

An International University without an International Office:
Experiences in Mainstreaming Internationalisation at the University of Helsinki

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As of 2003 the University of Helsinki has not had a unified, single office for international affairs. The speaker will describe the current organisational model for managing international affairs and also talk about both challenges and benefits of the current approach. Among the topics to be discussed are also the practical tools and other arrangements facilitating the co-ordination, leadership and management of international affairs, such as IT tools, strategic documents and regular meetings between different actors.



HELSINKI UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

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Markus Latinen, Kyoto University, 12.2.2009



WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS / AFFAIRS?



- Something that takes place in English (or other foreign languages)?
- Something to do with moving people across borders?
- Something that only has to do with education...
- ...or with research too?
- Something that can be clearly defined?
- Something that one can delegate to a specific office or other administrative structure?
- Or something that is part of all modern university's activities, something that the whole university has to embrace?

Outline



- National and Institutional Context
- How we came to this?
- What did we come to?
- What do we do?
- How do we do it?
- Something about IT
- Conclusions

A few relevant things about Finland



- Small country, in terms of Population 5,2M
- Physically remote
- Linguistically remote
- To certain extent geopolitically remote
 - At least until EU-membership in 1995
- Very low immigration
 - No "natural" base for international recruitment or co-operation
- And then there's the climate and weather....
- ... and Nokia, F1 and Rally, Pisa success etc

Setting the scene: University of Helsinki facts

- Comprehensive, no business or engineering
- Publicly funded, national responsibilities
- Officially bilingual, in truth trilingual
- Research intensive, research strong (top-ranked)
- "Bologna proof" as of 2005
- 35000 students, 8000 staff
- 1500 international degree students (107 countries)
 - 30 English-taught Master's programmes in 2010
- ~600 international staff
- Student mobility: 1100 out, 950 in annually
- **No tuition fees!**

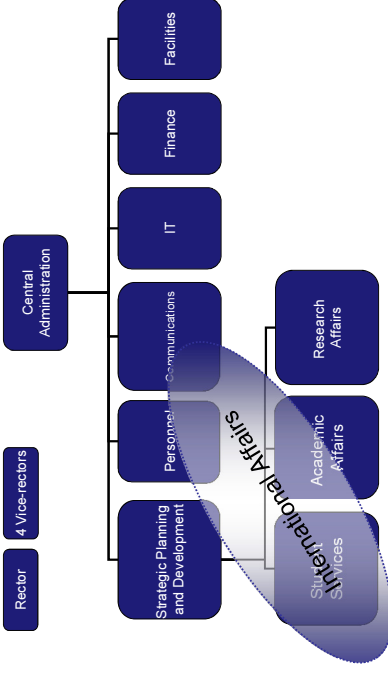
Briefly about international mobility

- Ministry of Education (MoE) sets target numbers for HEIs
- University of Helsinki has internal target numbers for faculties
- Result-based funding for internationalisation since late 1990's
 - Both by MoE and UH
- University annual budget for mobility ~2M€
- Mobility: an indicator in the 2010→ core funding formula
- New MoE internationalisation strategy calls for even more mobility
- Erasmus: 60% of all mobility: decentralised

Modes of Organisation

- International Relations established in late 1980's
 - Initially correspondence and protocol
- Since then 5 re-organisations
 - None because International Affairs analysed but rather by-products
- Since 2003 *Mainstreamed Internationalisation*
 - No International Office but a network/matrix organisation within central admin
 - No internationalisation strategy
 - Int'l embedded in all strategic documents

Current organisational model for IA



Areas of International Affairs

- Strategic planning and development of int. affairs
- Development of teaching in English + joint programmes
- Student Mobility
- International Staff Services
- International Admissions
- Teacher- and researcher mobility
- Traineeships
- Regional and national co-operation schemes
 - HERA, Summer School, UniversityAdmissions
- Altogether ~25 people (+further 15 for research)
- + administrators in all faculties, altogether ~50

How do we do it?

- Joint activities
- Meetings: both regular and ad-hoc
- Joint budget for activities
- Intranet site + e-mail lists
- IT-systems
- Not making a big deal out of it
 - For example at <http://www.helsinki.fi/international>
- Trust and co-operation
 - Between actors but also with their superiors
- And just by doing things...

Benefits and Risks of Mainstreaming

- Benefits
 - International cannot be marginalised
 - International coupled with substance
 - Contamination of internationalisation
 - More resources added without adding people
 - If successful, university truly embraces internationality
- Risks
 - Requires positive attitudes from leadership and middle management
 - Can lead of invisibility
 - Unconventional leadership and management structures
 - Requires time and a delicate touch

International IT developments 1/2

- [UniversityAdmissions](#)
 - Electronic applications for degree students
 - CRM functions
 - Central service for checking eligibility
 - Started at UH, now serves 16 Finnish universities
 - Housed at UH



International IT developments 2/2

- [International Mobility database](#)
 - University-wide system
 - Connected to other systems
 - Internet-based
 - Streamlined processes (3 years planning)
 - More electronic services
 - Replaces a central database first developed in 1997
 - Need to keep institutional statistics of all international mobility
- Implementation phase 2008-2009



Final thoughts

- Mainstreaming works for the University of Helsinki!
 - Requires maturity as regards internationalisation
 - Is not the same as downsizing or making it invisible
 - Has had mostly positive outcomes and contributed towards shared responsibility
 - Difficult to turn back time
 - Cannot and should not be copied as an ideal model
 - Mainstreamed internationalisation needs continuous further development
 - Especially related to leadership management and tools
 - In the right circumstances a University can be international without an international office!



Thank you for your attention

Markus Laitinen

[Video](#)