RTU CORE VALUES, INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES: AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Values are 'core values' when their influence on what people do surpass that of most other values in the value system. Core values are related more to what people in the organization wants to be and wants to be accountable for. They are the keys to institutional success. The effectiveness of an organization, such as an educational institution, is significantly dependent on the contents of its core values. Universities have long maintained an extensive mandate in terms of educational programs offered to learners and their links to businesses and industries. This paper describes the core values imbibed by the faculty members, as manifested in their institutional practices, the industry engagement towards a stronger university partneship in order to obtain the desired learning outcomes of the students. In this study, learning outcomes refer to those education-related consequences of students' university-industry experiences. The study employed the descriptive causal–comparative research design. Ssimple random sampling was utilized to choose the respondents of the study. Data analysis on the degree of association between core values and industry enaagement to learning outcomes was done using simple linear regression. Results of the study showed slight association between RTU core values and students' learning outcomes. Low association also existed between industry and students' learning outcomes. Thus, it is suggested that the University should revisit its quality assurance principles and may also engage the industry to participate in the development, delivery and evaluation of curriculum to ensure skilled and competent graduates.

Keywords: RTU (Rizal Technological University), Core Values, Industry Engagement, Learning Outcomes.

INTRODUCTION:

Great statements about a university's values, vision, and mission can have a remarkable impact on what a university actually achieves, what acts it takes, and based upon those actions, what goals can be inferred. Universities have long maintained an extensive mandate in terms of educational programs offered to learners and their links to businesses and industries. In most universities, the focus on the need for graduates to be career and work oriented has been well recognized and much discussed in current years (Bennet, 2006 and Kiggins, J., Cambourne, B., & Ferry, B., 2005). The interest provided to graduate competence and employability skills has led to the introduction of a range of explicit measures to ensure that graduates transition into professional life is sustained by a range of underpinning initiatives embedded in the university's value laden institutional practices.

Various sectors, especially those coming from businesses and industries, involved in the educational programs cite that education has high quality but just theoretically – lacks the conversion of the theories into practice. Practically students cannot adapt themselves to work at the industries. They experience confusion, distress, amazement, etc. when they first arrive at the industries for training. Communication barrier also exists between the industry staff and the university students because the students cannot communicate well. Another significant issue that is commonly discussed are complains from the businesses and industries that the students are not knowledgeable enough. Employers are looking for students who bring with them their daily knowledge (academic, social, and civic) to the real environment (Othman (2011). This shows a lot of misunderstanding and miscommunication. Evidently, there is still a mismatch between the universities' and industries' working styles. The university graduates are not ready to work directly in industries. Hence, there must be a critical appraisal among universities on how it conducts its business which include: guiding principles, decision making, and working relationships among its various stakeholders. Is the university embedded with institutional priorities and practices anchored in their core values that should be acquired by the students and would have them equipped with the needed learning outcomes necessary for the world of work? In order to determine the institution's educational effectiveness manifested in its core priorities and learning outcomes, this study was conducted. Thus, it was the concern of this research to carry out an analysis of the RTU's core values, how they are assimilated by the facukty members as shown in their institutional practices and how they are internalize by the students as reflected in their learning outcomes towards an effective academic/industry partnership. This study hypothesize that: (1) the perceived extent of assimilation of the core values by the faculty members is not associated to the extent of internalization of the core values by the students. (2) The assessed level of satisfaction of the industry on students' learning outcomes is not associated to extent of internalization of the core values by the students.

