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Report

LEAD Workshop on Academic Leadership Development

20-22 Oct. 2016 in Kunming

Yunnan Normal University

The LEAD Workshop at Yunnan Normal University started with a project consortium meeting at which a detailed partner discussion and planning for the 2nd series of workshops were prepared among the partners.

On 22-23 October, two full-days workshops were organized focusing on training of academic leaders. The first theme of the workshop was 'setting the scene of capacity building on academic leadership'. The leaders of YNNU welcomed all participants, including Chinese and European academic leaders, professors, lecturers, etc. The results of the LEAD needs analysis were presented at the workshop. After that, the structure and themes of the workshops and training were introduced.

The workshop focused on a few key topics. The first topic was on "Transformation of HE for the needs of the society & economy". The workshop increased the understanding of the participants on how university can meet the needs of the society and economy. It also enhanced ability to develop university academic vision that matches the needs of the society and economy.

The second topic was focused on Leadership on "research innovations". This workshop increased the understanding how academic leaders can decide on policies "Research innovations" and also enhanced competences of the participants on how to facilitate "Research innovations". Regarding research policies and strategies, the issue of ranking of universities was highly debated. On the one hand, higher ranking implies more visibility and higher reputation; on the other hand, it may have an effect on the student selection and career of students. Other key themes, such as interdisciplinary research, cooperation, cross disciplinary teams; evaluation of research output, research strategy, building world-class universities, focus on publications, etc. With regard to leadership support for research and innovations, the participants also discussed the university policies. Besides ranking, the participants also discussed alternative ways for quality, such as indicators for good teaching. Next to this, a training on "Educational innovations" was facilitated by Dr. Goknur Kaplan Akilli. The presentations and discussions on this topic increased the understanding of the academic leaders on new trends of educational modes and international market and gained an enhanced view on changes and innovations in education.

After the presentations and discussions, all participants reflected on the key issues and challenges of academic leaders and how they can tackle these challenges.

On 23 October, the training was focused on “Change Management”. Specifically, how academic leaders can address the societal, financial, structural, and procedural changes are presented and discussed. Especially the change theories were introduced. In addition, leadership and management of academic teams are discussed. The participants stressed that both academic and administrative staff need to upgrade their capacities especially in the international context. Also the role of the universities for societal needs and the local community are stressed.

Furthermore, regarding qualities of academic leaders, the participants had a deep discussion on what qualities of an academic leader is needed? What core competences are needed? The participants gave some key words as qualities of an academic leader, including scientific insights, managing teams, defining roles of team members, the art of leadership, etc. The participants referred to academic leaders as a tree, or a horse-carriage, or a train’s engine. The participants shared their own views, experiences, insights and successful stories.

The two days workshops enhanced the competences of the participating academic leaders and potential academic leaders. The participants exchanged a lot of experiences among each other. The workshops were especially significant for the local academic leaders from YNNU and other Chinese universities, as it provided a rare opportunity for the local academic leaders to develop their competences and leadership skills.



