

Performance Management and Turnaround Mechanism of Poorly Performing Institutes

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Abstract : Performance management is a continuous and systematic process that allows an institute (an engineering college/ university) to ensure efficiency in rendering institutional vision and mission. The process involves college, departments, and faculty entitles planning educational programs and academic services based on the needs of employers and students. To achieve these, the colleges must recruit outstanding faculty, developing institutional goals based on the vision, and mission. This can be achieved through training and by developing the faculty, empowering the colleges and departments, monitoring the development process, auditing the outcome, evaluating the performance of the faculty and diagnosing the causes for shortfalls, implementing interventions like firefighting so that the loss of resources can be minimized. This study is based on the brainstorming sessions with thirty small groups of heads of departments from thirty-six engineering and polytechnic colleges over a period of five years. The groups have identified the problems faced by them in planning industry- relevant programs, establishing consultancy centers, planning in-house faculty development centers, planning state-level seminars and industrial training programs for the

students. The outcomes are creating a learning institute, engaging the faculty, establishing in-house faculty development units, formulating the process of undertaking consultancy projects, establishing academic council, following appreciative appraisal of the faculty performance, decentralization of administration of the departments, empowering the star performing faculty members, and introducing firefighting mechanism to correct the deviations in achievements. Also, the recruitments should be based on the excellent achievement of the candidates. All these form the basis of learning institution which comprises of system thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning.

Keywords: Performance management, turnaround mechanism, learning organization, firefighting, continuous performance management, appreciative enquiry, academic auditing.

1. Introduction

The AICTE Chairman stated that 800 poorly performing engineering colleges will be closed soon. In the last few years, many educationalists had great concern on the poor performance of many colleges in their states. Most of the senior faculty members like the heads of departments and vice-principals who attended faculty development programs in Institutional Development, Performance Management, Developing Industry Relevant Curriculum, Establishing Consultancy Development Centers, Decentralization of Decision Making,

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Faculty Engagement, Leadership Development, Learning organizations, and Creation of Center of Excellence have identified the causes of low performance of many institutes are as follows:

- Strategic planning was never implemented in total in 90% of the colleges.
- Too much of bureaucracy in decision making
- Many development proposals were lost by the administration.
- Even the outstanding faculty members for external training programs were not permitted to undergo the training even though their applications were routed through the proper channel.
- Recruitments were not based on the outstanding performance and the highest qualification of the candidates.
- There is no annual academic auditing of the performance of the departments.
- The annual reports were prepared as routine documents.
- The Governing Council meets once in a year instead of four times in a year.
- The minutes of the Governing Council are not displayed on the Institute's web.
- There is no effort to maintain industrial relations.
- The performance appraisal of the faculty was never done after probation completion.
- Even though the Governing Council advised the CEO to establish a center for industrial consultancy, no action was taken by the CEO to establish one.
- Many poor decisions were taken with respect to various academic performance, no action was taken by the Governing Council to rectify them.
- Many well- performing candidates do not prefer these colleges.

- Most of the modern equipment was not maintained.
- There is no academic council to discuss the problems of the students or faculty members.
- No steps were taken to invite the companies for campus recruitment.
- The CEO's post was vacant for more than two and half years.
- There is no in-house faculty development center.

Most of these problems are due to ineffective leadership. Many CEOs suffer from bipolar disorder. A few of the CEOs are megalomania. They never allow transparency in decision making. They are surrounded by coteries who were not fully qualified for the posts that they occupy. They follow the line of least resistance and continue to get the benefits.

It appears that most of the strategic planning documents were prepared by outside consultants and the vision and mission statements are framed and displayed as wall hangers in all prominent places of the college. It is learnt that the faculty recruitment, planning new programs in emerging technologies, consultancy works, and performance reviews were given lowkey treatments.

Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- To plan the quality circles through small group faculty members who came for faculty development workshops in institutional development, performance management, a creation of centers of excellence, globalization of engineering programs, and development of industry- relevant programs.
- Collect the root causes for the under-performance of many engineering institutes.
- Develop case studies based on the synthesis of the feedbacks from the senior participants who attended the above workshops
- Develop a model for learning organization so

that the faculty would be empowered to solve the problems

Research Methodology

The researcher conducted 10 workshops of three-day duration every year in higher education administration, institutional development, planning industry relevant curricula, student personnel administration, strategic planning, industry-government-institute partnership, internal revenue generation and utilization, leadership development, faculty engagement, appreciative performance appraisal, organizational transformation and globalization of engineering programs. Around 30 senior faculty members, vice-principals, and principal-in-charges would attend each three-day program.

Quality Circle

The participants have listed the observed deficiencies in achieving the goals of the Institutes. After obtaining feedback on the low performance of many engineering institutes, case studies were prepared and given to the Quality Circles which were formed. Most of the Quality Circles composed of maximum 8 faculty members. The small groups discussed the causes and remedial measures. Usually, a leader would arise to moderate the feedback of the team. Finally, many innovative solutions were formulated by the Quality Circles. They are synthesized and a "Model for Learning Institute" has been developed. This is the heart of this research.

2. Literature Survey

Staats Elmer (1976) identified five severe challenges to American higher education: 1) public confidence in the value of a college education is weak; 2) educational demand is shifting from liberal arts to vocational courses; 3) teaching must be able to keep up with the rapid expansion of knowledge; 4) the student profile is changing considerably, and 5) the community college is becoming a potent education force while small private schools are losing enrollment. He further stated that management for results, by a system the federal government's General Accounting Office calls performance auditing, may be a key to the survival of colleges and universities. Performance auditing requires management to clearly define and publish its objectives, develop standards

and measurements of performance, obtain reliable information for control, and determine if costs can be reduced while maintaining or increasing productivity. Exactly this occurred in India. Most of the well-performing students prefer engineering colleges. Colleen Flaherty (2015) reported that employee engagement: it's an important metric that can gauge how loyal and intrinsically interested people are in their work. Gallup survey indicates that faculty in smaller, private institutions tend to be the most emotionally and intellectually connected to what they do. Tenure-track faculty members have major concerns about freedom, job security, compensation and other measures of job satisfaction. As faculty continues to remain critical components of an institution's efforts and productivity, the educational administrators need to foster an environment conducive to faculty retention and continued advancement (www.acent.edu/higher-education/topics/Pages/Faculty-Issues.aspx).

Office of the School Improvement, Georgia Department of Education implemented the following intervention models in low achieving schools:

- Turnaround (Replace principal and remove 50% of the staff)
- Conversion to charter management organization or educational management organization
- School Closure
- Transformation (Replace principal and utilize a combination of strategies in other reform model.

NPIU during the implementation of TEQIP II Project the following reasons for the low performance of the students:

- Low-confidence or Interest
- College factor
- Disadvantaged groups
- Inadequate Knowledge of English
- Timing of Remedial Courses and Repeat Exams

- They suggested the following strategies to improve the performance:
- Appointment of Active Student Adviser or Mentor
- Enhancing Classroom and Teacher Effectiveness
- Increasing Student Participation in the Classroom
- Improving Teacher Effectiveness
- Training in Pedagogy
- Fostering Positive Teacher Behavior
- Faculty Appraisal System

Beyond the Teacher

- Improving the Course Coordinator

In this research work, we focused our study other factors and excluded the students.

SWOT Analysis (Excluding the Students)

Strengths:

Training facilities under AICTE, ISTE, NITTTRs, IITs, and Technical Education Quality Improvement Program (TEQIP), Summer Schools, Winter Schools, Quality Improvement Programs, Summer Schools, Continuous Improvements in the Curriculum.

Weaknesses :

More than 50% vacancies in the Faculty Members, Improper Instructional Design and Planning, Absence of Course Specific Instructional Package, Poor Monitoring of Students Performance, Ineffective Examination System, Absence of Appreciative Inquiries, Absence of Academic Audit.

