in which teachers have traditionally enjoyed high status (Acherman, 1990; Kells, 1992).

The lesson to draw from this observation is not that intrusive, top-down, assessment is not a viable long-term option, although this is probably true, but rather that maintaining and improving quality is more easily achieved when staff are directly involved in the process of quality management.

Finally, universities in many societies play an important political and cultural role as centers for knowledge and expertise and for the free, or freer, expression of opinion. This role requires a measure of autonomy. A balance must be struck between an appropriate independence from external control and the reasonable claims of stakeholders to a credible

assurance about the quality of the service being provided. The way forward here was to provide for the well-constrained involvement of external expertise in the evaluation of quality. It need hardly be added that the autonomy of universities is at least as sensitive an issue in Hong Kong as in other parts of the world.

The next result of these environmental conditions has been the development by many universities of a quality-management style that emphasises the process for maintaining quality, not the quality level, that makes self-appraisal a key element in evaluation, and involves external expertise, but where this expertise is drawn into the process on the universities’ own terms. This has been the approach at City University of Hong Kong.

3.0 Quality Assurance at City University of Hong Kong

A number of specific factors have influenced the particular style of quality management at City University. The most obvious of these has been the shift to university status and “self-accreditation” after a period of ten years as the City Polytechnic of Hong Kong. Such a shift is by

no means unique, especially in tertiary systems influenced by British models. However, City University took advantage of this shift to accomplish two important ancillary objectives: a move toward a devolved, collegial, decision-making culture; and move toward a much greater emphasis on the research role of the organization, the local echo of general trend noted at the beginning of the paper.

The deliberate decision to foster a new style in university governance is related to the shift from external to internal accreditation of programs. In the early period during which the University was obliged to seek external accreditation, external demands became a source of disproportionate influence for managers controlling the link between the University and external bodies. A much tighter and more centralized system of internal quality control came into existence than could be justified by the demands of external agencies. Once self-accreditation had been achieved, the centralized system came under immediate attack and crumbled very rapidly.

The effort to dismantle centralized quality control, while retaining some of the checks and

balances required by management, if it is to provide stakeholders with credible assurance that quality is being maintained, has become one of the main dynamic tensions in the University's development of its quality assurance system.

The adoption of an institutional mission that provides for an emphasis on research, as well as on effective teaching, has provided much of the background to current internal discussion of quality assurance. Initially the adoption of a new research orientation, designed to increase the prestige and funding of the University, led to considerable stress and confusion. However, staff have quite quickly grasped the new rules of the game, and recognized the congruence of institutional and personal objectives under these rules. This has left the management, and the other staff committed to the teaching role of the University, forced to wage an internal campaign for quality teaching, and to seek a new consensus among academic staff about the institutional mission.

4.0 The Introduction of Quality Audit

Because the conditions of

the quality management problem facing City University were substantially shared with universities in other jurisdictions, the University has been able to benefit the experience of others. What has made the experiment in quality management at City University particularly interesting is the recognition that one of the most valuable instruments in the effort to refine devolved systems and to promote a quality culture is the internal, peer review of quality assurance systems, i.e. quality audit. While quality audit is a familiar feature of the external scrutiny of universities in Britain and elsewhere, there have been very few efforts to introduce this instrument internally (Jermyn, et al, 1994; Navaratnam, 1994),

Working from models explored in business and by other universities, City University concluded that a “mature quality assurance system would be characterized by two components; (1) a set of devolved quality assurance processes designed to facilitate continuous improvement by the staff responsible for the actual work; and (2) a pervasive “quality culture” that makes the devolution of such systems both possible and appropriate.

At a very early stage, the University’s newly established Quality Assurance Committee recognized that its role would be to develop policy in the area of quality assurance and to provide support and advice to staff seeking to implement that policy. The Committee did not regard itself as playing any direct role in assessing, monitoring, or managing quality. A Set of “quality principles” was adopted, placing responsibility for quality with staff themselves. Meanwhile, the Committee set about providing templates for quality assurance systems to operate at the programme level. This required substantial devolution of control over programme design, over the evaluation of teaching, over staff and student induction and so on.

This devolution was welcomed, but it raised a critical question. How was the University as a whole to continue to provide the necessary guarantees that the quality of its teaching and learning was in fact being maintained?

While it is probably true that staff rapidly noticed and accepted their “empowerment” and the new role that this implied, it cannot be said that many members of staff grasped much of the

“theory” of quality assurance. It is not often recognized that a quality culture is not simply a culture in which staff accept their responsibility for quality (Cope and Sheer, 1991; Gilbert, 1992; Sarah and Sebastian, 1993; Westbrook, 1993). A quality culture must also incorporate a broadly shared appreciation of the requirements for a system capable of delivering continuous improvement. These requirements are: that the system provide for review and evaluation, including input from users; that the system generate agenda for action promoting good practice and addressing defects; that actions are followed-up; that the impact of actions is checked; and that with a new round of evaluation a new cycle begins.

This is pretty much common sense, but like much that looks like common sense, it takes some absorbing. Even once absorbed, implementation is no easy task. It is always easier to evaluate than to figure out what to do about problems, easier to identify action than to follow up on it, and easier to devise remedies than to show that they have an impact. An organization does not have a quality culture until its members have grasped what is required and understand their own

role in the implementation of the quality system.

The terms of the policy problem were therefore to find the right balance between central and developed responsibility for quality management, while promoting a greater comprehension of the meaning of quality assurance among members of the university.

The Quality Audit Scheme

A solution turned out to have been built into terms of reference of the Quality assurance Committee. The Committee is instructed to “audit the systems that assure quality”. A number of quality audit models are available. The Committee recommended an approach similar to that taken by the United Kingdom Higher Education Quality Council, but substantially scaled down and modified in some important respects (Higher Education Quality Council, 1995a, 1995b).

The fact that the internal quality audit exercise in the University was able to take off owed much to the vision and commitment of the Vice-Chancellor's Office and the Quality Assurance Committee. It was also blessed with enthusiastic

professional support and advice from a small secretariat which had developed considerable expertise in the field of quality assurance since the inception of the Committee three year ago. The impending visit to the University in a year's time of the funding body, the University Grants Committee, on teaching and learning quality process review provided the impetus for the general acceptance by academic colleagues of the desirability and necessity for introducing the internal quality audit scheme as part of our quality assurance system.

The Level of the Audit

One major decision was to focus the audit on the faculties, rather than on the University as a whole, or on departments. Departments certainly have important responsibilities for the quality of teaching and learning, but these units are too small. A university-level audit is better done by an outside agency. In fact, "quality process reviews" are now going forward in Hong Kong. A faculty-level audit provides a suitable compromise. Audit of a faculty also assists in clarifying the respective roles in the quality assurance system of the center, the faculties and the departments.

Broad Approach of the Audit

The audit scheme can be described under three main headings: the broad approach, the focus, and the process. The approach taken is first to emphasize the key role of the "critical self-appraisal". The production of the self-appraisal is in itself one of the most valuable parts of the audit. It provides an opportunity for the faculty to review its approach to quality management, to reaffirm a faculty consensus on this approach, and to provide for internal and external use a clear statement of the processes at work. In the longer run, as the audit cycle goes forward, it is expected that faculties can return to their self-appraisals, review their progress and make adjustments as required.

A second important aspect of the approach to audit is that it is "peer review". The audit is undertaken by a small team of academic staff members. One member of the team is from the faculty that is the subject of the audit. The team also includes an external member, normally an academic from another overseas, or local, university familiar with quality management in higher education. However, on one audit team, a quality assurance

professional from a major local public utility joined the team, providing very useful input.

Focus of the Audit

The audit is focused on three main issues: course design; teaching and learning; and staff appraisal and development. In each of these areas, an effort is made to ensure that quality assurance systems are operating. The audit team checks whether feedback being sought, whether problems are being addressed, whether actions taken are having the expected impact and so on. As well as investigating the operation of the systems, the team is connected with the extent to which staff and students understand how the system works and their own role in the system.

The Audit Process

The audit process has three main steps. The faculty provides its critical self-appraisal and other relevant documents to the audit team. Although assembling documents such as committee minutes, course reports, teaching evaluation materials, staff appraisal schemes and so on, can be troublesome and gives rise to charges of bureaucratic excess,

these documents are the “trace” left by the operation of quality assurance mechanisms. They provide much of the evidence required to confirm the existence and evaluate the effectiveness of these mechanisms. The team reviews the documents and determines which issues it will take up on the audit visit.

The team then spends a full-day with the faculty, supplemented by an evening meeting with part-time staff and students. Given the time constraints, audit teams are obliged to “sample” programmes and to “track” particular issues, rather than review of the documents. On the visit a balance must be struck between general questions (if you wish to make a suggestion about the course, how would you go about it?) and questions about particular issues (we note that you increased the size of tutorial groups, how did you manage the impact of this on learning?).

The final step is the production of an audit report. The report is essentially a report to the faculty. It is intended to assist in the faculty’s own effort to review and enhance its quality management. At the same time, the report provides the University with

an assurance that the faculty has in place an effective quality assurance system, a system that is being used, and is capable of maintaining and enhancing quality.

5.0 Assessment

Striking a proper balance and maintaining a sense of proportion has been the guiding principle for the planners in conceiving the configuration of the internal audit scheme and in steering its implementation. A proper balance has to be struck in relation to many key attributes of the scheme: the time and financial resources to be invested, the role of external input, the comprehensiveness and scope of coverage and involvement, the degree of training for the auditors before the actual start of the audit, and the application of various levers as influence - moral exhortation, reasoning and persuasion, inducements, authority, the pressure of public knowledge of relative performance, and so on. A colleague dramatized one such dilemma vividly; "we cannot spend all the time watching over each other and neglect the more substantive task of meeting with the students, making teaching preparations and follow-ups, and engaging in other scholastic

pursuits, including research and publications." Two half-day workshops with external experts as facilitators were conducted for potential auditors nominated by department heads among their academic colleagues. The feedback on adequacy of training was that the actual experience in doing the audit was the most important thing.

An early assessment suggests, however, that internal audit pay off over the longer run. This pay off has come in three ways. Firstly, as expected, audit has provided an essential basis for a "mature" quality assurance system. A system is mature because it provides for the maximum of devolution, without sacrificing external scrutiny of quality management, and matures because it provides for the continuous review and improvement of the quality assurance system itself. This review has a very important role in identifying and spreading good practice, in refining mechanism that are working well, and in calling into question routines that are ill-focused or unhelpful.

Secondly, the audit has become the basis of a trade off. To the extent that quality audit can be developed as a useful instrument, central agencies are able to

delegate control over course design, teaching evaluation and so on. As a result, the burden of the related documentation and committee work can be substantially reduced. An audit-based system turns out to be simpler and more convenient to operate than other quality management systems.

Finally, and perhaps most important, quality audit has been the tool in the work of creating a quality culture. As noted above, an effective quality culture combines a widely shared sense of responsibility for quality with a widely shared grasp of the way quality assurance systems are supposed to work. When the first cycle of quality audits is complete, about twenty-five members of the academic staff will have acted as auditors, about fifty will have been directly involved in drafting critical self-appraisals, while about two hundred staff and fifty students will have participated in audit visits. Involvement in audit must lead to a much greater understanding of quality assurance and of the role of individual members of the University in quality assurance.

It is still premature to make a final assessment of City University's experiment with

internal quality audit. However, as indicated by initial review sessions with some key participants in the audits, there is little doubt that its impact has been positive. Indeed "quality audit" appears to have provided a neat, and cost effective solution to a difficult set of problems.

One reading of the University's current arrangements for quality management is that they represent a modern version of some older values: a respect for professional expertise and autonomy, alongside, recognition of the need to provide for professional self-regulation is seen to be effective; demands for external scrutiny and control can be more easily resisted. A commitment to establish and operate systems that facilitate the continuous improvement of the quality of teaching and learning is a very low price to pay for the privileges that come with institutional autonomy.

