

Managerial roles of academic executives in Bicol region, Philippines

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Abstract

Considering the diverse functions being performed by academic executives, their managerial roles in state universities and colleges (SUCs) in Bicol Region, Philippines were investigated. Academic executives involved in the study included deans and program chairs of eight state universities and colleges. The descriptive method of research was used with the questionnaire as the main data-gathering instrument. The respondents were selected through convenience sampling. It was ascertained in the study that the academic executives are performing such diverse functions as disseminator, leader, liaison, disturbance handler, monitor, resource allocator, spokesperson, negotiator, figurehead, and entrepreneur. The functions which are “always performed” by these executives include disseminator, leader, liaison, and disturbance handler. Recommendations were formulated in the light of the findings and conclusions drawn from this investigation.

Keywords: Managerial roles, academic executives, state colleges and universities, Bicol Region, Philippines

1. Introduction

Higher education institutions are characterized by differences in size, in complexity, and by a multiplicity of functions and roles [1, 2]. These functions and roles are divided and delegated to qualified and competent staff members in order for the institution to be relevant, responsive, efficient, and effective.

The academic operations of an institution are usually organized into divisions or departments. Each division or department is headed by a chairperson who is responsible for administering its affairs. The title given to these heads tends to vary from institution to institution but many use the title dean of instruction [3]. For purposes of this research, the title of academic executives is used. The dean or the chief academic officer is defined as the administrative head of academic programs with responsibility for all academic affairs at the institution. Some scholars have suggested that the position of academic executive is of equal importance to that of the president, at least in terms of academic affairs of the institution [4, 5, 6].

Chief academic officers are responsible for the institutional program; these individuals are at the center of what is ultimately of greatest importance to the institution-teaching and learning [6]. In addition, they occupy that middle ground where many of the tensions of the college come together, where daily battles are fought; administrative concerns versus faculty concerns; student services concerns versus instructional concerns. Likewise, academic executives are primarily responsible for instructional integrity and curriculum development in institutions of higher education [7]. Thus, they are responsible for the over-all educational program of a particular department in a university which is the *raison d'être* of its existence.

The duties and responsibilities of the chief academic officers are broad and diverse. They deal daily with college-wide issues; pass professional judgment on all teaching faculty; are responsible for the colleges' programs of study and schedule

of classes; help with long-range planning; plan, monitor, and spend a budget, deal with external agencies; to cite a few. Furthermore, the academic executive must be a leader with vision, a manager of details, an advocate of the faculty, and a representative of the president's office.

Deans must mediate among students, faculty, administration, and staff [8]. They must be careful stewards of resources and offer guidance on how funds should be allocated and reallocated. Finally, they must cope with both internal program evaluation and external accountability mandates. The position of dean in college is indeed a challenging job.

Academic executives in community colleges in the United States place more weight on their roles in running the affairs of the school as leader, liaison and disseminator, resource allocator, monitor, and entrepreneur [9]. As public figures, they consider such roles as spokesperson, disturbance handler, figurehead and negotiator. It appears that these executives perform varied roles both inside and outside the school. They cannot ignore the importance of linkages; that is, to relate with other colleges and universities, government and non-government agencies to provide avenues for possible additional funding and support to instruction, research, extension and production.

Given these concerns, the managerial roles of academic executives in state universities and colleges (SUCs) in Bicol Region, Philippines were determined.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design

The descriptive method of research with the questionnaire as the main instrument in gathering the data was employed using such indicators for the 10 managerial roles performed by academic executives.

Academic executives involved in this study include deans and/or program chairs assigned in the main and annex campuses of the eight state universities and colleges in Bicol Region of the Philippines, namely: Bicol University (BU) in

Legazpi City, Camarines Norte State Colleges (CNSC) in Daet, Camarines Sur Polytechnic College (CSPC) in Nabua, Camarines Sur State Agricultural College (CSSAC) in Pili, Catanduanes State Colleges in Virac, Don Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology (DBESMSCAT) in Masbate, Partido State University (PSU) in Goa, and Sorsogon State College (SSC) in Sorsogon City.

2.2 Sampling Method and Instrument Used

Purposive sampling was used in identifying the respondents (69 questionnaires were distributed; 52 accomplished questionnaires were returned or 75 percent retrieval). A modified questionnaire based from the instrument used for managerial roles of academic executives [9]. The academic executive-respondents were requested to indicate the extent of performing the managerial roles in executing their

managerial duties and functions using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “always performed” (5) to “least performed” (1). Descriptive statistics (i.e., weighted mean and rank) was used in analyzing and interpreting the results of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Managerial Roles of Academic Executives

Table 1 shows the extent of performance of the managerial roles of academic executives which appear that four of these roles (i.e. disseminator, leader, liaison, and disturbance handler) are always performed to a very much extent. The other indicators indicate that academic executives are either a monitor, a resource allocator, a spokesperson, a negotiator, a figure head, or an entrepreneur.

