INITIAL STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTION SURVEY

Results

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY UNIVERSITY, NEPAL

Integrating Talent Development into Innovation Ecosystems in Higher Education Ecosystems in Higher Education
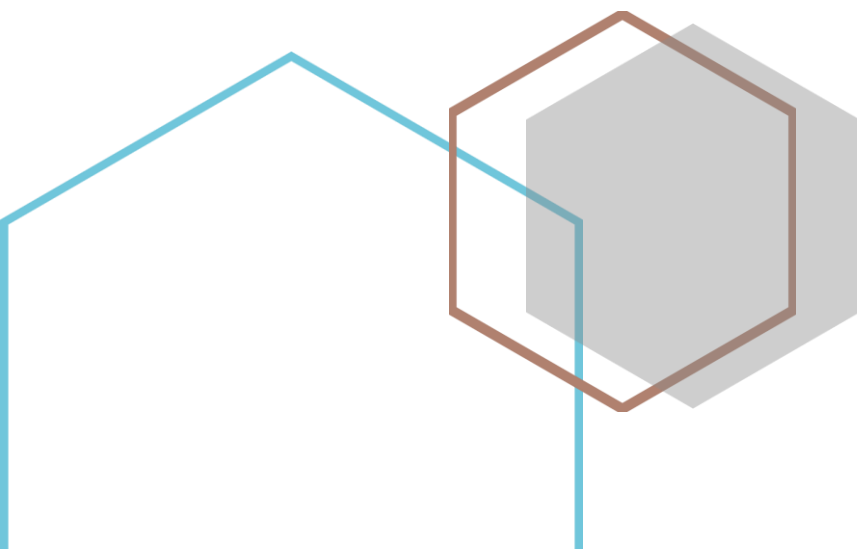
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INNOTAL

Table of Contents

Each INNOTAL Partner University in Asia has carried out a survey campaign aimed at mapping the initial positions and perceptions of key University stakeholders on issues of relevance to the project.

Representatives of administration and management have been asked to give their opinion about the way graduates' employability and relations with external stakeholders are currently handled at their University.

Students have provided feedback about the state of current student representation at the University, which is an important determinant of the ability of the institution to attract and retain talent.

Faculty members have been asked to share their interest in, and expectations from, future plans to embed employability in the various activities and operations at the University, to further develop talent development and improve the quality and relevance of education.

This document presents and analyses the results from this survey.

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Analysis and conclusions

For studying the perceptions of various stakeholders at the University, a survey was carried out. 75 observations from respondents were collected (through an online questionnaire and a hard copy questionnaire), including (A) Management and (B) Administration, (C) Students, (D) Faculty Members. The distribution of the respondents is quite acceptable considering the relative number of representatives of these target groups. Management and administration was represented by 26% of the respondents.

Based on the responses from Category (A) Management and (B) Administration, the findings of the survey can be summarized as follows:

A small majority of respondents (~54%) feel that the University needs to learn from examples and best practices of ensuring graduates' employability and establishing mutually beneficial links with business and industry but currently has no capacity to do this. This indicates that the INNOTAL project has a great potential impact in this area. It should be noted, however, that a significant number of respondents (over 37%) believe that the University has to be guided by the government strategy for higher education and do not seem to consider good practices as important. A clear majority of respondents (73%) believe that the University does not sufficiently monitor to what extent it is able to ensure the employability of graduates and cooperation with business. However, again, there is a substantial percentage (~30%) that believes the university is being evaluated by the responsible public agencies and does not need to exercise monitoring in this area.

A majority of respondents (~73%) is aware of the need of some improvement in relation to the employability of graduates, even if most of those respondents are relatively happy with the performance of the University. Yet, like in the questions above, a substantial percentage (23%) see this as the prerogative of public agencies rather than the University.

Almost half of the respondents believe that the University is monitoring only to a limited extent the external conditions in the economy and society that may affect the employability of graduates. A notable 26% believe that this is the job of public agencies rather than the University.

Around 80% of the respondents express a positive attitude toward developing a more coherent internal strategy for improving graduates' employability and links with business and industry. Around 20% prioritize government and public agencies' guidance over internal institutional strategy.

A remarkable 100% of respondents believe that external stakeholders are not sufficiently involved yet in the in the design, delivery and evaluation of curricula, and that the university would definitely benefit from increasing their involvement. The attitude is similarly enthusiastic with regard to the involvement of external stakeholders in the development of student talent, even though a minority of 8% (2 respondents) is against the interference of stakeholders in this domain of higher education.