6.0 The Way Forward

The internal audit was conducted in a supportive, frank and constructive manner. With the exercise now about two-thirds through, the general feedback is positive. These suggest that there

was no “over-kill”, and it was cost-effective addition to our quality assurance system. The audited faculties have taken ownership of the exercise and have set themselves an action agenda in dealing with the shortcomings brought out by the audit reports, which they publicized widely among their colleagues. The audit steering group will in due course document and publicize the good practices in the units to the whole institution. It is also actively planning other ways and means to sustain the momentum for continuous quality improvement. The separate efforts in quality management of the academic support centers and central administration units will be coordinated and dovetailed with those of the academic units.

The audit exercise has concentrated by and large on teaching. This also generally reflected our standing practices and concerns. Not enough attention has been paid to the factors and environment contributing to effective learning, deep learning and life-long learning. Nor, was there active exploration of the ways and means of engaging students in reflecting on, and committing themselves to, their own role and obligations in the pursuit of

excellence in learning and quality student life. An interim review of the audit exercise has brought out the shortcoming. It, however, confirmed our observation that a fairly advanced and sophisticated quality assurance system and set of procedures in academic administration were already in place in the University. Nevertheless, it also indicated that we are only in the early stages of the arduous road in building a deep and prevalent quality culture in teaching, learning and other scholastic pursuits- a culture where members respect, cherish and internalize the values of good practices, and reflect this in their behavior.

The major conclusion and the most important thing appears to be that we are on the right track seeking continuous quality improvement.

References:

Archerman, H.A. (1990) “Quality Assessment by Peer Review: A New Era for University Co-Operation”, Higher Education Management, 2(2), pp. 179-192.

Ashworth,A. and Harvey, R.C. (1994) Assessing Quality in Further and Higher Education, London:

Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
Barnett, R.A. (1990) "The Maintenance of Quality in the Public Sector of U K Higher Education", Higher Education, 16, pp. 279-301.

Barnett, R.A. (1992) Improving Higher Education, Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press.

Bibby, D. (1993) "Absolute and Relative Quality in Higher Education" in Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education, Bonn, F.R. Germany, 19-21 July, pp. 89-98.

Bourke, P. (1986) Quality Measures in Universities, Belconnen: CTEC.

Caldwell, E.M. (1992) "Quality in Higher Education: A Theoretical Study", Educational Research Journal, (7), August.

Cope, R. and Sheer L. (1991) Total Management for Organizations: Concepts and Tools, Adelaide: TAFE National Centre for Research and Development Ltd.

Craft, A. (ed.) (1992) Quality Assurance in Higher Education, London: Falmer Press.

Gilbert, A.D. (1992) "Total Quality Management and the Idea of a University" in Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education, Enschede, Netherlands, 28-30 July, pp 29-50.

Harris, R.W. (1990) "The CNA Accreditation and Quality Assurance", Higher Education Review, 23 (33), pp 34-53.

Higher Education Quality Council (1994) Guidelines on Quality Assurance, Higher Education Quality Council.

Higher Education Quality Council (Quality Assurance Group) (1995a) Notes for the Guidance of Auditors, Higher Education Quality Council.

Higher Education Quality Council (Quality Assurance Group) (1995b) Notes on the Role of Audit Secretaries, Higher Education Quality Council.

HKCAA (1994) Hong Kong Council of Academic Accreditation Handbook, Hong Kong: HKCAA.

Hong Kong Government (Efficiency Unit) (1995) Gaining Commitment to Continuous Improvement, Hong Kong Government.

Jermyn, K., Hall, C., and Burns, G. (1994) "Preparing for Academic Audit: A Case Study of a New Zealand University", NZOA Conference, New Zealand.

Kells, H.R. (1992) Self-Regulation in Higher Education. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Loder, C. (ed.) (1990) Quality Assurance and Accountability in Higher Education, London: Kogan Page.

Navaratman, K.K. (1994) "Quality Assurance Audits in Technical and Further Education", Total Quality Management, 5(4), pp. 219-225.

Sarah, J.V. and Sebastian, R.J. (1993) "Developing a Quality Culture", Quality Progress, September, pp. 73-78.

University of Northumbria (1993) "Quality Assurance at the

University of Northumbria"
Newcastle, University of Northumbria.

Vroeijenstijn, A.I. (1993) "Current Dutch Policy Towards Assessing Quality in Higher Education" in Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education, Bonn, F.R. Germany, 19-21 July, pp. 285-300.

Vroeijenstijn, A.I and Archerman, H. (1990) "Control-Oriented versus Improvement-Oriented Quality Assessment" in Goedgebuure, L.C.J., Maasen, A.M. and Westerheijden, D.F. (ed.), Peer Review and Performance Indicators, Utrecht: Uitgeverij Lemma.

Westbrook, J.D. (1993) "Organizational Culture and Its Relationship to TQM", Total Quality Management, January/February.

Redesigning the Philippine Quality Assurance System

Manuel T. Corpus
Executive Director
Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges
And Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP)

ABSTRACT

There are certain concerns or issues on accreditation by program that cannot be ignored. This paper introduces a framework of new accreditation model which will depart from program and shift to the institution, as the unit of assessment.

Keywords and phrases: unit of assessment, the framework of accreditation by institution

1.0 Introduction

The accrediting organization for state universities and colleges was born in 1987 with the original name, State Colleges and Universities Accrediting Agency in the Philippines (SCUAAP). However, when it was submitted for registration in the Securities and Exchange Commission, it was required that the word "state" be dropped as the Agency is a private agency. It was finally registered on September 4, 1989 with the name of the organization being changed to Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP), Inc.

Thus, AACCUP joined the

three other accrediting agencies, the oldest of which existed as early as 1957 while the two others started in the mid-1970's.

In search of a model, AACCUP sought the assistance of the older agencies and practically "copied" from them, the most important of which was accreditation by program. Though accreditation in state colleges and universities was supposed to start in 1987, the initial years were devoted to the organization of the agency, the development of manual of procedures, the preparation of accreditation instruments, the recruitment and training of accreditors, and the task of selling the ideology of accreditation to the clientele (SUCs) which were not

pre-disposed to plunging on a new endeavor.

It was only on September 15-17, 1992 when the first preliminary survey visit was conducted under AACCCUP. What started quite slowly, and even reluctantly, has gained momentum after mid-1990s to the extent that as of the end of the year 2000, there were 65 (among the 108) SUCs that have accredited programs.

Ten years of experience, albeit fruitful, in accreditation has led to the emergence of certain concerns or issues on accreditation by program particularly its relevance, usefulness and the operational practicality of the model culminating in the decision of the AACCCUP Board on March 1, 2001 to explore other models of accreditation, and commissioning this writer to lead this project.

2.0 The Unit of Assessment

Different countries the world over adopt varying structures, functions, mechanisms, and practices in their accreditation (or quality assurance) programs. But one of the most serious issues that is currently subjected to review is the unit of assessment.

What is the unit of

assessment used globally? Almost all countries have certain mechanisms in place that assess the institution as a whole, the individual academic programs, or a few others using a mixture of both. A few examples may be recalled: in India, they assess institutions; in the Philippines, programs; and in Hong Kong, they begin with institutional review, and later validate the individual programs. The Presidential Commission on Educational Reform (PCER) recommended a modification of the model in the Philippines by recommending accreditation by discipline, the concept being used to mean, a cluster of programs, like, engineering and technology, sciences, and others.

What unit of assessment should be adopted in the Philippines? Shall we stick to accreditation by program, or shall we explore other models as suggested by the CHED-organized Technical Working Group on Quality Assurance and by Dr. Marian Phelps, a consultant recently commissioned by the Asian Development Bank to study the quality assurance program in the Philippines?

I would like to offer three criteria in selecting the unit of assessment, namely: 1) the number

and size of higher education institutions, 2) the purpose of accreditation, and 3) the feasibility of using the model.

Accrediting by program has strong points. As it is reviewing a small unit, it enjoys the advantage of being well-focused; it looks into details. However, it is too fragmented, and in a country with over a thousand higher education institutions, it would take many years, perhaps even a century to accredit all programs even in just one cycle. This may be one of the major explanations why in spite of a history spanning more than four decades of accreditation, we can claim a coverage of less than 20%. Obviously, accreditation by program is not the practical approach suited in the Philippines unless we are prepared to accept the continued weakening of our educational system.

Even with only 110 state universities and colleges, the toll caused by the increasing traffic for applications for accreditation is now being felt by the AACCUP. This alone justifies a need to seek for other accreditation models, one of which points to increasing the scope, shortening the cycle, and improving the quality of the process.

One practical advantage of accreditation by institution is that the academic quality is defined by its collective impact. Indeed, in accreditation surveys, it is operationally strenuous to segregate the evaluation of certain inputs to the academic program as these are not used exclusively by the program under survey, but are shared with other units or programs of the institution. Take the case of the library, the laboratories, the classrooms, and other physical facilities. Even the services, such as the student services, not to mention the administration of programs, are extended institution-wide.

Another advantage of using the institution as the unit of assessment is its usefulness and relevance to the major stakeholders, such as the government, which provide the funds (quite relevant to state-supported institutions), the students, employers, aid-granting institutions, donors, foundations, etc. In those cases, the commitment and the accountability are demanded from the recipient of the assistance, which is the institution and not from individual programs. When in legislative budget hearings, the legislators ask questions on accreditation, they would like to refer to the

accreditation of the whole SUC. It is unfair to say: “we are accredited” when in fact, one is referring to only the accreditation of one or two of the over 20 programs offered by the institution.

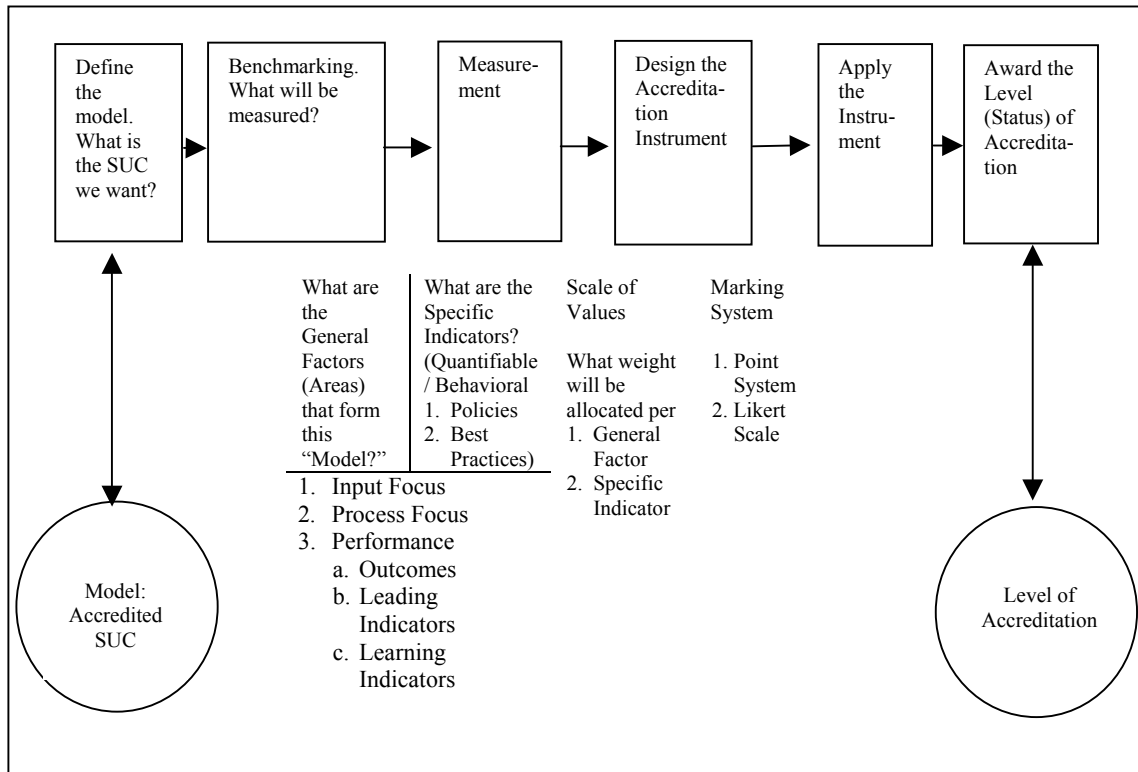
3.0 Towards a New Framework of Accreditation

A shift from program to institutional accreditation calls for a new framework, such as: 1) a redefinition of the scope or focus,

and precisely defining the picture of the accredited institution; 2) benchmarking what will be measured; 3) a new system of measurement; 4) a new breed of accreditors; 5) a partnership (with the SUCs) approach in institutional and program accreditation; and 6) the leveling of accreditation awards.

