

# Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis

Studia ad Didacticam Biologiae Pertinentia 9 (2019)

ISSN 2083-7276

DOI 10.24917/20837276.9.7

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## **The implementation of the third mission of academic tertiary education institutions by means of the social-occupational activation of a local milieu. Good practices originating from activity**

### **Introduction**

Every organization, and an academic tertiary education institution is no exception, conducts its activity upon the basis of the mission and the strategy, which determine the scope and the direction of undertaken initiatives. In particular, a mission is an important element of the organizational culture, and it provides a *sui generis* offer of an academic tertiary education institution for an external milieu. In the times of the intensification, and objective necessity, of collaboration between academic tertiary education institutions and the representatives of employers, of the commercialization of scientific research, the third mission of an academic tertiary education institution is becoming a significant pillar of tertiary education. However, this activity ought not to be restricted to the mutual dependence between an academic tertiary education institution, the market, and also the states, and, to express it more succinctly, between an academic tertiary education institution and finances and profit. Academic tertiary education institutions can, and ever more frequently actually do, conduct their activity for the benefit of a local community, by means of broadening their offer for the various groups of recipients, including those who are in the danger of social exclusion. This is an important initiative from the point of view of society, and it presents an academic tertiary education institution as a place accessible to all those who may be interested, as a building in which a nursery school attendee and a senior individual can feel good and develop. Regardless of the type of an academic tertiary education institution, every such institution is a learning organization. Not only does its activity exert influence upon its students and upon its employees, but it also shapes knowledge society. The opportunity to share its output, and initiatives that are to benefit various social groups, renders it possible not only to broaden the third mission of an academic tertiary education institution. It consists in building social capital, to rendering it possible for knowledge to be diffused, to achieving economic and cultural profits.

### Three missions – the multitude of the directions of activity

In the Polish system of tertiary education, in particular, while observing the period since the year 1989, one can notice that intensive changes, both pro-qualitative and pro-quantitative, have been taking place. The following ones ought to be regarded as the most important:

- the commercialization of knowledge and of scientific research;
- increase in the number of students;
- increase in the number of non-public tertiary schools;
- increase in the mobility of students and the employees of academic tertiary education institutions;
- the implementation of European standards, among others, ECTS, and two- and three-tier structure of degree studies (Wasilewski, 2017).

However, the fundamental mission of an academic tertiary education institution has remained unchanged for years, and it is defined as education and conducting scientific research, including such as fulfilling the needs of the economy and the market. The transformations which occur in the environment of an academic tertiary education institution, in particular, those determined by the processes of globalization, the development of technology and knowledge society, determine an increase in the expectations towards the establishment which is constituted by an academic tertiary education institution. These very expectations are formulated not only by the official organs of the state, but also by particular social or occupational groups, or by particular individuals. There arises a question about the cause of such a change within the scope of the perception of the role of an academic tertiary education institution, and its, *sui generis*, ancillary nature in terms of the environment? The answer to this question is a multi-aspect one, and it depends upon a several factor. Nevertheless, it ought to be indicated that academic tertiary education institutions ceased to be elitist establishments, accessible only to the chosen ones. Academic tertiary education institutions are not, in contemporary reality, perceived in the categories of institutions which deserve deference and respect just because they exist. It is their activity that earns them the recognition of the environment, among its future students and in the entire community.

By means of numerous agreements with social partners, with the organizations of the third sector, or with entrepreneurs, academic tertiary education institutions become a part of numerous undertakings, also such as are conducted on a nationwide scale. All the time as well, there occurs the process of the institutionalization of the relations between an academic tertiary education institution and an external milieu. Establishing official organs such as conventions, and the councils of stakeholders, renders it possible to exchange the expectations and experiences of the authorities of particular academic tertiary education institutions, the members of self-governmental authorities, or employers. Formal determinants obliging higher schools to consult, among others, their curriculums, and to take under consideration the comments of employers within the scope of expected qualifications (knowledge, abilities and competences) that the graduates of a given major ought to have mastered, are conducive to that. It is also society that formulates very clear

and detailed expectations towards academic tertiary education institutions and the scope of their activity. Employers want to exert influence upon the quality of the education of their students, and particular occupational groups develop the standards in accordance with which education preparing to a particular occupation is to be conducted. Polish higher educational institutions, leaving aside the issues of changes occurring within the scope of legal regulations, are facing the necessity of opening to the problems and needs of the external environment, both local and on a nationwide scale, and, further, of the global societies. Knowledge, as the crucial element of contemporary economy and its competitiveness, cannot remain the monopoly of the lecture rooms of academic tertiary education institutions. Commencing research collaboration, conducting implementation activities forming clusters<sup>1</sup>, the commercialization of research,<sup>2</sup> are the typical areas of the exchange of knowledge between an academic tertiary education institution and an enterprise, and particular industries. However, restricting the influence exerted by an academic tertiary education institution to the collaboration of this kind, fails to provide all the opportunities of taking advantage of the potential of an academic communities, both of the personnel and students alike.

