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Foundation and implementation of a Student Community in a university

Student Democracy

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1 Introduction

The Ministry of Higher Education of the Democratic Republic of Ruritania

Strelsau   *September 28th, 2021*

Highly Honorable Student

The Ministry of Higher Education, by decree of 30th February 2021, has decided to establish a new University for Business and Social Sciences. The primary objective is to further democratic processes in business, administration, and politics.

I have the honor to cordially invite you and your fellow students to partake in the preparation of guidelines for participation and representation of students in the organization of this university.

Sincerely yours,

Ioan Doe

Organizing committee
The Ministry of Higher Education

2 Foundation

2.1 Defining the role of students, their interests, and obligations

A university is an institution of higher learning, providing facilities for teaching, research, and authorized to grant academic degrees which awards academics in several disciplines. Nevertheless, in the sociological point of view, it is more than a service that students consume. Receiving a higher education in university as a student is not about consuming a service (acquiring theoretical aspects in a discipline). Being in the university is about not seeing the student as a costumer, but as a process of personal and professional knowledge. It is about having the ability to develop work-skills, seeking an identity, finding personal interests and improving them, acquiring responsibilities, and even enhancing the teamwork.

Moreover, students play a very important role in society; receiving a good education and developing creativity, open-mindness, practical implications, and the ability to adapt in certain situations may bring to successful economies. Therefore, students core objective is to obtain a degree to prepare life after university.

In today's world, to have a successful life, it is essential to receive the best education as possible to face the working life and job stability. Therefore, the university's education is the main interest in most of today's students. It is necessary and efficient.

Students also follow obligations. It is part of the knowledge to become a good citizen. Being a student, means liberty to choose but also responsibility among oneself as a part of a community. When having an education, means to learn how to behave, respect, accept other mindsets, and obey norms and disciplines. Becoming a student entail understanding different identities and roles.

2.2 Presenting arguments for and against student inclusion in democratic processes

Students needs to partake in the preparation of guidelines for participation and representation of students in the organization of this new university because:

For:

- If students are allowed to take part in decisions, they feel more connected within the community.

- They are students themselves and know better than anyone how students interact, communicate, what their want and needs are, etc.

- Students feel more heard as a result and will adjust their behaviour within the community in a positive way. This will lead to togetherness and a nicer atmosphere within the university.

- When students can give input through a foundation for a better society of students for the new university, it will also lead to better communication among students. Students will do their best and stimulate each other which will lead to better results (regarding study).

Against:

- Students may have a lot of other duties (job) and hobbies besides university activities and studies, for instance having other obligations to accomplished may lead to stressful situations.

- Students would be able to implement only their benefits and completely exclude the negative things.

- They would also be able to interfere with each other, making it a university that offers only fun things. This leads to worse education for all students who would study at this university, because in life you also must do and learn things you don't like. Not everything can be fun about studying.

2.3 Formulate a clause of intention to be included in the university's founding document

For better functioning of the student administration, we have worked on the following points, to achieve much more efficient management.

The most important thing is to help students to know their rights, develop their skills to improve as a citizen and also in their professional future.

1. All students have equal rights and duties, regardless of the university, studies or how long they have been studying.

2. Have the freedom of expression, have meetings, conferences and be able to associate in the university environment.

3. Promote proactivity in students, to motivate them to continue with student activities.

4. That the university provide specialized counselling in student areas, have mentoring programs, psychological help if the student needs it.

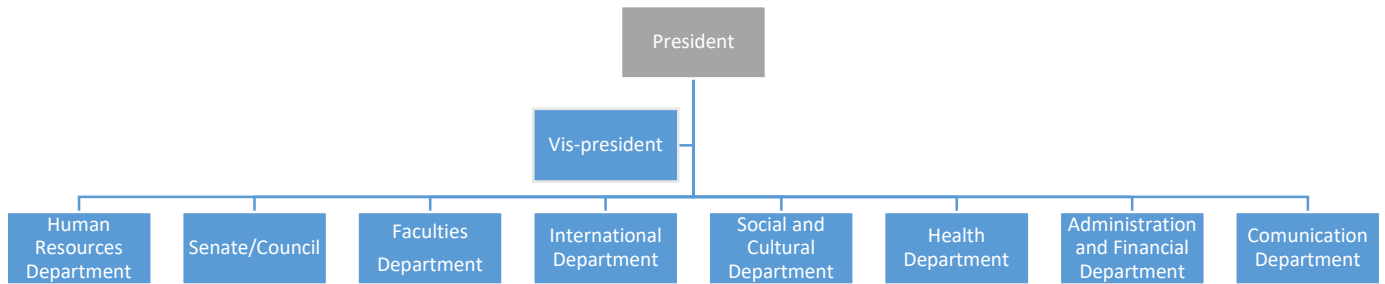# 3 Implementation: Submitting propositions
3.1 Structure / Organization chart

