COLLABORATION OF BUSINESS AND UNIVERSITIES FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

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Abstract

The landscape of business-university collaboration consists of a large number of highly diverse domains – for example, applied research in advanced technologies, in-company up skilling of employees, bespoke collaborative degree programs, science park developments, enterprise education, entrepreneurial support for staff and students, higher-level apprenticeships, skills development of post doctoral staff. A second dimension of each domain is defined by industry sector. Similarly the needs of business align with different domains and it is not unusual for a business to collaborate with several universities in meeting those needs. To achieve world leadership in business–university collaboration, all domains must attain excellence. It is necessary to understand the entire landscape of collaboration in order to ensure that policy intended to improve performance in one domain does not adversely affect performance in another. Knowledge of the effectiveness of the domains in this landscape is currently dispersed and in some domains is dominated by anecdote rather than evidence. A source of authoritative knowledge should be established, a source with a governance structure where business and university leaders sit as equals.

In order to enhance graduate skills levels and ensure a smooth and effective transition between university and business environments, there is a need to increase opportunities for students to acquire relevant work experience during their studies. Sandwich degree programs, internships and work-based programs all have roles to play in achieving this. Further, measures to promote progression into high-level apprenticeships need to be introduced in order to meet business needs. Government has a role to play in both these fields through funding support and regulatory changes.

There is existing and expanding good practice in business-university collaboration in degree program design, delivery and sponsorship. This has clear advantages for the company, the student and the university. Where the business-university collaboration supports students who are not a burden on the public purse, government should ensure that the development of such programs, and the consequential opportunities for students, are not inhibited by regulation.

Keywords: collaboration, prosperity, opportunities, needs, workforce, employment.

Partnership with business - important priority for universities. Main objectives are:

- quality of study programs and quality of qualifications;
- employability of graduates.

There are a lot of fields of collaboration. For example, study programmers’ development, practical training for students, development of technical base: laboratory equipment & simulators. We can define some motivations of such collaboration for universities and business. Universities can obtain financial support for their missions, broaden experience of students and faculty, identify significant and interesting research problems, enhance regional economic development, increase employment opportunities.

Industry's motivations for partnerships are:

- to access research infrastructure;
- to access expertise;
- to aid renewal of company’s technology;
- to gain access to potential employees;
- to increase pre-competitive research.

The goal is to develop a climate and infrastructure to foster a growing competitive local economy.

Universities are an integral part of the supply chain to business, a supply chain that has the capability to support business health and therefore economic prosperity. A thriving knowledge economy depends upon its universities in three critical dimensions, the application and exploitation of research capability, the enterprise and entrepreneurial culture that is developed amongst its students, and the applicability of the knowledge and skills of all its graduates.

The university sector cannot achieve excellence in these roles by itself; a sustainable supply chain is not a simple linear supplier-purchaser model. Supply chains that excel in performance are those where collaboration is strong and resilient, where there is constant communication in both directions, both operational and strategic, where there is a common understanding of the objectives of the other party, where there is a willingness to change existing practices to meet the needs of the collaborators; and where the
boundaries of capability are transparent and respected. In these contexts there are a number of weaknesses in the present business-university supply chain.

World-leading business-university collaboration is dynamic and interactive, leading to:

1. The design and delivery of programmes that are relevant to current and future business needs, ensuring progression opportunities at every level of achievement and a smooth transition between the different environments of universities and business;

2. Graduates who seek knowledge and skills that are relevant to their future careers and who are confident in their ability;

3. Opportunities for students to integrate work experience and study, ensuring connectivity between academic study and the world of employment;

4. An enterprising and entrepreneurial culture amongst university students and staff, where success in enterprise and entrepreneurship is celebrated, rewarded and promoted;

5. Businesses effectively and efficiently updating employee skills and seeing universities as a natural source of the expertise to do so;

6. Graduate recruitment that matches business need with graduate skills, meets the diversity objectives of employers, is seen to be fair by the student population and provides performance feedback to universities and students;

7. A culture of pursuing the application of university-based research excellence, ensuring that university research capabilities are fully exploited in generating economic wealth, optimizing the use of government support in research, innovation and development;

8. Collaboration with government agencies to undertake regular forward looks to co-identify areas of future knowledge and capability creation, where research investment should be allocated and, wherever possible, collaboratively developed and resourced;

9. Recognition that the university sector represents a diverse set of institutions, each with its own portfolio of business support capabilities, leading to an optimal matching of business need with university strength [1].

Matching the competencies of graduates and current market needs, and broader engagement of business is strategic dialogue with universities, are on the agenda of universities. Education beyond high school and lifelong education opportunities are vital if we are going to retain our competitive edge in the global market and make every person a part of Nation's success. To provide the workforce with education and training they will need to meet the needs of tomorrow's workplace, we will need to strengthen the connections between postsecondary education institutions and businesses. Technology, demographics, and diversity have brought far-reaching changes to the economy and the workplace, including an increase in demand for a well-educated and highly-skilled workforce.

Why do we need to be concerned about ensuring our workers have the right skills today and access to quality education and job training to keep their skills current so our businesses will remain competitive? Simply put, if we continue on the path we are on, we will not have the people with the talent and the skills they will need for the jobs that will be created over the next few years.

We must address the current shortage of well-educated and highly-skilled workers through partnerships among businesses, institutions of higher education, and the government, and we must do so before the shortage becomes any worse. Improving communication so universities will know what businesses need, and then providing the necessary training and education to address those needs will be critical if we are going to succeed in retooling the workforce.

Strategies to ensure the development and recording of students’ employability, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills should be implemented by universities in the context of the university’s mission and promoted through its public literature to inform student choice. It is for universities to determine the educational context within which those skills are developed and the emphasis that is placed upon the integration of skills development within the curriculum.

