

Strategic Leadership and Planning for Universities in the Global Economy

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Abstract

This article discusses some aspects of strategic leadership and planning in the higher education sector in the global economy. It examines global trends in strategic leadership, the culture of entrepreneurialism, characteristics of higher education leaders, the importance of strategic planning and six different dimensions of strategy formulation. Finally, it evaluates the role of monitoring and evaluation in the higher education sector.

Keywords: higher education, strategic leadership, strategic planning, global economy, entrepreneurial culture.

Introduction

A critical issue relevant to educational leaders and more specifically to contemporary university leaders that has been largely overlooked in current leadership literature is strategic leadership. Compared to many academic disciplines, strategy is a young field. Hofer & Schendel published the first book on 'Strategic Leadership' in 1978 while the Silver Jubilee of *The Strategic Management Journal* was in 2004. However, Boyd, Finkelstein and Gove (2005) assert that despite its relative youth, strategy as a field of research has grown substantially in scope and influence over the last few decades. House and Aditya (1997) believe that prior to the mid 1980s, there were very few empirical studies on the strategic leadership processes or behaviours. The literature focuses on the processes to show how managers make strategic decisions, and to a lesser extent examine the behaviour of such managers as leaders.

Whilst the study of strategic leadership is in its early stages, the role of strategic leadership has gained greater significance within the institutions of higher education. The development of a knowledge society and a changing socio-political environment in which universities operate, and the subsequent paradigm shift to corporate governance and managerialism has increased the need for strategic leaders. Crowther and Limerick (1997) describe strategic leadership as one of the five prominent leadership approaches that have acquired credibility in contemporary educational management theory and practice. Preedy, Glatter and Wise (2003) assert that this development is taking place in an increasingly turbulent and uncertain market-driven environment that is impacting on universities and their leaders in multiple and complex ways. The need for effective strategic leadership in higher education is therefore imperative if universities are to continue to survive and meet the needs of a rapidly changing society. In this context, this article focuses on the significance and impact of strategic leadership.

Global Trends on Strategic Leadership

Educational reform efforts throughout the world have affected the strategic role of educational leaders. Particular trends with significant impact on that role include changes to decision-making processes and the power and authority of the leaders, social, political and economic changes within the contexts of the societies and the cognitive bases of those who lead universities. Embedded in this trend is the emerging understanding of the leadership paradigm. Trends relating to these issues are now further explored.

During the past ten years the governments across the globe have undertaken a series of reforms within the higher education sectors, altering the governance and administration of universities. So far, the concept of marketing has been an essential tool of management in the industrial and commercial world, but now the universities and colleges are highly involved in marketing their institutions and adopting new approaches to recruit students. In this new environment, the leaders of higher educational institutions need to consider some degree of promotion of their institutions by improving external relations (Fidler & Bowles, 1989). As strategic management is strongly emphasized in the rapidly changing educational environment, the strategic leadership for such management has inevitably becoming a necessity (Cheng, 2002).

These reforms have embedded an ideology of market and consumer choice in education (Foskett, 2003). The pace of this change and the need to be adaptive and responsive to local community and customer

needs require the leaders to develop new skills and working styles (Mestry & Grobler, 2004). Consequently, these trends demand different styles of leadership as greater autonomy and self-governance has altered the role of those who lead colleges and universities. For many decades educational leaders have relied on qualities of personality and intuition. Contemporary educational leaders require flexible management of resources and strategic management of their institutions. Effective leaders have learnt to value the process of developing strategic planning, to clarify strategic priorities in ways that enable them to focus on planning, targeting resources, shaping staff development and monitoring their progress (Martin, McKeown, Nixon & Ranson, 2000). Modern educational leaders need to combine the roles of the 'leading professional' and 'chief executive officer'. Current educational leaders are quite capable and do frequently switch between such roles (Gamage, 2005; Law & Glover, 2003).

In line with global trends in the strategic leadership in educational spheres and reasoning as provided above, the following four trends have been identified:

- Internationally, higher education systems are increasingly moving towards corporate models of university governance and administration.
- Reforms in university governance require leaders and managers to adopt business-like practices, including marketing, listening to customers and observing market trends.
- Greater degree of autonomy and empowerment for corporate type decision-making avoiding unnecessary delays.
- Higher education systems have recognized the need for training in leadership and management.

