

The Czech University of Agriculture Prague – A Continuing Process of Transformation

Jan Hron

In concordance with the idea of a managed university, this article describes the ongoing process of transformations within the Czech University of Agriculture Prague (CUAP), which has presently made it an important institution within the group of good and leading Czech universities. There are three main factors influencing the development of the university: politics, economy and the advancement of technology. Possible models of universities are discussed i.e. as College, Bureaucracy, Corporation and Enterprise structures. The CUAP, like other universities, is a mixture of organizational practices and experiences which are historically located and variably resistant and resilient to being wholeheartedly overthrown by “new” concepts. The most difficult task for the university is to implement standards of economic and political rationality into its daily life. The core topic invoking processes of permanent changes and influencing strategic decision making are discussed, namely organisation and rethinking of teaching and training, commercialization of education, transition into a mass university, problems of fragmentation, ICT-based technologies and network university, as a model of a combined enterprise university.

higher education, curriculum, higher education law, university management, education market, commercialization of education, types of university organisational structures, network university, self-centred education, further and adult education.

1. Introduction

In the course of the two last decades basic conceptual changes took place in the life of universities. Even commonly and frequently used words which remained the same took on new meanings. Words like “net”, “knowledge”, “virtual” have a different meaning today, than they have had twenty years ago. The process of globalisation also influences institutions for higher education (HEI), which are thus put into a competitive and quickly changing environment and have to apply new and more sophisticated methods of management. This article provides a methodological description and analysis of the main selected aspects influencing the lives of professionals at the Czech University of Agriculture Prague (CUA) within the framework of Czech higher education environment. This concerns, above all, changing relationships between triangles: *politics, economy and technology* in the period between 1990 and 2005.

Politics influences the life of the university by means of laws that give the university some degree of autonomy.

Economic places the university into a competitive environment which requires a good marketing strategy on the educational market and a relevant model of management.

Technologies – commonly based on ICT – require complex changes on the level of all university activities.

In accordance with the idea of a managed university, we consider it as complex and self-referential organisation. Changes in the university are nontrivial transformations and conceptualise the management of change at the university as highly important yet unpopular interventions.

Changes take places not only in universities but also in plants, enterprises and institutions. Although a university has many common features with an enterprise the

processes of changes differ substantially in these institutions. Changes in enterprises are managed and controlled by professionals on the level of top and middle management and when accomplished the institution usually produces better results. Successful changes in an enterprise usually start with a long-term period of unchanged operations. Making changes in a university is more complicated. A university makes decisions in a risky and more uncertain environment. Though the managerial teams at faculties consist mainly of highly educated professionals, within these teams there are rarely professional managers. And, last but not least, the process of changes at the university is permanent. Most of changes are made so to say on the march.

The word “change” belongs to one of the most frequent words used among academics in the last years.

2. Methodological approach

This article provides information derived from a complex benchmarking process which was realised within two strategic actions: 1) Preparation and elaboration of the “Long Term Plan of the Strategy Development in 2006 – 2010” and 2) External evaluation of the university provided by a team of foreign experts.

With the benchmarking process the university had an opportunity to compare its own data with local as well as selected foreign universities. Data came from different sources: annual reports, study plans and curricula descriptions, web information, printed articles.

There were two types of benchmarking:

- 1) Internal benchmarking provided by the management and administration of the university within a process of internal evaluation and internal quality assessment. Most of the results were presented in an internal self evaluation report.

2) External benchmarking provided external evaluation by a team of experts from foreign universities: University of Plymouth, Humboldt University in Berlin, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna, Wageningen University and Research Centre.

The benchmarking process led to discussions, brainstorming and round tables among representatives of the academic staff and resulted in the presentation of strategic documents which highlight all contemporary problems and ways for future development.

3. A university in motion

Within the existence of the CUA since 1990 we may identify two stages of transformations.

