Human Resources Management, Internationalization and Academic Staff Mobility

Fraumann, Grischa; Güney, Işıl

CHAPTER SIX

Human Resources Management, Internationalization and Academic Staff Mobility

Grischa Fraumann and Işıl Güney

Introduction

Academic mobility has always been a part of European universities. As Musselin (2004, p. 55) puts it: "In Europe, academic mobility has a long tradition which began with the birth of the European universities in the middle ages". Nowadays, along with internationalization, academic staff mobility has been at the heart of Bologna process and EU policy discussions and formulations.

Academic staff mobility not only constitutes a part of universities' internationalization strategies, it is as well of great importance to academic staff development (Wächter 1999: 32). However, all mobility initiatives do not take place in a vacuum and have to be backed up by institutional strategies. In this context, this study aims to analyze academic mobility as an academic staff development tool in its relation to human resources management (HRM) practices of higher education institutions in their internationalization efforts. To this end, the study provides some theoretical background information about role of HRM in academic staff development and academic mobility. Then, the relation between internationalization of institutional strategies and HRM are introduced. The study defines institutional structures, processes and key players to give a thorough understanding of an effective strategy in promoting academic staff mobility. Finally, support and incentive mechanisms are addressed. The study concludes that despite ever-increasing importance attached to academic staff mobility, there is still a lack of human resources tools to support and manage academic staff mobility as a staff development tool. It is argued that defining an institutional strategy with an effective university leadership on top, at the same time taking into account all departments and putting the HRM department and the international office on a prominent position is one precondition to reach this goal.

Background

Human resources management has become one of the most challenging issues in higher education institutions worldwide due to higher education landscape being transformed by such forces as massification, globalization, marketization and internationalization. To be able to face these challenges and stand out in the

Fraumann, Grischa & Güney, Işıl (2015). Human Resources Management, Internationalization and Academic Staff Mobility, in: Pausits, Attila (ed.) Human Resource Management in Higher Education. Case Studies and Future Scenarios, MARIHE E-Book Series, Edition 2.1., Danube University Krems: 2015.

competitive market with sound research and teaching capacity, a diversified and qualified work force is required. Recruiting and retaining qualified and skilled academic staff becomes vital for modernization of higher education, which in turn necessitates proper management of human resources both at national and institutional level so that institutional capacity for the future could be built (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007, p. 136). Dunkin (as cited in Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007, p. 140) identifies six key elements of a human resource strategy to retain qualified knowledge worker staff, which are:

1. determining number of people needed, what and how they need to and how to manage them,
2. determining skills needed,
3. attracting and retaining high quality staff,
4. managing performance and performance measurement,
5. rewarding and acknowledging good performance,
6. ensuring continuous staff development.

In this context, modernization of human resources management brings the issue of academic staff development into the spotlight. Defined by Webb (as cited in Blackwell & Blackmore, 2003, p. viii) staff development refers to "the institutional policies, programs and procedures which facilitate and support staff so that they may fully serve their own and their institution's needs." As this definition suggests, staff development is related not only to the individual level, but it also has an institutional function. Archer states that (2005, p. 51) during the process of modernization of human resources management, human resources (HR) in higher education institutions "shifted from an administrative support function to a valued strategic partner for the top team". In terms of staff development in strategic human resource development, a learning culture based on reciprocal relations between staff development and corporate strategy is aimed to be created (Blackwell & Blackmore, 2003). That means staff development not only affects corporate strategy, but also is shaped by it. However, the relationship between HRM in higher education institutions and staff development is a controversial one. At universities, HRM and staff development activities may not be considered related since HRM may be regarded as a low-status activity or having too close relations with "management" (Elton 1995 as cited in Blackwell and Blackmore, 2003, p. 6). It may also be considered more as an academic task not to be performed by HRM units. A survey conducted about educational units in the United Kingdom demonstrates that while 38% of those educational units were stand-alone central units, the rest was grouped into eight categories. HRM constituted the largest group among them with 17% followed by education departments with 13%. However, as argued by Archer (2005, p. 6), although staff development sometimes does not fall into the responsibility of HR departments, it is central to its purpose and an integral part of culture change. Blackwell and Blackmore (2003) also claim that less favoring position though it may have in academic culture, HRM may succeed under appropriate conditions such as having autonomy and independence to act, design strategies to serve needs of top, middle and bottom interests, and taking into account cultures of academic disciplines. Given support from leadership and run by individuals who gain confidence of senior academic staff at departments, HRM can fertile grounds for academic staff development.