Figure 1. The Framework of Accreditation by Institution

3.1 Model: The Accredited SUC



Is the currently used one-size-fits-all approach still relevant in an institutional accreditation? (The relevance of this approach even in program accreditation was already under question).

How do we define the institution to be evaluated? One way of defining the parameters of the evaluation is to assess the institution on the basis of its mission, goals and objectives. Thus, in the scheme, an institution defines its mission and its performance is evaluated only as it is related to its mission. Thus, a primarily teaching institution is assessed differently from research institutions. A problem may crop up - how do we handle the programs pursued by an institution which are not within the ambit of its mission? How about SUCs with multi-campus? Let us admit that one weakness in the choice of the institution as the unit is that in the assessment of the whole, it may not be able to distinguish between the good and the bad sub-units, or the good and the not-so-good curricular programs. Of course, certain pre-determined threshold qualifications or compliance levels for all campuses and programs as a sine qua non for the award of an accreditation status may be required.

Given the mission, goals and objectives, an appropriate evaluation scheme may be adopted in defining the focus of assessment.

3.2 What will be Measured?

One misconception must be settled right way. Accreditation by institution does not mean dropping programs in the evaluation. The programs will still be the major foci of evaluation.

The present accreditation by program under AACCUP adopts 10 criteria, namely: 1) mission, goals and objectives, 2) faculty, 3) curriculum and instruction, 4) students, 5) research, 6) extension and community involvement, 7) library, 8) physical facilities, 9) laboratories, and 10) administration.

The Technical Working Group commissioned by the CHED to devise a system for the ranking/classification of higher education institutions, public and private, recommended 12 evaluation criteria, viz: 1) administration, 2) faculty, 3) student services, 4) curriculum and instruction, 5) physical plant and facilities, 6) library and media resources, 7) laboratory resources, 8) research, 9) extension and

community outreach programs, 10) performance indicators, 11) information, communication and technology, and 12) linkages and networking.

This design for the ranking/classification of HEIs is institution-based; it also includes a criterion on performance or outcomes.

A paradigm shift necessarily needs a dramatic change in the standards used. The criteria adopted by the Technical Working Group on the Ranking/Classification of HEIs illustrate attempts to align the accreditation system to global practices, particularly in the inclusion of performance and information, communication and technology in the evaluation by institution, even while it still puts primary emphasis on inputs.

A new accreditation paradigm needs to still include the inputs (e.g., facilities), and procedures (e.g., teaching-learning transactions and administration of services). However, there must be an emphasis on measuring the success of past activities (lagging indicators) through outcomes as well as the dynamism of the institution (leading indicators) as

measures of future performance as may be illustrated by the institution's planning and information management systems; and how fast the institution makes adaptations to innovations and challenges (learning indicators).

3.3 The System of Measurement

The present system adopts a system of values in the assessment based on the set criteria. Weights are allocated to the different criteria, and evaluation is pursued both qualitatively and quantitatively. The specific tool for evaluation is the accreditation instrument.

The new measurement system will contain similar features, viz, adoption of scale of values, assignment of weights to the different criteria, a mix of quantitative and qualitative evaluation, and use of accreditation instruments. But, the measurement will depart from the almost exclusive reliance on inputs, to an assessment of outcomes, quality management practices, the dynamism of the institution, and its actual performance in adapting to new challenges. This will require the use of more open-ended questions particularly in evaluating quality management and services.

3.4 A New Breed of Accreditors

This new model conceives of drawing some accreditors from the private sector or end-users of the graduates of the state institutions to join the current cream of peer accreditors from the SUCs. This will be a new experience for the host institution, the current crop of accreditors, and the AACUP itself.

Another new feature will be the special qualification of the accreditors. Under program accreditation, the accreditors must have the particular program (e.g., agricultural technology) to be accredited as his area of specialization based on his education and experience. In institutional assessment, accreditors will be selected on the basis of their qualifications in being able to assess certain criteria (e.g., financial management, research, or library) of the institution as a whole rather than of a particular program.

Aside from the accreditor's qualifications to evaluate a certain criterion (or "area" as we refer to in the accreditation instrument now being used), the model accreditor would still be sought: knowledgeable and competent; able to make rigorous and objective

assessments; able to relate professionally with the host institution officials, faculty and staff and to be a worthy team player; personal decorum (e.g., dressing) with no undesirable or improper habits; observing ethical standards; and other related traits.

The shift in the unit of assessment and the corresponding changes that it entails, necessitates a new program for training accreditors. This calls for the assistance of experienced experts including foreign consultants to enrich this new scheme of accreditation with global experience.

3.5 A Partnership Approach

The goal of accreditation is to develop and sustain the quality of the educational services offered by an institution. Thus, it would enhance the success of the program if the institution develops an internally-driven initiative, and/or be a partner in the pursuit of the accreditation program. The new scheme proposed here is to adopt a partnership between the host institution and the external accreditors. Under this system, the accreditation of an institution, including the assessment and the award of accreditation will be the

exclusive role of the AACCCUP.

Along-side external assessment, the individual SUCs will be encouraged and assisted in developing their respective internal assessment systems manned by their accreditors, all or some of whom, are AACCCUP accreditors. The internal assessment system (body) will be tasked to:

1. conduct self-surveys using the AACCCUP instrument which may be validated by external accreditors;
2. conduct internal assessment by discipline, or even by program, for the use of the individual institutions, and hold follow-up activities after an institutional accreditation is conducted; and
3. plan, provide technical advice, and monitor implementation of survey team recommendations made by external accreditors.

3.6 The Levels of Accreditation

In AACCCUP, as in the other accrediting agencies, we have adopted four (4) levels of accreditation (Incidentally, PASUC has adopted a similar classification scheme for SUCs although using different criteria and designed for a different purpose).

Most European countries adopt only two (2) classifications of institutions: accredited or not accredited. The disadvantage of this scheme is that it removes the incentive of the accredited institutions to aspire for a higher status, to be different from the rest.

India, taking notice of this observation in the European countries, has modified the classification scheme. She still makes a distinction between the accredited or not accredited, but for the former, is a leveling from 1-star ascending to 5-star institutions.

Under this new scheme where we intend to use the whole institution as the unit of assessment, there is an advantage of using a 4-level accreditation status to classify accredited programs, provided that we do away with the confusing label of

level I as only granting candidate status, not yet accredited. It would be advisable to use level I as the initial accreditation, and then improve upwards to level IV.

It is conceived that the grant of accreditation, valid only for a certain period (say five years for re-accredited status), may still be retained. However, the practice of requiring that accreditation status must pass through pre-determined stages must be re-examined. For example, why should an institution be required to qualify first for level II if it is already qualified for level III?

4.0 Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, this writer has been commissioned to prepare the new accreditation design. This paper is an initial approximation of a framework of a new accreditation model which will depart from program and shift to the institution, as the unit of assessment. In preparing this paper, this writer has profited from country papers on accreditation or quality assurance, the ideas of a few foreign experts that this writer has met at the INQAAHE (International Network on Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) and other foreign

conference, from stakeholders like officials from CHED and SUCs, private sector education experts and the officials of AACCUP. Certainly, comments and recommendations from this group of senior accreditors would be most welcomed.

References:

- Harman, G. (1996). Quality Assurance for Higher Education (Developing and Managing Quality Assurance for Higher Education systems and Institution in Asia and Pacific). Bangkok: UNESCO-PROAP.
- HKCAA (1995). Institutional Review Report: Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation.
- Indhapanya, W. (2000). "Standard for Quality Assurance: A Case of Thai Higher Education." International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Bangkok, Thailand.
- Kogan, M., I. Moses, and E. El-Khawas (1995). Staffing Higher Education: Meeting New Challenges. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Lee, H.C. (2000). "Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Standards and Mechanisms in Korea." International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Bangkok, Thailand, November 2000.

Tavakol, M. (1999). Higher Education Status in Iran. Research and Planning in Higher Education, 6(4), 1-26.

Vroeijentijin, A.I. (1994). "External Quality Assessment, Servant of Two Masters? The Netherlands Perspectives." in A. Craft (ed.). Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Proceedings of an International Conference. London: The Falmer Press.

Webb, C. (2000). "Mechanisms for Quality Assurance." International Conference on Quality in Higher Education in Bangkok, Thailand, November 2000.

The Thai Standards for Quality Assurance

W. Indhanya

On behalf of the Council of University Presidents of Thailand
(CUPT)

ABSTRACT

The old system of quality control in Thai higher education is considered not good enough. The new law requires that an internal quality assurance system must be employed by the university, an external quality assurance will be introduced, and report will be made available to the public. The purpose of the paper is to review and assess the standards for quality assurance system in Thai higher education.

Keywords and phrases: internal quality assurance.

1.0 Introduction

In 1999, the new National Education Act was announced and quality assurance for all levels of education was required by law for the first time in Thailand. Universities in Thailand are classified by ownership into private and public universities. Both are under supervision of the Ministry of the University Affairs, but there was no quality assurance as a system like today. Private universities are under close supervision by the Ministry of University Affairs as they have to go through several steps of approval and review by external committee. It may take years before a private university is accredited, even so it has to go through the process of

quality control again for any new degree program. At the other end is a much less control for public universities. They were established by law with certain powers under their own legislations. The Ministry of University Affairs provides guidelines and final approval, but does not have any audition or review after the approval.

Like many countries, quality control in higher education depends heavily on the university itself. Certainly, it does not mean that Thai universities do not take quality of education seriously. They always look for academic excellence, unfortunately they may see this as an internal management rather than an information made

available to the public. University ranking has never been done in Thailand but academic reputation is known in each area of study among all universities. There seems to be an implicit ranking known by the public.

2.0 Quality Assurance Under the Ministry of University Affairs

The idea of having quality assurance system for Thai universities originated from the Ministry of University Affairs. In July, 1996, the Ministry announced for the first time about its policy on quality assurance. The Ministry has put effort to encourage universities to make academic standards. The policy has required all public universities to install the internal auditing system as a means to maintain the quality of education at present and to improve it in the future. This policy has been stated as quoted below.

“1. The Ministry of University Affairs will provide and develop the quality assurance system and mechanism as an instrument in maintaining the institution’s

academic standards. The principle of stimulating institutions is to establish an academic quality control system including their continuous mission improvement on the basis of academic freedom and of an autonomous nature. This is a way to ensure public accountability requirements which lead to wide acceptance in academic standards and international competency in a world competition. To make this measurement work, the subcommittee of educational standards has been established for supervision, providing academic standards, administration, and accreditation.

