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January - May 2024

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eISSN 2600-9811



Publication Date
1 June 2024



ROLES OF STUDENT SOCIETY AND CONCEPT OF SERVICE AT UNIVERSITY

Tertiary education, also known as higher education or post-secondary education, refers to the stage of education that follows the completion of secondary school. This level of education typically includes universities, colleges, and vocational schools where students can pursue various undergraduate and graduate degrees, such as bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral degrees. Usually, undergraduate students are encouraged to get involved with student clubs or societies on top of courses to be enrolled for every semester and pass with flying colours.

Why student clubs or societies among undergraduate students is so important? Let's look at the "service concept" perspective.

A service concept needs to be detailed enough to clearly outline what the organization offers or delivers and what the customer purchases or obtains. "At an elemental level, a university provides lectures, food, accommodation and learning materials, but what its customers are looking to acquire are service aspects that are much greater than the core elements but less tangible – an 'educational experience', or a 'richer view of life', or 'improved job prospects' (Johnston et al., 2021, p.96)". Meaning that in completing their degree at the university, the undergraduate students should be equipped with formal (in the form of lectures, tutorials, assignments, and other course-related assessments) and "informal" learning experiences. One of the sources of "informal" learning experiences is involved in student clubs or societies. The learning process is advised by at least one advisor (lecturer or staff).

The committee of the student clubs or societies be formed during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) or during the online election. Some clubs/societies are very structured, where each Top Committee and Bureau has a detailed Job Description (JD) so that the job scope is clear and reliable from one term of committee to another term. The JD is expected to be improved from time to time, based on the journey that the committee went through.

Generally, student clubs or societies must have their strategic planning aligned with the university's strategic planning as advised by the Department of Student Affairs. The strategic planning should be revisited to suit the current one. Projects to be conducted must be aligned with the club's strategic planning. The common practice is that before a new semester starts, the committees of the clubs/societies must submit paperwork including the financial implications to the Department of Student Affairs. Some of the paperwork be approved and some may not. There is a situation where the paperwork is approved with conditions, such as without budget or must collaborate with other clubs/societies. Therefore, the creativity, dynamic and entrepreneurship elements must be applied.

During the execution of the approved projects, the elements of planning, organising, leading and controlling are exercised. Throughout the process, leadership skills, communication skills, negotiation skills, conflict management skills, time management, scheduling, and emotional intelligence are employed. If the plan does not meet with the current performance, the committee needs to find alternatives for corrective action, therefore, more teamwork and decision-making skills can be diffused among them.

After completing the event, the committee must perform a post-mortem meeting and report, including the financial report. Feedback during the post-mortem is valuable for continuous improvement, in making sure that they are not going to reinvent the wheel. Sometimes, they do reinvent the wheel, since they are in the learning process; it is understood that such a situation is inevitable.

Implicitly, the value-added components that are embedded in the committee would be in the form of explicit, implicit, and tacit knowledge. This knowledge is acquired throughout the "learning experience" that enriches the student's capability in becoming well-equipped human capital for better employability or employability.

Reference

Johnston, R., Shulver, M., Slack, N., & Clark, G. (2021). *Service Operations Management* (5th ed.). United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited

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BizNewz 2024
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