Table 1: Extent of Performance of the Managerial Roles of Academic Executives

Managerial Role	Overall Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Disseminator	4.69	1	Always performed
Leader	4.67	2	Always performed
Liaison	4.52	3	Always performed
Disturbance handler	4.51	4	Always performed
Monitor	4.47	5	Performed more often
Resource allocator	4.43	6	Performed more often
Spokesperson	4.42	7	Performed more often
Negotiator	4.35	8	Performed more often
Figure head	4.34	9	Performed more often
Entrepreneur	4.33	10	Performed more often

Legend: 4.51-5.00 (5) – Always performed
 3.51-4.50 (4) – More often performed
 2.51-3.50 (3) – Often times performed
 1.51-2.50 (2) – Sometimes performed
 1.00-1.50 (1) – Least performed

Four out of ten roles are performed “always” by chief academic officers of SUCs in Region 5. Their order as ranked is as follows: 1st – as a disseminator; 2nd – as a leader; 3rd – a liaison; and 4th – as a disturbance handler. As a *disseminator*, the function includes disseminating pertinent information receive from the outside environment to the appropriate internal office or individual; sharing acquired relevant knowledge and skills with faculty and staff and ensuring that the faculty and staff are updated with information relevant to their position. Academic executives should, therefore, possess effective communication skills, both verbal and written and use technological tools such as internet, e-mail and word processor. One of the greatest challenges of the deanship in the state universities and colleges in the new millennium is to keep open channels of communication to faculty members and other stakeholders if they are to serve the institution effectively and strategically [10].

The academic executive being a *leader* provides a milieu which enables faculty and staff to work effectively; interacts with colleagues within the limits to enhance professional activities and duties; and encourages teamwork among staff. As leaders, their role is pivotal so that the degree of success the school attains is attributed to them. They must be effective at human relation functions such as motivating and collaborating with others to accomplish institutional mission. Being a *liaison*, these executives perform the functions of maintaining a network of contacts and information sources outside the unit; establishing good interpersonal relation with personnel outside the academic office and academic staff; and

disseminating relevant information between the department and outside departments.

Being a *disturbance handler* an academic executive should adopt appropriate remedial actions when faced with important unexpected problem or crisis; implements corrective action when unexpected pressure from either within or outside the unit is too great to ignore; and adheres to policies to prevent conflicts, misunderstanding within or outside the unit.

Being a *negotiator* suggests that minimal problems arising with other units within the institution are effectively managed in order to maintain the harmonious working relationship between and among different departments in the institution.

Academic executives are likewise noted as personally participating in a variety of symbolic, social, and ceremonial activities, hence, chief academic officers assume the role of a *figurehead* often times.

Being an *entrepreneur* is a challenge to all SUCs in order to carry out efficiently and effectively its production function, being one of the four-fold functions expected of a higher education institution. This is the immediate need of the time inasmuch as all SUCs in the country are undergoing normative financing scheme as the government’s basis in providing financial subsidy [11]. Along this line, academic executives are faced with the challenge to provide quality education to a growing number of students while at the same time receiving limited subsidy from the national government. Thus, it has become imperative for SUCs to be financially and fiscally autonomous from the national government and

ultimately to become self-reliant. Hence, the need for corporatization in SUCs becomes a mandate ^[12].

These findings are in keeping with what has been reported by previous researchers ^[3-6, 8, 9]. Academic executives are entrusted with the responsibility of sustaining the existence of colleges and universities in providing quality education by submitting their programs to accreditors. In being able to accomplish these managerial duties and functions, academic executives perform several roles. Thus, as they perform their managerial roles, the challenge of sustaining a dynamic and quality-laden institution is achieved.

4. Conclusion

Academic executives in Bicol Region of the Philippines are “always” performing the role of being a disseminator, a leader, a liaison, and a disturbance handler. Being a monitor, a resource allocator, a spokesperson, a negotiator, a figurehead, and an entrepreneur are roles which the academic executives performed more often.

5. Recommendations

The present inquiry recommends that given the limited extent in the performance of the managerial roles by academic executives, heads of SUCs should consider the idea of delegating more challenging roles to these executives to better prepare them to the next higher administrative position. School heads should designate deans or program chairpersons who are committed to do their jobs, and are dynamically aggressive in facing managerial challenges. Likewise, when delegating managerial roles, heads of SUCs must allow for the innovativeness and creativity of academic executives in performing their functions. They must be given opportunities to move at their own pace in their own way, within acceptable limits, to enable them to release their professional potential for the welfare of the institution. Traditionally, the position as academic executive is the stepping stone to the presidency; hence, incumbent presidents of SUCs should consider the idea of delegating more challenging roles to their academic executives to better prepare them to the next higher administrative post.

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