2. The Ministry of University Affairs will enable

-
- institutions to develop their own internal quality assurance system as a tool in the development of educational management. It is a way to create an internal quality control mechanism with higher education institutions that would be efficient. Therefore, any institution is able to establish its own appropriate internal quality control for its implementation and evaluation system.
3. The Ministry of University Affairs has established the principles and the initial procedure of practical measures in educational quality assurance which each institution can develop appropriately in accordance with each institution condition. By this measure, a quality assurance manual is used to provide detailed information for the improvement of each institutional quality assurance system.
 4. The Ministry of University affairs will encourage each institution to establish its own quality audit mechanism at both the institution and discipline levels in order to gain wider acceptance.
 5. The Ministry of University affairs supports and encourages both public and private departments / institutions including academic or professional associations to participate in higher educational quality assurance activities.
 6. The Ministry of University Affairs will facilitate institutions to widely and publicly distribute their

information and the results of institutional quality assurance activities for society's acknowledgement of higher educational standards. It also helps parents and students to decide on which educational institution to choose for study, including details of financial support for the institution's administration."

The Ministry of University affairs has organized several workshops and seminars since then to implement its policy on quality assurance. Along the way, Thai university administrations have learned new concepts such as quality auditing, quality assessment, internal quality assurance, external quality assurance, self-assessment report, quality assurance index, etc. Most of them are imported from abroad, especially from United Kingdom and Australia. The policy is to improve the standard of teaching and academic environment in public universities. There was no formal assessment showing the declining quality of public

universities, but the policy indicated clearly what the problems in Thai higher education were. This was very unfortunate for all public universities as one could misunderstand that university education in Thailand had poor quality. In fact there is other reason for public universities to adopt fund in the manner that best quality can be assured. Evidence of quality can not be certified solely by the universities. It has to be done through the process of external evaluation.

To implement its policy, the Ministry has proposed several indicators of quality assurance. Finally, the indicators have been grouped into 9 aspects of higher education criteria as the following:

*

- Mission, objectives, planning
- Teaching and learning
- Student recreational activities
- Research
- Social academic service
- Preservation of arts and culture
- Administration
- Budgeting
- Quality assurance and enhancement

It should be noted that the

idea of having external assessment is quite a radical change to all public universities which have long enjoyed the privilege of academic freedom and self-regulated system. It needs a lot of effort and good strategy to have a smooth operation. Above all, the policy must be cooperated by university community. Knowing the nature of university people, the ministry has selected a good strategic approach leading to a successful implementation. But this is just the beginning; there are a lot more to be done. However, the Ministry has taken a significant step in introducing quality assurance to higher education in Thailand. It can be seen as a milestone in the history of Thai educational system.

There is one more reason for the Thai public universities to be cooperative under the new quality assurance scheme introduced by the Ministry of University Affairs. The universities always want to be free from government regulations on budget and employment. As a government unit, the budgeting is controlled by the Budget Bureau and the Comptroller General's Department. The university people always look at these regulations as inefficient and an obstacle to good university administration (though they may

not agree on what should be a good university administration). They would prefer funding by block grant to the existing budgeting system. The government can give a block grant to the universities only when there is something to ensure that the universities will spend the grant to produce good quality education. Therefore, to be autonomous, the universities must be under quality assurance system with external review. Under the new law, the public universities will have to choose between becoming an autonomous university or staying under the normal budgeting procedure. At this point, all of them are scheduled to be autonomous (with the block grant funding) by 2002. So far, there is no resistance from the universities to join the quality assurance system. The Ministry has set schedule for first round visit by external reviewers at the department level.

There are three components within the external quality assurance. Firstly, the Ministry will send a team to audit the internal quality assurance system. Secondly, the external reviewers will assess the quality based on 9 aspects of higher education criteria. Thirdly, a recognition (or accreditation) will

be made for the institution. The purposes of external control are:

- to approve the quality index used internally.
- to approve the system of internal quality assurance.
- to audit the effectiveness of internal quality control.
- To assess the quality and to provide recommendations for improvement.

The external reviewing team consisting of 3 - 5 persons, appointed by the Ministry of University Affairs, will visit the department for 3 - 4 days. The team will report to the Educational Standard Sub-Committee. The report will be available to the public. Any university that does not pass the assessment must show improvement within 2 years, the recognition will last for 5 years for those that pass the assessment.

At this moment the system of quality assurance for public university in Thailand is not in a complete cycle. Recently, about 6 medical schools have been visited to audit their internal quality assurance systems. Thailand has not yet experienced the full process of quality assurance. No one really knows what will happen in the future when the new Accreditation

and Quality Assessment Office begins its operation. For Thailand only part of the lesson has been learned.

3.0 The Internal Quality Assurance

The internal quality control is seen by many as a vital part of quality assurance. What can be done at most by an external reviewer is to reflect what the university is, he can not make any change in it. The strength of a university must come from its own internal management. Poor quality is caused by the production process not from the outside examiner. A good quality control by the university itself can ensure students will graduate with good quality as demanded in the labor market.

Public universities have their own quality control for a long time, but the system employed can not produce supporting evidence ready for external review. They screen the lectures, they always want to recruit good students, and these are part of quality control. There are several committees in a university working on how to improve teaching, curriculum, or research. There is a committee to take care of the environment and

cleanliness on campus. These are somehow related to quality assurance, but when asked to produce a report on how the quality is controlled, most of us just do not have such report on hand. The evidence are scattering in all places, unorganized, and perhaps unwritten. The internal quality assurance should help us to do a good documentation on what we have done to maintain or to improve the quality. It allows you to take a good look at yourself. If you look good, you will have supporting documents ready for external reviewers. If you look bad you will know what should be fixed up so that by the time the external reviewers come you will be in good shape.

The Ministry of University Affairs has encouraged the universities to do the self-study report at the departmental level and at the institutional level. Guidelines and handbooks have been distributed, and workshops have been organized to make sure that we can produce the required self-study report. Basically, a self-study report will contain a) introduction, b) analysis of strength and weakness, c) summary, and d) appendix, which contains appointed quality assurance committees at the departmental level. The committee

may be responsible for planning for activities related to quality assurance such as necessary trainings, workshops, dissemination of good practice, provision of handbook, etc. The committee will decide on how to do the internal quality control, but no matter what system is chosen, the Self-Study Report must be prepared for external review. This report is a self evaluation by all internal units. It covers from objectives or targets to final output, from professors to students, and from programs to supporting facilities.

Many universities expressed some disagreement with the quality assurance at the beginning. To be evaluated is something that Thai university lecturers are not used to. Ironically many of them have Western educational background where class evaluation is a normal practice. This is the part when university administrators have to find the best way to sell the idea of quality assurance. It certainly can not be rushed, and it should be made clear that there is no negative measure or penalty involved in this process.

4.0 The Lessons Learned

Most of the public

universities are in the stage of setting up their internal quality assurance system; only a few have experienced the external audition. The lessons learned are mainly for internal auditing and assessment. The following lessons may not exactly happen in all universities, but should describe the general situation shared by public universities.

Lesson #1 The quality assurance needs administrative leadership. It would be difficult to start the issue from bottom up. It should be seen as a challenge to university society rather than a mandatory measure.

Lesson #2 To be successful the quality assurance should gain participation from all groups of personnel in the organization. Once the system has been installed, the bottom up process should be encouraged.

Lesson #3 The quality assurance will be very effective if there is a strong culture of a) quality first, and b) evaluation in the organization.

Lesson #4 There is a cost and time involved in setting up the quality assurance system. The university has to provide manpower and budget to support it. Another significant supporting factor is a good data base. Good quality assurance also requires resources.

Lesson #5 It should be made as clear as possible that the quality assurance is a long term commitment included in the university's planning and monitoring. By doing so the quality assurance will become a routine job.

5.0 The Problems

There is no report of major problems up to this point. But some problems are expected when the quality assurance comes to its full cycle. Under the new legislation, the quality assurance will be transferred from the Ministry of University Affairs to the Ministry of Education. Some transitional problems may arise. The more serious problem is the shortage of qualified external reviewers. Training can be provided to train external reviewers but not all of

them will be respected by the universities. Thai university community is a small world, those who are in the same area often know each other. There might be some conflict of interest. There is a question on standard and quality of the reviewing team. The standard of quality assurance also needs a quality control of external assessment. How could this be done effectively?

Another standard problem is what we do not have any common understanding on what should be a standard. The suggestion is to set a minimum standard for a field of study, but one can imagine how hard it is to set a measurable standard in academic world. It is possible for a university to do a survey on employer's satisfaction and use it for quality improvement. But the market demand will change overtime. Academic quality can be dynamic, and so to set a standard will be more difficult.

In sum, the quality

assurance for public universities in Thailand has just begun. We do not have many lessons of our own, and it is too early to conclude that we do not have any problems. But we can say that there is a breakthrough in Thai higher education, and that we have moved into the right direction. In the world of competition, quality is always the answer.

References:

Ashworth A, Harvey R (1994) "Assessing Quality in Further and Higher Education." Higher Education Policy Ser. No. 24 ISBN 1-85302-539-9.

Parsons C ed. (1994) Quality Improvement in Education: Case Studies in Schools, Colleges and Universities. ISBN 1-85346-327-2.

Rieley J B (1994) Total Quality Management in Higher Education. Diane Publishing ISBN 0-7881-1293-7.

Unit of Assessment for Accreditation

Antony Stella and A. Gnanam

ABSTRACT

One major aspect that needs careful attention is the choice of the “Unit” for assessment. Almost all countries have some mechanisms already in place which would assess the institution as a whole. This paper gives the description of each of the units of assessment in which the choice seems to depend on many considerations. The size of the national system of higher education as a whole, the specific purpose for which the assessment has been commissioned, the significance of the outcomes to the stakeholders, its viability, and above all, the feasibility of such reviews are some of them.

Keywords and Phrases: unit of assessment, institution, faculty, academic program

1.0 Introduction

An analysis of the current practices of the national accrediting agencies of different countries reveals a great deal of diversity. They vary in structure and function. Some of them are established and supported by their respective governments. Others are either independent or quasi-government bodies and, in a few countries, they are formed as an institutional consortium. These bodies may undertake only the accreditation on a two-point scale or carry out an elaborate assessment and grade the units or restrict themselves to the overall academic audit without grading. Likewise, many of them

may confine assessment to the review of either teaching and learning or the research activities of the unit or do both. Other aspects of such variations are many, and, therefore, one cannot say which is the best. However, for a given frame of reference, one can attempt to identify the best model that is most suitable for the national context.

2.0 Institution as the Unit of Assessment

While evolving and operationalizing quality assurance mechanisms, we may come across many issues, the relative level of importance which will fall somewhere between the macro and

micro approaches. The overall size of the higher educational network varies with the countries. The total number of students enrolled, and number of institutions - universities and colleges - involved are some of the factors that will determine the size of the system.

It ranges from a single University (Mauritius) to hundreds of them as in USA, Russia and India. India which has the second largest network of higher education system, has 245 universities and about 11,000 colleges with more than 8 million students enrolled. Obviously, for any country which has a large sized educational system, choosing any unit smaller than the *institution*, will have many practical difficulties. If one chooses the *department of study* or the discipline as unit, in a country like India with its large number of universities and colleges, the number of units to be assessed will run into a few hundreds or thousands, a stupendous and practically difficult job to be done within the normal assessment cycle of 4 to 5 years. In a country like UK, where there is a relatively smaller number of large institutions, the choice was made some years ago to use the program as the unit of assessment and two cycles have been completed so far.

In a country like India where there is a large number of smaller institutions, the institution happens to be the obvious choice. In Canada, education is a provincial responsibility and there is no 'national level' mechanism in place for quality assurance. In fact, some of the provinces follow 'quality assurance' procedures, quite similar to our 'affiliating functions'. At the provincial level, it is possible for them to focus on programs. Even in New Zealand and Hong Kong since the number of institutions to be covered is very low, program level or aspect level assessment like assessment of Teaching-Learning Quality Review could be possible.

