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SUSTAINABILITY OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS OF MINDANAO STATE UNIVERSITY IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO

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I. INTRODUCTION

Mindanao State University System is the only premier university in Muslim Mindanao which the national government established in 1961 with the objective to facilitate the integration of the Muslims into the national body politics and to accelerate socio-economic development in the region. Since then, the university expanded its operation into island provinces of Tawi-Tawi and Sulu in early 70s. The MSU branches in these areas, however had not grown well as expected due to the failure to improve academic services for the students and sustained faculty development. MSU-Sulu is originally mandated to operate as technical college with an academic thrust on fisheries and agriculture, oceanography and fisheries for Tawi-Tawi and agriculture for MSU-Maguindano.

This paper anchors with the view that improving the instructional standard, the university's facilities and sustaining the accreditation process will have a long-term impact on attaining quality education. Academic services and responsive leadership and management have to be sustained if MSU branches located at the BARMM area desire to be on the path to quality education. This study seeks to determine the way how to sustain instructional programs and projects of Mindanao State University campuses in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Specifically, it aims to find out the support systems of MSU-ARMM to sustain programs and projects in terms of faculty development, facilities, in-service training and student services; to identify the strategies used in sourcing out funds; to find out the priority areas of concern of MSU-ARMM; to determine the problems encountered in sustaining instructional standards; to find out how budget is allocated; and to determine employment policies of MSU-ARMM to sustain instructional programs and projects.

Descriptive method is utilized in this study. The principal research instruments used in this study are the statistical analysis, questionnaire and random sampling of 120 respondents chosen from the four (4) campuses of Mindanao State University in ARMM. A combination of simple random sampling and equal quota allocation technique were also used for the faculty respondents. Library works were also undertaken.

II. Support System of the MSU-ARMM to Sustain Instructional Programs and Projects

Ever since, faculty development, improvement of facilities, in-service training and student services are the vital ingredients of the university's instructional programs and projects. Assessment of these instructional programs should be done regularly in order to keep the programs sustainable and more relevant to the goal of the university.

Faculty Development

Basically, gleaning on the results presented in Table 1, the faculty respondents strongly agree that the following ways can sustain instructional programs and projects in MSU-ARMM. As manifested in the table, the following activities were rated in the verbal description as Strongly Agree. The first five (5) are shown in the following order with their corresponding mean rank: 1.) the school must provide scholarship opportunities to faculty to update quality of teaching (3.79); 2.) the school must show interest for professional development of the faculty (3.77); 3.) academic programs and projects must be at all times supported (3.72); 4.) faculty members must be provided with equitable and fair work environment (3.72); and 5.) the school must give financial assistance to conduct research project (3.65).

As cited by Plater (1995) faculty development should be the engine that drive a campus mission, invest resources so individual and groups can attain strategic goals. Support for such activities often includes support to attend research meetings or professional development seminars and to provide funds to participate in those efforts that enable faculty members to maintain a current and relevant research agenda in their area of expertise.

Facilities

For facilities, also shown in the same table, the respondents strongly agree on the contention that MSU-ARMM can sustain instructional programs and projects to involve the provisions of favorable library services and teaching materials with a mean score of 3.79; maintain quality classroom equipment and other necessary materials needed to attain quality learning (3.78); use instructional materials in order to achieve the goal of education with a mean value of 3.73; utilize relevant visual aids and other teaching devises (3.72), and the provision of modern laboratory apparatuses (3.71).

The results indicated that library services and teaching materials/equipment were rated as important facilities as shown in the mean score. Equally important to mention is the study of Muksan (2005) citing that as a vital learning resource, the library is identified with every sound as a learning-teaching institution, whether in the technical, vocational, business or maritime school/college.

In service Training

In matters of supporting in-service training, all the indicators or activities were rated as strongly agree by the faculty respondents wherein they agreed that these helped sustain instructional programs and projects. As presented in the same table, the following indicators are: the school must encourage faculty to attend seminars and conferences to update them on issues relative to their profession with a significant mean of 3.76; faculty who attended seminars/trainings must re-echo the knowledge learned to others with a mean of 3.67. While the two indicators: faculty members see to it that seminar/trainings to be attended must be in line with the thrust of the school and school must allow faculty to plan training programs for other teachers in places where there is a need

shared the same mean score of 3.60. And the least rated was item number 15 with a weighted mean of 3.58.

These results implied that faculty needs to attend seminars/trainings to update him and perform better so as to help improve the organization where he belongs. The integration of training opportunities and employee drive for self-development translates employee development program into service improvements and better performance as aptly put by Valera (1989). Yarcia (2006) emphasized that teachers feel the need to grow in the service. Their job actually requires them to improve themselves for “to teach is to learn twice.”