Fraumann, Grischa & Güney, Işıl (2015). Human Resources Management, Internationalization and Academic Staff Mobility, in: Pausits, Attila (ed.) Human Resource Management in Higher Education. Case Studies and Future Scenarios, MARIHE E-Book Series, Edition 2.1., Danube University Krems: 2015.

There are numerous ways that human resources management can support academic staff development and make the academic professions more attractive through such mechanisms as recognition and reward, promotion, guidance, funding and support for mobility. At a time when internationalization has gained a firm foothold in higher education in Europe and worldwide, mobility became a key issue in terms of academic cooperation and knowledge transfer. With efforts of governments to make higher education well-prepared for the challenges of globalization, economy, and labor markets (van der Wende, 1997, p. 19), academic staff mobility gained importance both in terms of academic staff self-development, their contribution to their institutions' qualified human capital force and in preparation of universities and students function in international and intercultural contexts. As mobility is considered one of the main instruments of internationalization of higher education, European higher education agenda has been characterized by discussions of barriers and incentive mechanisms for academic staff mobility. While international offices played a significant role to manage international management of mobility, it is clear that "there is a need for system-level and institutional career systems, human resource strategies and practices, and industrial relations machinery to 'catch up' with the idea of staff mobility" (Cradden, 2007, p. 46). One of the most important institutional effects of attracting talents worldwide is to further strengthen the capacity and reputation of the university itself, as the human capital of an organization is important to reach the organizational goals by obtaining a competitive advantage compared to other organizations (Ásványi, 2014, p. 84-5). Nevertheless, one has to be realistic in that not every visitor will provide top class teaching and research, and will enrich the institutional profile (Ferencz & Wachter, 2012, p. 54). At the same time individuals benefit from the so-called "mover's advantage" regarding their future career plans, and they should be provided with incentives to take part in stays abroad (van der Wende 2013, p.1-10.; Wächter 1999, p. 73-4.). Cradden (2007, p. 8) points out that the benefits of academic staff mobility is so taken for granted that its benefits for HE institutions and systems are not well studied. In terms of socio-cultural exchange, exchange of knowledge and culture and pedagogical approaches are immense. Additionally, mobility is regarded as a significant tool for advancing one's academic career. It is argued to have become a professional standard in some disciplines in Europe. In terms of academic staff development, along with its contribution to disciplinary knowledge and exchange of pedagogical practices, it enables academic staff to establish new professional networks, brush up on foreign language skills, and gain knowledge about other higher education systems (Netz & Jaksztat, 2014, p. 36).

Internationalization and international mobility as both staff development tool has been supported by the European Union for the last few decades. With the Bologna Process, international dimension of higher education, staff and student mobility, international cooperation, harmonization of degree systems became key topics in the field of higher education. Starting from 2000, the concept of "internationalization at home" was raised by the European Association for International Education (EAIE), which refers to the idea of ensuring internationalization within a higher education institutions by incorporating international elements to the curriculum and familiarizing students with international culture and helping them gain international and intercultural skills and competences. The academic staff becomes the key actor in implementing

Fraumann, Grischa & Güney, Işıl (2015). Human Resources Management, Internationalization and Academic Staff Mobility, in: Pausits, Attila (ed.) Human Resource Management in Higher Education. Case Studies and Future Scenarios, MARIHE E-Book Series, Edition 2.1., Danube University Krems: 2015.

internationalization and creating an environment for intercultural and international learning at home (Beelen, 2011).

One of the Key Actions of ERASMUS+, the flagship programme of the European Commission that was established at the end of 2014 defines mobility as a main activity as regards to professional development "to improve skills and competences of both academic and non-academic staff, opened to partner countries in both direction" (European Commission, 2014, p. 26). Furthermore, another policy initiative connecting — among others — academic mobility and HRM with overall strategies of universities and involving several institutional units is the so-called "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers" set up by the European Commission and implemented in many institutions. Upon successful completion, the HEI receives a "HR Excellence in Research" logo, which 102 institutions have already obtained (European Commission, 2015). Finally, there is an ongoing debate on academic mobility, as shown in several international conferences highlighting this topic[i], and even research centres that are dedicated only to this goal, such as the Institute for International Education's (IIE) Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact (IIE, 2015).

In the light of these developments, it is important for universities to develop strategies that deal with academic mobility. These have to be implemented within the institutions and should be accompanied by clear targets, for instance regarding the amount of faculty exchange, which are monitored regularly (Wächter, 1999, p. 73-74). Thus, what kind of institutional structures and processes are needed, and which key actors are involved?

