A MODEL TO INVOLVE STUDENTS IN GOVERNANCE AMIDST RESISTANCE

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As with all nations, high expectations are placed on our Universities to be key contributors to economic growth of Egypt.

However, although there has been paradigm changes in the western HEIs, the traditional teaching and research university in our region has yet to transform into an entrepreneurial university model.
Historical Perspective
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With the military coup in mid century and the move to a more socialist systems access to higher education was granted to all levels of society

However
THE IVORY TOWER
60 YEARS LATER
THE IVORY TOWER
Where are we today?

Introspective University playing an active role in the process of change in society.
The idea of letting industry and labor market in the planning of higher education is still foreign to most academics in Egypt.

However

- The dialogue has begun
- And so did the movement to resist.
The Idea of considering students as stakeholders still horrifies many.

**However**

- The dialogue has started
- And so did the resistance.
In tough times
We had to think positively
We wanted to embrace QA processes that:

- Would include students as key partners
- Was embedded in the day to day management of the institution
- Would support decision making
External challenge

- Negativity and lack of trust of students.
- National security forces
Time for BIG ideas
We needed to think of quality culture that is not just as a set of procedures (ink on paper)

But

As context in which efforts are linked to the development of true transformation
Transformation is at the heart of quality

(Harvey 2006)
- Transformation that is not hindered by accountability-improvement dichotomy

- But one that is compatible with culture as a lived experience with true on the ground impact
Student Empowerment Approach
Elections of SU
A key decision was to empower students by giving them power to influence their own transformation and encouraging them to take ownership of the learning process.
Bringing students to cross the bridge was unexpectedly difficult
First students needed to be motivated to be active partners after a lifetime of HIBERNATION.
Mechanisms were needed to ensure a minimum level of student involvement in institutional governance.

Students needed to be involved in the decision-making process related to their education.

It was needed to be emphasized that students must be both considered and treated as partners in institutional governance.
Involvement of students in committee structure

- Student representation in existing governing committees was implemented
  - Education and student affairs senate

INITIAL SHOCK from faculty members

Change in culture of senate
Newer committees were developed to regulate student involvement in the decision-making process related to their education with student representation.

- Committee for schedules.
- Assessment committee.
- E learning committee.
- Academic support committee.
- Student support committee.
Mechanisms and policies were needed to ensure that students are included as key players in internal quality assurance process.
Breaking the Barriers

A model for structuring student integration with faculty members.

- Heavy campaigning
- Awareness
- Documentation and senate approval
100% Student body
On Monthly Basis

Representatives from Department Councils meet with student delegates to get feedback on any grievances from students and give students feedback from faculty members.

Student Groups elect 1 student per course.
Initial resistance by students who have been brought up in culture nurturing separation between students and professors.

Initial resistance by some faculty members to upgrading level of students to being partners in a process.
Challenges

- Resistance to change
- Pre University Education
- Legislation that fosters the IVORY TOWER.
- Lack of readiness Faculty members to engage.
- Teaching service vs. Student engagement.
- Recourses
The transformation process itself provided the opportunity for self-empowerment of students, through increased confidence and self-awareness.

Student empowerment by the development of a critical attitude; to think and act in a way that bridges taken-for-granted preconceptions, prejudices.

Questioning established orthodoxy and learning to justify opinions.
Khaled Said
Wake up Egypt!
An anti-government protestor gestures during clashes with police in Cairo January 30, 2011. Thousands of Egyptians defied a ban on protests by returning to Egypt's streets on Wednesday and calling for President Hosni Mubarak to leave office, and some scuffled with police. REUTERS/Ahmed Jadallah
Enough Killed
WHO'S AFRAID OF TWITTER?!
REVOLUTION TOOLS

AK-47

MACHETE

TWITTER

FACEBOOK
- Self Motivation
- Sense of ownership
- Self organization.
- Better faculty member acceptance.
- Less administrative resistance.
- Less negativity from students.
- More level of participation.
And the journey continues
Thank you