Student Services

The data revealed in the same table that the respondents strongly agree with the ways to sustain instructional programs and projects in terms of student services. The following activities with their corresponding mean are described: the school must treat students justly, fair, and humanely regardless of religious affiliation, race and academic standing with an important mean score of 3.82; the school ideally provides encouraging environment for learning (3.80); the school must show interest to help students in their learning endeavor with a mean of 3.78; the school provides activities both academic and extra-curricular for students’ improvement (3.70); and the school administration must allow students to enjoy academic freedom with a mean of 3.62.

Thus, the faculty respondents of the four Campuses are aware of the importance of student services and organizations as stipulated in the University General Catalogue (2006) stating among others that the University is in the forefront in promoting cultural integration and forging national solidarity, creating opportunities for regular interactions and activities for Christian and Muslim students, and providing opportunity for faculty, staff and students to mix freely in an extra-curricular environment.

Table 1. Support System of the MSU-ARMM to Sustain Instructional Programs and Projects

SUPPORT SYSTEMS	MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
Faculty Development		
1. The school must show interest for professional development of the faculty.	3.77	Strongly Agree
2. The administration must support faculty for professional travel.	3.60	Strongly Agree
3. The school must give financial assistance to conduct research project.	3.65	Strongly Agree
4. Faculty members must be provided with equitable and fair work environment.	3.72	Strongly Agree
5. Academic Programs and projects must at all times supported.	3.72	Strongly Agree
6. The school must provide scholarship opportunities to faculty to upgrade quality teaching.	3.79	Strongly Agree

7. The school administration must provide fringe benefits and job security for faculty.	3.65	Strongly Agree
Facilities		
8. The school must provide favorable library services and teaching materials.	3.79	Strongly Agree
9. The school must maintain quality of classroom equipment and other necessary materials.	3.78	Strongly Agree
10. Faculty must utilize relevant visual aids and other teaching aids.	3.72	Strongly Agree
11. Faculty must use instructional materials in order to achieve the goal of education.	3.73	Strongly Agree
12. School must provide modern laboratory apparatuses.	3.71	Strongly Agree
In-Service Training		
13. The school must encourage faculty to attend seminar and conferences to update them on issues relative to their profession.	3.76	Strongly Agree
14. School must allow faculty to plan training programs for other teachers in places where there is a need.	3.60	Strongly Agree
15. The school must shoulder seminar/training fees of the faculty.	3.58	Strongly Agree
16. Faculty members must see to it that seminar/training attended must be in line with the thrusts of the school	3.60	Strongly Agree
17. Faculty who attended seminar/ training must re-echo the knowledge learned to others.	3.67	Strongly Agree
Student Services		
18. The school must provide activities both academic and extra-curricular for students' improvement.	3.70	Strongly Agree
19. School administration must allow students to enjoy academic freedom.	3.62	Strongly Agree
20. The school must provide encouraging environment for learning.	3.80	Strongly Agree
21. The school must show interest to help students in their learning endeavor.	3.78	Strongly Agree
22. The school must treat students justly and humanely regardless of religious affiliation, race and academic standing.	3.82	Strongly Agree

Mean:

1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree

2.50 – 3.49 = Agree

3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree

III. Strategies Used in Sourcing Out Funds by MSU-ARMM

As reflected in table 2, the faculty respondents perceived that the following indicators or strategies can help source out funds to sustain instructional programs and projects. They strongly agree on the contention that the: 1.) the institution must strengthen academic programs by way of accreditation for additional package bonus from the CHED (Mean=3.57); 2.) Linkages/network must be established to funding agencies to support instructional programs and projects (Mean=3.56); and 3.) Maintain income-generating projects (IGP) (Mean=3.53). As cited in the Republic Act (R.A.) 8292, otherwise known as Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997, all State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) are given the exclusive rights to initiate income-generating projects to support their operating expenses.

On the other hand, the respondents agree that of the: creation of campus business center to generate funds and increase tuition fees with approval of the Board of Regents and as mandated by R.A. 8292.

Table 2. Strategies Used in Sourcing Out Funds by MSU-ARMM

SUPPORT SYSTEMS	MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. Linkages/network must be established to funding agencies to support instructional programs.	3.56	Strongly Agree
2. The school must create a Campus Business Center to generate funds.	3.38	Agree
3. The school must maintain income Generating Projects (IGP).	3.53	Strongly Agree
4. The institution must strengthen academic programs by way of accreditation for possible additional package bonus from the CHED.	3.57	Strongly Agree
5. The school increase tuition fees with approval of the Board of Regents and as mandated by R.A. 8292.	3.22	Agree

Mean:

- 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree
- 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree
- 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree
- 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree

IV. Priority Areas/Concerns of MSU-ARMM Related to Instructional Programs and Projects

Indicated in table 3 are the priority areas/ concerns of MSU-ARMM related to instructional programs and projects. Based on the data gathered, the administrators' concern of seeing the overall operations of the campus ranked first with a mean rank of 2.83. This implies that administrators really play major roles in the school.