Institutional Structures, Processes, Support and Incentive Mechanisms

As universities are facing international challenges today, they should develop an internationalization of their institutional strategy and HRM. To achieve an effective internationalization strategy several preconditions have to exist at a university, which are closely connected to staff development such as:

…college leadership; faculty members' international involvement in activities with challenges, research sites, and institutions worldwide; international curriculum; the availability, affordability, accessibility, and transferability of study-abroad programs for students; the presence and integration of international students, scholars, and visiting faculty into campus life; and international co-curricular units (residence halls, conference planning centres, student unions, careers centres, cultural immersion, and language houses), student activities, and student organisations. (Taylor, 2004, p. 150-151)

Institutions use a variety of strategies to achieve internationalization and support academic staff mobility. In some cases, institutions achieve a higher visibility for instance by nominating a vice-rector for international affairs (Pausits, 2006, p. 200; Wächter, 1999, p. 46). In some other cases, institutions connect their overall strategy to the recruitment strategy in order to attract new international applicants. At the same time, teaching and research of visitors should match the institutional profile, but for instance added by an international perspective on a certain topic

(Wächter, 1999, p. 31). Further, an institutional strategy always has to be backed up with enough resources, such as personnel and funding (Wächter, 1999, p. 46). Thus, the following section gives an overview of tools and structures that are applied by several universities. The aspects that are covered are related to the tasks of the international office, faculties, and the HRM department.

To start with a recently established initiative, universities use to set up dual career programs to attract skilled professionals. By doing so, the cohabitant of the hired staff is supported by the university, because they offer her/him guidance regarding professional development in the new host country. Actually, that does not only apply to foreign applicants, but it could be more helpful for them than for new staff members from the same country (Harvey et al., 2009; University of Heidelberg, 2015).

Another important way of enhancing staff mobility, is providing advisory and counselling for staff members at central or faculty level. Similar to students that facing a stay abroad, trained staff of the university can support other staff members in preparing for a stay abroad. It is also important to have a single point of contact for foreigners that want to apply at a certain university. This can be supported by specialized university managers. As an extension of preparing staff for academic mobility, intercultural trainings can be provided inside the university, respectively in cooperation with external partners (Wächter, 1999, p. 46-5).

Further, a crucial part of receiving international academic staff nowadays is building up a welcome center. These centers can provide advice, how to prepare for a stay at the university and can help the international academics to settle down. Some welcome centers even offer apartments for the first months in the new country. Nevertheless, this special kind of guidance does not end after the first months. Welcome centers have also set up mentoring programmes. On the one hand, internationals can find help regarding language barriers or when they want to get things done at the city administration. On the other hand, it is also an effective tool to relate them with local citizens. Due to the fact, that local mentors do not have to be members of the university, it is also possible for internationals to connect with new people beyond the scientific community. Therefore, this can be a first step towards the integration in the local community, because their mentors can also facilitate contacts with their friends, etc. (IO, 2011). Welcome centers were created at many universities worldwide, to attract more international academics or to make their stay as convenient as possible. Meanwhile, at the University of Mannheim a Research Alumni Network was created, to foster the relations to former guest scientists by providing services such as reunion grants (University of Mannheim, 2015). Ultimately, the effect of such centres is not well studied yet, and is also difficult to grasp.

On these grounds, another way to increase the amount of staff that takes up a stay abroad, is by the universities providing funding for that kind of personnel development. Meanwhile, funding programs such as ERASMUS+ also contribute to this funding scheme. As introduced by the European Commission as a special program to enhance the student mobility for studies, nowadays it is also possible for staff to take part in this programme. This encompasses the position of an ERASMUS+ lecturer at a foreign university. That is only one example to illustrate

the diverse funding options, whereas a lot of other funding exist as well, such as national or regional programs. All these funding opportunities have to be coordinated by trained staff, which is again connected to university managers. This personnel can also organize information events for staff to raise the awareness among them. The university can also offer higher positions to staff that aims spending a term or more abroad. This can also erase barriers for stays abroad.

Besides, paid leave possibilities, such as sabbaticals for professors can also be offered. Actually, this offer is referring to professors who want to conduct research for one semester without having teaching duties. Generally speaking, this can also be carried out at host universities.

