

Iulian Boldea, Dumitru-Mircea Buda (Editors)  
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## ASPECTS OF DIAGNOSTIC-ANALYSIS OF THE ROMANIAN HIGHER EDUCATION. CASE STUDY

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*Abstract: Education in Romania faces the problem of orientation towards the synchronization with the most important current and future development of higher education nationally and internationally. The extensive and constant technological changes lead to the transformation of the educational systems and skilled workforce that ensures the economic environment.*

*Development of the economic environment causes mutations in Romania's workforce profile, and these changes generate many opportunities for the development of the higher education system.*

*This paper aims to make a diagnostic analysis of the current situation of a public university of higher education from Romania, which has known a complex evolution, marked by historical events that crossed it. But always it fulfilled an important role as the core of spirituality and culture in the Transylvanian area.*

*Keywords: higher education, changes, transformations, strategies, diagnostic analysis*

Romania has taken significant steps towards the European Higher Education making efforts to implement the Bologna standards. The higher education system in Romania is going through a period of major changes. The new trends recorded and globalization, have imposed the universities to reposition themselves in the economic and social environment. For this reason, the policy regarding the educational domain has to be rethought in such a way that there will be a correlation between the ever developing labor market and the types of qualifications provided by the higher education system.

In order to formulate strategies and directions for improvement of performances in the higher education system, the universities which target to identify and solve these problems need to conduct complex analysis. These problems can be current and potential problems or problems that can appear in the future.

1. General considerations regarding "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu- Mureş

From its establishment in the 1960s, ensuring an institutional and cultural continuity despite the numerous constraints and obstacles, "Petru Maior" University presents its self-mature and with the reputation of being "a University for the community".

Over time "Petru Maior" University has known a complex evolution, marked by historical events that crossed it. But always it fulfilled an important role as the core of spirituality and culture in the Mureş County area [10].

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The mission of “Petru Maior” University can be defined by the following ideas:

- A qualitative higher education on all Bologna levels, regarding the training of high school graduates in known and needed professions;
- Fundamental, applicative and dedicated research;
- The transfer of knowledge to the community and in its service.

“Petru Maior” University fulfills its mission through the following:

- Creating specialists with higher education in the fields of education, research, social-economical sector and the cultural sector;
- Integrative function of local company with national and international academic community; articulating permanent to the cultural and international scientific values.
- The search for truth, the fundamental priority of the university's mission, materialized in fundamental research, applied and committed.
- Promoting educational offers in the training system, LLL (Life Long Learning), for national and regional human resources.
- The transfer of knowledge to society so that the University , through the services and dedicated research, can make partnerships with other organizations to achieve cooperation in regional development [7];
- Developing a strategy for asserting organizational culture, the image and institutional identity of the university.

## 2. Diagnostic Analysis of the current situation in the University "Petru Maior" of Tîrgu Mureş

### 2.1. External Environment Analysis

Education in Romania faces the problem of orientation towards the synchronization with the most important current and future development of higher education nationally and internationally.

The extensive and constant technological changes lead to the transformation of the educational systems and skilled workforce that ensures the economic environment.

Development of the economic environment causes mutations in Romania's workforce profile, and these changes generate many opportunities for the development of the higher education system [3].

Social and technical-economic conditions of the current period

To develop a strategic plan effectively is imperative to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the political, social, economic and technological international, national and regional level in order to detect major changes taking place and to identify trends that will influence the "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş in its development, a process that needs to be consistent with the needs and the real transformation in society [6].

Examination of the political, economic, socio-cultural and technological calls for a PEST Analysis:

#### A.Political aspects

–Liberalization of education has determined the founding of new higher education institutes, which by promoting an aggressive policy of attracting candidates have become great competitors to the large traditional universities.

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–Singing the National Education Pact, a document through which the political class is trying to help the national interest towards education. This is the reason why the educational system in Romania has received a priority status following the signing of the social pact by the majority of the political parties, the President and the organizations involved in this field.

#### B.Economic aspects

–More and more companies realize the need for lifelong learning among employees, continuous updating of knowledge and acquisition of new knowledge in related areas, a situation underlying the rapid process of educational offers and postgraduate courses [8].