Apart from the practical aspects, the use of an institution as a unit of assessment has many advantages. The academic quality is justifiably defined as, not the quality of individual teachers but the collective impact of an overall academic program designed and delivered by the institution as a whole for providing the desired knowledge, skills and competencies (QAA document). It is true, as it is indeed, then the assessment strategy should focus on the *collective impact*. In that case, the institution will be the obvious choice as a unit of assessment because institutions are responsible

for the introduction of new programs based on the current trends and changed expectations and for their design and delivery of the course. Individuals do contribute but they cannot do so without the academic soundness of the institution. It is the responsibility of the institutions to provide the academic environment that helps in developing the cognitive and general skills that fall beyond the realm of subject specialization and classroom teaching. Likewise, only the institution can facilitate the multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary programs through coordination among the various constituent departments of studies.

It is also the responsibility of the institutional management to provide the various infrastructure and learning resources such as central library, computer centers, residential halls, facilities for sports and games, cultural activities, academic activities like seminars, debating etc. These significantly contribute to self-learning, acquisition of self-confidence and leadership qualities. Institutions act as the training ground for several skills such as communication, capacity to work in a team, citizenry and other expected or implicit maturity among the

students. The ideal and rich corporate life of the many campuses generally provides opportunities for students to develop their inherent talents and institutions are empowered to provide the needed rich ambiance in the campuses for this purpose. In fact, the institution as a whole is responsible for providing all the implicit and explicit provisions for developing desired knowledge, values and skills among students. Consequently, only when the institution is assessed for its mission, objectives, policies, principles, processes and various inputs, one can get an insight into the quality of education offered.

Another advantage of using the institution as a unit of assessment is its direct usefulness and relevance to the major stakeholders, such as the government which funds, the prospective students and the employers who hire the graduates. The institution is the unit of funding by the government or the private foundations and Trusts all over the world. Though certain specific programs of studies and many research projects may be funded by different individual sponsors to a faculty or a department of studies, the lasting and sustainable funding -

maintenance or block grants - comes only to the institution from the state and not directly to any of the subsystems. Even the agencies that provide support to individuals insist on institutional commitment for accountability and in many cases the institution is the proper channel through which the transaction takes place.

Likewise the public consciousness of academic quality is built around the institution rather than any specific course or degree even though the faculty and the quality programs contribute to the image of the institution. After all, the departments form the backdrop for the institutional assessment and without them the assessment is impossible. The students and parents choose an institution for study mainly because of the standing, reputation and the tradition of the institution and not based on the quality of discipline-based academic program(s), when they complete their high school or graduation. Even the public philanthropy seems to favor the institution as a whole.

Although the situation may be different in the developed world, looking for the *critical size* of the unit is an important factor for undertaking assessment work. In

countries where undergraduate education is separated and offered in affiliated colleges, the size of the individual unit is generally reduced. Even the institution as a whole may find it difficult to qualify if a critical number of students on the roll is insisted upon.

Many state universities in India and in the Indian subcontinent, have a large number of small colleges affiliated to them which take care of the undergraduate education, while the universities provide only post graduate and research programs. The result of this bifurcation is that neither the colleges nor the affiliating universities normally have more than 1000 to 1500 students. The few unitary universities may be exceptions. In such cases, for the extent of efforts and the time involved for the assessment work, the outcome may not commensurate with the efforts. It is a futile task to take up a unit which is smaller than the institution as a whole viz. a university or a college.

There are also certain disadvantages in the choice of the institution as a unit of assessment. An overall assessment-based single grade for the whole institution may not distinguish between the good

and bad sub-units. At the surface level, it may appear that even the not so well performing groups are protected under the institutional umbrella. If this is the only reservation against institutional assessment, the reporting can be suitably adapted to include departmental evaluation on specific pre-determined aspects. A more realistic and practical difficulty will be in assessing institutions that are large, and offer hundreds of program options with many thousands of students in one or more campuses.

3.0 Academic Program as Unit of Assessment

The academic programs as unit of assessment will have the advantage of being well focused and will provide opportunities to look into the micro details. It can provide the right kind of inputs to discriminating beneficiaries like the employer and students. It will not have the difficulties one would encounter in assessing the institution as a whole. However, the disadvantages of choosing this as a unit of assessment are:

- At the national level, the number of such units offering the various programs will be too large and consequently one

would end up with a large number of such units to assess in a 5 or 7 point scale.

- Normally any program at a given institution may not involve more than a few faculty and a few students and consequently the unit size will be too small for such a big effort.
- Compared to the institution as whole, the composition and character of the group offering a program may undergo frequent changes. If a faculty or two move out of the institution, the quality of the offerings will suffer and hence, the outcomes of the assessment may not be tenable for any extended time.
- The programs of interest to the students and the employers at one time may not be so in a few years. It is likely that some such programs will not even be there after one or two year cycles, thus making the assessment effort futile.
- Even though the program offerings are done by the department/school, most of

the infrastructural facilities such as library, computer centers and other learning resources may be shared with others and their quality is determined by the central governance structure rather than by the departments of studies.

- Many programs that are inter-disciplinary in nature and offered by more than one department with the varying responsibilities may not pose a problem when everything is in order. If there happens to be a bottleneck at any juncture, identifying the cause and taking appropriate value judgments become difficult and this will pose a serious problem in objective assessment.

4.0 Faculty as the Unit of Assessment

Apparently, the faculty, where related discipline-based departments of studies are grouped such as Faculty of Arts, Science, Languages, Medicine, Engineering etc. constitute a relatively homogeneous group with an ideal size to be used as a unit of

assessment. Unfortunately such a unit is practically unknown to the stakeholders and therefore may not be useful. It is neither a unit of funding by the public nor a unit of academic offering. Therefore, except for its practical advantage as a manageable sub-unit of the system for assessment, it can offer very little to the stakeholders like the funding agencies, employers or to the students.

An entirely different approach in selecting the unit of assessment will be, to take up the different academic aspects like the teaching and learning process or the research component of either the institution or the department of studies. In England, the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) directly assesses the quality of the research in the departments or schools of studies and rates them for differential funding. This process is done by an in-house group called RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) unit with well laid out protocols and uses the outcomes to fund the research activities. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) which is an autonomous body partially financed by the HEFCE undertakes the assessment work of the academic aspects of the programs of studies offered by all the

institutions. In Canada, Commission for Evaluation of College Education (CEEC) of Quebec attempted a different approach to begin with and now it is moving towards 'institutional review'. CEEC once carried out two types of assessment - the general component of the college studies and the specific component of the college programs - for the select programs in all the 47 colleges of the Quebec province. After involving a cross section of faculty in all the colleges, now CEEC is promoting institutional assessment.

While the discipline-wise or aspect-wise assessment provides a horizontal review of the select aspect across institutions, the institutional review yields the top down vertical assessment. While the former may be good for well-developed institutions in the not so advanced nations.

5.0 Conclusion

To sum up, it is important that we choose the unit of assessment in the national context. One has to look at the various

factors such as the size of higher education system as a whole, feasibility of completing the assessment cycle within a pre-set assessment cycle, viability in terms of having a minimal critical size for assessment, and the sustainability of the unit.

References:

Astin, A.W. (1991). Assessment for Excellence: The Philosophy and Practice of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education. New York: Macmillan.

Craft, A. (1992). "Quality assurance in higher education." Proceedings of an International Conference, Hong Kong, 1991. Bristol, PA: The Falmer Press, Taylor and Francis, Inc.

Curry, W., & Hager, E. (1987). "Assessing General Education: Trenton State College." in D. F. Halpern (Ed.). Student Outcomes Assessment: What Institutions Stand to Gain: New Directions for Higher Education No. 59 (pp. 57-65). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

A Quality-Based Normative Financing for State Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines

Roberto N. Padua
CHED Representative
For
Technical Working Group on Normative Financing

ABSTRACT

The annual government subsidy given to state colleges and universities is often characterized as a negotiated funding scheme. Historically, such subsidies have been incremental in nature responsive to economic inflation factors but not necessarily to quality consideration. A recent proposal of the Commission on Higher Education, following the pattern of the U. K.'s Funding Council, considers the link between funding and quality in higher education.

Keyword and Phrases: normative financing, state universities and colleges, Funding Council, block grant.

1.0 Introduction

The sheer number of state universities and colleges in the Philippines demands a more rationale approach to budgeting. For FY 2002, the appropriation for these 110 state institutions of higher learning amounted to P12.6.B. Such huge investment outlay invites public pressure demanding for accountability as part of the institutions' quality assurance system.

The main rationale for rationalizing the budgeting process of state universities and colleges is on grounds of efficiency. Certain inequities in the allocation of state resources point to the inefficient operation of the institution. Two colleges that offer the same programs and have similar conditions obtaining in them receive differentiated funding levels. The variances that are observed in these institutions are often so wide that the budgets appropriated defy logical

explanation. Such inequalities and inefficiencies are to be expected in a situation where funding is negotiated.

In a negotiated funding model, the state schools prepare an annual budget proposal. The budget proposals are submitted to the budget agency, the Department of Budget and Management, which scrutinizes the proposals based on an approved budget ceiling. The DBM-received proposals are then incorporated in the President's proposed National Expenditure Program (NEP) which, in turn, is submitted to Congress for deliberation. Budget negotiations begin at the DBM level when political figures try to intercede in behalf of the concerned SUC's. The negotiations continue until the budget process culminates in the signing of the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

The "winners" in this negotiated funding process are the SUCs with strong political backing while the "losers" are those without political clout. Consequently, the resulting budgetary appropriations do not reflect the actual needs of the SUCs, are insensitive to quality parameters and often, defy logical criteria for funding.

Budgetary inequities and inefficiencies translate into poor overall performance of the higher education system. For instance, for the same total national budget for SUCs and with increasing number of SUCs, the per capita share of the individual institutions generally shrink. The more established SUCs feel the budgetary cuts less but the less developed ones are the ones that ultimately suffer the most.

Realizing this situation, the Commission on Higher Education, since 1999, began inputting quality considerations in the SUC budgets. In FY 2002, exactly 20% of the maintenance budget of SUCs are explained by such quality measures as: a) passing rate in board examinations, b) identification as Center of Excellence or Development, and c) above the national passing rate for licensure examinations. It is envisioned that the percentage of SUC budgets explained by quality measures will be increased to 100% by FY 2004. The platform through which this objective can be achieved is through normative financing.

2.0 Analysis of SUC Budgets: FY 2002

More than eighty percent (80%) of the SUC budgets are

dedicated to support salaries, wages and benefits of personnel (PS cost), 15% are allocated for maintenance and operation (MOOE) and 5% for capital or infrastructure outlay (CO). This simple breakdown of SUC budgets shows that the operations of these state schools are jeopardized. For instance, the 15% allocation for MOOE are almost consumed by the mandatory expenditure on light and water, gasoline and lubricants, travel, and necessary supplies and materials. The subsidy provided by the national government to SUCs is almost devoted entirely to cover the salaries and wages of SUC personnel. The FY 2002 situation is a replica of the SUC budgets over the last decade.

The inequities are observed by analyzing the individual SUC budgets. In the National Capital Region (NCR), seven (7) SUCs share an MOOE budget of over P800M. The largest, in terms of enrollment, is the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (enrollment = 65,000), followed by the University of the Philippines System (enrollment = 56,000), yet more than 75% of the MOOE budget is allocated for the UP system with the remaining 25% shared by the six other SUCs. The lopsided budgetary allocation

becomes even more pronounced in the Capital Outlay (CO) appropriations: more than 85% of the CO budget for SUCs are allocated for the UP system the remaining 15% are shared by the other 109 state schools.

Perhaps these inequities can be explained partly by quality considerations. However, since only 20% of the MOOE budgets in FY 2002 are explained by quality parameters, the remarkable budgetary differentiation between SUC cannot be fully explained.