Opportunities :

Assistance from NITTTRs

Academic Staff Colleges, Inhouse Faculty Development Programs, AICTE assistance for

modernization and removal of obsolescence

Threats

Unemployment/ underemployment

Bank loan burden

Social Problems

Pedler et al. (1997) stated that a learning organization is a company that facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transform itself. O'Keeffe, T(2002) stated that learning organizations develop because of the pressures facing modern organizations and enables them to remain competitive in the business environment.

Organizational/ Institutional Learning Peter Senge (1990) stated that a learning organization is a group of people working together collectively to enhance their capacities to create results they really care about. He proposed the following five characteristics of a learning organization:

1) System Thinking- Learning institutions use system thinking when assessing their institutes and have information systems that measure the performance of the institute and of its various components.

2) Personal Mastery - The commitment by a faculty to the process of learning is known as personal mastery. Individual learning is acquired through faculty training, development, and continuous self-improvement.

3) Mental Models- The assumptions held by faculty and institutes are called mental models. In creating a learning environment, it is important to replace confrontational attitudes with an open culture that promotes inquiry and trust.

4) Shared Vision- The development of a shared vision is important in motivating the faculty to learn, as it creates a common identity that provides focus and energy for learning. The most successful visions build on the individual visions of the faculty at all levels of the institute, thus the creation of a shared vision can be hindered by traditional structures where the institute vision is imposed from above. Therefore, learning institutes tend to have flat, decentralized institutional structures.

5) Team Learning- The accumulation of individual learning constitutes team learning. The benefit of a team or shared learning is that faculty grow more quickly and problem-solving capacity of the institute is improved through better access to knowledge and expertise. Team members must develop open communication, shared meaning, and shared understanding. Learning institutes typically have excellent knowledge management, structures, allowing creation, acquisition, dissemination and implementation of this knowledge in the institute.

Benefits of Learning Institutes

- Maintaining high levels of innovation and continued to be competitive
- High levels of academic efficiency
- Having the intellectual's skills and higher order cognitive abilities to better link resources to industry needs
- Improving the knowledge and human capitals
- Improving institute's image by becoming faculty and student- oriented.

Chawla and Renesch (1995) state that institutes should become more like communities that faculty can feel a commitment to. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) indicate that on the job training plays an integral role in student engagement. Specifically, students who participate in service learning often earn better course grades and can apply skills learned in their courses.

Case Studies

The following case studies were provided to the faculty members who formed Quality Circles for solving:

- Inordinate delay in the recruitment of faculty
- Outstanding candidates were not selected.
- Reward system is skewed towards coteries
- Many senior faculties did not conduct the classes as per the timetable.
- Assignments were given at end of the semester

- Periodical tests were not conducted as per the schedule.
- Many schedules of experiments were not conducted due to poor maintenance of the equipment and for want of consumables.
- No performance evaluation of the faculty was conducted.
- The development proposals were not cleared by the CEOs.
- No team is formed for the projects undertaken from international development agencies.
- Sizable number of faculty indulged in their private businesses.
- There is no faculty forum to discuss the poor progress due to the problems.
- The minutes and policy decisions of the Governing Council were not made public.
- The proposal for getting approval for guiding research scholars was withheld by the CEO.
- The approved funds for the purchase of consumables and maintenance of equipment were not released too many departments who needed for upgrading the software and maintain the equipment.
- Many departments were closed and the faculty was allotted to various departments where they did not possess expertise.
- There was no academic audit on the institute's performance.
- Costly equipment was purchased and allotted to departments who did not possess the expertise to use them.
- Industrial training was not offered to the students.
- No efforts were taken for student selection through campus interview.
- No in-house faculty development programs were conducted.