Encouragement for University Leaders to Adopt Business-style Practices

In Australia over the past two decades, federal and state (or territory) governments have been wrestling with the issue of the privatization of public sector services. The outcome of this ongoing debate has been an "inexorable move towards a purchaser-provider model of public service provision throughout Australia" (Dempster & Logan, 1998: 80). Caldwell (1998) asserts that this new culture of public service has led to the downsizing of bureaucratic arrangements at the centre of the system of public education, with a parallel shift in authority, responsibility and accountability to the institutional level. Schools and higher educational institutions, especially those supported by public funds are constantly told to emulate the style of operation that characterized private, stand-alone enterprises. Educational leaders must learn to use new kinds of administrative structures and

processes, or they and their institutions will not prevail (Beare, 1995). Hatton (2001) adds that it is now commonplace in Australia to find educational institutions managed by modes of operation originating from the corporate world of private enterprise.

Effects of Autonomy and More Authority to Top Leadership

Generally, the restructuring efforts appear to be part of an attempt to make the management more efficient, effective, accountable, and more responsive to government policies in introducing corporate management approaches from the business sector, and devolving more responsibility while placing greater emphasis on educational outputs in keeping with customer needs (Harman, 1991). The influence of these changes has had a direct and immediate impact on the strategic role of leaders and managers (Townsend, 1996). They expect leaders and managers to acquire practical knowledge of change management, entrepreneurialism in resource acquisition and commercial standards and accountability (Dempster & Logan, 1998:83).

Current Trends Toward Searching for Strategic Leaders

In an examination of some of the highly prestigious as well as rapidly developing universities around the world, it is evident that they are breaking away from the usual traditions for new perspectives and visions to universities by installing those with experience in industry and commerce as institutional leaders. For instance, Harvard University, one of the most prestigious universities in the world, appointed Larry Summers, a former US Secretary of the Treasury as the President. Some years ago, Cambridge University recruited Alec Broers, an Australian research engineer from IBM in New York, as its first Vice-Chancellor from outside Britain. In 2004, the Oxford University appointed John Hood, a Consulting Engineer and former Vice-Chancellor of the Auckland University from New Zealand as its Vice-Chancellor. This type of decision-making was simply unthinkable in the past at two of the most prestigious universities in Britain with strong traditions and values (going back to 12th century) peculiar to them. Thus Oxford and Cambridge are fishing and competing in the global market place for strategic leaders with appropriate talents and ideas. Thus, they have made watershed decisions to search globally for strategic leaders.

Shih Choon Fong, the President of the National University of Shanghai worked at General Electrical Company in the USA, for seven years before joining the University. Now, he has made the NUS a topnotch university, coming within the top five in Asia and Australia. There are many such examples in the higher education landscape of the world, which show how the universities have responded to change

and the importance of having a leader with an entrepreneurial drive and experience so as to create an entrepreneurial university. In Brazil, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, government has offered incentives for companies and universities to collaborate in revising rigid academic structures to make undergraduate education both more interdisciplinary and more responsive to the needs of the employers.

If we look at some entrepreneurial universities in Europe, we can learn many lessons and get new ideas. For instance, Chalmers University of Technology (CUT) in Sweden, one of the 10 best technical universities in Europe, has a Vice-Rector for external activities involving university-industry-government cooperation. CUT also has a Department of Innovation Engineering and Management. The Chalmers School of Entrepreneurship (CSE) at CUT recruits students from Engineering, Business and Design Schools. The aim of the selection process is to identify students who are motivated and capable of becoming entrepreneurs. Here studies are built around actual innovative projects where groups of three students are required to establish a new venture on the basis of research-based ideas. In the contemporary world, entrepreneurship needs to be considered as a cross-cutting discipline and should be taught as a subject in all degree programs including Engineering, Agriculture, Fisheries, Science, and IT etc.

In most universities, Entrepreneurship is taught only to students following degree programs in Management and Business Administration and there is no mix of students from different disciplines. As a result, they do not see the tremendous entrepreneurial opportunities that exist in various sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, IT, chemistry, industry etc. Multidisciplinary studies will bring new and diverse perspectives providing for the cross-fertilization of ideas instead of inbreeding. Therefore, in the contemporary world, universities need to promote the concept of borderless, multidisciplinary programs, enabling a free diffusion of ideas and confluence of talents across disciplinary boundaries. Hence, we need to properly identify students from different disciplines who have strong entrepreneurial passion and drive for courses on entrepreneurship. Perhaps, it should be made mandatory for each entrepreneurship student to start an enterprise at least in the second year under the guidance of experienced entrepreneurs and mentors.