The majority of respondents (~85%) believe that the University still needs to work on introducing a more student-centred approach to teaching and learning. Only around 8% (2 respondents) of the respondents believe that such an approach is not necessary.

Based on the responses from Category (C) Students, the findings of the survey can be summarized as follows:

Only 7.5% of the respondent students rate positively their participation in official decision-making bodies of the University. 44.5% believe that their voice could count more, and a notable 48% believe that students are not adequately represented in University governance. The opinion is similar as regards the degree to which students feel they are consulted on the quality of

teaching and the study programs. A notable 30% state that they are not consulted at all, and another 22% feel they are not consulted on a regular basis. Nearly 41% state that they are rarely consulted and are not able to really influence the quality of teaching and of the study programs. Only 7.5% seem satisfied with their representation in this area. With regard to consulting students on matters of support services, health and other services related to social life, over 70% do not feel sufficiently consulted, while another 18.5% state that they are consulted but not on a regular basis. 11% are satisfied with their representation.

On a positive note, 74% of the students feel that the University attracts and retains talented students. Yet there is a large percentage of those who believe the opposite (26%), which should be a reason for concern and further exploration. The future of INNOTAL activities seems to be promising as the great majority of respondents (~96%) feel ready to participate in innovation or research projects with their Professors (yet some 44.5% of them feel that they need prior training). In response to the question about type of activity which will improve their employability, 37% feel internship with industry is the best choice. This is a surprisingly low percentage that warrants further analysis. A noticeably higher percentage (48%) of respondents feel positively about an internship or training placement in a non-governmental organization. It is very positive in light of the INNOTAL project, however, that ~78% believe that an innovation or applied research project at the university developed in cooperation with business or industry is their best option for improving employability. Students feel similarly positive toward international mobilities or periods of study abroad. Involvement in community work and volunteering, however, is valued as skills-building experience only by 26% of the students.

Based on the responses from Category (D) Faculty members, we can summarize the findings of the survey as follows:

Some 59% of faculty members feel that the University is doing a lot to guarantee employment to students, but at the same time they also feel that more efforts will help achieve better results. Over 30% believe the University does not have a good enough strategy in this area. Nearly 78% also state that the University would benefit from developing a more coherent internal strategy for improving graduates' employability and linkages with business and industry. Almost all respondent faculty members declare readiness to contribute to the University's efforts in developing students' employability, but some 9% of those note that they would only be willing to do this if their workload is not increased. Another 4.5% note that they would only do this if their efforts are acknowledged in the formal process of attestation and promotion.

Faculty appears to have an overall positive attitude to involving external stakeholders in the design, delivery and evaluation of courses (~77%), even if some 13% out of those positively minded faculty members warn that this should not be overdone as it may disrupt the teaching process. There is a notable ~23%, however, who oppose the involvement of external stakeholders as it would disrupt their teaching routine. The source of this attitude should be further examined.

The majority of AFU staff appears to be open to improvement and innovation in the teaching and learning process. Thus:

- ~73% of the faculty is willing to introduce a more student-centered approach in teaching

- ~91% express a positive attitude toward involving external stakeholders in the development of student talent (though more than half of them also indicate that there should be rules and limits to that involvement in order to preserve academic freedom)

- ~91% express a positive attitude toward developing and delivering innovation and entrepreneurship training

- 100% would be willing to organize and facilitate the involvement of students in live innovation projects that also involve external stakeholders (even if some 14% do not quite feel up to it, while 23% are not familiar with the practice in detail)
- 100% would be willing to introduce more innovative teaching methods in their teaching

These last results are very positive and suggest that future INNOTAL activities are likely to be well received.

