



HEGP

Higher Education

Governance & Policy

ISSN: 2717-8676

Volume: 5 Issue: 1

Editorial: The administrative workforce in higher education

Yasar Kondakci

Department of Educational Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

Article Type: Editorial

Corresponding Author: Yasar Kondakci, kyasar@metu.edu.tr

Cite as: Kondakci, Y. (2023). Editorial: The undervalued workforce in higher education. *Higher Education Governance & Policy*, 5(1), i-i.

Editorial: The administrative workforce in higher education

Although the core practice at higher education institutions is academic, the success of academic practice relies on possessing effective, professionalized back-office workers and professionals, who undertake various administrative functions at universities. In many country contexts, back-office workers of the universities are categorized as administrative personnel and they are differentiated from faculty staff members or academic personnel. However, the effectiveness of these staff members depends on several different characteristics which are located both at system and institutional levels. Investigating the role of these factors in facilitating the work of administrative staff members is necessary to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of higher education organizations. This issue of HEGP presents articles that either focus on the administrative staff members or indicate the role of these staff members anecdotally in other academic or administrative processes.

In this issue of HEGP, we present four articles that are based on studies conducted in different countries. First, theorizing and discussing the inequalities in higher education Arhal argued that Covid-19 deepened the digital divide among different groups of students. Arhal problematized the role of digital education on student outcomes or the degree of benefit from distance education. A survey study with a sample of 59 students at the Ibn-i Zohr University revealed that access to the Internet, quality of technology infrastructure, and availability of financial support play a role in the effectiveness of distance education. Highlighting the need for Professional development of instructors in higher education institutions, the second article by Altuntaş-Özben, Seggie, Börkan, and Dikilitaş investigated the English language instructors' values and professional learning practices. The mixed method study showed that workplace dynamics are closely related to the continuous professional development activities of the instructors in both identifying the valuable professional development activities and determining the factors supporting or hindering professional development intentions and efforts of the instructors. The authors concluded that the type of university in terms of financial and governance mode is a factor in the professional development orientation of the instructors. Instructors in public universities develop an externally oriented professional development understanding and seek professional development activities outside of their institutions while instructors in foundation universities develop internally oriented professional development understanding and seek professional development activities available inside of their institution. The third study by Bulut Şahin and Erdoğan investigated the models of the relationship between higher education institutions in Türkiye and the United Kingdom. The authors conducted semi-structured interviews with policy-makers, academic leaders, and academics. The authors concluded that the relationship at the institutional level between Türkiye and the United Kingdom has been weakening because of both structural and attitudinal barriers in the two countries. In the final article of this issue, Holmén explored the relationship between funding, governance modes, and resource allocation. Using the balance between faculty and other personnel as an indicator, the author constructed scatterplots on the relationship between other personnel per faculty and revenue per faculty in the UK, the US, Sweden, and Finland. The findings suggest that an abundance of resources leads to dominance of the workforce by nonfaculty. Holmén stated that resource allocation is not independent of the governance model. Theorizing on the politics of bureaucracy the author concluded that loyalty to the sovereign, which elects the university board determines the funding scheme at a university.

We hope that the articles in this issue of HEGP will inspire its readers.

Yasar Kondakci
Editor