

Chapter 6

Academic Governance Arrangements: Quality Assurance and Pandemic Impact

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ABSTRACT

Governing the quality of academic activities at the institution level is a challenging task. Literature shows that the model of academic governance considers quality but still lacks proper standardization of academic functions and risk minimization in higher institutes. In the current chapter, the authors present a conceptual framework of academic governance, different arrangements settings, and exploring nexus of governance in education sector: how it operates to support the quality of academic activities. Using literature content and qualitative analysis, firstly the chapter explores a few factors of academic governance such as expectations of regulators, standards, and quality, and secondly, it presents influences due to pandemic on academic governance. At the last, this chapter draws inferences to act as a starting point for the study on academic governance, refers knowledge, infuses more research practices, and answers a few questions that might surface from the implementation of academic governance in assuring quality.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Origin of Academic Governance

The history of academic governance is something related to faculty governance. The famous author in the area of academic governance, argues that prior to the modern times, universities across the world changed during nineteenth century. In the past, the institutional governance was mainly the governance led by

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governing boards, faculty board, and committees appointed. In this sense, the academic governance has been autocratic in nature (Gerber, 2014). Gerber also mentioned that academic governance seen reforms with a lack of professionalization among the teaching staff, who were quite young in their age, had no advanced experience, and specialized expertise in teaching related activities (Pham *et al.*, 2020). It is also evident from his studies that the concept of academic governance was not expected to engage in original research where people did not find themselves for teaching as a long-term career but rather as a form of temporary employment. In the end of nineteenth century, education sector has seen the emergence of the large, medium types of universities across the globe. Many of the universities had predicted on the increasing professionalization on academic specialization, graduate education, and research.

As Gerber's theories in the context of education in western countries, also highlights the relationship between professionalism and academic freedom. Generally, faculty in the academic areas claims based on their own competencies and teaching expertise, often argues about their relative teaching strength as compared to other staff to contribute in institutional governance processes. In the early Twentieth century, expansion in the education systems, with an increased faculty role in institutional governance, and also with high professionalization, faculty members, and top management were closely associated. This time also saw a unique trend of increased involvement of faculty members in institutional governance by different ways of enabling their participation, professionalism, and unionism. The role of administrative head of the university systems also found critique with varying but limited executive powers.

The academic governance during the Second World War to the mid-1970s seen tremendous growth and rising global presence but without use of internet technologies. During this time an academic board that seen provided consensus that "faculty should exercise primary responsibility over all academic matters. After this time period, new challenges for faculty governance including emergence of multi-campus systems were seen, that had changed the perspective of national economy of many countries. Many theories of academic governance linked with faculty governance were proposed, de-professionalism of faculty, included faculty unionism, the variation in faculty responses (Gerber, 2014). A few of the academic governance related studies were also mentioned by Gerber were oriented towards market model of governance, shared governance, a robust system of shared governance in the education sector. It is seen understood from the reforms that professionalism in academic governance can be articulated in more than one way, may be in the form of an ideal public service, that it is compatible with unionism, and that it can provide an effective basis for mobilization and making political claims.

1.2 Basic Arrangements and Structures

The concept of academic governance is a highly challenging concept which includes different arrangement focused on collective efforts of an academic entity towards a dedicated goal of education and learning. In the broader sense, it refers to internal environment of the educational entity, or an organization, and management, particularly in higher education institutes (Hanne Kvilhaugsvik, 2021). The term 'academic governance' basically refers to governing process in an academic environment. Generally, the process of academic governance focuses on both the internal as well as external governance in the institutions. Internal governance mainly caters decision making and governmental process related arrangements within the institutes, for example, authority, to increase quality of teaching and related decisions (Cardoso *et al.*, 2015). A few other areas of decision making could be financing at institute levels, also at academic programme and staffing levels. In contrast to internal, external governance in academics environment refers to the institutional arrangements.

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