There are other features of the SUC budget for FY 2002 that deserve further scrutiny. The pro-poor and Mindanao-focus of the present administration's agenda are hardly reflected in the Appropriations Act for SUCs. For instance, CARAGA, the poorest among all the regions in the country and host to two (2) of the most depressed provinces in the Philippines, received the lowest SUC appropriations. There are four (4) state colleges in the region, one for each province. Of this number, three (3) are newly-established SUCs whose operating standards are way below what is expected of higher education institutions. In all three new SUCs, there are no library buildings (except for

makeshift libraries out of old classrooms), the laboratory facilities are out dated or non-existent; faculty expertise is not congruent to higher education standards. All these should have been concrete considerations if the budgets were made sensitive to quality and development concerns.

3.0 Normative Financing for SUCs

In 2001, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided Technical Assistance to the Commission on Higher Education to study and reform the SUC budgeting system. The ADB consultants with the experts from the Commission submitted a report to CHED recommending the use of a normative financing model for the state universities and colleges to address the issues of inequity and inefficiency in the use of government resources.

The use of a normative financing model (NFM) for SUCs is anchored on the premise that the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) will take the role of a Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC). This premise is based on the fact that among all agencies of the national government, it is CHED that directly deals with the

SUCs. CHED is supposed to develop and implement a funding formula that will be more equitable and will lead to greater internal and external efficiency among the SUCs.

The funding formula takes into account parameters related to: a) quality, b) typology, and c) demand for higher education courses. In particular, the formula is given by:

$$\text{Number of student Places} = a \times \text{Quality} + b \times \text{Typology} + c \times \text{Demand}$$

$$(1) \dots \text{Budget for the } i\text{th program} = \text{No. of Student Places} \times \text{Cost Per Student Per Program}$$

where a, b, c, are positive constants, $a + b + c = 1$.

The parameters Q (quality), D (demand) and T (typology) are explained in detail:

Quality

Measurement of quality (of SUC programs) is a difficult, albeit, tedious exercise. At best, quality can be inferred from some surrogate measures, the crudest of which is to say “1” if quality is

perceived “0”, otherwise. For example:

Quality = 1, if program is accredited at least level II
= 0, else

or

Quality = 1, if passing percentage in board exam is above national average
= 0, else

Whatever measure is adopted, CHED needs to decide and make public its own quality-assessment procedure.

Demand

Demand is, theoretically, measured from the point of view of the end-users of the higher education graduates. Thus, demand needs to be based on a labor market information system (LMIS). In the meantime that such an information system is not available, CHED may opt to adopt a ranking of higher education courses based on priority needs. Thus,

1, if program is within CHED’s priority list

Demand =
0, else

Typology

The issue on typology is a ticklish one. How should an SUC be classified? A prevailing school of thought avers that SUCs can be classified into: Agricultural, Science and Polytechnics, Normal schools or Comprehensive Universities.

If the basis for classifying SUCs is their respective Charters, then all SUCs are comprehensive colleges and universities. It is therefore logical to classify SUCs on the basis of their official names. Thus,

1, if program is within an SUC typology
Typology =
0, else

Constants

The constants a,b, and c are positive weights (percentages) applied to the parameters Q, D and T. The determination of such weights should come from CHED.

Cost Per Student Per Program

Ideally, the cost per student per program should account for the investment needed to educate one (1) student in a given program at a level comparable with international

standards. This can be a staggering figure by Philippine standards. For example, an Engineering student in Hongkong pays at least \$6,000 per annum (PhP 300,000); in the United States the same student pays \$7,500 per annum (PhP500,000). The cost per student if the Philippine varies from a low of P9,500 per annum to a high of P97,500 per annum, both figures being way below international rates.

The idea of international comparability of costs needs to be abandoned. The CHED may have to compromise costs observed in the public school system and the private school system.

4.0 Issues, Problems and Prospects of Normative Financing

Normative financing does not purport to cure all the ills of public higher education funding. On the contrary, it is recognized that the implementation of such a financing scheme in the Philippine setting is replete with pitfalls and difficulties. Some of the issues that are raised relative to this financing scheme are:

Issue 1. Legislative and Executive Compatibility of NF

The new role of CHED as an independent funding council requires that CHED relinquishes its role as Chairperson of the Boards of SUCs. This is in direct opposition to the provisions of Republic Act 8292.

Apart from this difficulty which can be remedied through an amendment of the law, it is also doubtful that Congress will give up its power relative to the budgets of SUCs. A strict application of NF will result in an objective budget figure for an SUC which cannot be changed by a Congressional initiative.

Issue 2. Comparability of the SUCs

A major difficulty in the application of NF is the basic assumptions that the “playing field is even”. The playing field is not even, as can be gleaned from the level of development of the SUCs. A straight application of NF will wipe out more than 50% of the existing SUCs with no capability to generate their own income. It is therefore important to implement NF, if at all, in phases.

Issue 3. Should NF Include PS or Not?

How does one compute the cost per student per program? Should this computation include the PS or not? If PS is included, how will the government deal with the government officials that cannot be funded by NF? On the other hand, if PS is not included then NF will rationalize only 15% of the SUC budgets.

One school of thought avers that PS should be included as a “shadow budget”. This means that the full subsidy to PS normally given to SUCs will continue, but the benchmark NF results will be the basis for the gradual attrition of the work force.

5.0 Concluding Statement

The need to rationalize the SUC budgets in the Philippines is a

concrete and urgent concern of the government. Normative financing provides an avenue for such reforms in resource allocation for higher education. Perhaps, the full effect of NF will not be felt in the immediate future but will certainly be appreciated one or two decades later.

References:

Preddy, J. et al. “ADB-PPTA on Normative Financing”. (A Technical Report Submitted to CHED, 2001).

Padua, R. et al. “Legislative and Executive Compatibility of Normative Financing ”. (A Report of the TWG on Normative Financing Submitted to CHED, 2002).

Towards a Quality Model for Higher Education

A. I. Vroeijenstijn
Senior Consultant

Quality Assurance and Quality Assessment
Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU)

ABSTRACT

The quality movement in Higher Education caused the development of instruments for internal quality management and external quality assessment and accreditation. Models are always helpful instruments in auditing or assessing the institutions and disciplines. The paper aims to introduce quality models that would help an institution in quality management.

Keywords and phrases: quality assurance, EFQM-model, SWOT-analyses, quality models

1.0 Introduction

Since the last three decades of the past century, higher education is confronted with the rise of a quality culture. Quality, quality assurance and quality assessment, is a booming business. Higher education is not only confronted with the requirement to assure its quality but also show its quality to the outside world in the framework of accountability.

Of course, higher education did look around to see what could be learned from industry and if it was possible to apply models, like, the EFQM. Already at an early stage it

became clear that, for example, the EFQM model could be difficult to apply in higher education without substantial changes. The reasons are:

- A Higher Education Institute is not a firm; it is not a cookie factory producing graduates.
- Talking about Higher Education, it is not clear what the product is. Is it the graduates? Or is the product that provided courses?
 - Also the client is not clear. Who is the client of Higher Education? The

student? The employer?
The Minister? The society
at large?

- Higher Education is a professional organization and not a hierarchical one. A Higher Education Institute depends on the quality of experts, not easily to lead or to steer.
- The EFQM-model is more of a model aiming at organization development and organization improvement and is not aiming at the improvement of quality per se. Therefore, the EFQM-model might be useful to analyze organization management, but not to assess the quality.
- The concept of quality in education is much more complicated than the concept of quality in industry.
- Quality control in industry has not the specific feature of accountability, like it is introduced in Higher Education. This means that models for quality management and self-

assessment should fit with the methods and requirements set by agencies for external quality assessment.

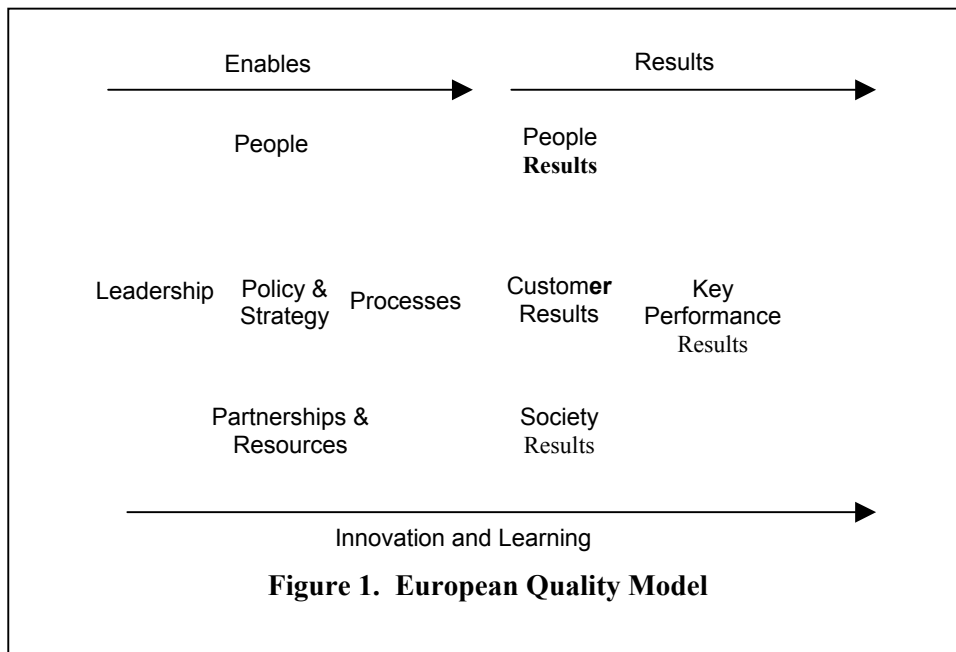
2.0 Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Since the 80s of the past century, quality, quality assurance and quality assessment became hot topics in Higher Education. The US had already a tradition of more than 100 years of accreditation and quality assessment, but for example in Western Europe quality was considered to be present because the governments were steering Higher Education very centrally. This changed in an area of more autonomy, more consumer orientation, more market orientation. Higher Education was forced to take care of its quality by internally assuring the quality and externally showing the quality. So far, quality has been the individual responsibility of every professor, now the institutions are held accountable for it. It is interesting to see that the pressure from outside, asking for accountability also caused internal quality management.

Interestingly, Higher Education did choose an approach

that differs from the approach in industry. Industry has already a long tradition in quality control. One of the gurus, Deming, developed quality

several quality models in use. Maybe the best known is the EFQM-model (E= European Foundation for Quality



models and ideas for Total Quality Management. In the ISO-9000 series, both a definition for quality has been given and criteria for quality control. Industry has developed the ISO-certificate, recognized all over the world and telling the client that the firm is meeting certain assessed criteria for quality control. There are

Management). (see figure 1).

In the past decades Higher Education developed its own working process. Nowadays, many countries in the world have an agency for accreditation and/or external assessment of the Higher Education institutions. This might be on institutional level or at

program/discipline or subject area level. Of course, all agencies are working in their own national context. There are differences but also a lot of similarities in the approach. In general there are very little differences in answering the question how it is done. Differences have much more to do with the why. In general the quality assurance model in Higher Education looks like the model, given in figure 2.