In the first stage the university started its development with substantial strategic changes in the structure and content of the curriculum, in the aftermath of the "velvet revolution" in 1990. Many changes on both staff and organisation levels were made during the period between 1990 and 1995. This was an era of transformation of the university, adapting to world standards, which was driven above all by political decision-making. It was a rather hectic time. New study programmes were accredited and wide collaboration with foreign universities from the west started. Changes were made in the structure, content and orientation of the social-science subjects both in education and research and concerned relevant departments at all levels. There was a significant competitive advantage of the university, being relatively competitive in education and research in the field of several professional topics: the level of teaching and research in selected professional areas and at the departments was comparable with similar ones in the West. That is why the transformation process was accomplished within a relatively short period of five years. The university could start – with considerable advance compared with other HEI in the Czech Republic – a new qualitative phase of its development in the context of Czech and European educational markets.

This first stage of changes went on from 1995 to 1998. The university sought out its place not only within the Czech but also the European educational markets. Two European Tempus projects made it possible to compare organisations and structures of education and research at the CUAP with some well developed European universities. There was an implemented functioning base for quality assurance of education and research. The university signed a number of bilateral contracts and agreements with universities in Europe and elsewhere in the world, in order to increase and develop its international cooperation and position itself on top level in the matter of quality education offered to the public.

The second – and to this time ongoing – stage of changes, which is characterised by a fundamental and massive progress on all levels, was initiated in 1998 by the University Law Act No. 111. This law substantially

changed the politics for higher education in the Czech Republic. Universities, which until then had been directly controlled by the government with little or no decision making power whatsoever, were given thereby a relatively substantial degree of autonomy. Some of the key terms in the implementation of this law were: global budgets, the universities' right to determine their own internal organisational structures and processes, independence in handling staff policy, increased executive power for those in senior positions.

In 1998 the CUAP began to implement this new law. With its nearly 4500 students and a staff composed of 600 academics and 150 administrative workers and technicians, with malfunctioning university estates, the university in those days was a typical example of an Eastern European HEI of the post-transformation period type. The above mentioned law started a process of transformations that resulted not only in a substantial increase in student numbers, but also in broadening the scope for internationalisation of the educational and research sector within an overall positive socio-cultural climate. The new law provided a basis for an institutional autonomy of the university. Extensive decision making powers were shifted from the Government to the Rector and to the managements of faculties, in order to enable them to introduce *business management* and *service-oriented conduct* and thus to achieve *efficiency* and *quality* enhancements, cost effectiveness and consequently a better use of resources. The changes that were induced by the new law may be understood as a response to the trends of *globalisation in higher education* and the adoption of a mixed model, combining the academic tradition and culture of the former central European area with those elements of university management, which stem from within the Anglo Saxon and American cultural heritage.

Although the new law at first seemed to be genuinely concerned with deregulating higher education and thereby opening it up to free-market forces, it continued to closely control the destinies of universities through a series of devolved mechanisms, such as accountability-based and performance-oriented funding strategies and standardised data collections, a process that has been described as "steering at a distance" by western analysts the very same year (Vidovich, Currie, 1998).

4. Specific features in the management of changes at the university

Management of changes in a university setting is an extremely tedious task: it tends to be carried out in periods of limiting budgets and must deal with unclear goals of the organisation. The motivations behind actions taken by individuals involved are not necessarily obvious to others. In addition hierarchies may be ambiguous and unreliable and governance structures are usually weak. There are many reasons for this situation (see e.g. Argyris, 1996):

- There is no possibility for long-term academic positions, because elections are held every three years and the management can change.
- Members of an organisation, e.g. a university, may be distinctive and idiosyncratic, often obstinate in their behaviour; of course they may be experts when it comes to arguing.
- The culture of a university is diverse because of the various disciplines that have contradictory scientific and/or educational orientations.
- Defensive routines are widespread in the structures of an organisation, and as a university is a “knowledgeable organisation”, it is even harder to transform it into a learning and/or learning and research one.

Thus, it is not surprising that the analysis of change in universities emphasises the paradoxical challenges that university management is facing and criticises the standards of rationality underlying actions in university management.

