

DIVERSITY, QUALITY and QUALITY ASSURANCE in BELIZEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Galen University and

The Association of Tertiary Level
Institutions in Belize (ATLIB)

Belize

- Former British Colony (British Honduras)
- 1981 Independence
- Developing economy
- Population of 270,000
- Multi-ethnic Society
 - Mestizo
 - Maya
 - Garifuna
 - Creole
 - Immigrants: Central Americans, Asians



Overview of Presentation

A Belizean Higher Education Landscape

B Traditional Measures of Quality

C Emerging Quality Assurance Framework

The Belizean Higher Education Landscape

- A two tiered system
 1. Associate Degrees at Junior Colleges
 2. Bachelor Degrees at Universities
- A Church-state partnership in education
 1. Junior colleges either community or church owned and administered but supported by Government funding
 2. Universities:
 - a. University of Belize – national, public
 - b. University of the West Indies – regional
 - c. Galen University – private, transnational

Diversity in Belizean Higher Education

1. Program and Institutional Diversity
2. Student Diversity
3. Stakeholder Diversity

Program and Institutional Diversity

I Mix of British and North American models

- The Junior Colleges

1. Initially emerged as British type sixth forms preparing students to sit Cambridge 'A' level examinations
2. Later mutated to American type junior colleges offering Associate Degrees
 - still offer preparation for advanced level examinations, from both Cambridge and the Caribbean

Program and Institutional Diversity

II Program Diversity

1. The Associate's Degree – diversity in

a. credit value from 60-94 credits

b. content

- breadth of offerings (General Core plus major courses)
- depth in areas to be assessed by external examining boards

c. purpose

- enter the world of work
- entry to British type universities
- transfer to American type universities
- respond to immediate socio-economic needs

Program Diversity

- Bachelor Degrees
 - Vary in structure
 - University of Belize – “2+ 2” structure; 124-154 credits
 - UWI – “2 + 3” structure
 - Galen University – full 4 year; 120 credits
 - Vary in outlook
 - University of Belize – national outlook, mission
 - UWI – regional outlook
 - Galen University - international and national focus

Student Diversity

Students are

- From a variety of academic backgrounds
- Have differing expectations of their education
 - Enter world of work
 - Transfer to other institutions (at home and abroad) for further education
- Are of two types
 - Traditional
 - Non-traditional
- From various ethnic groups
 - Mestizo
 - Maya
 - Gariguanu
 - Creole
 - Immigrants: Central Americans, Asians

Stakeholder Diversity

- Parents
- Students
- Employers
- Government officials
- Churches
- International Students

TRADITIONAL MEASURES OF QUALITY

1. External examinations
 - Cambridge 'A' level examinations
 - Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE)
2. Relevance to the job market
3. Transferability of credit to US and other institutions
4. Quality at Galen University

The Emerging Quality Assurance Framework

Quality Assurance movement fueled by:

1. CARICOM Accreditation mandate/CSME
2. Belize's support for the *Consejo Superior Universitario Centro Americana (CSUCA)*
3. The National Accreditation Council (NAC)
4. ATLIB's Quality Assurance Committee
5. The *Handbook on Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Tertiary Education*

The National Quality Assurance Framework

1. A National Higher Education Policy
2. System-wide Quality Control Measures
3. The ATLIB Quality Assurance Committee

A National Higher Education Policy

That will

1. Guide what higher education does and connect it to socioeconomic development
2. Inform decision making regarding
 - Program and institutional development
 - Funding
 - Professional development of faculty and staff

Informed by a national development strategy and developed all the stakeholders.

System-wide Quality Control Measures

1. System A Higher Education Council
2. Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Tertiary Education
3. The National Accreditation Council
4. An Institutional Quality Assurance

The Higher Education Council

That would provide oversight of the higher education system, including:

- Approve the establishment of new institutions
- Establish policy as it relates to the financing and administration of higher education etc ...
- Monitor the administration of higher education
- Serve as a coordinating body among the various stakeholders

Composed of a cross-section of all the stakeholders

Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Tertiary Education

Will prescribe minimum criteria for licensing:

- Governance
- Financing
- Staffing (and conditions of service)
- Administrative services
- Management of student records

The National Accreditation Council

The Mission:

1. The registering of institutions
2. The recognition of awards (both local and foreign)
3. The articulation of awards within the regional framework
4. The ensuring that all programs meet established and academic and professional standards
5. The ensuring that a culture of continuous quality enhancement exists in Belizean higher education

Functions of the National Accreditation Council

- Register institutions
- Accredite programs and institutions
- Promote the development of tertiary education in Belize
- Ensure that tertiary education meets established standards
- Promote the free movement of skills and knowledge across the region (CSME)
- Promote research in tertiary education

An Institutional Quality Assurance System

Will ensure accountability with each institution.

- A Quality Improvement Plan
- Program Approval, Monitoring and Review Policy
- Internal Quality Review

The ATLIB Quality Assurance Committee – critical objectives

1. Standards for curriculum development
2. A Qualifications Framework
3. Faculty Upgrading and Development
4. Development of Instructional Media
5. Student Development Services
6. Development of Physical Infra-structure
7. Sustainable Financing of Belizean Higher Education

Recommendations

- The ATLIB QA committee provide continued leadership amongst institutions
- Continued partnership with the Ministry of Education in ensuring quality
- The quality development of higher education must occur within a national policy that is shared by all

The image features a solid teal background. In the center, the words "THANK YOU!" are written in a white, serif, all-caps font. Behind the text, there is a faint, semi-transparent illustration of two hands shaking, rendered in a lighter shade of teal. The hands are positioned horizontally, with one hand on the left and one on the right, meeting in the middle.

THANK YOU!