The organizational structure of a university refers to the hierarchy through which delegation of responsibilities is accomplished either administrational institution or students. Therefore, it is important that every department has its own structure and know what their functions and responsibilities are. This gives employees and students a sense of who answers should a problem arise. Every organization can differ on their interest, thought most cases, the executive level is the highest rung on the organization ladder (the president and chancellors in a level below).

This organigram form helps a lot to orientate every party in the university by helping to shorten the administration and bureaucratic processes. Moreover, dividing the task in different departments makes easy to work efficiently and efficacy the students' demands.
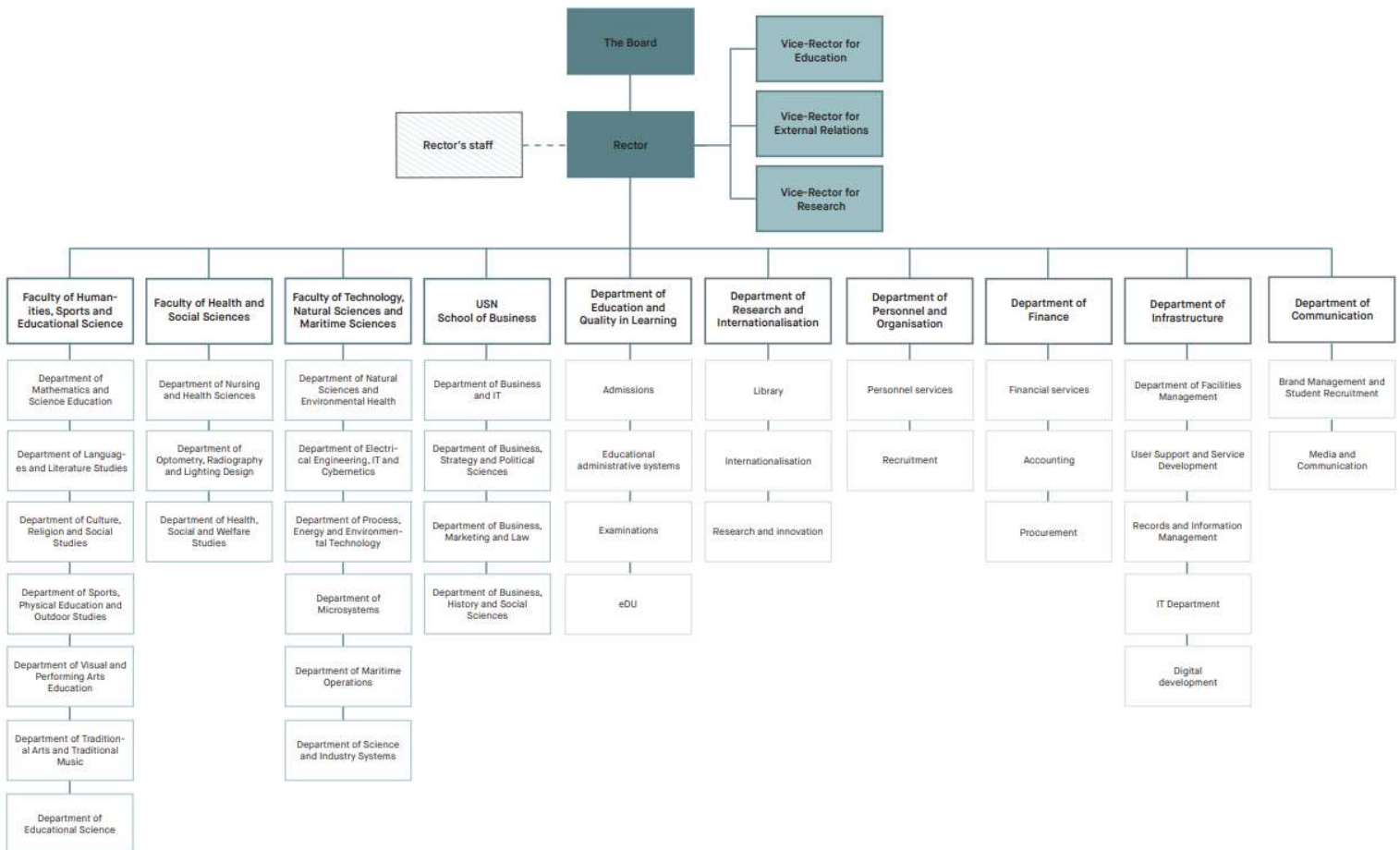
Library, human resources, international affairs, administration systems, and accounting, are a few of the dozens of departments stablished in a university.