RTU-VISION, MISSION, CORE VALUES AND INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES:

The vision of Rizal Technological University is "A prominent University recognized for its commitment to innovative programs in addressing society's challenges." This vision statement is significant because it describes the direction the University plans to go, and what it will look like when it gets there. It is a point where the institutionl sees itself to be in the future and it is a kind that envisions itself when the time it has set comes. While a vision is a point, a kind, or a mark, a mission is a work to be done. The mission of the University is to "Prepare students to create their future in a knowledge-driven and culturally diverse society." This mission is a task to be accomplished to arrive at what is envisioned by the University: superior graduates to be absorbed by businesses and industries. A gigantic task but reachable with vision and mission as guiding principles. Our most fundamental core values reflect our identity as a State and Metropolitan University. These values center on: excellence, affordable and accessible education, student-centered, research and scholarship, relations-centered, integrity/accountability, openness to cultural diversity, civic responsibility, and environmental consciousness (RTU, Startegic Direction 2010-2014). These core values statements describe what RTU believes about itself and the people and communities it serves. The mission, vision and core values are important because they prescribe the context, or framework, within which priorities and program actions (outputs) are designed, learning outcomes are selected, and performance is measured. In these institutional core values are reflected the plans and specific goals and objectives of the administrators and faculty force in carrying out their daily task of developing the students into knowledgeable, skillful and globally competitive citizens. As a tertiary educational institution, Rizal Technological University evidently has shown commitment in delivering high quality service to its constituents. With priorities and programs providing the essential tools in achieving its goal of producing competent, learned, and prepared graduates who will be working in a diverse,

multicultural and multinational environment.

UNIVERSITY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING:

Guruz, et.al (2011, cited by Ozidem) said that the Universities' current functions can be classified into four categories: education, basic scientific research, community service, and training of qualified workforce. International organizations like European Union, United Nations and World Bank made their share in this transformation by conducting studies on changes in higher education and related concepts. As an upshot of their efforts "quality assurance principles and standards" started to be applied in higher education, and each nation started to evaluate its own educational system. Thus, the use of business instrument such as the strategic planning finds its niche.   According to Erdogan (2002), strategic planning is a process that starts with identifying the current situation of the organization by taking external factors into consideration, and proceeds with setting and implementing the strategies to take the organization into the future, and finally evaluating the performance. At the core of this planning are the vision, mission beliefs and core values to which the organization is entrusted. The effectiveness of an organization, like an educational institution for that matter, depends on the contents of the vision, mission and core values.

VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES:

The vision, mission, and core value statements define the perceived purpose, priorities, and promises of the institution. Calder (2011) cited that educators rely and depend on the compelling statements of vision, mission and values as the three major pillars by which new programs and service initiatives of the institution are reinforced so as to enhance academic and administrative operations. An institution that has developed and articulated vision, mission and values can support its constituents to have greater confidence in its strategic direction as well as having a clear sense of purpose that is clearly defined by its common values. Values are 'core values' when their influence on what people do supersedes that of most other values in the value system (Pant & Lachman, 1998). Core Value statements are not as often seen or mentioned on the strategic plans of Higher Education Institutions, but they do represent an important "foundation pillar" which helps define how an institution conducts its business-guiding principles, decision making, and working relationships among its various stakeholders. Several values were identified across a number of colleges and universities by Calder (2011). These may include: respect for individual, accountability practices, quality programming, workplace relevance, fiscal transparency, strategic cooperation and alliance, and most especially their commitment to student success. Core values are seen as fundamental assumptions, both identity-related and ambition-based, that support the organizational mission and vision. In a study conducted by Lohuis (2008), she said that core values are based on the institution's strategic policy, while others presume the strategic policy is based on their core values. Calder (2011) discourse on the above statements focused on the relationship between all the vision, mission, and values. He found out in his survey that colleges and institutes had eloquently articulated how their institutional values are linked closely to the achievement of their vision and mission. These institutions spoke about their passions for their work, which addressed their values. While some, simply listed what they taught their values were: Examples are learner focused and integrity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Learning outcomes refer to those education-related consequences of students' tertiary educational experience. An array of student learning outcome taxonomies has been advanced. They range from those specific to a particular outcome domain, such as Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of cognitive outcomes to Chickering's (1969) seven "vectors" of students' psychosocial development. Other more complex and inclusive outcomes may include the following selections. Astin (1976, 1993) recognized that "There is no way to capture the impact of college adequately in one or two simple measures, such as credits and degrees earned or job placement". The framework is based on the type of outcome and the type of data to be gathered. Types of outcomes were categorized into "two broad domains: cognitive (sometimes called intellective) and noncognitive (sometimes called affective)". The dimension is, however, a useful reminder that student outcomes may be behavioral as well as psychological. Ewell (1984) has offered a taxonomy of outcomes more detailed than Astin's. It contains four general categories: knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and relationships with society and particular constituents. The taxonomy developed by Lenning and his colleagues (Lenning, 1977; Lenning, Lee, Micek, & Service, 1977) for the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) is by far the most complex and inclusive. It was designed not as a "student outcomes" taxonomy, but as a "framework that