Not only does a free-market economy eliminate particular occupations; it is also a *sui generis* creator of the new ones. It is that very economy that determines the demand of the labor market; a occupation chosen by an individual may, but may not be, needed at a given moment. As it was rightly indicated by W. Furmanek (2017), the contemporary labor market favors the educated, and provides opportunities for talented, hard-working and creative individuals, for those who want to acquire knowledge and develop their abilities, which implies new challenges and expectations towards the educational market. Contemporarily, being educated, possessing broad technical abilities, cannot guarantee that an individual will achieve

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1 Clusters are usually composed of 80–100 entities. They include three types of institutions: enterprises (70–80% of which are small and medium-sized companies), business environment (training centers, center of the transfer of technology, technological parks and business incubators) and scientific units (academic tertiary education institutions and research institutes). Clusters are one of the most important tools of the policy of regional development and the innovation policy of the UE. They include companies and organizations working near each other (among others, producers, suppliers, recipients and distributors), which, even though they compete with one another on the market, simultaneously wish to exchange experiences, and also to collaborate for the benefit of the common objective and benefits. These may include, for instance, developing, in collaboration with scientists, new technological solutions (website [http://naukawpolsce.pap.pl/sites/default/files/201807/RAPORT\\_science\\_Zastosowane.pdf](http://naukawpolsce.pap.pl/sites/default/files/201807/RAPORT_science_Zastosowane.pdf), accessed on 12.08.2019).

2 The commercialization of the results of research, and also of technologies, ought to be defined as: selling the results of research, most frequently in the form of know-how or know-why, selling licenses, taking advantage of patents. The term ‘commercialization’ is applied as well to the entire scope of activities which are connected with the transfer of knowledge into economic practice. This is the process which renders it possible to provide the market with innovative technologies. In a more restricted meaning, it is interpreted as particular instances of handing over knowledge or abilities to make use of them on the market in the form of services, or products. In conclusion, commercialization is a very complex process, which is to transfer the results of research scientific on the market (Gołabek, Fliśniuk, 2016: 65).

success on the labor market. The changes in the organization of work, the arrival of new occupations, and the partial disappearance of those already existing, and, first and foremost, a very rapid development of technology, are the principal determinants of demand on knowledge, yet, the demanded knowledge must be up-to-date, and, therefore, an employee is expected to participate in continuous education. As it is expressed by Violetta Drabik-Podgórna, (2010: 100), "contemporary model of the transition connected with globalization, the segmentation of the labor market and occupational chaos involves a lot of unpredictable phenomena, repeating and involving the various spheres of life". Not everyone can cope with the new challenges on the market, and, first and foremost, not everyone ever has a chance to prove the worth of the competences which they have acquired.

Academic tertiary education institutions are charged with providing such knowledge and abilities, which, in the future, will increase employability, therefore partly shape the educational-occupational future of an individual. Theoretical knowledge, which, for many years, young people acquire at academic tertiary education institutions, is certainly an element needed to perform a particular occupation, but it has to be combined with occupational internships, or by contacts with the milieu of employers. It is also lecturers who can exert influence upon their students, and encourage them to undertake self-education and active participation in the life of an academic tertiary education institution, which, in the future, will bring forth the fruits of being a more successful player on the labor market. An academic tertiary education institution, its mission, that what it offers to its students, is not only knowledge, but also shaping attitudes, behaviors and motivating them to strive for perfection. Therefore, studying ought to be conducive to the development of personality, including, as well, the personality of an employee. Knowledge and increase in its significance in modern societies have contributed to paying substantially more attention, also by politicians, to the activity of academic tertiary education institutions. More involvement is expected of higher schools, both regionally, and on a nationwide scale, not only within the scope of the transfer of knowledge, but, as well, within that of integration with the surrounding society, the integration of employees, and the integration of students.

However, it is difficult to claim that academic tertiary education institutions ought to do nothing else than to prepare to an occupational career. Their task is as well to broaden general knowledge about the world, to contribute to the development of science, and to respond to the needs of society. For that very reason as well, so much emphasis has been placed in the recent years upon the development of the so-called third mission of an academic tertiary education institution. Too frequently and erroneously is the third mission of an academic tertiary education institution perceived in the categories of a complement to the two traditional academic mission. In particular, its social scope is not taken under consideration, and this is the very activity within this scope that is significant for a change in the perception of an academic tertiary education institution in our country. Attempts to define the third mission of academic tertiary education institutions in European conditions have been made since the mid-1980s. It was in Great Britain that the necessity of changing the attitude to the management of academic tertiary education institutions,

departing from tertiary education based only upon collaboration between the state and academic official organs, was noticed. Permitting other social groups interested in the activity of academic tertiary education institutions, paying attention to their interests and expectations as well, was changing the priorities of academic tertiary education institutions. Partly under the influence exerted by the environment, the arrival of the new recipients of the process of education, academic tertiary education institutions started to formulate individual missions, adjusted to their own abilities as well.