–It is becoming increasingly clear that in the labor market a fierce competition appears, both in terms of attracting high school graduates, and for the preparation and optimal placement of their own graduates.

–The globalization process manifests itself in many forms strongly influencing the future development of universities. The university graduates will face a single labor market, the global multiculturalism and national identity gaining new meanings.

–The large transnational companies organize their employees training in various fields, an offer that proves its self to be preferred because of the lecturer's mobility and the adapting thematic needs of the improvement of human resources.

–Poor budgeting of the teaching process at a ministerial level, imposes the reconsideration of the university's mission by adopting a different behavior by widening it's sphere of activity in the use of the community and the economic environment.

#### C.Social-cultural aspects

–Romania, like many countries, faces a pronounced phenomenon of massification of higher education, which has a number of positive and negative consequences in the short and also the long term. Given that the phenomenon exists as a result of the needs expressed by the members of society, teachers have a duty to properly manage and coordinate an educational process responsible for the phenomenon and not a distribution of diplomas.

–Academic institutions face a national and even international competitive process. The existence of a competition generates a series of comparison system which based on some criteria can decide the ranking of the institutions.

–Universities are characterized by the way they are capable to change: mission, organization, collaboration, communication, curriculum, methodical, organizational culture, becoming cognitive universities because of the reconsiderations operated in the system.

–Within the universities, changes are made at an organizational and cultural level, aiming to promote the educational offer, to increase the quality of the educational act and to form and develop a highly specialized working force.

#### D.Technological aspects

–Rapid innovation in science and technology especially information technology and communication require continuous adaptation of the educational process in line with new scientific theoretical and practical, so that the university is always well informed with the scientific innovations.

## 2.2. Analysis of the internal environment

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From the perspective of the strategic management, the functional attributes of the organization are very important because they can create a competitive advantage in the long term and also can be related into obtaining a synergic effect [1].

The structure of the university

The university has an educational structure that provides pathways for training in the fields of engineering, economics, literature, international relations, history, political sciences, legal sciences, administrative sciences, computer science, socio-psycho.

The main type of training is the education by day, and since 1999-2000, there have been promoted forms of part-time education and evening classes to complete engineering studies [2].

Through the three faculties, the Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Science and Letters and Faculty of Economics, Law and Administration Sciences, as well as the Center of Continuous Education and the Department of Teacher Education, the "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş prepares specialists in four areas of engineering, four economics, six basic sciences and letters, one administrative sciences, one legal Sciences, one political science, 17 masters, so seeking to satisfy the needs of the society and the economic environment, particularly in the area, being an institution of science, education and culture.

–Teaching

Conditions were created for university graduates to assimilate all the knowledge necessary to form skills and abilities that enable them to act responsible and accountable to the rule of law, free and democratic.

It is attended to continue to improve through the development content of the educational curricula and syllabuses in accordance with national and global standards in those areas [4]. Implementation of the strategy for quality education continues in line with national standards and criteria for assessing academic universities and detailed rules for the authorization and accreditation ARACIS.

Throughout the entire university necessary conditions were ensured for the authorization of opening new doctoral schools.

The curriculum is in constant adaptation and restructuring, in close liaison with the organizing specializations, professional routes and academic structures and compliance with the rules ARACIS.

In this regard, the "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş applies to the developing of the learning process, a series of policies based on strategic alliances with other universities or institutions.

–Teaching, research and administrative staff

Human resources and in particularly the teaching and research staff, are the decisive factor in the development of the "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş. It is noted that:

–In recent years the vacant teaching positions have reached almost the number of the occupied teaching positions.

–The dynamic of the teaching positions is consistent with trends in the number of students enrolled to be educated in the strategy proposed by the university. The report between the

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teaching positions / students is appropriate in terms of quality of education, the limits being imposed by the ARACIS rules.

Research will be an active and valuable part of the university, this being the reason why it has been proposed the creation of viable research structure:

–The development of the Management Research Unit, a functional department with only 2-4 employees whose jobs will consist of stipulating and managing the research portfolio, identifying the financial sources for funding and fulfilling the research.

–Creating research centers and ensuring the personal for these research centers.