Detailed results: Summary findings on institutional survey of Agriculture and Forestry University

No of observation used in the study

Methods	Category of respondents			Total
	Faculty	Students	Administration and management	
Online	15	27	1	43
Hard copy questionnaire	7	0	25	32
Total	22	27	26	75

Detailed results

Management and administration		
1. Around the globe, universities are becoming increasingly focused on ensuring the employability of their graduates and on establishing mutually beneficial links with business and industry. Is our university actively looking for examples and best practices in this area?	**N**	**%**
We are guided by the government strategy for higher education. We have no capacity to research good practices from other countries	8	30.77
We are interested but we have had no resources and capacity to carry out a good research on the best practices	14	53.85
We do not think good practices from other countries would be useful for us	0	0.00
Yes, we are actively researching the best practices in order to learn	4	15.38
2. Does our university assess to what extent we are able to ensure the employability of our graduates and how well we cooperate with business?		
No, this is not part of our job. The university is being evaluated by the responsible public agencies	7	26.92
Yes, but only occasionally	19	73.08
Yes, regularly	0	0.00
3. Is our university aware of any weaknesses in relation to the employability of our graduates and our cooperation with business?		
We are not evaluating these areas at all, it is up to public agencies to do it	6	23.08
We are relatively happy with our current performance but some improvements will be welcome	15	57.69
We are very happy with our performance	0	0.00
Yes, we have identified weaknesses	4	15.38
4. Is the university monitoring the external conditions in the economy and		

society that may affect the employability of our graduates?		
No, we rely on the government and the responsible public agencies to do it	7	26.92
Only to a limited extent	12	46.15
Yes	7	26.92
5. Would our university benefit from developing a more coherent internal strategy for improving graduates' employability and links with business and industry?		
We can think about some improvements but we mostly need to rely on the government and the responsible public agencies to chart strategic directions	5	19.23
We have no coherent strategy at this time and it would be good to start working on it	16	61.54
Yes, we have already started working toward these goals, it would be good to improve the strategy	5	19.23
6. Would our university benefit from involving external stakeholders more actively in the design, delivery and evaluation of curricula?		
External stakeholders are already involved but their involvement could be increased if this will help improve graduates' employability	0	0.00
External stakeholders are already sufficiently involved and no further action is needed	0	0.00
External stakeholders are not sufficiently involved yet and the university would definitely benefit from increasing their involvement	26	100.00
7. Would our university benefit from involving external stakeholders (notably business) more actively in the development of student talent?		
External stakeholders are already involved but their involvement could be increased if this will help improve graduates' employability	0	0.00
External stakeholders are already sufficiently involved in the development of student talent and no further action is needed	0	0.00
External stakeholders are not sufficiently involved yet and the university would definitely benefit from increasing their involvement	24	92.31
External stakeholders have no particular relevance to the development of students' talent. Developing students' talents is the job of the university itself	2	7.69
8. Is the approach to teaching and learning at the university sufficiently student-centred?		
No and we are not ready to modify the existing teaching and learning processes unless this is a formal requirement by the accreditation agency	2	7.69
No, but we would support the introduction of a more student-centred approach in teaching and learning, if we feel we have the capacity and resources to do it	4	15.38
We are trying to introduce a more student-centred approach to teaching and learning but there is a long way to go	18	69.23

Yes, we have achieved substantial success in introducing student-centred teaching and learning	2	7.69

You can share with us any additional comments or observations you might have on the above topics or on related issues

Classroom delivery should be enhanced

University is working as guided by our curriculum, we must improve our curriculum, program, policy to involve our graduates in business, policy level discussion to improve the situation is required

Students

1. Do you think students are properly represented in official decision-making bodies at the university?

No, we are not sufficiently involved or consulted on governance matters	13	48.15
Yes, but our voice could count more	12	44.44
Yes, our representation is very satisfactory	2	7.41

2. Do you feel that students are consulted on the quality of the programs and teaching?

No, we are not sufficiently involved or consulted on the quality of the programmes and teaching	8	29.63
We are rarely consulted and we are not able to really influence the quality of teaching and of the study programs	11	40.74
We are regularly consulted and we can give our opinion and voice our complaints	2	7.41
We are sometimes consulted but not on a regular basis	6	22.22

3. Do you feel that students are consulted on student support services at the university, including financial assistance, accommodation, health services and social life?

No, we are not sufficiently involved or consulted on student support matters	10	37.04
We are rarely consulted and we cannot really influence the student support services	9	33.33
We are regularly consulted, we could give our opinion and voice our complaints	3	11.11
We are sometimes consulted but not on a regular basis	5	18.52
No answer		

4. Do you feel that your university attracts and retains talented students?

No	7	25.93
Yes	20	74.07

5. Do you feel confident and prepared to become involved in an innovation or research project together with your professors?