will accommodate information about the full range of tertiary education outcomes".

Astin's model is a useful tool for identifying and estimating the effects of tertiary education experiences over which administrators or policy makers might exercise some programmatic or policy control to enhance educational effectiveness. The environment of Astin's model includes four general, institutional-level sources of influence on student outcomes. These are c*urricular influences* (e.g., courses taken, major field), *formal instructional experiences* (e.g., type and quality of instruction, interaction with faculty in class), and *institutional characteristics* (e.g., type and control, curricular mission, size, selectivity, environment or culture). Institutional characteristics would also include the human, financial, and physical resources an institution has available to it. These resources shape the educational environment and students responses to it in both obvious and subtle ways. These environmental variables comprise most of the programmatic and policy levers available to campus administrators and policy makers to shape students tertiary education experiences and, thereby, the learning outcomes of higher education. Learning outcomes in Astin's model are, quite simply, the "products" of students' higher education; the outputs of what the institution envisions for the students which then be reflected in the workplace as signs of an effective educational program.

Sources mentioned in this subject matter were cited by Terenzini (1997).

CORE VALUES, INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES, AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Studies show that core values are part of contextual activities or goals, such as the organizational strategy or vision, to get employees to understand their significance and usefulness. Core values have to be translated into concrete behavioral rules of conduct, so the employees understand what the relationship core values amount to in their everyday activities. It is also focused on the institution-student relation as to the role of core values. Values, as defined, shape much of the work processes and as such influence how an institution and its various units move forward in positive ways. It should be noted that a few institution did post statements of their "guiding principles" closely aligned to value sets such as: the student is first or conduct business in a suitable manner to everybody. He emphasized that outcome oriented institutional statements (vision, mission, and core values) from institutions talked about developing "good citizens" in their graduates, while others look at their graduates as being "career ready" and "educationally prepared for world of work." (Calder, 2011) He also pointed out that such statements possessed by institution resulted in "empowered communities through knowledge and skills", while others associate these to general terms like "improved student success" or "learning outcomes acquired" by students. Also in her study, Lohuis (2008) said that core values are connected to employees' behavior and co-operation. So in general, the core values were initially regarded as guidelines for employee behavior. When employees understand what the core value means and also underline them, the core values have to pop up regularly in their communicative interaction and other organizational activities (Grof, 2001). In other words, core values are considered ineffective when employees do not understand what they mean in their day to day activities and how they can change their daily decisions. All these previous examples speak of the learning outcome in the academic level of education which is then transported in the industry. And Davis, et.al (2007) in their study found out that students of universities which placed a stronger emphasis on ethical values on institutional statements had stronger ethical values compared to students who placed weak ethical values in their institutional statements. Clearly, these are relevant issues that must be responded regarding the role of the core values in the academe.