- Even the faculty who got selection for foreign training were not released even though their applications were routed through proper channel.
- Only one governing council meeting was held in a year and that too during summer vacation.
- The travel grants were not released to the faculty when they present papers in the international conferences.
- Even if they plan to attend the international conferences by privately meeting the expenses, they were not permitted to avail their leave to their credit.
- The contingency amount sanctioned by UGC to the research scholars were not granted to them
- When the external part-time research scholars requested for hostel accommodation for presenting the synopsis of their thesis to the duly constituted doctoral committee they were denied the hostel rooms.
- The Chairman of the Governing Council never met the faculty in the last five years.
- The CEO of the Institute planned many foreign trips without getting the approval of the government.
- The CEO promoted the coterie even though they did not possess the required qualification
- The CEO did not take interest in permitting the star faculty in bidding for development projects in the ongoing programs under IDAs.
- Causes for Poor Performance and Nonachievement of Vision

Quality circles were formed through the faculty members who attended the workshops since they aimed to improve the performance of the departments and the institutions. They learned to analyze the cases and prepare best solutions through in- depth discussions with other members of the group.

The members of the Quality Circle indicated that the CEO did not follow the norms and standards for

developing a vision statement. The faculty members were not involved in this process. The Chairman of the Governing Council never visited the institute in the last five years. There is no academic audit on the performance, short fall, bottlenecks, and constraints. Most of the external Governing Council members did not attend the meeting. Even though many guidelines were forwarded to the Institute by National Project Implementation Unit, they were not circulated by the CEO. The Institute is virtually managed by the Administrative officer. Hence, the Quality Circle suggested to display the agenda of the Governing Council, conduct four meetings, display the decisions taken by the Council, involve the departments in implementing the goal, mission, and objectives, start an in-house faculty development unit, review the achievement and shortfalls in all academic activities. There is a need for a meeting of the Chairman with the members of the Council with the faculty at least once in six months. Like universities, the faculty representatives could be elected. Like American universities, two representatives of alumni could be elected for the Council who could attend. Most of the ex-officio members do not attend the Council meeting due to many emergent works in their offices. They can provide their points through video conference using existing equipment.

Why are Mission Statements needed?

The Institutes should be faithful in implementing various emerging technology programs in cooperation with alumni and local companies. They should follow the AICTE and NPIU guidelines faithfully. All the programs should be accredited. The outcomes are to be reviewed every year. There is a need for continuous performance evaluation and feedbacks are to be given. The Academic audit should be conducted to improve the programs and services. All these center around the mission statements.

Why are the Goals needed?

Goals give direction for capacity building, quality improvements, and efficiency improvements. It is required for recruiting the qualified faculty and developing new programs which are sought after.

Why are the Objectives needed?

It gives direction in planning the courses and checks their relevance, process of achieving them and measuring the impact that they make.

Why do we need Academic Council in an Affiliated College?

Every engineering college should have a formal Academic Council with all the senior faculty members and invited external experts and two junior faculty members to review the new courses and other academic activities like seminars, industrial training and campus placement. There is no bar for starting Academic Councils by the affiliated institutes. At least there should be four Academic Council meetings in a year. The quality of the performance of the students and publication of the papers in the journals and other achievements are to be placed before the Academic Council.

Recruitment of Excellent Faculty

Considering the fast growth of industrial development and the dependence of the companies for training the executives and undertaking sponsored research, there is a demand for the competent and motivated faculty.

Almost all the Quality Circle members suggested to recruiting the outstanding candidates since whole institutional development centers around their problem-solving capacity.

In-House Faculty Development Center

The heads of departments can plan various short-term faculty development programs through webinars, workshops, invited speakers from the industry and universities. Also, the faculty can be encouraged to undergo MOOCs offered by edX, Coursera and World Bank Institute. The registration cost could be reimbursed to the faculty.

Decentralization of Decision Making

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University introduced decentralization and decision making to the departments in 1973. There is no obstacle in accelerating the extension and research works. The outcome has improved the productivity. The faculty needs quick approval for planning innovative programs, budding for the external projects, undertaking consultancy works and planning faculty development. Under Canada India Institutional Cooperation, the project institutes created a post for faculty development to overcome the bottlenecks.

World Bank suggests decentralization in engineering institutes. GTZ project managers desired decentralization of decision making for the development leaning packages for Industrial Training Institutes. Autonomy with accountability is always desired. Many engineering colleges still follow the bureaucratic method. Even the project proposals were not given importance by the administration. When there are 550 colleges under each state university, there are no qualified evaluators. Most of the colleges do not plan to get accreditation from NBA.