No	1	3.70
Yes	14	51.85
Yes, but only if I receive proper training before that	12	44.44

6. What type of activities do you think would best serve to improve your employability? (more than one answer is possible)

Internship or training placement in business/industry	10	37.04
Internship or training placement in a non-governmental organization	13	48.15
An innovation or applied research project at the university that is developed in cooperation with business or industry, with support from the faculty	21	77.78
Job fairs and meetings with potential employers during my studies	8	29.63
Courses and assignments based on case studies and practical tasks	15	55.56
International mobility or periods of study abroad	19	70.37
Volunteering	7	25.93
Involvement in community work while at the university	10	37.04

You can share with us any additional comments or observations you might have on the above topics or on related issues

- *Our education here solely relies on will of student and theoretical back ground, that needs to be changed. There is large gap between student and teachers. There is lack of respect for students among teachers and faculty members, which needs to be changed. Field visits, training and skill development should be incorporated in education.*

- *The AFU administration should be tough and systematic (including written based exam with enough multiple choice questions/MCQs) while recruiting new lecturers. Because I think the level of knowledge can't be decided by just 4 hours of written exam. Percentage/marks is obviously one of many indicators determining the level of competency but not only with option less. Similarly, rule of law, governance and accountability should be duly considered by both students and people in power.*

- *Teaching from the External Visiting Professors.*

- *Universities like ours do not provide job placements. Professors do not take their responsibilities well.*

Faculty
Area of teaching and research (optional)
Veterinary medicine
Animal Nutrition Sciences
Veterinary Medicine and Public Health
Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding
Animal Science, Genetics and Breeding
Conservation Ecology
Biochemistry

Engineering

1. Do you think that our university is doing enough to guarantee the employability of our graduates?

I think we are doing a lot, but more efforts would achieve even better results	10	45.45
No, we don't have a clear and consistent strategy	7	31.82
No, we have a good strategy but not enough effort is put in this area	3	13.64
Yes, we have a very clear and consistent strategy for improving graduates' employability	2	9.09

2. Would our university benefit from developing a more coherent internal strategy for improving graduates' employability and links with business and industry?

No, enough is done already	5	22.73
Yes	17	77.27

3. Would you be willing to contribute to university efforts to increase the employability of students and to improve the development of their talent?

Yes	19	86.36
Yes, but only if my workload is not significantly increased	2	9.09
Yes, but only if these efforts count toward my attestation at the university	1	4.55

4. Do you think involving external stakeholders more actively in the design, delivery and evaluation of the programs and courses that you are teaching would be beneficial for your students?

No, it would disrupt my teaching routine	5	22.73
No, it would reduce my academic freedom	0	0.00
Yes, but it would disrupt the teaching process and should not be overdone	3	13.64
Yes, it would make sure they are better prepared for work and it is worth some additional efforts	14	63.64

5. Would you be willing to introduce a more student-centered approach in your teaching?

It is not necessary because I have already done this	2	9.09
Yes	16	72.73
Yes, but only if I receive clear instructions what to change	4	18.18
Yes, but only if it does not significantly increase my workload	0	0

6. Do you think external stakeholders should be more involved in the

development of student talent?		
No, this would significantly complicate the teaching process	2	9.09
Yes, but only if there are clear rules and limits to involvement, so that academics retain their academic freedom	11	50.00
Yes, this would increase the employability of students	9	40.91

7. Would you be willing to develop and deliver innovation and entrepreneurship training?

No, these topics are not relevant to my field of teaching	2	9.09
No, unless it is a requirement	0	0.00
Yes, as separate elective course(s) within the program	13	59.09
Yes, but only as short extra-curricular training(s)	6	27.27
Yes, but only as topic(s) within existing courses	1	4.55

8. Are you familiar with the practice of involving students in live innovation projects that also involve external stakeholders?

Yes	17	77.27
Not in detail	5	22.73
No	0	0.00

9. Would you be willing to organize and facilitate the involvement of your students in live innovation projects that also involve external stakeholders?

I don't feel up to it, but if something is done at university level, I would support it	3	13.64
No, this is outside my competences at the university	0	0.00
Yes	19	86.36

10. Would you be willing to introduce more innovative teaching methods in your own teaching?

No, unless it is a requirement at university level	0	0.00
Yes	14	63.64
Yes, but only if some guidance is provided at University or Department level or if there is a support structure within the university that could assist me	8	36.36

You can share with us any additional comments or observations you might have on the above topics or on related issues

Curricula of the University should be more oriented towards real problem, more practical and problem based

Many changes in teaching and learning process should be addressed which portions are still missing in current ongoing situation.