The Contribution of the Higher Education Institutions to Knowledge Transfer between People of Different Cultures

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Universities are knowledge-intensive service organizations (Sparrow – Mooney – Lancaster, 2006, Dobrai-Farkas 2009a, b), the main activities of which are the creation, transfer and sharing of knowledge. As universities are not only places of organizational knowledge creation and transfer, but a major source of knowledge transfer between the organization and its environment (Stevens - Bagby, 2001, Winter – Wiseman – Muirhead 2006), it is necessary to study the ways knowledge flows from universities to other organizations (such as other universities) as a result of participation of students and staff in nonprofit organizations.

A special opportunity for knowledge oriented activities of university NPOs is the University Network of the European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC), which is an international nonprofit organization of the universities located in cities which either have been or are, or will be Capitals of Culture in Europe. This university network was founded in Pécs, Hungary in December 2006. It meets the challenges of today’s globalized world, where higher education is becoming more and more competitive and international. UNeECC was created to stimulate new forms of collaboration between higher education institutions. As a university network it can provide its members with numerous possibilities for gaining first hand information about the challenges and prospects of the international higher education market.

The aim of UNeECC is the internationalization of higher education, promoting international education, meeting the professional needs of individuals in international education, promoting policies, informing members of policy debates, developing partnerships, providing networking opportunities, promoting academic excellence, providing information on European initiatives and programs, and strengthening the position of European universities in a global context. For three years now, an active co-operation has existed between the member universities, involving many activities. This joint project should bring people of the member universities closer to each other by providing a chance to share experiences about their European Capital of Culture year and have the possibility learn each other better. Sharing also means cooperation in the field of education and research between its members.

Aim of the paper is to show how universities shall respond to emerging opportunities, how they have to reach out to the society and how they can create something unique that meets today’s challenges of the international higher education area. The paper also focuses on examining knowledge transfer channels between partner institutions by using a research methodology which includes the study of existing literature connected to this topic; and also document analysis and interviews with members of this international organization.

References:


3) Sparrow, John – Mooney, Michele – Lancaster, Nick (2006), Perceptions of a UK university as a knowledge-intensive business service enhancing organisational and
regional service innovation, International Journal of Business Innovation and Research, 1(1/2): 191-203