A mission, as it is emphasized by Z. Ratajczak (1997: 83), "is a responsible task to be fulfilled, an important order to be processed, a mission. There are cultural, scientific or social missions, and also the diplomatic ones. Missions are served, accepted, fulfilled, delegated and entrusted. An individual who undertakes a mission certainly feels that if this mission is not completed, they will be blamed for that, therefore, this task has some features of a moral imperative, of responsibility".

There are two principal priorities within the scope of the third mission of an academic tertiary education institution:

1. The transfer of innovations and modern technologies to economy in order to develop competitive advantage. This is the task, in particular, for academic tertiary education institutions which conduct research within this scope, and which also possess sufficient financial means.
2. The transfer of academic knowledge to particular groups in order to solve social problems, a dialogue with society and consultations. The third mission is, in this case, perceived in the category of social involvement, and can be served by every higher school regardless of its category.

The third priority, which is not frequently mentioned, is the third stream of incomes connected with the transfer of knowledge and granting licenses for intellectual property rights in collaboration with the private sector, private associations, and also with the state sector. The lack of the complete conceptualization of the notion of "the third mission of an academic tertiary education institution" provides the opportunity of the implementation of this area by every academic tertiary education institution, and adjusting it to its strategy of activity.

Because of the above-mentioned transformations, and also constantly increasing social expectations, an academic tertiary education institution is becoming an important segment of societies, both in the local dimension, and in the global one, alike. The synergy between academic tertiary education institutions and economy, the transfer of knowledge for the benefit of the industry, and of modern technologies, is a positive aspect of serving the third mission. Nevertheless, academic tertiary education institutions are contemporarily expected to provide the different forms of involvement in solving the problems of social life. Broadening educational offer, which includes rendering it possible to benefit from lifelong learning, is a response to the needs of knowledge-based society. Establishing numerous academic tertiary education institutions for children, the universities of the third age, are the different forms of activity engaging further social groups in academic life. Simultaneously, they indicate that higher schools serve their third mission in a planned manner, frequently with the use of their own resources, including the financial ones.

### **The third mission of an academic tertiary education institution – in the direction of the prevention of social exclusion**

Restricting the third mission of an academic tertiary education institution to conducting activities concentrated upon developing economical superiority upon the basis of the transfer of knowledge from academic tertiary education institutions to an external milieu fails to take under consideration a number of initiatives and particular activities undertaken by these organizations for the benefit of societies, culture, education and individuals in the danger of exclusion. More and more willingly, academic tertiary education institutions implement activities which reach far beyond the scope of the traditionally-understood third mission. Their popularization is not only recommended in the perspective of developing a positive image of tertiary education, but it also contributes to a greater involvement of community in the initiatives of academic tertiary education institutions.

Serving the third mission of academic tertiary education institutions requires a conception, workload, and, of course, financial resources. However, the instances of numerous Polish academic centers in the recent years demonstrate that the authorities of academic tertiary education institutions and scientific personnel have original ideas for the implementation of activities within the area of the third mission. In particular, it is recommendable to pay attention to projects which support individuals being the members of so-called risk groups. Improvement in their situation, social and occupational activation, demonstrate the big role that is played by academic tertiary education institutions in fulfilling the needs of a local community. One of the instances is the implementation, at Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa, of the project "Transition into Adulthood with the Competences of the Future", co-financed from the means of the National Center for Research and Development.

The general objective of this project is to raise competences (crucial for the economy and development of the country) in the case of 60 individuals aged 14–18 coming from care and education institutions situated in the area of the city of Częstochowa, and also of the county of Częstochowa. Providing support for the above-indicated group results from, first and foremost, their more difficult (in comparison with that of their peers) situation, and also from the specific traits, frequently meaning that this group is in the danger of social exclusion. The lack of emotional support of the family is the most severe problem for this group. Very frequently, it results in various kinds of emotional disorders, reaching for drugs as early as at a very young age, and adopting a passive attitude to life, consisting, in principle, in the lack of self-confidence and trust in their own abilities. This project will contribute to making those under the care of orphanages independent by means of occupational activation, education, development and improving the chances of finding a job. Achieving the adopted objective was based upon reaching by the project team the following fragmentary objectives:

- raising the level of knowledge and abilities of those under their care;
- the development of the linguistic competences of those under their care;

- the development of personality, and the development of interests, including shaping social abilities;
- shaping entrepreneurial attitudes.

