

Издатель

ФГБОУ «Петрозаводский государственный университет»
Российская Федерация, г. Петрозаводск, пр. Ленина, 33

Студенческий научный электронный журнал

StudArctic Forum

<http://saf.petrstu.ru>

№ 4(8), 2017

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ISSN 2500-140X

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185910, Республика Карелия, г. Петрозаводск, ул. Ленина, 33.

E-mail: saf@petrstu.ru

<http://saf.petrstu.ru>

Образование и педагогические науки

Managing a post-merger university: a case study of UiT The Arctic University of Norway

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Ключевые слова:

governance
administration
organizational structure
identity

Аннотация:

The article deals with the nature of intra-institutional governance, organization and administrative support structures of UiT The Arctic University of Norway as a result of the three-step merger of five higher educational institutions of various types (universities and university colleges) and locations (6 campuses). The case of the UiT The Arctic University of Norway demonstrates how the new organizational structure reflects the strategic goals of all the institutions merged and accounts for the conditions affecting the outcomes of the merger in the higher education.

Рецензент: М. С. Гвоздева

Основной текст

Introduction

In the process of globalization and the following market-oriented environment, an organization needs to be complete and powerful to exist and survive. Some authors tend to put organizations in such main categories as actor, agent and arena where actor is the only complete organization. This paper describes intra-institutional governance, organization and administrative support structures of UiT The Arctic University of Norway in an attempt to identify whether this university is a complete organization. The choice of institution was made upon its reputation as a university of a unique location and character and interest to the institutional mergers that has happened at the university in 2009 (UiT merged with the University College of Tromsø), 2013 (merged with the University College of Finnmark) and 2016 (merged with both the University College of Harstad and the University College of Narvik).

The three sections of the paper describe and analyze the structure of the university after the merger, namely: intra-institutional governance, organization and administrative support.

1 Intra-institutional governance structure

UiT The Arctic University of Norway is the third largest research university of Norway which sets the task to contribute to knowledge-based development at the regional, national and international levels as its goal. Its location in the North is closely connected to the mission of the university: develop the knowledge about the Arctic, the use of its resources and about such global threats as climate change.

University management team is currently presented by eight people: rector, pro-rector for education, pro-rector for research, three vice rectors (from Alta, Harstad and Narvik), university director and assistant university director. The rector is the chair of university board and shares with it the responsibility to manage and supervise the university's activities. The rector is also the legal representative of the institution and the institution's spokesman towards public authorities and general public. The university director has the highest administrative responsibility and in charge of the implementation of the decisions that are made by the institution's governing bodies and also responsible for the distribution of financial resources in accordance with the decisions made by the board. Since the UiT The Arctic University of Norway is state-owned, it receives its funding directly from the state budget through the Ministry of Education and Research. The university director is the secretary of the university board which is the main decision-making body of the institution. It currently

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consists of 17 members (till 31.07.2017) that are elected for four years at a time. The leaders of the board are the rector and pro-rector for research and development. There are seven representatives of permanent scientific staff and four representatives of employees in technical and administrative positions. The board also currently contains two representatives of temporary staff who are elected for one year and eight student representatives also elected for a year. There are also ten external representatives in the university board who are appointed by the Ministry of Education. Such big number of student and external representatives can be explained by the big number of campuses (six) which all have to have own representatives.

If one would try to analyze the governance of UiT The Arctic University of Norway in terms of internal democratic participation, one can suggest that it would be somewhere closer to democratic than to the executive. First of all, the rector and his team are elected by all the participants of the educational process. On the contrary, the university director is appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research and has the highest administrative responsibility. Secondly, the big number of university board members, and especially the number of student and external representatives, also makes the decision-making process rather democratic. The fact that some of the board members are elected (rector and staff and student representatives) and some are appointed (university director and external members) makes the governance of a mixed internal / external character. The university director represents the Ministry of Education and Research and secures that all the decisions don't contradict the Norwegian Higher Education Act. The external members represent the interest of the industry and society in the university board and secure the connection of the university with the society. The authority of the university is a little hard to detect: on the one hand the board and its democratic structure make it possible to state that the authority is centralized in the university, but on the other hand the huge administrative position of the appointed university director decentralizes and spreads the authority on the external stakeholders. Also the fact that the university is state-owned and receives its funding from the state can't make the university absolutely autonomous. The concentration of authority is another issue that shows the working collaboration and interdependency between the rector and university director: when the rector and the university board are responsible for the decision-making, the university director is responsible for the implementation of these decisions.