The most difficult task for the university was (and is) to implement standards of economic rationality into its daily life. Some current attempts to implement strict economic reasoning are subject to just as much criticism. Economically oriented and professionalized managements are seen as developments which, in the long term, force universities to more or less disregard duties specifically assigned to them. Nevertheless the university has to change and is in fact changing. Recent results indicate that the CUA is successful in its socio-economic environment. However, resistance to change cannot be easily overcome because, as in the case of many other universities in the Czech Republic, the CUA is a *mixture of organizational practices and experiences which are historically located and variably resistant and resilient* to “new” managerial concepts.

Seen from the perspective of organisational theories, the main question now is how to make sense of changes in the university and how do people in charge of managing change – e.g. Deans and Vice-deans – make sense of it in a conflicting situation of simultaneous necessity and resistance to change.

In public discussions about policy in HEI in the last decade, it has often been argued that the weakness of the whole system is to be found in an outdated university culture. Hence, these shortcomings are attributed to a tradition which is characterised by a *unity of research and education*, by state financing, by an employment policy based on contracts for unlimited time periods, and a nearly free access to all studies and facilities for everyone. These convictions are largely based on comparative studies of HEI in Europe and USA with those in our country. The results of these studies are publicly interpreted as indications of a growing gap in the efficiency of the European education systems (both in education and research), in comparison to HEI in the USA.

In fact, from a managerial and competition-oriented perspective, one can find striking weaknesses in the systems that have had effects on the individual or a group, as well as on the organisational level. Regarding changes in universities the most important issues are as follows:



Prof. Dr. Jan Hron, DrSc., Dr.h.c., Chancellor in the years 1994–2000 and in 2003 up to now.

1) Whilst Law No. 111 gave universities high autonomy, these are to a large extent still over-bureaucratized. Central authorities are dominated by a central model of regulation which leads to a maze of rules and regulations that shape academic life and to a regression of the independent and professional status of the universities’ management. This concerns tuition, a question which still remains unresolved, social subsidy for students which is provided by universities instead of social welfare offices, planned number of bachelor graduates and budgeting.

2) Rotating organisational membership and frequent refilling of management posts leads to a poorer organisational memory. The Rector, Deans, Vice-rectors and Vice-deans, are usually given the responsibility not by the virtue of their professional experience in the field of management, but for other reasons. Professorial authority to fulfil such duties has been based on academic reputation and influence on decision-making bodies such as the Senate and not by academics, who have chosen “management” as a career route, or by professional managers from non-academic backgrounds in business and public service industries. There is another limiting rule which stresses the need to change the positions of Rector and Dean on a 3–4 year basis.

3) Within the university there is often a large degree of disparity between the understanding that different groups have of some key organisational terms. Thus, while the university might enforce its strategic plans statement on issues such as diversity, equity, student-centred learning, democratisation, governance, net-

working, integration, entrepreneurialism, knowledge-based curriculum or indeed quality, different groups and teams in the departments are likely to take up this strategic tasks in very different ways and political valences when used by daily work.

One important consequence of these three factors on the organisational level is that both the administrative body and the academic functionaries lacked management know-how. Most of those holding senior positions were almost unanimously convinced that there was no need for systematic learning and developing managerial skills. It is natural that the top management in industry consists of qualified professionals. It is not so evident at a university.

The overall consequence of this situation is that the future educational, research and governance management of the university will have to look for a model which will not monopolise only on a group of organisational members, professors and researchers, but will also look for members of the academic staff, who instead of pursuing unilaterally their professional career, will fit the requirements by acquiring the necessary managerial skills.

5. Education market and commercialisation of education

Terms such as student-centred learning and lifelong learning were often used alongside the "user-pays" discourse where students were positioned in the role of active consumers operating within a service-based higher education. These kinds of contradictory narratives are secretly mentioned in some policies of higher education (Duderstadt, 1999). The Dean emeritus of the Michigan University, for instance, employs the rhetoric of *student-centred learning* and *learning networks* while being essentially concerned with a consumerist vision of a networked educational future. In his conception of the university as a devolved, vertically integrated organisation he suggests that "the virtual university" might be viewed as the "Nike approach" to higher education, selling its intellectual content while outsourcing the marketing and packaging of its educational products.