Under the project, the following tasks are conducted:

- certified courses of a foreign language;
- workshop classes with career advisors and educational brokers within the scope of occupational activation;
- planning the path of further education;
- training within the scope of entrepreneurship and interpersonal communication preparing to functioning in social and occupational groups;
- visits and study trips providing the opportunity of making oneself acquainted with the educational offer of a region, including academic tertiary education institutions and prospective jobs.

The fact that all the classes for the participants in the project are conducted by the scientific and didactic personnel of Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa, and on the premises of this academic tertiary education institution, is significant in the perspective of serving the third mission of an academic tertiary education institution. Not only do the those under their care have a chance of making themselves better acquainted with the infrastructure of an academic tertiary education institution, but, first and foremost, they can see tertiary education as a stage in education open to everyone regardless of their financial situation. The lecturers conducting the classes, the teachers of foreign languages, apart from following the curriculum, make attempts to involve those under their care in the everyday activity of this academic tertiary education institution. Those under their care participate in cultural events organized by its students, and are guests at lectures and sporting events. The Faculty of Pedagogy of this academic tertiary education institution educates its students within the scope of care and educational pedagogics, and these students have started to take an active part in the implementation of the project. The exchange of experiences between young people, inspiring stories, staying on the premises of an academic tertiary education institution, provides individuals in the danger of social exclusion with a new perspective, and the feeling of belonging to a new community, being an academic community. Academic tertiary education institutions, opening to the various groups of stakeholders, demonstrate simultaneously that, as institutions, they can effectively support and assist various social groups. Thanks to that, they develop a modern image of tertiary education, namely open and developing civil society.

It is assumed that the implementation of the project will also contribute to developing a model of support for those in care and education institutions within the scope of the development of crucial competences, which will be possible to be used both by an academic tertiary education institution as an institution educating career advisors, pedagogists and therapists. Also, lobbying in favor of their proposals of changes in national legislation relevant to the process of becoming independent in the case of those in care and education institutions will take place.

## Final remarks

The mission of an academic tertiary education institution, similarly to the mission of every organization, is defined in the categories of the principal objective of its functioning, and also conducting activities which are undertaken both for the benefit of an academic community and an external milieu. In the case of academic tertiary education institutions, listing all the recipients of its activity is not, contrary to what might seem, an easy task. This fact results, principally, from the significant broadening of their offer and conducting the activity of Polish academic tertiary education institutions, in particular, in the area of the so-called third mission. Collaboration between higher schools and the external environment is contemporarily not restricted to the commercialization of research, to the exchange of experiences or to the internships of its students. This consists in actually exerting influence upon a community, the situation of it and activity involving particular groups in academic life, an instance of which is the implementation of the described project. For academic tertiary education institutions, serving the third mission is not only a challenge, but it is also an opportunity to use the possessed resources of knowledge in practical activity, in activity directed to assistance and support. This develops the new kind of an academic tertiary education institution based upon alterocentrism. As it is emphasized by J. Kumaczewski (2013: 65), "an academic tertiary education institution cannot resign from traditional values: academic, formative education, preparing the graduate also to honor and live by universal values, ethics in their actions, objectives 'of higher order', upon which the future of civilization needs to be built". Appropriately implemented, not only is the third mission not in contradiction to the above-mentioned ideals, but it rather provides the opportunity to transfer them to the different groups of local communities.

The current process of the implementation of the third mission in academic tertiary education institutions is a challenge requiring the involvement of both the academic milieu and the external environment. This consists in a change in the ways of thinking about an academic tertiary education institution as a closed institution, which confines itself, principally, to conducting research and educating. It means the perception of an academic tertiary education institution as an organization having a substantial potential in terms of personnel, methodology and research facilities, which can be implemented in solving local problems.

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## **The implementation of the third mission of academic tertiary education institutions by means of the social-occupational activation of a local milieu.**

### **Good practices originating from activity**

#### **Abstract**

This article is relevant to the implementation by academic tertiary education institutions activities within the scope of the third mission of higher schools, which, apart from didactic and research activity, ever more frequently activate local community and collaborate for the benefit of it. The principal objective of this paper is to present the contemporary direction of the development, and the scope of the third mission of academic tertiary education institutions by means of critical analysis of the domestic and foreign literature, and also presentation of good practices within this scope. To achieve this objective, the study of the conception of the so-called third mission, namely, the various activities of higher schools dedicated to particular groups, was undertaken. The accompanying objective is also to provide the answer to the question of the significance of the third mission in the strategies of the management of higher schools in Poland in reference to traditionally-defined academic missions, namely education, and also conducting scientific research.

**Keywords:** university, third mission, transit, good practices, activation

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