The characteristics of the general EQA-model are the following:

- It is based on self-analysis and external assessment by peers.
- The external assessment is organized by an independent agency. If the agency is not independent, at least the committees can

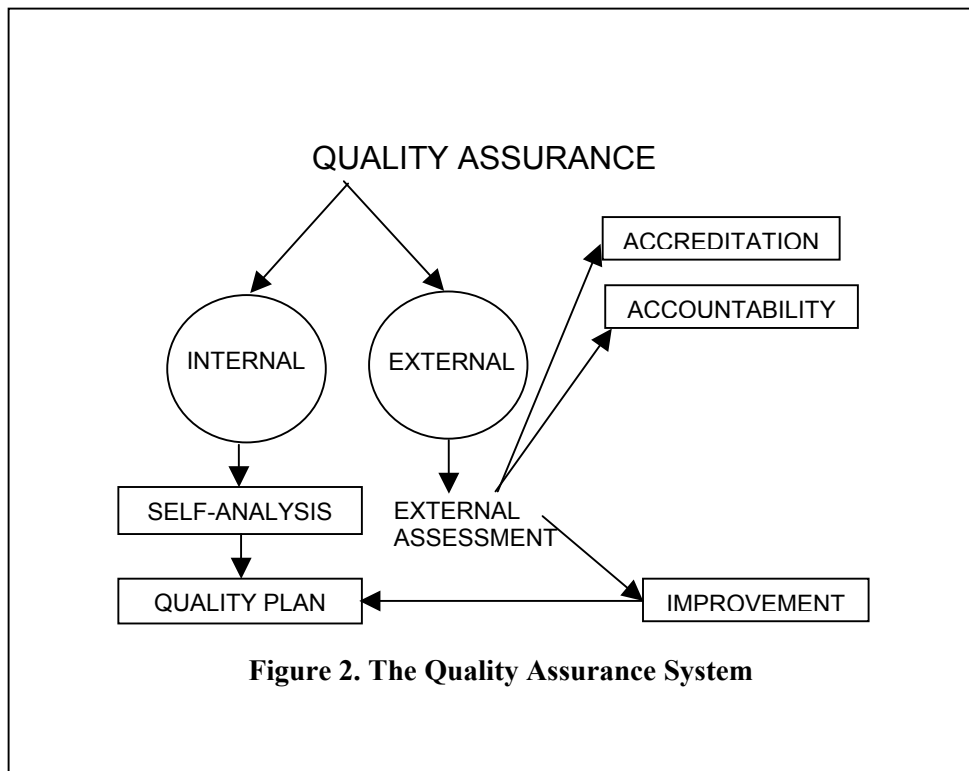


Figure 2. The Quality Assurance System

act independently.

- It has both internal functions (accountability, quality label, accreditation).
- There is generally spoken, a public report of the external assessment
- It looks not only at quality procedures, but tries to catch quality itself by looking to input quality, process quality and output quality.

As said, it is difficult to apply the EFQM-model in Higher Education, although we see a lot of temptations to make the model applicable to Higher Education. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that all manuals and guidelines in use for self-assessment are only providing a list of aspects or topics to be taken into account, analyzing the institution or the discipline. The manuals do not provide a clear relation between the aspects and the topics. The attraction of the EFQM-model is that it offers a relation between the aspects and offers the possibility to get more grip on the reality.

This had been one of the

reasons to start to think about a Quality model in Higher Education. Another reason has been that it is necessary to prevent both the internal and external assessment becoming a de-fragmented assessment of some aspects or topics without taking into account the correlation between the different factors. There is a need for a model for having an overall view on quality instead of a scattered one.

Another important reason is the internationalization of Higher Education and the rising need of recognition of qualifications and degrees. A basic condition for mutual recognition of degrees is the need to assess the quality on a generally accepted approach. There is no need to make the assessments uniform. However, it is important that at least the same criteria have been taken into account.

3.0 A Quality Model for Higher Education

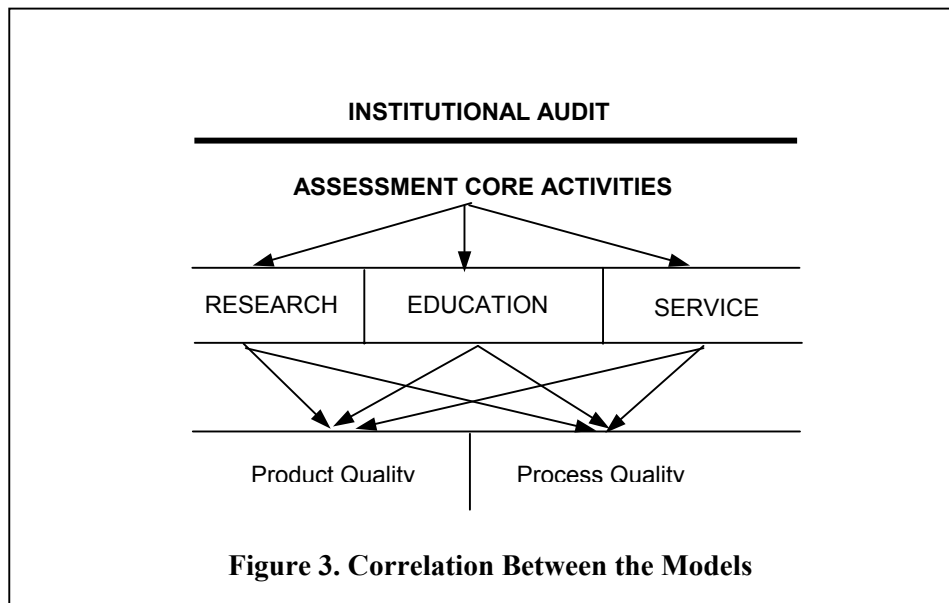
As already said, looking around in the world, one will find a lot of guidelines, manuals and protocols for self-analysis and self-assessment. They all have a lot in common. They all try to describe the most important quality criteria,

quality indicators and quality aspects. However, what is missing is a model, in which aspects are all correlated, like the quality model used in other sectors of society. For example, the EFMQ-model (see figure1) helps to structure the self-analysis of a company and helps to discover strengths and weaknesses. Also for Higher Education, there is a need for such a model for SWOT-analysis. We need to analyze our Strengths and Weaknesses, to look at Opportunities and to see what are the Threats.

In most cases, the self analysis or self-assessment in

Higher Education is connected with an external assessment. This means that in some cases, the self-assessment is only seen as providing information for the external committee. This is a pity, because a self-analysis might be a powerful instrument to assure the quality. In fact, an HE-institute should adopt the self-analysis regardless of a formal, organized external quality assessment.

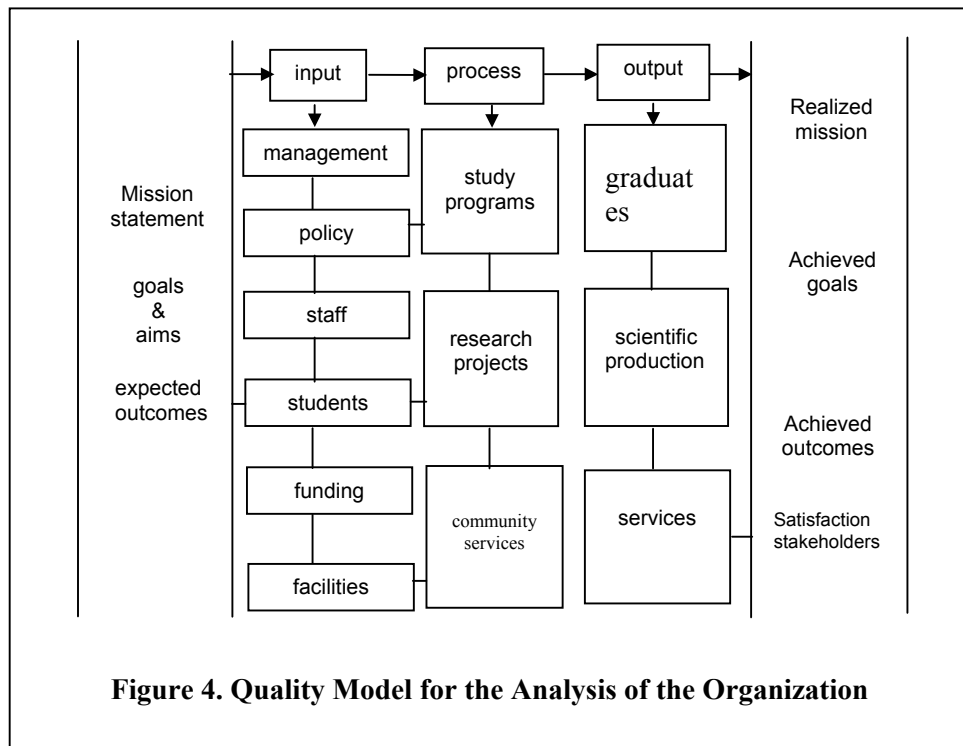
Just as a model may help an institution for a good self-analysis, it may also help the external review committees to analyze the quality.



To analyze the quality of an institution, we have to make a distinction between

community services.

In this paper we restrict ourselves to the analysis of the



- the analysis of the organization (might be the institution as a whole, a faculty, department or school)
- the analysis of the quality of the core business of Higher Education 1) the educational activities, 2) research and 3)

organization and the core activity of teaching/learning.

In figure 4, a model for the institutional analysis has been given. Figure 5 is a model for the analysis of program quality.

4.0 A Quality Model for Institutional Analysis

The model given in figure 4 may be applied to the institution as a whole, but also at a lower organizational level, like, a School, department or faculty. In the following the model is clarified.

Mission Statement

Nowadays, there is a general agreement that an objective definition of quality in Higher Education does not exist. Quality is seen as context-bound and as multi-dimensional. Quality is in the eyes of the beholder who has his or her ideas about quality.

Although it is difficult to define quality, there are in fact three main questions, when we are talking about quality.

- Are we doing the right things?
- Are we doing the right things in the right way?
- Do we achieve what we are claiming to achieve?

This means that every quality assessment and self-analysis have to start looking at the formulated mission statement, the formulated goals and aims and the formulated expected outcomes (= the standards set by the institution). Without a clear picture about why

one is doing what one is doing, each assessment of quality is impossible. Is the mission clearly formulated and well known to everybody? Is the mission statement operationalized in clear goals and aims?

Input

The second group of topics to be analyzed has to do with input. They may be seen as the boundary conditions to achieve our goals. It concerns:

- Management

An analysis is needed of the management of the institution: role of the management; top down management or bottom up? Analysis of the personnel management and financial management. The leading role of the management.

- Policy

How are mission statement, goals and aims translated in a policy? Is the policy plan the basis for strategic management? How is the feedback on the policy plan organized? How is the involvement of

the different levels in formulating the policy?

- Staff

Quality of an institution will be decided by the quality of staff. A more in-depth going analysis of the staff will take place during the analysis of the core business. The analysis here concerns the qualifications of the staff in general (e.g. number of Ph.D.), the competencies of the staff to cover the programs offered. Are there problems with staff concerning aging of staff; competition with the outside world to attract good staff members?

- Students

The quality depends too on the quality of the entering students. Is there any selection? How is it to be done? What do we

think about the starting level of the students?

- Funding

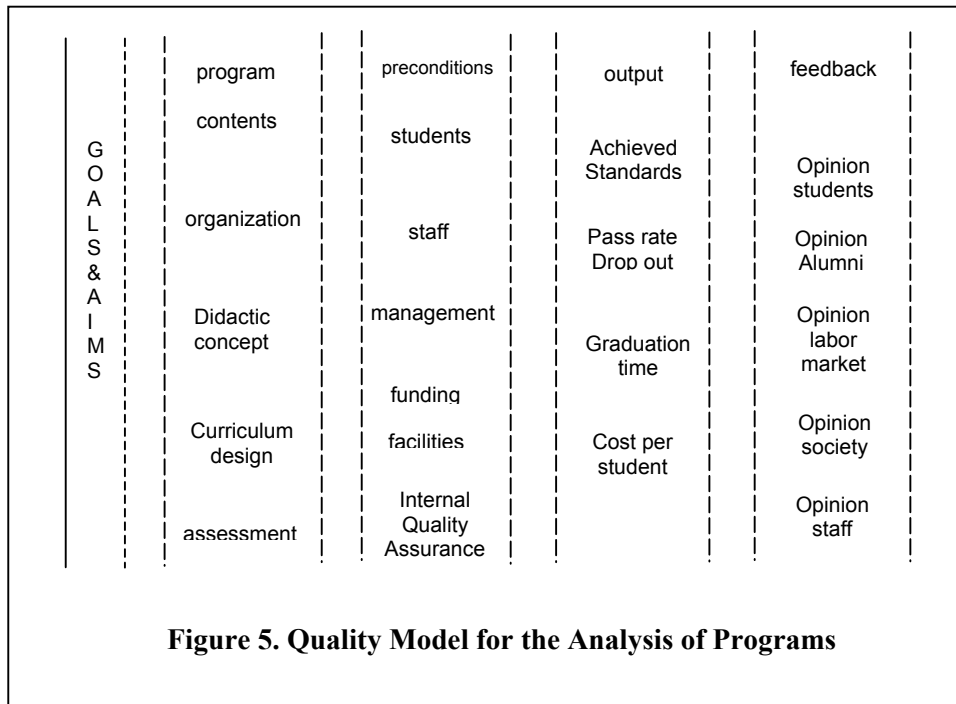
Talking about quality, of course funding is important. Too often, one forgets that every quality has its price. This means that the formulated goals and aims should be achievable in the given constraints of funding.