It is also important to invite the movers and shakers of industry to develop and conduct courses, developing the entrepreneurial skills and igniting the entrepreneurial passion of students thereby helping them to blossom out as entrepreneurs. Establishment of business incubators attached to universities are now very common in some universities,

where students are immersed in an entrepreneurial environment which enable them to develop into enterprising, resourceful, independent self-starters and eventually blossom out as successful entrepreneurs.

New knowledge and findings of industrial potential or commercial value that emanate from research conducted by the university staff is often not commercialized and such a culture does not exist in many universities. In this context it would be useful to have an institutional mechanism or structure to provide necessary services to educate and advise the staff on how to commercialize research findings, innovations and inventions. These steps are likely to assist the transform new ideas and knowledge into innovative products and services. Moreover, courses on creativity, innovation, inventions, which are likely to sharpen the faculties of analysis, foster imagination, inquiry, and creative thinking could ignite the passion to innovate and create new knowledge, should be developed and offered.

An Entrepreneurial University will have several advantages over a traditional university. Reduced dependence on State funds through income generated from licenses, patents, spin-off companies etc, greater administrative and financial autonomy through generated income, production of more innovative and entrepreneurial graduates, improved employability of graduates and greater contribution to industrial growth, business development and regional development are some major advantages of an Entrepreneurial University. If we look at the universities in the world, there are many universities that have become not only true and effective partners, but also the driving forces and engines of regional development. Stanford University in the United States, Technology Universities in Aachen in Germany, the University of Sheffield in UK, Oulu University in Finland, Chalmers University in Sweden, Punjab University in India are some such universities (Seneviratne, 2006).

Strategic Planning

Strategy is an elusive concept; first it originated from the usage in military situations where it distinguishes an overall plan of action from the tactics, which are its constituent parts. In the 1970s the development of theoretical concepts relating to strategic planning was first initiated and developed in highly competitive business environments. Strategic Planning enables an organization to take stock of the current situation and decide on a direction for the future where the organization wants to be. It is not just developing a plan and implementing it. It is a much more complex and an interactive process. Planning is a process that precedes decision-making. A plan can be defined as a decision, with regard to a course of action. A course of

action is a sequence of acts, which are mutually related and viewed as a unit. All successful organizations develop plans. There are some organizations, or even countries, which develop plans that are not implemented. If an organization develops a plan, it must be implemented to be successful, and it is expected that all organizational members follow the plan. Planning is an intelligent preparation for action. The planning process is differentiated from other pre-decision activities, in that it is systematic, deliberate and continuous. The planning process can lead to:

- Democratic and open management, or autocratic and closed management; creativity and flexibility; or organizational and human arrangements of rigidity;
- More efficient utilization of financial and human resources, or wastage of these resources, particularly over a long period of time;
- Building identification and commitment, among students and staff, to institutional goals or leading to demoralizing effects;
- Develop the institution as a professional organization, or reinforce its bureaucratic tendencies.

It is the responsibility and the mission of the leadership to select the appropriate path for the organization he or she is leading. Whether the leadership wants to develop a democratic, high performing organization or a mediocre, bureaucratic organization where the differences of opinions and initiatives will be suppressed and discouraged depends on the position that the leader adopts. Of course, action speaks louder than words. Thus, it is his or her style of leadership and approaches to decision-making and attitudes to staff and students that would enable them to understand the direction in which the organization is heading, as it is a very important strategic decision that the leadership needs to make.

Importance of Planning

In the context of educational management, there are two key reasons as to why planning is considered important. First, it often has “primacy”, from the standpoint of its position in the sequence of management functions. Second, it has “pervasiveness” as an activity that affects the entire organization. With regard to “primacy”, planning logically precedes the performance of all other managerial roles, especially in organizing and/or controlling an organization. Planning establishes the objectives to be pursued and the strategies through which they are to be achieved. It should not be assumed that planning is the initial step in a linear process. The objectives may have to be modified, as action plans are developed and reviewed periodically, to suit changed circumstances and new developments. The pervasiveness of planning

is evident in the performance of all other managerial roles, and potentially, the activities of almost all members of an organization.