2 Organizational structure

Besides the rectorate and the office of university director UiT The Arctic University of Norway has the central administration which consists of Department of Research and Development, Department of Academic Affairs, Department of Communications and Public Relations, Department of Finance, Department of Human Resources and Organization, Department of Information Technology and Department of Property Management, which all work under the supervision of the university director. The Department of Research and Development is responsible for strategic and administrative issues within research and development at the university. According to the strategic plan there is need for more researcher exchange, external financing, cooperation with affiliated institutions and economic life in the region. As far as the strategy of the university has been mentioned, it is of importance to take a closer look at it. The strategic plan 2014-2020 names the following areas of priority: energy, climate, society and environment; technology; health, welfare and quality of life; community development and democratization; sustainable use of resources. In these areas UiT The Arctic University of Norway will develop knowledge about causes and effects of changes in climate and environment as well as social adaptation to changes in climate and environment; technologies that solve challenges related to health, the external environment of Arctic and safety; best schools and health services that promote people's quality of life in the north; the basis for collaboration and potential conflicts in the High North as well as societal and cultural changes stemming from globalization; interaction between traditional and new industries and sustainable use of marine resources. The general strategy of the university is to offer research-based education of the highest international quality standards and to provide students with good creative learning environment and developed infrastructure.

UiT The Arctic University of Norway offers 258 educational programs in Norwegian and 35 programs taught in English on bachelor, master and PhD levels. Among them there are 2 online programs in Northern studies, shorts programs for one year (for example, Arctic studies, Tourism or the Norwegian language) and joint international programs (e.g. "Governance and Entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas" – a 3-year master program in Tromsø and Saskatoon (Canada)). There are six campuses (in Tromsø, Alta, Harstad, Narvik, Hammerfest, Kirkenes + the campus at Svalbard) and nine faculties at the universities (Faculty of Health Sciences; Faculty of Law; Faculty of Fine Arts; Faculty of Biosciences, Fisheries and Economics; Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education; Faculty of Sports, Tourism and Social Work; Faculty of Engineering Science and Technology; Faculty of Science and Technology and Department of Social Education). Each of the faculties offers in total 349 research projects in 172 research groups.

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As far as the additional organizational structures are concerned, UiT The Arctic University of Norway has Tromsø University Museum which is a conglomerate of Tromsø Museum, The Polar Museum, MS Polstjerna (Norway's best preserved sealing vessel) and the Tromsø Arctic-Alpine Botanical Garden. The museum is North Norway's oldest research institution and was incorporated in the university in 1976. The university also keeps the University Library of Tromsø with its branches in other campuses. Within the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education there is Barents Institute located in Kirkenes, which was organized in response to the need to produce knowledge about the border region between Norway and Russia and to gain competence on the transnational relationships among the countries in the Barents Region. Barents Institute is not the only one connection of the university with Russia and this issue will be discussed furthermore. The Faculty also encompasses Centre for Women's and Gender Research, Centre for Peace Studies (CPS) and Centre for Sami Studies. Within the Faculty of Law there is K.G. Jebsen Centre for the Law of the Sea which is halfway funded by the university. The main goal of the Centre is to ensure sustainable development and peaceful utilization of the oceans in the XXI century.

The cooperation between UiT The Arctic University of Norway and Russian institutions has a long history. In 1991-92 UiT signed its first agreements of cooperation with Russian research and education institutions including the Pomor State University in Arkhangelsk which is an important city in Barents region because it played a significant part in the development of Northern Norway until 1917 and set good relationships between the two nations. In 2016 Norway launched its strategy for the High North and Russia launched their Arctic strategy. The Norwegian strategy enhanced cooperation with Russia, Canada, the USA, Denmark (Greenland), Sweden, Finland and Iceland among which Russia is the forefront in terms of number of partners and scientific scope. UiT The Arctic University of Norway has annually around 100 cooperation projects with Russian institutions covering the broad field of subjects: language, health and medicine, marine biology, climate and environment research, geology, fisheries, history, engineering, economics, law, tourism, music and culture.