- Facilities

One has to analyze if the available facilities support the mission. Is the equipment for teaching and learning adequate? Lecture halls, small working rooms? Computer facilities? Are the equipment for the research activities sufficient?

Process

The cells under the heading



‘process’ contain the core activities of the institutions. Information for the SWOT-analysis of the educational activities, the research activities and community service, should be based on the SWOT-analysis carried out by the departments. The model for an analysis of the teaching/learning activities is given in figure 5. For the institutional analysis at central level or faculty level, one will summarize the strengths and

weaknesses found by the analysis of the core activities. One should look at how each educational program contributes to the stated mission. How does the research contribute to realize the mission? And what to think about the community service. What is the overall quality of the core business? What fields need strengthening? What may be closed?

5.0 The Quality Model for the Educational Activities

Output

What has been said about the process is also applicable to the output. The departmental analysis should provide information and show strengths and weaknesses. Here an overall analysis will be made because one has an overall picture of the faculty and even of the whole institution

Realized Mission

This last column in fact is the most important one, talking about the analysis of our institution. Do we indeed realize what we have expressed as our mission, our goals and our aims? How do we know that we have achieved what has been formulated as desirable to achieve? And of course, just as in the industrial models we have to look at the satisfaction of the clients. However, it is not quite clear who our clients are. Therefore, we have to look for the satisfaction of all stakeholders: students and parents, employers, academic community, government, society at large. How do we know how they think about our performance.

The model showed in figure 5 is useful for the analysis of the teaching/learning process (the educational activities). The model may be applied to the undergraduate, graduate, as well as post-graduate programs.

Also, the model for the assessment of the educational activities starts at the left side with an analysis of the goals and aims of the program. Formulating the objectives of a program, one has to take into account the requirements of all stakeholders, weight the requirements and balance them in formulating the expected outcomes of our program. There should be a clear statement of what is expected from the graduate after finishing the program. Those expected outcomes (knowledge skills and attitude) are the standards set for the program. Analyzing the goals and aims one has to ask questions like:

- Is there clearly formulated policy on what the expected outcomes of the program are?
- What are you expecting from the graduates?
- How did you operationalize the expected outcomes?
- How do we take into

account the requirements of the stakeholders?

The Program

Analyzing our program, we have to look at several aspects:

- The content
- The organization
- The didactic concept
- Curriculum design
- The assessment/examinations

One has to ask how the goals and aims are translated into a program; if the program is coherent or not; and the contribution of each course to the achievement of the general mission of the institution.

Not only the content is important. Also the way of delivering the didactic concept behind the organization of the curriculum is important. Is the organization structure satisfactory? Is the didactic concept taking into account new methodologies? How is the curriculum designed? How are innovations introduced in the programs?

Having goals and aims reflecting the expected outcomes (standards) and having designed a program, which aims at achieving the standards, one needs to pay attention, too, to the way one can

assess the achievement of the students. One has to analyze the procedures and organization on the one hand. On the other hand, one has to look at the level of the examinations and put the question, if the examinations indeed reflect the content of the program.

Boundary Conditions (Pre-Conditions)

Although the standards set for the program and the way of delivering it will decide the quality, it is not enough to look at the program only. One has to analyze the environment, too. One has to look at the constraints and the boundary conditions.

Students

One has to analyze the student population; the way the students are selected; and the way students are followed during their study. How is the student counseling done?

Staff

The quality of a program depends strongly on the quality of staff; the competencies and the way staff members are co-operating.

Facilities

It will be clear that the facilities to deliver the program should be satisfactory. The introduction of Computer-based learning without sufficient computer equipment does not work.

Output

The starting point for the self-assessment is the formulation of the expected outcomes. However, the proof is in eating the pudding: What about the achieved outcomes? Do our graduates achieve the standards set indeed? How many students did achieve the standards? In what time and at what cost? How high is the drop out?

Feedback From Stakeholders

The last column has also to do with feedback and satisfaction of the stakeholders. What is the opinion of the students about the program offered and the way it is offered? How do the alumni think about their education? What is the opinion of the employers and the labor market about our graduates? Society-at-large?

6.0 The Quality Model as Instruments for Self-Assessment

The described model may be used for a self-analysis or a SWOT-analysis, whether the internal assessment is directly connected with an outside-organized external assessment or not. Depending on the situation, one may start with an analysis at program level only, on departmental level, on faculty level or on institutional level. However, it is clear that an institutional analysis has to be based on the analysis of the core activities.

To use the model, the following steps have to be taken:

- Formulate for each cell in each column questions related to the topic. One may use existing manuals for self assessment for formulating adequate questions, fitting the needs
- Look at each question and give:
 - a clear description of the current situation
 - a critical analysis and reflection on the current situation
 - the way you think the

problem may be solved

- Before one starts with the self-analysis, one has to set one's own criteria because objective criteria do not exist. For example, one has to fix the pass rate and the

to take into account criteria or standards laid down in law or regulations by professional bodies.

- Design a checklist based on the questions. After description and analysis,

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. The institution has clearly formulated goals.										
2. The goals express clearly the purpose to achieve.										
3. The goals have been formulated in consultancy with all stakeholders?										
4. The goals are well known to all.										
5. Institutional planning and decision making are guided by the goals.										
6. The institution reconsiders the goals regularly.										
7. The goals show the profile of the institution.										
8. The goals are translated in measurable goals and objectives.										
9. The goals and objectives are translated in clear policy plan.										

Figure 6. Example of a Checklist to be Used

drop out rate that might be seen as satisfactory. Based on benchmarking one may have set the standards for the Bachelor or Master Degree. Of course, one has

one will mark each topic with a mark between 1 and 10, where 6 means satisfactory, below 5 is unsatisfactory and 8 and more is good or excellent.

- Calculate for each cell in

each column the average. Do the same for each column and fill the marks in the cells and columns. By doing so, one sees at a glance the strengths and weaknesses of the programs, the department, the faculty or the institution as a whole.

In figure 6 an example of the checklist to be used is given. It concerns the column “goals” for the institutional assessment.

If the self-assessment is not followed by an external assessment, one still has a firm basis for the formulation of a quality improvement plan for the years to come. You may use the model or parts of it again to control the progress of the quality plan at all levels in the institution.

In case of an external assessment, one must be ready for it. If one has done the self-analysis in the right way, and if it has been an honest and open self-assessment, one does not have to be afraid. The external committee will not discover weaknesses one does not know about. One has a possibility to start already with improvements before the

committee arrives. One has also the possibility to show and emphasize the strengths. If the external assessment also will be done in an unconstructive way and not only is seen as inspection, one will get valuable information and suggestions for keeping the quality where necessary enhancement of the quality is needed.

7.0 The Quality Model as Instrument for the External Audit or Review

It will be clear that the given model not only can be used for the self-assessment, but also for the external assessment by the external experts in the review committees. Looking at the developments in the field of quality assurance, it will become more and more important that both institutions and disciplines will be assessed in a comparable way.

Although it is not possible to define quality in an objective way and although assessors always have to take into account the specific context, it is important to know that institutions and disciplines are being audited or assessed, using a model, containing the most important aspects. The use of the model might help to promote (mutual) recognition of the external

quality assessment agencies and by doing so to promote transparency of the Higher Education system and its core activities.

References:

Elam L C (1991) "Values, Leadership and Quality: The Administration of Higher Education." The David D. Henry Lectures University of Illinois Press ISBN 0-252-01893-1.

Kells H R (1992) "Self-Regulation in Higher Education: A Multi-National Perspective on Collaborative Systems of Quality Assurance and

Control." Higher Education Policy Ser.

No. 15 Taylor & Francis ISBN 1-85302-528-3.

Queeney D S (1995) "Assessing Needs in Continuing Education: an Essential Tool for Quality Improvement." Higher & Adult Education Ser. Jossey-Bass ISBN 0-7879-0059-1.

Institutional Members

- Abra State Institute of Science and Technology
- Aklan State College of Agriculture
- Basilan State College
- Batangas State University
- Benguet State University
- Bicol University
- Bukidnon State College
- Bulacan State University
- Cagayan State University
- Camarines Norte State College
- Camarines Sur Polytechnic College
- Camarines Sur State Agricultural College
- Carlos A. Hilado Memorial State College
- Catanduanes State College
- Cavite State University
- Cebu Normal University
- Cebu State College of Science and Technology
- Central Luzon State University
- Central Mindanao University
- Central Visayas Polytechnic College
- Central Visayas State Polytechnic College
- Cotabato Foundation College of Science and Technology
- Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology
- Don Honorio N. Ventura College of Arts and Trades
- Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University
- Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa, Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture
- Eastern Samar State College
- Eulogio “Amang” Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology
- Ifugao State College of Agriculture and Forestry
- Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College
- Iloilo State College of Fisheries
- Isabela State University
- Kalinga-Apayao State College
- Laguna State Polytechnic College
- Leyte Institute of Technology
- Leyte Normal University
- Leyte State University
- Mariano Marcos State University
- Marinduque State College
- Mindanao Polytechnic State College
- Mindanao State University
- Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology
- Misamis Oriental State College of Agriculture and Technology
- Mountain Province State Polytechnic College
- Naval Institute of Technology
- Negros State College of Agriculture
- Northern Iloilo Polytechnic State College
- Northern Mindanao State Institute of Science and Technology
- Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology
- Nueva Vizcaya State Institute of Technology
- Nueva Vizcaya State Polytechnic College
- Occidental Mindoro National College
- Palawan State University
- Palompon Institute of Technology
- Pampanga Agricultural College
- Panay State Polytechnic College
- Pangasinan State University
- Partido State University
- Philippine Merchant Marine Academy
- Philippine Military Academy
- Philippine Normal University
- Philippine State College of Aeronautics

Institutional Members continued . . .

- Polytechnic State College of Antique
- Polytechnic University of the Philippines
- Quirino State College
- Ramon Magsaysay Technological University
- Rizal Technological University
- Romblon State College
- Samar State Polytechnic College
- Siquijor State College
- Sorsogon State College
- Southern Leyte State College of Science and Technology
- Southern Luzon Polytechnic College
- Southern Philippines Agri-Business, Marine and Aquatic School of Technology
- State Polytechnic College of Palawan
- Sultan Kudarat Polytechnic State College
- Sulu State College
- Tarlac College of Agriculture
- Tarlac State University
- Tawi-Tawi Regional Agricultural College
- Technological University of the Philippines
- Tiburcio Tancinco Memorial Institute of Science and Technology
- Tomas Oppus Normal College
- University of Eastern Philippines
- University of Northern Philippines
- University of Rizal System
- University of Southeastern Philippines
- University of Southern Mindanao
- University of the Philippines
- West Visayas State University
- Western Mindanao State University
- Western Visayas College of Science and Technology
- Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology
- La Carlota City College
- Lipa City Public College
- City College of Urdaneta
- The Queen's University of Brighton