UNIVERSITY, INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT AND STUDENTS' LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Universities are no longer considered an icon placed in ivory towers, but rather they are regarded as centers of national and international labors. In the universities, everybody is working on many policies that are believed to be needs of national and international community. However, the big pressure is how well does a university rank. History tells universities' function before were just to educate people, but now the pressure the universities are facing is to prepare their graduate students to work. The successful engagement of industry was a factor cited by Lawson (2011) to have an impact on the professional learning of the students. This is manifested by, for instance, using the existing networks of academic staff to develop partnerships and developing strong links between the university and the community. Involving the industry either by collaboration or through industry-led initiatives are beneficial to the delivery of service (learning) of the university. Passionate teachers who dedicate time to improve student learning outcomes and maximize opportunities for contextualized learning and industry engagement are important for learning to be effective. He further stressed that effective learning occurs when students

work directly with clients. Thus, the need to expose students to professional environment and industry practices to attain an effective transition from education to employment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:
RESEARCH DESIGN:

The research design employed in this study was the descriptive causal–comparative wherein the alleged cause is not manipulated as described by Gay and Airasian (2000). The basic effect of the independent to the dependent variables is determined: the relevance of core values, industry participation to learning outcomes.

PARTICIPANTS:

The samples of the study, 330 graduating students, were chosen randomly from the following colleges: CAS, CBET, and CEIT. For the faculty a total of 196 respondents out of 398 were also selected randomly from the same colleges. All respondents came from Boni Campus, City of Mandaluyong. The CON was excluded in the study because practicum evaluation was done by RTU clinical instructors and not by professionals outside.

INSTRUMENTS:

The data collection instruments, 10 items each on a 4-point Likert Scale, consisted of three types. The two types were researchers' constructed questionnaires that measured the extent of assimilation of the RTU core values as manifested in the institutional practices of the faculty and the extent of internalization of the students of the RTU core values as seen in their learning outcomes. The third type was the standardized evaluation instrument on the student trainee which measured the level of satisfaction of the industry, named also as the cooperating agency, on the learning outcomes obtained by the student in the university. The scale of statistical values and verbal interpretation shown in the table was adopted for the measurments of the three variables mentioned.

Weighted Average	Value	Verbal Interpretation
3.5 - 4.00	4	Very Great Extent/ Very Satisfactory
2.5 - 3.49	3	Great Extent' satisfactory
1.50 - 2.49	2	Limited Extent/ Unsatisfactory
1.0 - 1.49	1	Very Limited Extent/ Very Unsatisfactory

DATA COLLECTION:

Different methods of obtaining data were utilized by the researchers. Initially, necessary permissions were requested from the various departments of the University to do the survey on the faculty members and graduating students for the school year 2011-2012. At the same time, records form the office of the cooperative education were retrieve to determine the evaluation of the industry on the performance of the students while they were on their training. These data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted.

DATA ANALYSIS:

In the analysis of the data gathered, the following statistical tools, which were taken from the book of McClave, J. and Sinsich, T. (2006), were used: Frequency and Percentage were the statistical tools used to determine the distribution of respondents according course. Weighted Mean was used in problems 1, 2, and 3. To obtain this, the number of responses for each category was multiplied by the weight (1 to 4), the products of which were added and divided by the number of responses. Simple Linear Regression was utilized from the point-of-view of prediction. For predictive purpose, the expected relation of RTU core valus to learning outcomes and inustry enagement to learning outcomes were values obtained by using the line close to the values that were actually observed.

RESULTS:

Results of the study presented in tabular for easy interpretation and comprehension of the data.

Table 1: RTU Core Values Manifested in Faculty Members' Institutional Practices

Institutional Practices	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Support the University in its commitment of providing high quality-service in all aspects of its academic programs, learning outcomes and student support services.	3.34	GE
2. Uphold the University's commitment of making higher education accessible to qualified and worthy students.	3.37	GE
3. Share with the RTU's advocacy of prioritizing students' needs in their academic and service planning.	3.38	GE
4. Work for the institution's realization of its goals on engaging actively in research activities and scholarship programs.	3.32	GE
5. Maintain the University's core values of open communication, respect, collegiality and acceptance of individual differences.	3.31	GE
6. Show strong commitment in strengthening linkages with local and international business, industry, and education sectors.	3.29	GE
7. Operate with the highest standards of integrity, honesty, fairness and personal responsibility in order to sustain a community of trust and harmonious relationship.	3.29	GE
8. Strengthen the institution's outreach program through involvement in varied extension services to the community.	3.37	GE
9. Implement best practices in facilitating students' development and ensuring the completion of their respective courses.	3.36	GE
10. Seek creative and effective ways of maintaining students' desire for education throughout their professional lives.	3.31	GE
Overall Weighted Mean	3.34	GE