Universities may differ somewhat in the way they have taken up market models but, in general, they have to adopt new forms of governance marked by an increased emphasis on the new role of the university as a service centre in education, especially in education of adults and further studies.

The university is, and in an increasing degree will be, under intensifying market pressures and thus is obliged to make market oriented decisions. This leads it away from an administered public service model to self-management market practices.

Permanent changes in restructuring the university and the spreading of ICT-based technologies influences teaching and learning reforms, offering them new oppor-

tunities for rethinking pedagogical practices. The market will influence the student population, which in turn will demand changes in standard pedagogical procedures: from a notion of "one size fits all" to a concept of tailored and flexible learning for everyone.

This concept is not new at the CUA. Academics are familiar with the need of flexible learning, emphasising in particular a student rather than teacher-centred approach to education. As far as the managements of faculties are concerned, the requirement for a student-centred learning tends to go hand in hand with a market-driven, e.g. enterprise model of the university. Under this model it is assumed that the student is a "self-managing learner conceptualized as flexible, adaptable, self-motivated, independent, and capable of making choices in order to maximize personal benefits – a discriminating consumer" (Blackmore, 2001).

In addition, the democratised, student-centred learning education is breaking down the boundaries between theoretical learning (as dispensed at a HEI) and learning so-called "real world" or "generic skills", in "capability-oriented education", etc. In this particular context market influences in education may improve the organisation of the curriculum and decrease boundaries between work, study and leisure.

6. Looking for the best model of organisation

A university is an organisation that is characterised by an exceptional degree of complexity. This requires adequate functioning models of organisational structure and management. A university is also a permanently changing organisation and this means its organisational structures must withstand any un-expected changes.

According to Ian McKay's (Meister-Scheytt, Scheytt, 2005) there are four perspective models of university organisation:

- 1) "*Collegial*", characterised by its lack of central control and high level of autonomy.
- 2) "*Bureaucratic*" with its fairly loosely denned policy but tightly controlled rules and regulations for organisational practices.
- 3) "*Corporate*" which is based on strong central control over both policy and implementation.
- 4) "*Enterprising*", an organisational model marked by clear central goals but a considerable degree of autonomy in relation to how those goals are carried out.

Although universities tend to be a complex mix of all four organisational cultures, the latest research data have shown that over the past few decades universities have been progressing from a primarily collegial organisational structure through bureaucratic and corporate modes to a predominantly *enterprise-oriented* model. This last model, with its emphasis on the melding of a coherent organisational culture with devolved work

units articulated together by ICTs, clearly fits into the networked model of organisation as the paradigmatic organisational structure of the information age (Castells, 1996; Van Dijk, 1999).

In the near future the CUA will have to look for the best functioning model of its internal organisational structure.

It seems to be logical to follow the "tried and truly functioning" model, thread-bared by many successful universities in the west, and apply the enterprise-oriented model. Yet the CUA is in its transitional phase, and as such its organisational culture is in most cases moving towards devolution rather than towards increased centralisation, which can be described as a combination of the both collegial and bureaucracy models. These are more or less centralised models of control. The risks of centralised models lie in an increase in both bureaucratic processes and top-down corporate managerial techniques, and a concomitant loss of flexibility and autonomy, a process that is often tied to the implementation of centralised systems of networked technology. In other words, corporate and enterprise models may be simultaneous rather than sequential. This time the present university organisation might even be evolving easily into a hybrid model form, rather than culminating in decentralised network.

Finally, there are doubts about the claim that the enterprise network-oriented model is enabling universities to move from a rigid, bureaucratic structure to a flexible, entrepreneurial environment in which autonomy and initiative are rewarded. While the logic of the network organisation is set up in opposition to that of the bureaucracy, the first experience at CUA seems to be that these logics are often interwoven. As a number of critics have noted, while the introduction of networked ICTs into the organisational setting is meant to empower workers, it also increases the ability for organisations to exercise centralised control and surveillance.

7. Mass university and the problem of fragmentation

The number of enrolled students has rapidly increased since 1997. This process has been accelerated by a range of forces, first of all, by an excellent offer of study programmes and a unique university environment, which has become well known among potential applicants not only in the Czech Republic but also from abroad.