As cited by Bakil (2006) a school manager should bring to his position certain capacities of body and mind, emotion and spirit. He must have the necessary knowledge and skills in the main functions of educational management, which is planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. She pointed out, further, that essentially schools which are effective and have the

capacity to improve are led by a head that makes a significant and measurable contribution to the effectiveness of their staff.

While budget allocation for each college/department ranked second with a mean rank of 3.97; send qualified and interested faculty to seminars/trainings ranked third (4.41); improve instructional materials ranked fourth (4.49); active supervision is necessary with a mean score of 4.90; regular meetings and conferences with employees must be conducted ranked sixth (5.53); improve centers of development and center of excellence ranked seventh (5.88); maintain linkages/network with funding agencies ranked eight with a mean rank of 6.14; cooperative planning and strengthen accreditation programs ranked ninth and tenth with a mean rank of 6.36 and 6.43, respectively.

Gleaning on the results, strengthening of accreditation programs ranked number 10 as priority area, which is in contrast with the strategy used to source out funds by strengthening academic program by way of accreditation (3.57) as shown in table 3. This seems to imply that this is caused by the requirements posed by the accrediting agencies and the tire out and bulky work in the process of accreditation like documentation and others coupled with financial constraints of the schools.

Table 3. Priority Areas/Concerns of MSU-ARMM related to Instructional Programs and Projects

AREAS/CONCERNS	MEAN RANK	FINAL RANK
1. Administrator must keenly see the overall operations of the Campus.	2.83	1
2. Send qualified and interested faculty to seminars/trainings.	4.41	3
3. Improve instructional materials.	4.49	4
4. There must be a budget allocation for each College/Department.	3.97	2
5. Active supervision is necessary.	4.90	5
6. Regular meetings and conferences with employees must be conducted.	5.53	6
7. The school must maintain linkages network with funding agencies.	6.14	8
8. Strengthen accreditation programs.	6.43	10
9. Improve centers of development and centers of excellence.	5.88	7
10. There must be a cooperative planning.	6.36	9

V. Problems Encountered by MSU-ARMM in Sustaining Instructional Programs and Projects

As presented in table 4, the faculty respondents viewed that MSU-ARMM faced problems and challenges in sustaining instructional programs and

projects. The respondents agree on the following aspects: inadequate budgetary allocation (Mean=3.48); poor management of the faculty development program (Mean=3.43); lack of initiative to generate income-generating projects (Mean=3.39); poor learning environment (Mean=3.27); poor academic performance of faculty due to inefficient hiring policies (Mean=3.26); presence of “Bata-Bata system in the Campus (Mean=3.13); lack of proper motivation and dedication to service (Mean=3.13); irrelevant offerings of courses and programs (Mean=2.97); and pressures coming from parents and students on issues of increasing tuition fees with a mean rating of 2.88.

On the other hand, problem pertaining to budget cut on Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) ranked as number one in terms of mean score of 3.53, which indicates that the respondents strongly agree that this is indeed a problem.

In the words of Roblas and Chee Kee, columnists of Manila Bulletin (2003) that the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) at the wake of a tight financial condition in the country streamlined the budget for MOOE of all State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) across the country. They, further, pointed out that budget cut of SUCs MOOE threatens their academic operation, thus in effect cripple them financially.

Table 4. Problems Encountered by MSU-ARMM in Sustaining Instructional Standard in the light of Financial Setbacks

PROBLEMS	MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. Affected by the budget cut on Maintenance and Other operating Expenses (MOOE).	3.53	Strongly Agree
2. Inadequate budgetary allocation.	3.48	Agree
3. Lack of initiative to generate income-Generating Projects (IGP).	3.39	Agree
4. Poor management of the faculty development program.	3.43	Agree
5. Poor academic performance of faculty due to inefficient hiring policies.	3.26	Agree
6. Poor learning environment.	3.27	Agree
7. Irrelevant offerings of courses and programs.	2.97	Agree
8. Pressures coming from parents and students on issues of increasing tuition fees.	2.88	Agree
9. Presence of Bata-Bata system in the Campus.	3.13	Agree
10. Lack of proper motivation and dedication to service.	3.13	Agree