Planning is considered a vital responsibility of the leader or manager in any sort of organizational setting. According to Boone and Kurtz (1987), there are specific reasons for its importance:

- Planning is related to performance - organizational success depends upon successful planning.
- Planning focuses attention on objectives – plans continually reinforce the importance of objectives. It helps ensure that decisions contribute to their achievement and that top administrators do not get involved in less important and less relevant decisions and activities.
- Planning helps offset uncertainties and anticipate problems by developing plans for future contingencies; leaders and managers become better prepared and proactive, providing the staff with better security of tenure.
- Planning provides guidelines for decision-making – as plans specify the actions necessary to attain the set objectives, they serve as a basis for decisions about future activities.
- Planning is necessary to facilitate monitoring and control – reference to plans can help leaders and managers determine whether decisions are being implemented properly, and whether organizational objectives are being accomplished.
- Planning is important in resolving the following issues, which arise in contemporary universities:
 - How to make the best use of limited resources;
 - How to make the organization more efficient and effective;
 - How to keep pace with the equity requirements; and
 - How to make the academic programs more relevant to the changing environments in meeting the needs of the economy and the society.

Change needs to be systematically planned and coordinated. In the planning process, appropriate attention needs to be given to long-term goals and priorities, as well as, to the goals to be achieved in the medium to short term. Finally, those concerned with planning improvements in education need to recognize that competent educational and lay leaders must be involved, at least, in the process of determining goals and major policies. This arises, because the public must accept the goals and policies, before they can be utilized for guidance in affecting any significant changes.

Scholars stress the positive effects of planning in a number of different ways. Timmons (1999) points out that opportunities and changes can be anticipated when management thinks ahead. Bangs (1996) echoes this idea when he claims that planning makes possible the objective assessment of weaknesses, needs and problems, before

they grow into damaging proportions. Bryson (1990) as well as Flavel and Williams (1996) are of the opinion that when planning is carried out strategically, it yields a clearer direction to any organization.

Strategic Planning is the process of discovering effective and efficient ways of utilizing organizational resources for the attainment of a desired future (Flavel & Williams, 1996). Weindling (1997), points out that strategic planning stresses evolutionary, or rolling planning, where the plan itself is altered to adapt to changing circumstances. Strategic planning fosters and requires productive relations and linkages with public agencies and groups, other than those directly responsible for education. It involves the determination of policies and the establishment of new or revised goals. This concept should be of special interest to the institutional leaders who have a major responsibility for developing and implementing plans. A plan helps to ensure the commitment and support that is essential in facilitating needed changes.

Davies and Ellison (1998) re-conceptualize the planning process as involving three types of activities, which occur concurrently and interact and reinforce each other. The first type is *future thinking*, which involves the identification of longer-term fundamental shifts in the educational setting. The second is *strategic intent and traditional strategic planning*. Strategic intent focuses on the less predictable areas of medium-term planning, while traditional strategic planning is used for the definable and predictable areas. The third type is the *operational target setting*, which enables an organization to set measurable targets for the whole institution, different faculties or sections and students.

Different Perspectives in Strategy Formulation

Different explanations are given as to how strategies are developed. Bailey and Johnson (1997) have listed these perspectives as follows:

- The planning perspective;
- The logical incremental perspective;
- The political perspective;
- The cultural perspective;
- The visionary perspective; and
- The natural selection perspective.

The Planning Perspective

According to Bailey and Johnson (1997), this perspective of strategy formulation involves a logical, rational and a planned approach. Senior managers need to set clear strategic goals and objectives. Then, a systematic analysis of the organization and its environment

has to be carried out. From these data, strategic options need to be generated. Such alternative courses of action have to be assessed, before one is chosen. The chosen option has to be translated into specific action plans. In this systematic process of developing the strategy, the resources needed have to be identified and subsequently allocated, providing for monitoring and control systems.

The Logical Incremental Perspective

Lindbloom (1959), cited in Bailey and Johnson (1997), argues that it is difficult for leaders or managers to consider all possible options in the process of shaping strategic actions, as organizations and their environments are complex. Hence, 'successive limited comparisons' of the possible strategic options need to be undertaken, in order to determine the best choice. When leaders have a clear view of where they want their organization to be in the future, they need to work towards that desired future in an evolutionary process. This logical incrementalist view of strategic management considers the organization as a cyclical system, encompassing feedback loops to previous stages, where the problem may be redefined and the solution may be redesigned in the process of ongoing analysis. Assessment has to be refined incrementally, to match the environmental changes with the procedures implemented in the organization.

The Political Perspective

The political explanation for the formulation of strategy is that organizations achieve compromises between internal and external interest groups, with conflicting interests. Strategies are then formulated, through bargaining or negotiations. Both in democratic and autocratic systems, the general directives for the planning are formulated through a political process. Naturally, leadership has a big say in formulating such directives.