Continuous Performance Improvement and Management

Decentralization, empowerment, mission, academic auditing, in-house faculty development, industrial training, performance management, Academic Council, quarterly discussion of the Governing Council members with the faculty, display of policy decisions and industrial consultancy centers would enable the formation of “Learning Institute”. If there is any shortfall, “firefighting” must be initiated to stop further deuteriation. The root causes for poor performance could be analyzed quickly and the remedial measures could be implemented.

Development of Industry Relevant Programs

The engineering colleges could plan industry relevant programs and place before the Academic Council for its deliberation. Later, the same could be taken to the University for its approval and institutionalization.

Establishment of a Consultancy Center

The quality and competency of the faculty would be further improved through undertaking consultancy works and sponsored research & development works. If there is a need, the institute can get the services of experts from national labs, industries and universities. The Adjunct Faculty would be of great use.

Students Engagement through Industrial Training and Industry Sponsored Project Works

Established consultancy centers would easily link the industries in the region. Short visits to the companies would help the learners to know the current technology- based production and would enable them to look for sponsored topics for project works.

Professional Associations

This helps the rightful engagement of the students and guide them to prepare for research and discuss the finding. Also, eminent alumni can be invited to share their successes. All these improve the attitude of the students.

Appreciative Inquiry of the Annual Performance of the Faculty Members

Appreciative inquiry values the act of recognizing the best in faculty members. The faculty members can use their potentials to overcome the deficiencies and perform very well in the future. The faculty members must prepare their achievements in curriculum planned, instructional materials prepared, research works completed, consultancy works delivered and papers published. The committee should first appreciate the contribution and then they request the faculty to propose new methods to overcome the short comings. If this process is adopted, the faculty members can easily do better in the next academic year.

Academic Audit

This will provide a method of self-evaluation of the achievements and shortfalls of the department. An Academic audit must be done by the interdisciplinary senior faculty members. The achievements against the program planning, programming, budgeting system methods could be used. Learning will be maximum when the avoidable slips could be identified. This is method is not for finding fault, but to identify the hidden causes.

Rewards for Outstanding Performance

The Ohio State University has evolved over time with a continuous focus on achieving excellence along all dimensions of research, teaching, and service.

There is a need for recognition for outstanding performance so that other faculty would follow the footsteps of the star performers. In one polytechnic college when this was followed, the faculty started producing maximum results. They engaged the students very well. The skills and competencies increased very well. The students were absorbed by the companies within three months.

Development of Learning Institute

Characteristics of Learning Institutes	Redesigning the engineering institutes
System Thinking	Development of vision, mission, goals and objectives are to plan with the full participation of all faculty members.
Personal Mastery	The Institute should provide resources and set goals for higher achievement through lifelong learning. There should be in-house faculty development center and the faculty should be encouraged to undertake to bid for global projects and consultancy works. Publications in the international journals and conferences should be encouraged.
Mental Models	The whole institute should work towards creating Centers of Excellence, Academic Council, Professional Association, Globalization of Engineering Programs, Networking with Global Universities and Planning International Conferences.
Shared Vision	The policy decisions of the Governing Council should be displayed on the institute web. All the needed information for planning new programs are to be made public. The circulars from various Ministries and Government Departments are to be made public.
Team Learning	The Institute should encourage the formation of teams for curriculum development, undertaking external consultancy projects, establishing Academic Council, and conduct of international conferences.

Systematic Faculty Development

The whole intervention centers around proper selection of qualified faculty members, training them and systematically developing academic plans, more exposure to the current technology, industry relevant courses and continuous process improvement.

3. Conclusion

Turn around mechanism could be designed and implemented as stated in this paper. They are least expensive and need only systematic planning, and decentralization of decision making, empowerment of the faculty.

Many modernization projects failed to yield results due to an absence of faculty engagement. Performance management by following the principles of creating "Learning Institutes" would yield outstanding results.

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