Redefining Universities: Role of e-Governance

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Educators, administrators, and students alike can agree that education is a vehicle for solving problems of economic and social inequity. As the engine of opportunity, it can allow people to transcend boundaries that have traditionally stratified our societies. When resources are constrained, this engine can be slowed down, but with changes in global connectivity, technology provides a way for institutions to broaden their reach to potential students in underserved urban and remote rural areas and improving the administration in these institutions.

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Introduction

According to Goddard et al. (2006), the universities have played a strategic role in the economic and social development of the country and of the regions where they are located. The University is a relevant actor in the social system, in what concerns the development of human capital, through the supply of new professionals that have universalistic skills which provide a better identification of social and economic responsibilities. In our present university system, there is an urgent need of reforms in terms of their governance. Raposo et al. (2006) argued that the universities should be able to give answers which are suitable to its social and public responsibility, through the prosecution of four main objectives: (i) Education and learning; (ii) Commercialization of the research; (iii) Cooperation and partnerships with the industry; (iv) Cooperation with external institutions and centers.

In order to fulfill these objectives, Universities have to improve their functioning and ensure the transparency and accuracy in all the functions academic as well as administrative. One of the problems faced by them is the malfunctioning in their administration. This issue of miss governance became a burning issue and there is a need to improve it immediately. New technologies can help a lot in this direction. The use of information and communication technologies in the administration of universities is termed as e-Governance.

Generally the concept of governance applied to the University is related to the exercise of controlling the power of different centers and departments which are part of the University. N.K.C. (2006) pointed out "There is an acute need for reform in the structures of governance of universities. The present system is flawed. On the one hand, it does not preserve autonomy. On the other, it does not promote accountability. The autonomy of universities is eroded by interventions from governments and intrusions from political processes. This must be stopped. At the same time, there is not enough transparency and accountability in universities. This must be fostered." e-Governance will be quite helpful in order to improve the existing system of governance in our universities.

Basic philosophy

e-Governance is more about an opportunity for administrative reforms than merely about electronics and information technology and infrastructure. It is needed to:

- Reduce transaction costs and transaction time of education

- Improve reach and quality of educational services
- Increase transparency of governance
- Reengineer processes to increase efficiency and productivity of our education system
- Ensure that every student get the benefits from the education.

An approach towards e-based Higher Education System:

e-based university governance system is an internet-based application specifically designed for the higher education marketplace which dramatically improves productivity and streamlines information access in the areas of student admission, enrollment, academic records, advanced standing, academic assessment, progression, research, graduation, and student finance. This system provides a comprehensive enterprise backbone to help connect students to important records, information and services.

Services:

1. Student Recruiting: Plan, manage, execute, analyze and optimize student-focused recruitment programs.

2. Admissions: Enable quick response to initial inquiries, follow-up requests, and applicant communications

3. Enrollment: Pre-enroll students, batch enroll continuing students,
4. Academic Records: Get detailed setup and tracking of academic assessment items for patterns of study or for individual students

5. Program Structure and Planning (PDF): Set program attributes that are either tightly defined or freely structured.

6. Student Finance: Allow versatile definition and maintenance of discrete student tuition, fee charges, and payments.

Benefits
This system along with i-Learning and CRM provide a comprehensive frame-work that meets the unique requirements of higher education institutions.

- It provides the means for educational institutions to maximize limited resources and address competitive pressures.

- It also helps to eliminate duplicate entry of information and provide a real-time view of and access to information across HR, finance, recruiting, and student systems.

- The mechanisms of e-governance assume a special importance in terms of developing governance strategies that are oriented to the sustainability of educational institutions, in general, and of University, in particular.

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