The CUA student numbers grew markedly between 1995 and 2005. In 1990 there were some 4500 students enrolled, in 2006 the total number of registered students grew to 15 500. In other words in the past 16 years there was a 300% increase in the amount of enrolled students. The participation rate in the Czech Republic currently stands at around 35 per cent of 18–25 year old and is supposed to rise up to 55 percent by 2010. Thus, there is a great potential for further applicants. The university is

bigger and will grow even more. Yet, as demand is increasing and with it the numbers of students and to some extent staff members, the ideal and classical sense of community possible in smaller size universities is slowly but surely eroding.

The arrival of a "mass of students" may be regarded as one of the factors which inhibits the classical internal unity of a university with a "collegial" model structure and can be a cause of its disintegration. One of the consequences of such growth in the number of students, of greater funds being invested in the appointment of new academic staff members, of increased career mobility and the proliferation of sub-disciplines, is that along with the advent of a "mass university" academic life is becoming increasingly specialised.

Induced fragmentation and specialisation has resulted in a rapid expansion of sub-disciplines in many fields. There is a growing tendency toward fragmentation in education, reflected by a range of special subjects, study texts, SW supports, which in turn have resulted in an increased number of highly specialised subjects which have become separated in the curriculum, like grain silos, from each other. The university, naturally, should try to offer an already baked loaf of bread.

The development of e-learning and the inclusion of more professional and practice-based subjects into the curricula, lead to separation of teaching and research. The role of a "specialist" tries to include "teaching-only" and "research-only" staff, and then technicians and web developers. Service roles tend to be multifaceted and poorly defined, if at all. Such categories of staff cannot reasonably be expected to fulfil the range of *unspecified tasks* often carried out on the basis of goodwill.

These fragmentations, reflecting the interests of sub-communities within a field of intellectual enquiry, exist in all disciplinary territories to a greater or lesser extent. This fragmentation is also supported by the process of awarding academic careers. Countable research outcomes and "impact" measures support the idea of specialisation. Evaluation of research tends to privilege and reward the intellectual achievement of individuals working in highly specialised, rather than inter-disciplinary, academic fields. Burgan (1998) asserts that the emphasis on research has led to the "outsourcing" of service activities to a growing number of "middle" managerial functions both in education and research. Such functions are hidden in ICT services, counselling services, centres of excellence, incubators, etc.

8. Networked university as a form of enterprise university

The university system has been, and continues to be, marked by a similar set of contradictions. Universities increasingly find themselves straddling the public-private divide, a situation that has seen them being pushed towards a enterprise model of networking at the same

time as attempting to maintain collegial networks as well as links with the wider critical public sphere. In this sense, universities offer a unique and timely perspective on some of the major contradictions underpinning the concept of a network society. It seems that in the university setting the network model offers a number of potential and at times contradictory organisational trajectories.

What model of the network organisation can/could be implemented at the CUA and which are the ways in which the model of the network organisation has been applied to, and taken up by, the university in our information age? There are discussions concerning implementation of the network model at the university which should be taken into consideration. Following reasons argue with advantages and/or disadvantage of the network model:

1) The network model is an emancipated alternative to the previous historical culture of the university, e.g. bureaucratic, inflexible, unresponsive and autarkic institution.

2) While terms like the network university and the virtual campus are figuring increasingly in the university life, media, policy and academic debates over the future of higher education, these labels are subject to critical evaluation and the implementation of the network model does not seem too clear.

3) Although public opinion across the public and private sectors prefers network organisation models, the practices associated with different types of networked organisational forms can vary considerably. Thus, corporate models of collaboration and flexibility certainly do not exclude competition, centralisation and hierarchy; instead, seemingly paradoxical forms may often coexist.

4) Similarly, the promotion of the collaborative, networked organisation has also been picked up by the staff involved into teaching and training who perceive the electronic networks and virtual communities facilitated by the rise of ICTs as offering "interesting possibilities for greater democratization of education" (Lank-shear et al., 1996).