Activity of the academic staff will be subject to annual reviews. The evaluation will be conducted based on a schedule set by each department separately under a framework regulation approved by the University Senate. The valuation level achieved will condition maintenance or modification status of the person concerned.

Administrative staff work will be subjected to evaluation every two years in accordance with a scale developed for each department separately.

–Scientific research

Scientific research is a fundamental component of the academic activity that is equivalent in importance and volume with the education component.

The University at central level and through its specialized departments edit a number of 6 BDI quoted scientific journals. Also included are volumes of scientific papers presented at national scientific sessions, organized by the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, volumes of scientific reviewers and ISBN.

In order to increase the value and impact of these scientific events, all the three faculties, decides to organize these international scientific sessions once every two years.

Beginning from the departaments level, "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş, plans to organize scientific research centers, thus providing the framework for conducting the research activity and also taking advantage of its value. University Publishing takes the most important results and publish them in the form of books, monographs, volume of articles etc.

–International cooperation

International cooperation represents for the "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş a major priority materialized in policies and programs created in accordance with the Sorbonne Declaration from 1998, the Bologna Declaration from 1999, the Romanian legislation and the principles of the universities autonomy.

Recognizing the role of international and European cooperation in promoting a quality higher education as well as the implications of cooperation at the research, innovation and development levels, in the Charter of "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş [9] are specified the following:

"The University has acceded to the European University Association and the International Association of Universities, acquiring the provisions of the following documents:

–The Lima Declaration on Academic Freedom and Autonomy Institutions of Higher Education (1988);

–The Magna Charta of European Universities (Bologna, 1988)."

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In this context, the participation of the "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş in the European programs which are specific to higher education: TEMPUS, ERASMUS, SOCRATES, MINERVA and LEONARDO DA VINCI, has relevant dynamics with positive results in the quality of education and also in increasing the number of research contracts every year.

–Academic and administrative management

From a managerial point of view, "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş bases its activity on the essential requirement of correlating the curriculum and institutional organization with the financial resources and also on combining the institutions' academic management with its economic management.

The organization of the "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş is based on a system that nominates the employees' tasks, establishes relationships between the institutions' functional departments, thus clearly defining the responsibilities and the levels of delegation, which at the core is an adoption of organizational charts suggested by MENCs to specific conditions and organizational parameters of the institution.

The organizational charts of the university is passed on to the decision-makers and execution personnel who complete it with interior regulations, thus creating the opportunity for teaching and research activities, which are specific to the institution, to be developed in good conditions.

–Financial

Financial activity is integrated in the overall development plan of the university as a component to be taken into consideration in each sector of activity and also in the institutional organization (curriculum, state functions, number of students, management, administration etc.) that has in its plan:

–Increasing the financial autonomy of the university, by increasing its own incomes and the proper use of budgetary allocations, in such a way that the university diminishes its dependence to the fluctuations of budgetary allocations and the instability of the education funding policy;

–Compliance in the national standards relating to the average unit cost per equivalent student;

–Improving the expenditure structure by reducing consumption and staff costs (in terms of wage growth) and also by directing an important part of funds to the investment of facilities and spaces for teaching, research and services.

–Counseling and career guidance

"Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş, through the Centre for Counselling and Career Guidance, conducts annual studies on the labor market (relative to the employability of candidates) [5], on the options which potential candidates have and also on the reasons for which they choose programs within the university.

### 3. Conclusions

By practicing a quality, dynamic and competitive education, which is able to meet a wide range of educational requirements and to achieve adequate theoretical and practical knowledge of its graduates to the demands of their future professional activities, by providing the students and teachers with appropriate conditions for studying, housing, recreation and

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entertainment, comparable to those offered by representative Western institutions of higher education, "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu Mureş has further strengthened its credibility, its attractiveness increasing year by year.

Continuous and permanent attention to improving curricular and syllabi, the introduction of transferable credits system, establishing the optimal balance between the theoretical and the practical application of the disciplines, inserting the research results in courses, seminars and debates, using modern technology of teaching and learning on a larger scale, where only a few key objectives which led to the achievement of a competitive and modern education.

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