To illustrate a different concept regarding mobility and providing a community for international students and lecturers the Venice International University will be introduced. This institution was set up by a group of universities from all over the world, and provides a common space for student and staff mobility. The university offers specialized programmes only for students of their partner universities which are held by international lecturers. One could argue that this structure also facilitates the stay abroad and maybe makes it possible to reduce some barriers of moving to another country. American universities and colleges provide similar programmes, which are organized by themselves. This always has to be backed up by lecturers from the home university (Wächter, 1999, p. 37). Some universities even set up a branch campus abroad, which is most of the times supported by the government. Examples of such activities are TUM Asia in Singapore by the Technical University of Munich or campuses of some US universities in the Middle East, such as the New York University Abu Dhabi. The Venice International University is one example of international partnership in teaching and research and there are large amounts of universities that take part in certain international networks, such as the League of European Research Universities (LERU). There is even an initiative to establish the first multinational campus, the so-called European Campus, initiated by the University of Freiburg (Germany), University of Basel (Switzerland), University of Strasbourg (France), Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany), and University of Upper Alsace (France). By doing so, universities can save resources and help to develop their staff (and students) internationally (VIU, 2015; TUM Asia, 2015; NYU Abu Dhabi, 2015; University of Freiburg, 2015a; 2015b). Nevertheless, criticism about the set up of branch campuses has arisen, such as high costs, and low student recruitment. Further, an effect on reputation could emerge after the close of a branch campus, as some of them were closed (C-BERT 2015; Havergal 2015). A HEI may also start to internationalize parts of their curricula, before setting up international joint or double degrees (Wächter, 1999, p. 73). There are also international institutionalized networks, which provide double degree study programmes abroad with integrated curricula, such as the International Partnership of Business Schools (IPBS) (IPBS, 2015).

Fraumann, Grischa & Güney, Işıl (2015). Human Resources Management, Internationalization and Academic Staff Mobility, in: Pausits, Attila (ed.) Human Resource Management in Higher Education. Case Studies and Future Scenarios, MARIHE E-Book Series, Edition 2.1., Danube University Krems: 2015.

Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to provide an overview of academic staff mobility, connected with internationalization and the necessary structures, key players and processes at higher education institutions in relation to the role of university leadership, the HRM department, international office and faculties. In the end, all departments of the institutions have to work together to reach this goal by introducing an institutional strategy and developing a working plan for all agents. The HRM department in this context plays one of the most important role in coordinating all these efforts. Mainly, because the most important effects of mobility is personnel development and institutional capacity building and this should be coordinated by the HRM department. The study also provides an overview of possible support and incentive mechanisms that can contribute to reaching a large amount of internationally experienced staff. Yet, one needs to bear in mind that awareness for internationalization should also be raised at universities and obstacles should be decreased.

References

Archer W. (2005). Mission critical? Modernising human resource management in higher education. Oxford: *Higher Education Policy Institute*.

Ásványi, Z. (2014). Nature of Human Resources Management. *Tudásmenedzsment, 15*(1), 84-90.

Beelen, J. (2011). Internationalisation at Home in a Global Perspective: A Critical Survey of the 3rd Global Survey Report of IAU. In Globalisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education [online monograph]. *Revista de Universidad y Sociedad del Conocimiento*, 8, (2). Retrieved fromrusc.uoc.edu/ojs/index.php/rusc/article/view/v8n2-beelen/v8n2-beelen-eng.

Blackwell, R. & Blackmore, P. (2003). *Towards Strategic Staff Development in Higher Education*. Maidenhead, UK: The Society for Research into Higher Education.

Cross-Border Education Research Team (June 8, 2015). *C-BERT Branch Campus Listing*. [Data originally collected by Kevin Kinser and Jason E. Lane]. University at Albany, State University of New York. Retrieved from: http://globalhighered.org/branchcampuses.php.

European Commission. (2014). *Education and culture: The EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport 2014-2020*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-in-detail_en.pdf.

European Commission. (2015). *The human resources strategy for researchers (HRS4R)*. Retrived from http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/strategy4Researcher.

Fraumann, Grischa & Güney, Işıl (2015). Human Resources Management, Internationalization and Academic Staff Mobility, in: Pausits, Attila (ed.) Human Resource Management in Higher Education. Case Studies and Future Scenarios, MARIHE E-Book Series, Edition 2.1., Danube University Krems: 2015.

Ferencz, I., & Wächter, B. (2012). *European and national policies for academic mobility. Linking rhetoric, practice and mobility trends.* Bonn: Lemmens Medien.

Gordon, G. & Whitchurch, C. (2007). Managing human resources in higher education: The implications of a diversifying workforce. *Higher Education Management and Policy, 19*(2), 135-155.

Harvey, M. et al. (2009). Interpreting dual career couples' family life-cycles: Identifying strategic windows of global career opportunity. *Research and Practice in Human Resource Management*, *17*(2), 14-35.