5) It can be the way from "bureaucracy and hierarchy" to "network and connectivity" (Cetina, Bruegger, 2002).

It is clear from the above argumentation that whilst the standard managerial literature tends to set up the network organisation as a kind of an ideal model of an organisation, the complex organisational cultures of universities offer an exemplary site for examining both the positive and the potentially oppressive aspects of network organisations. Universities are prominent producers of knowledge in contemporary knowledge-based society and as organisations that have over the past decade been working within sophisticated, technologically mediated global networks, universities could be held up as the ultimate exemplars of the new information society. However, rather than accepting at face value the notion that all universities are now network organisations the question remains as to whether the concept of the network enterprise is so readily applicable to the university.

9. Will new technologies destroy classical higher education?

One of the strongest critiques of new technologies used and/or developed in educational process in the universities is US historian David Noble, who has described the recent enormous push to on-line education as a move back to the days of Fordist automation and mass production. In his much quoted essay "Digital Diploma Mills" he argues that rather than providing academics with greater freedom and control over their work, the introduction of network technology into universities has instead contributed to the commoditisation of education. Echoing Braverman's account of the increased pressures on workers following the introduction of technology into the industrial workplace, he contends that the digitalisation of education similarly positions teachers as labourers in an automated "production process designed for the efficient creation of instructional commodities". Thus, in the "wired" university, the role of academics "is being restructured, via the technology, in order to reduce their autonomy, independence and control over their work and to place workplace knowledge and control as much as possible into the hands of the administration" (Noble, 1998).

Similar opinions are voiced also by other authors (Harris, 2000; Vanderstraeten, 2006). As suggested, one of the problems with the network theory is the belief that there has been a linear development from the bureaucratic organisation to the network form. Underpinning this developmental narrative is the assumption that the relationship between the bureaucratic and the network organisation is an oppositional one. However, Harris proves in his research paper that the organisational structures of the virtual universities under study were more hybridised than the notion of the network organisation might suggest. His description of the Open University as a "networked bureaucracy" leads him to conclude that "the relationship between information networks, knowledge base and organizational structure are more complex and variegated than is assumed by the network metaphor" (Harris, 2000).

The concluding paragraphs urge the necessity of a non-formal and creative approach to the implementation of new technologies and a new structure of management schemes into university life. The enormous development of the CUA in the last decade convinced us that the strategy of development based on traditional university values such as a "face to face approach" and individual access to each student as to a human being can guarantee success in our competitive world.

10. Concluding remarks

The implementation of the newest ICT-based technologies is of course one of the most important strategic aims of our university. ICT-based technologies will in-

fluence more and more the future of both educational and research work, of the staff and also attitudes, behaviour and expectations of our student population. The main task in implementation of this technology is not to forget the main university mission: to be the centre of learnedness and the workroom of humanity (Comenius, 1630). Thus, implementation has to be provided diligently and with great managerial skills. Here, more than in other places, it is a valid and well known assertion that "management is science and art". In the case of higher education it would be even better to say "management is an art and a science".

We can present good examples of creative approaches of many academic staff members in the implementation of the newest technologies with high and admirable respect for traditional university values. For example, while professionals in enterprises were often concerned with using technology to strengthen the production and control of the market, many of the teachers were more interested in the distributed and collaborative possibilities of networked technology. While they use standardised teaching and learning software, and develop uniform administrative and evaluative systems, at the same time they also are searching for ways of pushing alternative agendas such as using technologies to help democratise the lecture room. In other words, they are concerned in using technology both as a driver of organisational change leading to better organisation and also for creation of a better human and cultural environment.

Although scientists like Noble argue that hegemonic forces within the university have linked networked technology to essentially conservative organisational agendas, our experience indicates that the network university, which can be considered as a university model of the enterprise university, is more complex and may fit our managerial needs. The complex organisational cultures wisely and reasonably created in a networked and a networking university show that network technology, while marked by certain historical tendencies and assumptions, can be articulated to a number of goals, not all of them necessarily tied to purely instrumental or technocratic concerns.