For many people, acquiring postsecondary education or training is the key to their success. To prepare workers for high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand occupations, we have to support rigorous training and education programs that will lead to degrees or industry-recognized credentials in employment. We need to provide training and relevant job skills to small business owners or operators to facilitate small business development in high-growth industries. We need to expand or create programs for distance, evening, weekend, modular, or compressed training opportunities that will provide skilled training in high-growth, high-demand industries.

Today, it is globalization. We are either going to be run out of town or we are going to get on top of it, and to get on top of it, it means we are going to have to invest in education. Clearly, the partnership structure is absolutely the right way to go. We could not do our jobs as research universities without Federal support for research and for education.

Universities have to be innovative and change so that we are not just doing what worked in the past, but doing what is going to be important to prepare the right kind of workforce and the right kind of research and scientific breakthroughs for the future.
That this is the right strategy is clearly underscored by what is happening in other countries and the level of investment that is occurring in the European Union, in China, in Singapore, and in India, and to travel to those places and to look and to see the level of involvement by businesses in support of those universities from the educational programs to the construction of research facilities and laboratories to research partnerships that lead to commercialization is to see people pursuing exactly a strategy of closer cooperation [3].

We think one of the challenges is how do we get business engaged with more institutions across the spectrum of higher education. There is a process of pricing higher education out of the reach of the most needy in our society and something has to be done about this. Otherwise, we will relegate that segment of our society, the margin of society, and the social costs associated with that sector will be enormous, and it is increasing.

Today, most new jobs require a postsecondary education. To meet these employment needs will require training a more diverse and technologically sophisticated workforce.

What about Government? Government support in research and innovation is a dynamic environment, reflecting its importance to the nation’s economic future. Intermediaries, in this context, are organizations or individuals that occupy the space between the researcher and commercial exploitation of that research. They are able to operate in both academic and business cultures. In many cases intermediaries may be an in-house technology transfer/research commercialization office, in others a third-party service and occasionally they are a blend of both.

It is important to recognize that there is no one intermediary model that suits all situations. Sometimes third-party intermediaries are necessary to mediate an arrangement; in strong collaborative relationships an environment of integrated working is developed. Where there is common understanding of the motivation of respective partners and a common language, limited mediation is required.

The vast majority of knowledge exchange interaction follows direct contact between academics and external organizations, rather than being mediated by knowledge exchange offices, so networks and mechanisms of exposure and engagement between academia and industry are crucial. In this context networking, and establishing and sustaining trusted relationships, becomes a key role for research academics and businesses alike. Such relationships can only be achieved if there is a culture of such real-time networking amongst academic staff.

However, interaction between universities and companies is an ever-changing market as businesses seek to be leaders in their particular fields and researchers seek to ensure that the potential of their work is realized.

The well-known and established knowledge transfer partnerships scheme places recent graduates with companies under joint academic and company supervision to undertake a research project, with the goal of improving the competitiveness of the company.

In towns and cities there are institutions that have fundamentally shaped, and been shaped by, the character of their communities. These institutions have influenced the structure of the economy, the quality of the public realm and the ‘feel’ of each of these communities; they are often termed ‘anchor institutions.’

Many universities meet the requirements to be classified as an anchor institution: an important presence in the community; a key cultural centre; a major impact on employment; a gatherer and spender of significant revenue; a role as a major employer; a purchaser of goods and services; an attractor of businesses and talented individuals. A university provides economic, environmental and cultural benefits to its community and, critically, should play a central role in rebalancing the economy of a community under stress and promoting growth in one that is prosperous. This is a particularly important role in those communities that are heavily dependent upon public sector employment and where there is an imperative in the current climate for the private sector to grow.

However, this does not imply a common level or form of contribution; universities choose to engage in their communities in different ways. For example, some universities have a stronger focus on international links and world-class research, whilst others are rooted within the economy of their cities or regions, playing a central role in driving economic growth and social regeneration. Individual university missions will dictate the priorities of each university but each has an obligation to its local community as a major employer, a source of high-level skills and a centre of research and innovation. The precise form of the contribution will depend upon the university’s strengths but, as an anchor institution, its influence is material. Other institutions, particularly local authorities and major employers, are also recognized as anchors in the context of the roles that they play in economic prosperity. But recognition as an anchor institution does not ensure collaboration and synergy in their local communities.

Universities are large employers in their own right, often amongst the largest in their communities. The direct economic impact of their presence is significant, regardless of the added value that they bring through high-level skills, research and innovation [2]. However, their impact in terms of trade should be examined further. In the context of export generation they play a very significant role in our economy; in the role of inward investment they are an underexploited national resource.

The economic benefits of being a leader in international education are not confined to the direct financial impact of international students, important though they may be. Many universities have a highly
diverse international faculty, making campuses truly international in every perspective of intellectual and cultural life. The importance of this international community is clear and not solely in the direct economic and cultural benefits that such a diverse student population brings.

Networking between universities and the business community is a critical component of an efficient innovation ecosystem. There are several established networking tools at national and regional levels that create links between universities, business and research technology organizations. These mechanisms need to be constantly evaluated, reviewed and updated as media innovations change communications capability and expectation.

References

Summary

Основними формами співпраці бізнесу та освіти є, перш за все, навчальні програми, стажування, співробітництво у сфері інновацій, фінансування бізнесом наукових досліджень та підготовка компетентних кадрів. Але з метою економічного процвітання нам слід більш наполегливо працювати над комерціалізацією університетських розробок, адже це дасть змогу надалі ефективніше організовувати роботу вишів. А також – працевлаштовувати студентів після випуску з університетів.

Ключові слова: співпраця, процвітання, можливості, потреби, зайнятість.