Mean:

- 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree
- 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree
- 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree
- 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree

VI. Budget Allocation in MSU-ARMM to financially Sustain the Instructional Programs and Projects.

As shown in Table 5, the faculty respondents strongly agree on the contention that the items or indicators on budget allocation can sustain instructional programs and projects in MSU-ARMM. The results indicated that the first indicator that was viewed the highest in terms of mean rating was fund solicited/collected from funding agencies/institutions and income-generating projects must be used in accordance to its intended programs (3.77). This means that the University Campuses welcome donations and funding assistance from agencies like NGOs, POs, GOs, and other entities to support and strengthen academic operations. In fact, MSU-ARMM had established linkages and consequently tied up program and signed MOA with EQUALLS-USAID, BEAM, GEM, Gerry Roxas Foundation and the like. And, also operating income-generating projects to sustain instructional programs and projects of which Campuses have created business centers, for instance the University Business Office (UBO) of MSU-Marawi and the Campus Business Center of MSU-Sulu.

The rest of the indicators as shown in the same table were also perceived by the faculty respondents that can sustain instructional programs and projects.

Table 5. Budget Allocation in MSU-ARMM to financially sustain the Instructional Programs and projects

BUDGET ALLOCATION	MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. The school must appropriate enough funds for each college operation.	3.67	Strongly Agree
2. The CHED must appropriate bigger budget to schools that have bigger population.	3.62	Strongly Agree
3. The DBM must prioritize the allocation of budgets for education to improve instruction.	3.75	Strongly Agree
4. Funds allocated for the school must be used for academic operation.	3.63	Strongly Agree
5. Funds solicited/collected from funding agencies/institutions and income-generating projects must be used in accordance to its intended programs.	3.77	Strongly Agree

Mean:

- 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree
- 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree
- 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree
- 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree

Employment Policies of MSU-ARMM to Sustain Instructional Programs and Projects

Based on the results presented in table 6, the faculty respondents strongly agree that all the employment policies mentioned can sustain MSU-ARMM instructional programs and projects. Policy number two which centers on APSB decisions in hiring teacher based on educational qualifications and merits ranked the highest with a mean rating of 3.84.

Table 6. Employment Policies of MSU-ARMM to Sustain Instructional Programs and Projects

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES	MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. The school must screen all applicants.	3.71	Strongly Agree
2. Member of the Academic Personnel selection Board must base their decisions in hiring teachers through educational qualifications and merits.	3.84	Strongly Agree
3. The administrator of the Campus must not interfere with the results of Board's interview and screening of the applicants.	3.65	Strongly Agree
4. Qualified applicants must be informed immediately after the members of the board reached their verdict.	3.71	Strongly Agree
5. Applicants must be hired based on their educational qualification and not by "whom they know in the Campus.	3.76	Strongly Agree

Mean:

1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree 2.50-3.49=Agree

1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree 3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree

VII. CONCLUSION

Improving the instructional standard and the university's facilities as well as the accreditation process are the practical steps towards attaining quality education. Academic services and responsive leadership and management have to be sustained if MSU branches located at the BARMM area desire to accomplish its trilogy functions on quality instructions, research and extension services.

The support system as rated by the faculty respondents can sustain MSU-ARMM instructional programs and projects to include: faculty development, facilities, in-service training and student services. There are ways of sourcing out funds that can sustain instructional programs and projects. These strategies are: maintain income-generating projects (IGP); establish network/linkages with funding agencies and strengthening academic programs. As aptly stated in R.A. 8292, otherwise known as Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997, all State, Universities and Colleges (SUCs) are given the exclusive rights to initiate income-generating projects (IGP) to support their operating expenses;

1. That out of the suggested priority areas of concern relative to sustaining instructional programs and projects, administrators' capability to see campus operations ranked first. This means that school manager/head still occupies a big role in school management;
2. That MSU-ARMM encountered problems; and budget cut on Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) was strongly rated as number one problem. Other problems are also mentioned such as: inadequate budgeting allocation, poor management of the faculty development program, lack of initiative to generate IGPs, inefficient hiring policies poor academic performance and lack of proper motivation and dedication to service;
3. The allocation of budget for sustaining instructional programs and projects is determined by DBM and CHED appropriations; and the operation of income-generating projects, where funds are used according to its purpose of collection. This means that these campuses welcome donations and funding assistance from agencies like NGOs, POs, GOs and other entities to strengthen academic operations.
4. That MSU-ARMM Academic Personnel Selection Board (APSB) decisions by hiring educationally qualified faculty to teach can help sustain instructional programs and projects.

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