REFERENCES

- ARGYRIS, C.: Organizational Learning. Reading, MA, Addison Wesley 1996.
- BOURDIEU, P.: Homo Academicus. Cambridge, Polity Press 1990.
- BURGAN, M.: Academic Citizenship: A Fading Vision. Liberal Education, Vol. 84, 1998.
- CASTELLS, M.: The Rise of the Network Society. Cambridge, Blackwell Publishers 1996.
- CETINA, K. K. – BRUEGGER, U.: Inhabiting Technology: The Global Lifeform of Financial Markets, Current Sociology, 2002.
- COMENIUS, J. A.: Didactica Magna. Prague, Gregř a syn 1630.
- DUDERSTADT, J.: Can Colleges and Universities Survive in an Information Age? In: KATZ, R. R. (ed.): Information Technology and the New Competition in Higher Education. San Francisco, 1999.
- HARRIS, M.: Virtual Learning and the Network Society, Information, Communication and Society, Vol. 3, 2000.
- LANKSHEAR, C. – PETERS, M. – KNOBEL, M.: Critical Pedagogy and Cyberspace. In: GIROUX, H. A. (ed.): Counter Narratives: Cultural Studies and Critical Pedagogies in Postmodern Spaces. New York, Routledge 1996.
- LEWIS, T. – MARGINSON, S. – SNYDER, L.: The Network University? Technology, Culture and Organisational Complexity in Contemporary Higher Education, Higher Education Quarterly, Vol. 59, 2005.
- MCINNES, C.: Change and Diversity in the Work Patterns of Australian Academics. Higher Education Management, 8 (2), 1996: 105–117.
- MEISTER-SCHEYTT, C. – SCHEYTT, T. (2005): The Complexity of Change in Universities. Higher Education Quarterly, Vol. 59, 2005, No. 1.
- NOBLE, D. F.: Digital Diploma Mills: The Automation of Higher Education. Monthly Review, Vol. 49, 1998.
- VANDERSTRAETEN, R.: The Historical Triangulation of Education, Politics and Economy, Sociology, Vol. 40, 2006.
- VAN DIJK, J.: The One-Dimensional Network Society of Manuel Castells, New Media and Society, Vol. 1, 1999.
- VIDOVICH, L. – CURRIE, J.: Changing Accountability and Autonomy at the "Coalface" of Academic Work in Australia. In: CURRIE, J. – NEWSON, J. (eds.): Universities and Globalization: Critical Perspectives. Thousand Oaks, 1998.

Hron, J. (Česká zemědělská univerzita v Praze, Česká republika):

Česká zemědělská univerzita v Praze – pokračující proces transformace.

Scientia Agric. Bohem., 37, 2006: 87–94.

Česká zemědělská univerzita v Praze (ČZU) prochází obdobím permanentních změn, které ji postupně dovedly mezi skupinu elitních českých univerzit. Univerzita prošla dvěma stadii změn. První stadiem bylo zahájení transformačním procesem po sametové revoluci a probíhalo, často i hekticky, do poloviny devadesátých let. Univerzita v tomto období mohla navázat především na dobrou vědeckou i pedagogickou úroveň odborných kateder, z nichž mnohé měly srovnatelnou úroveň s vyspělými evropskými univerzitami. V dalším období univerzita postupně dosahovala evropské standardy ve vzdělávání i stylu vědecké práce, rozvíjela mezinárodní spolupráci a stabilizovala vzdělávací kurikulum. Toto období bylo v podstatě ukončeno realizací boloňského procesu v roce 2002. Nyní se

univerzita nachází ve stadiu plné konkurence na trhu evropského vzdělávání a realizuje odvážnou strategii stát se vedoucí evropskou univerzitou v oblasti věd o životě a v manažerských, ekonomických, technických a lesnických vědách.