The Cultural Perspective

This perspective recognizes the significance of organizational culture in the formulation of strategies. This cultural perspective is built into the planning process through the history and past experience of the leaders/managers and the organization. The evaluation and choice of strategies are coloured by the values, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions common among the organizational members and other stakeholders.

The Visionary Perspective

Especially in the current context, the choice of organizational strategies is influenced by an organizational vision, which is simply the desired future state of the organization. Accordingly, a leader is expected to use his intuitive or innovative acumen in dealing with the

strategic problems of the university or a college and articulating and communicating such a vision to other stakeholders. When the organizational members embrace this well articulated idea or vision, it becomes a shared vision for resolving organizational concerns.

The Natural Selection Perspective

In the case of educational organizations, there are many environmental factors that influence, as well as, constrain the choice of strategies. These external factors impinging on the organization may occur unintentionally, in the form of conflicts over the control of limited resources, accidents, errors, tactical moves and vested interests. If the variations are beneficial, the leader should opt to retain them (Bailey & Johnson, 1997).

Developing a Strategic Plan

In strategic planning, the emphasis is on the development of an evolutionary or a rolling plan, enabling adjustments to be made, to suit the changing circumstances. Strategic planning, which is a way of looking more systematically into the future, originated in the business world in the 1970s and has now become a standard part of management thinking in most organizations. The main purpose is to prepare the best fit between the organization and the environment, leading to the development of the best strategy, for the organization to move forward. Today, strategic planning is a technique, which assists leaders and managers in dealing with the increasingly turbulent environments and challenges, confronting organizations. As strategic planning takes an overall view of the long-term development of an organization, many higher educational institutions as well as school systems have embraced the concept of strategic planning.

Processes Involved in Developing a Strategic Plan

Fidler (2002) asserts that the process of strategic planning should involve three conceptual stages: a strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategic implementation followed by three action steps to include: deciding how to plan, deciding how to choose and deciding how to plan and implement. However, in developing a strategic plan for a higher educational institution, the leadership needs to embrace the key elements of the planning process. This involves the following five managerial tasks:

- **Developing a shared vision to determine where the institution is heading** – In providing a long-term direction, leadership needs to delineate what kind of an institution that is envisaged;
- **Setting objectives** – It is necessary to convert the strategic vision into specific performance outcomes to be realized by the institution;

- **Developing the strategies** – Appropriate strategies need to be developed to achieve the desired outcomes;
- **Implementing the chosen strategies** – The chosen strategies need to be implemented efficiently and effectively;
- **Monitoring and evaluating the performance** – Monitoring and evaluation of the progress should be undertaken to initiate corrective adjustments in the vision, long-term objectives and strategies, in the light of actual experience, changing conditions relating to new opportunities, threats and new ideas (Adapted from Gamage, 2006).

Developing a Shared Vision within the Organizational Mission

Very early in the strategy formulating process, the leadership needs to focus on a set of key questions relating to the future of the organization that they propose to lead. What is the educational philosophy on which we should develop the institution? What should be the position of the institution amongst other similar institutions? ‘Mission’ is another term that is used to express the purpose for the existence of the organization. It is employed to indicate the overall aims and philosophy and is often captured in a brief sentence or a phrase. It is usually expected to be memorable, guiding the future policies and actions of the organization. Bush (1998) asserts that even though some scholars use it interchangeably with the vision, mission should be regarded as the more specific and permanent expression of the values of an organization, a vehicle for translating the inspirations into reality.

Drawing a carefully studied conclusion relating to the long-term direction of a college or university, the leadership should take a hard look at the internal and external environments to form a clearer sense of how it should change over the next five years and beyond. The intended strategic vision should reflect on the aspirations of stakeholders, providing a panoramic view of “where we are going?” providing specifics about its development expressed through ‘a strategic plan’. For instance, originally, Microsoft set its vision as “A Computer on every desk and in every home, using great software as an empowering tool”. In 1999, because of the rapid advancement of technology, the Microsoft vision was broadened to read as “Empower people through great software anytime, anyplace and on every device.” A university may develop a mission statement such as “Our Mission is striving for excellence in teaching, research and service.”