Havergal, C. (2015). Overseas branch campuses become 'low priority' in internationalisation strategies. *Times Higher Education*. (2015, May 28). Retrieved from https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/content/overseas-branch-campuses-become-low-priority-internationalisation-strategies.

Institute of International Education (IIE). (2015). *IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact*. Retrieved from http://www.iie.org/en/Who-We-Are/Centers-of-Excellence/Center-for-Academic-Mobility-Research-Impact.

International Office of the University of Mannheim (IO)
(2011). *Internationalisierung*. Retrieved from http://www.uni-mannheim.de/welcomecentre/downloads/internationalisierung/fininternationalisierung.pdf.

International Partnership of Business Schools (IPBS). *About IPBS*. Retrieved from http://www.ipbsedu.com/about-ipbs/.

Kadir Has University. (2014). *Kadir Has University ECHE 2014-2020 Erasmus policy statement (overall strategy)*. Retrieved on May 27, 2015 from http://www.khas.edu.tr/en/1571/kadir-has-university-eche-2014-2020-erasmus-policy-statement-overall-strategy.

Musselin, C. (2004). Towards a European academic labour market? Some lessons drawn from empirical studies on academic mobility. *Higher Education*, 48(1), 55-78.

Netz, N. & Jaksztat, S. (2014). Mobilised by mobility? Determinants of international mobility plans among doctoral candidates in Germany. In N. Maadad & M. Tight (Eds.), *Academic mobility (International perspectives on higher education research, volume 11)* (pp. 35-59). Bingley, UK: Emerald Press.

NYU Abu Dhabi (2015). *About*. Retrieved on May 27, 2015 from http://nyuad.nyu.edu/en/about.html.

Pausits, A. (2006). *Student Relationship Management in der akademischen Weiterbildung: die strategische Ausgestaltung der Kundenbeziehungen an Hochschulen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Customer Relationship Management Ansatzes* (Doctoral Dissertation). Universität Flensburg, Flensburg, Germany. Retrieved from http://www.zhb-flensburg.de/dissert/pausits/pausits_srm.pdf

Fraumann, Grischa & Güney, Işıl (2015). Human Resources Management, Internationalization and Academic Staff Mobility, in: Pausits, Attila (ed.) Human Resource Management in Higher Education. Case Studies and Future Scenarios, MARIHE E-Book Series, Edition 2.1., Danube University Krems: 2015.

Taylor J. (2004). Toward a strategy for internationalisation: Lessons and practice from four universities. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 8*, 149-171.

TUM Asia (2015). *About*. Retrieved on May 27, 2015 from http://tum-asia.edu.sg/about/tum-asia/.

University of Freiburg (2015a). *Partnerschaften und Netzwerke*. Retrieved from http://www.international.uni-freiburg.de/faculty-de/partnerships-de#section-0.

University of Freiburg (2015b). *European campus*. Retrieved from http://www.international.uni-freiburg.de/partners/european_campus.

University of Heidelberg (2015). *Dual career service*. Retrieved from http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/university/staff/career/dualcareer/index.html.

University of Mannheim (2015). *Forscher Alumni Netzwerk "MaRA"*. Retrieved from http://www.uni-mannheim.de/welcomecentre/forscher_alumni/index.html.

van der Wende, M. C. (1997). Missing Links: the relationship between national policies for internationalization and those for higher education in general, in T. Kälvemark & M. van der Wende (Eds), *National Policies for the Internationalization of Higher Education in Europe*. Stockholm: National Agency for Higher Education. Retrieved on May 27, 2015 from http://www.hsv.se/download/18.539a949110f3d5914ec800082193.

van der Wende, M. C. (2013). *International academic mobility: Towards a concentration of the minds in Europe*. Paper presented at Academia European Conference on Migration and Mobility in Science: Impacts on Cultures and the Profession in Institutions of Higher Education in Europe. Rome.

Venice International University (2015). *What is VIU?* Retrieved on May 27, 2015 from http://www.univiu.org/what-is-viu.

Wächter, B., Ollikainen, A. & Hasewend, B. (1999). Internationalisation in higher education. In B. Wächter (Ed.), *A paper and seven essays on international cooperation in the tertiary sector* (pp. 11-77). Bonn: Lemmens Verlags- & Mediengesellschaft.

---

[i] See for instance: 1st international conference. Higher Education and Mobilities. 2013, Grenoble, France; 13th International Mobility Conference, 2009, Marburg, Germany; ACA 20th Anniversary Conference: Internationalisation and international mobility. Where do we stand, where are we heading?, The Hague, 2013; EU2013 – Researcher Careers & Mobility Conference, Dublin, 2013.