Proces permanentních změn probíhá na všech světových univerzitách v souvislosti se změnami v politice, ekonomii a technologiích. Univerzity přizpůsobují své strategie rozvoje a jim odpovídající formy řízení novým podmínkám. V odborné literatuře se setkáváme se čtyřmi různými modely řízení univerzity: a) college, b) administrativní, c) korporace, d) podnikový. ČZU, podobně jako i jiné univerzity, aplikuje smíšený typ řízení, který je výslednicí historického vývoje, tradic, zkušeností, návyků a který je značně rezistentní k požadavkům rozvíjející se globální společnosti a vzrůstajícím nárokům tržního prostředí v oblasti vzdělávání. Vedoucí funkcionáři na všech úrovních řízení, tj. rektor, prorektor, děkani, proděkan a ředitelé institutů, jsou tradičně voleni akademickým stavem podle kritérií odborných a společenských a nepožaduje se po nich manažerské vzdělání. Jen výjimečně se funkcionáři po dosažení do funkce v oblasti řízení dodatečně vzdělávají. Je proto těžké a někdy téměř nemožné implementovat do chodu univerzity ekonomické standardy a novou ekonomickou realitu života v konkurenčním prostředí.

Další změny probíhají v oblastech aplikací ICT. Tradiční výuka a distribuce studijních materiálů a informací se poskytuje v prostředí elektronických sítí, které propojují katedry, fakulty a univerzity. V některých oblastech se prolíná virtuální prostředí výuky s reálným prostředím, slova dostávají nové obsahy a významy. Tak např. pojmy užívané ve strategických dokumentech jako „diverzifikace“, „rovná příležitost“, „demokratizace vzdělávání“, „sít“, „integrace“, „servisně orientované vzdělávání“, „znalostně orientované kurikulum“ atd. jsou často srozumitelné a smysluplné pouze některým funkcionářům nebo odborníkům, ale jejich skutečný smysl už může být učitelům nesrozumitelný. Ve strategii rozvoje univerzity se nově objevují marketingové prvky: univerzity vykonávají své poslání v silném konkurenčním prostředí a nabídka i realizace vzdělávání se stále více přizpůsobují tržním podmínkám. To se projeví především změnou organizace studijních plánů a širší nabídkou předmětů a studijních podpor tak, aby vyhovovaly individuálním požadavkům studentů, byly přizpůsobeny individuálnímu tempu studia. Administrativa se bude redukovat na minimum nezbytných operací, zvýší se osobní podíl studenta na tvorbě svého osobního vzdělávacího portfolia a řízení svého studia.

Počty zapsaných studentů vzrůstají od roku 1997, v roce 2006 je zapsáno téměř 15 500 studentů. V průběhu 15 let vzrostl počet studentů na 300 %. Velký počet studentů nutně vyžaduje i změny ve stylu řídicí práce na fakultách – od modelu „college“ se implementují prvky řízení modelu „podnik“. Zvýšený podíl výuky v životě pedagogů má za následek jejich užší specializaci: na katedrách se začínají profilovat pracovníci „zaměřeni na výuku“ a pracovníci „zaměřeni na výzkum“. Tyto zúžené specializace, ve své podstatě pro výuku nepříznivé, jsou navíc podporovány i systémy hodnocení vědecké činnosti pomocí impaktů a podmínkami přidělovaných evropských grantů. V centru pozornosti musí být proto aplikace e-learningových metod, stimulace samostatné práce studentů s využitím systému ECTS a další aktivizující metody, které umožní realizovat správné proporce mezi pedagogickou a vědeckou činností pedagogů.

Univerzita vstupuje do období, kdy bude třeba více prosazovat vhodný model řízení na všech úrovních. Bude to model založený na tradičních a ověřených hodnotách a zkušenostech, ale s prvky větší demokratizace vzdělávání, s využitím prvků podnikového řízení, s maximálním využitím sítí, které propojí pracoviště a pracovníky nejen vertikálně a horizontálně, ale i navzájem, tj. od „administrativy a hierarchie“ směrem k „vzájemnému propojení a komunikaci“ (from “bureaucracy and hierarchy” to “network and connectivity”).

Contact Address:

Prof. Ing. Jan H r o n , DrSc. dr.h.c., Rector of the Czech University of Agriculture Prague, Kamýcká 129, 165 21 Praha 6-Suchdol, Czech Republic, e-mail: hron@pef.czu.cz