Setting Objectives for the Organization

The purpose of setting objectives is to convert the leadership aspirations on a strategic vision based on the organization’s mission into specific performance targets – results and outcomes that are expected

to be achieved. Setting organizational objectives, and measuring whether the set targets and outcomes could be achieved within the time lines, help the leadership to track and monitor progress. The leaders and/or managers of the best performing or excellent organizations set objectives that they are not able to achieve without a struggle or a great deal of effort. The challenge of trying to achieve bold, aggressive performance targets pushes the leadership to be more inventive, to exhibit some urgency in improving both its resources base and the desired outcomes and to be more intentional and focused in their actions. Objective setting should be resorted to by all faculty and sectional leaders. Every section, every faculty needs concrete and measurable performance targets that contribute meaningfully towards achieving the set objectives. When the organizational wide objectives are broken down into specific targets for each section and faculty, lower level leaders and academics could be held accountable to achieve the set performance targets. The development of an organizational-wide outcome oriented organizational climate and culture could energize the whole organization.

Developing the Strategies

Once the organizational objectives are set, it is important for the leadership to establish a strategic planning committee with competent personnel to develop a strategic plan. Here, the leader needs to be a member rather than the chair of the committee to facilitate the free flow of opinions and open discussion. Then, short, medium and long-term goals need to be set towards the realization of the shared vision. The Committee may hold a brainstorming session of the key opinion leaders to consider different ways and means by which these goals could be achieved. In achieving a set goal, alternative ways and means should be considered through a process of simulation and evaluation to select the best strategy with which a particular goal can be most efficiently and effectively achieved. From this perspective, it is the responsibility of a strategic leader, through whatever mechanism established to identify through a wide-ranging process of consultation and analysis the opportunities and problems or threats that confront the organization, and systematically to search for the alternatives and make choices that maximize the organizational performance. The success of the strategic plan depends on the choices made and the strategies developed. As a battle hardened military leader develops his strategies to win a war, contemporary leaders of higher educational institutions need to make hard choices and develop the strategies to realize them.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan

Once the plan is approved, it becomes the responsibility of the pres-

ident or the vice-chancellor, in his or her capacity as the CEO to organize the implementation by those who have been made responsible for various faculties and/or sections, in keeping with the agreed target dates. The Strategic Planning Committee, which was responsible for the coordination and drafting of the plan, should monitor the progress in implementation with regular progress reports by the CEO to the governing body. It is very important for the CEO to be a member of the 'Strategic Planning Committee'. If and when problems arise, action needs to be taken to address them without delay. On the other hand, at the end of each year, another year needs to be added, with necessary adjustments to the goals by making it a rolling plan in moving the organization forward.

The leadership skills in figuring out what must be done to implement the agreed strategies efficiently and effectively to achieve the set goals within the target dates, is extremely important. It is a hands on, close to the scene administrative task that should include the following key objectives:

- Build an organization capable of implementing the strategic plan successfully;
- Allocate resources to sections and faculties where it is needed most ensuring that professionally qualified, competent personnel are available;
- Establish appropriate structures, policies, operating procedures and processes supportive of the strategies agreed upon;
- Motivate and energize the staff to achieve the set goals and targets. Where needed job designs need to be modified to achieve a better fit between the strategy and the successful implementation of the plan;
- Align the rewards and recognition policies to meet the desired results;
- Create an organizational climate and culture conducive and responsive to change leading to improved performance both for the students and staff;
- Establish an effective network of communication to keep the organizational membership and relevant stakeholders well informed; and
- Embrace the concept of total quality management (TQM) to ensure customer orientation and continuous development of personnel, improvements to programs, services and facilities in all areas and aspects (Adapted from Gamage, 2006).

Monitoring and Evaluating the Progress

Again, it is a key responsibility of the leadership and the 'Strategic Planning Committee' to monitor the process of implementation of the strategic plan and evaluate the progress made while identifying the problems and bottlenecks that would have arisen, if any. Periodical progress reports should be provided to the governing body to keep them informed, and to obtain the approval for the corrective measures

that are proposed. It is also the responsibility of the leadership to stay on top of the organizational operations deciding whether things are going well internally and monitoring external developments closely. Wherever problems and bottlenecks arise, corrective measures need to be taken promptly and effectively.

Conclusion

In this article we have examined the significance of strategic leadership and strategic planning for the survival and development of organizations in the global economy. Strategic leadership is the key to stay float in a keenly competed higher education market with no borders as was in the past. It is a time to discard the usual traditions and practices as were resorted to by the world renowned universities such as Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge and search for innovative, entrepreneurial strategic leaders, wherever they are, whether within the academic community or outside. Nowadays, developing a Strategic Plan is seen as a key function and a key responsibility of the top leader and/or manager. To be an effective, proactive leader and/or manager, one needs to acquire the required education and training to develop the necessary skills and competencies such as the acquisition of a sound theoretical base, relating to strategic leadership and strategy formulation and more specifically, strategic planning.

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