One of the key priorities of UiT The Arctic University of Norway is to contribute to the development at the regional level (as well as national and international), so there are many collaborations with the local industry sector:

- Northern Research Institute (Norut) – Norwegian research and innovation company that produces knowledge with practical applicability for the High North in the fields of technology and social science;
- Nofima – one of the largest international institutes for applied research in fisheries, aquaculture and food research in Europe;
- Norwegian Centre for Integrated Care and Telemedicine – helps achieve the goal of a common national ICT solution for health and care services;
- Institutes hosted by the Polar Environmental Centre – preserving biodiversity by spreading the knowledge about the Arctic and the Antarctic;
- Andøya Space Centre (ASC)
- EnergiCampus Nord - providing research-based education in energy and engineering in Hammerfest;
- The Norwegian Meteorological Institute.

3 Administrative support structure

The administration of primary processes at UiT The Arctic University of Norway is held through the Department of Research and Development and the Department of Academic Affairs. The Department of Research and Development is responsible for strategic and administrative issues within research and development at university and is run by the director for research. The Department cooperates closely with other departments, faculties and units in areas of external funding, applied research, international cooperation, management of PhD studies and dissemination of research. PhD education at UiT The Arctic University of Norway is held through PhD programs, PhD schools and National and Nordic Graduate Schools. The programs are offered in all research areas at all university faculties. PhD schools are more thematically targeted: EPINOR is a PhD school for epidemiological research in the High North; MSB – a PhD school in Molecular and Structural Biology; CASTL graduate school offers degrees in theoretical linguistics; ARCTOS – a PhD school that emphasizes field studies in the Marginal Ice Zone; CEPIN (Citizenship, Encounters and Place Enactment in the North) – multidisciplinary PhD school focusing on globalization and modernization in the North; PhD trainee school in Arctic Marine Geology and Geophysics. National and Nordic Graduate Schools are mostly targeted for Norwegian and Nordic applicants. They are usually organized in the partnership between the universities: for example, NATED is National Graduate School in Education Research coordinated by University of Oslo in collaboration with University of Tromsø (Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education), University of Bergen,

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University of Stavanger, The Norwegian University of Science and Technology, University of Agder, University of Life Sciences and Oslo University College.

The Department of Academic Affairs offers help to applicants, students, researchers and the University management in all matters concerning the education. It is lead by the Director of Academic Affairs together with the three heads of units (Unit for Study Quality, Unit for Study Information and Admission and Unit for Internationalization of Education (International Office)). The International Office assists the University management, faculties and staff in development of the international agreements and partnerships, joint degree programs and student and teacher exchange. The Unit for Study Quality is responsible for development and implementation of the quality system for the educational activities at the University. It is also the secretariat of the Learning Environment Committee which is responsible for administration of examinations and examination results. It is also in charge of the assessment of establishment of new study programs and reports to the University Board.

Norway has 21 national centers of excellence located throughout the country and UiT The Arctic University of Norway administers three of them: CTCC (Centre for Theoretical and Computational Chemistry), CAGE (Centre for Arctic Gas Hydrate, Environment and Climate) and CASTL (Centre for Advanced Study in Theoretical Linguistics). Taking CAGE as an example of centre of excellence, one should pay attention to its history, goals and main organizational features. The Centre was established by the Department of Geology of University of Tromsø in cooperation with Geological Survey of Norway (NGU). In November 2012 the centre received a status of Norwegian centre of excellence and received the funding for 10-year period from The Research Council of Norway. The main goal of CAGE is to contribute to arctic marine geology research with the international help from Europe, Russia and North America. The steering committee of the centre is responsible for supervising the strategy for research, training and patent development at the centre. It also has the task of overseeing the relationship with the University, institutes and industry. The Director of CAGE reports to the committee which has five members from UiT, NTNU, Norwegian Geological Survey and Norwegian Polar Institute). The Centre also has international scientific advisory board which gives advice on strategic scientific issues and consists of five members from Germany, Russia, USA and Canada. The work at the Centre is organized in eight teams of 4-15 researchers (PhD, PhD Candidates and Postdoctorals), each having their own leader.

Conclusion

The paper presents an overview of the most significant characteristics of intra-institutional governance, organization and administrative support structures. Due to the size and structure of the university, UiT presents a complex and interesting case-study and gives much more room to higher education management research than the framework of this paper. Despite the several institutional mergers UiT makes an impression of united and integrated institution under the shared identity.

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locations (6 campuses). The case of the UiT The Arctic University of Norway demonstrates how the new organizational structure reflects the strategic goals of all the institutions merged and accounts for the conditions affecting the outcomes of the merger in the higher education.