For this reason, main structure of a university should be composed with no less than this hierarchy to bring the most well-organized institution:

Organigram Chart: Own Source

In the following table you can find the organization chart from the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN) established on May 4th, 2018.

Organigram Chart: Source from University of South- Eastern

3.2 Building a common culture and identity

When improving university services, it is important to provide in-person programming and support to strengthen bonds between students and build a sense of community. Therefore, a solution in developing a common culture and identity within all students should be the plan of creating a student community.

To ensure a sense of a community in the university, providing social activities, interactive assessments where students could work together, or offer different areas to develop shared interests, could help to build a common culture environment. Creating a student community would mean implementing and trying to establish a common culture and identity within the students.

Meeting students' basic needs would increase relations and a sense of belonging if their needs are unmet. This would be an improvement as students would feel understood, and therefore feel like they are heard, providing more unity and participation in university classes and other activities.

Keeping students informed using various communications platforms could keep students connected to the institution and to one another. Moreover, the organization's university could create platforms or channels with the core objective to develop relationships with students and where they share their experiences and questions related to the community.

Offering mentors and student leaders per students to cultivate a sense of community orienting them. Also, mentors could bring the role of instructor or advisor to increase the energy, passion, and care to the student's motivation.

Giving students ample opportunities to share their experiences and following through with appropriate support. In-person interactions would bring relationship-building, honest dialogues about personal experiences. For instance, create a place where they can spend time.

Stablishing a common sense of a student community, means to try and understand other's identity and finally forget about the other differences. Find the positive aspects and create an international space to share experiences and build and student culture.

3.3 Building inclusive social arenas services

Building inclusive social arenas can be an important thing for a community. Without inclusive society probably would be affect people's mental health and may lead to loneliness, isolation, and low self-esteem. When trying to build inclusive arena, consist in achieving unity, where people can meet and get to know each other and have a social gathering and maybe find common interest. Social inclusion enables a more positive and healthier human experience. Moreover, the Prime Minister of Higher Education may have in consideration to build places where more students can meet to have social gatherings and where everyone is included.

It should as well be services like a therapist and a psychologic to help the students with their mental health. If the university succeed with these two very important parts of the student's life it would benefit them very much. Since the pandemic start it, these two parts has been a very important for most of the students because suffering off loneliness and lot of work can change the motivations and people attitude. So, focusing on the social part and the mental health will make things less depressing.

3.4 Student representation in boards and committees

Boards and committees are a group of people representing a company, school, or organizations. They usually have meetings where they discuss and share knowledge on different topics. The discussions are based on ways to solve problems, share new ideas and operate daily operations. The members are usually people with different backgrounds and professions. Some committees and boards are elected democratically by either the workers, students, or fellow colleagues. We also have committees and boards that are based on shareholders and the decisions are made on how mare shares you have control

of. The question is based on if we should allow students to be a part of the committees and boards regarding the new university for business and social sciences?

The new university has democracy as one of their primary objectives. So for them to not include students in the committee and boards would be wrong. The decisions made are based on their life and student experience. Important part of democracy is to be able to have something to say when a decision is affecting your life. There are many other reasons to let the students be a part of the committees and boards. Students are living and learning in the university, they can help improve the university, the university will have a better reputation, if people know that they cooperate with their students. With students in their committee and board the university will be considered an innovative and modern university with the well-being of their students as their top priority.

4 What is the most important here and why?

It is essential to highlight those rights also generate duties, in addition to giving autonomy, responsibility, freedom, and a sense of belonging to the university and studies.

Students are playing a very important role in society. They bring common interests, and the government authorities invest for the future's economy and society prosperity. Nevertheless, being a student not only gives general wealth, but also a personal learning and knowledge. Therefore, the main core objective of universities should ensure the principals student rights as a whole community, provide a sense of a unity community, watch for the personal and labour growth.

Also, generate a culture in which tolerance and equality are promoted and guarantee the inclusion of international students. Creating an environment in which each student feels represented, valued and understood by their institution, and forming them as a good citizens.

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