Extent of Assimilation of the RTU Core Values. When surveyed, the faculty members responded positively by saying that they are committed to a great extent in practicing the RTU Core Values which include: excellence, affordable and accessible education, student-centered, research and scholarship, relations-centered, integrity/accountability, openness to cultural diversity, civic responsibility, and environmental consciousness.

Table 2: RTU Core Values as Manifested in Students' Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and language skills in various means.	3.13	GE
2. Analyze problems, process information, formulate solutions and draw conclusions using critical and creative thinking.	3.07	GE
3. Demonstrate solidarity and leadership skills in achieving common goals.	3.11	GE
4. Organize and manage activities conscientiously and efficiently.	3.10	GE
5. Recognize and appreciate varied human experiences in the environment.	3.12	GE
6. Work effectively with others as members of a team, group and organization in local, national and global communities.	3.17	GE

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7. Demonstrate interpersonal skills and maturity, identity development, self-concept, self-esteem and personal judgment.	3.14	GE
8. Develop civic mindedness with strong emphasis on community membership, participation, and responsibility.	3.12	GE
9. .Identify the knowledge and skills specific to my choice of career and occupational status.	3.20	GE
10 Respond to social, political, religious, interpersonal, standards of conduct and orientation to life-long learning.	2.90	GE
Overall Weighted Mean	3.11	GE

Extent of Internalization of RTU Core Values. Results of the study that the students had internalize the RTU Core Values to a great extent as manifested in their learning outcomes while in the institution. This is indeed an affirmation to the notion that outcome oriented institutional statements (vision, mission, and core values) from institutions talked about developing learned graduates who are career ready and educationally prepared for world of work.

Table 3: Industry Assessment on Students' Learning Outcomes

| Characteristics	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Job Knowledge – The extent how he knows and understands the details and nature of his job and related activities.	3.28	VS
2. Quality of Work – The extent of accuracy, completeness, orderliness, and neatness of the job performed.	3.30	VS
3. Quantity of Work – The amount of acceptable work accomplished and the ability to complete work within the time schedule.	3.22	VS
4. Initiative and Judgment – Does things without being told and makes sound decision whenever necessary.	3.28	VS
5. Attitude Towards Supervision – Accepts suggestions and criticisms maturity.	3.30	VS
6. Relationship with Others – Gets along well with superiors and other employees.	3.23	VS
7. Attendance and Punctuality – Comes regularly and observes official working hours.	3.17	VS
8. Personality – Trainees effect on others as a result of the totality of personal and social traits such as conduct, appearance, human relations, etc.	3.30	VS
9. Industry – Energetic and hardworking gives concentrations and exerts effort in the performance of the job.	3.30	VS
10. Company Rules & Safety Practices – Observes company rules, regulations, and practices safety measures.	3.30	VS
Overall Weighted Mean	3.27	VS

Level of Satisfaction of the Industry on Students' Learning Outcomes. Results of the study show a very satisfactory rating for the graduating students of the institution because of their perceived competency while in practice in industry. Students were perceived to be knowledgeable, work with quality and on time, make sound decisions, have good attitudes towards supervision and others, imbibe good social relation, follow company rules, and work hard in performing the tasks assigned. These identified learning outcomes are what industries expect to obtain from graduates so as to attain excellence in their role towards nation-building.

Association Between Faculty Members Institutional Practices and Students' Learning Outcomes. Faculty members' institutional practices have low correlation to students' learning outcomes with r = 0.0943. This means that the academic staff institutional practices are slightly affected by the students' learning outcomes. However, this low correlation does not indicate lack of association between variables. It only means that the association is non-linear.
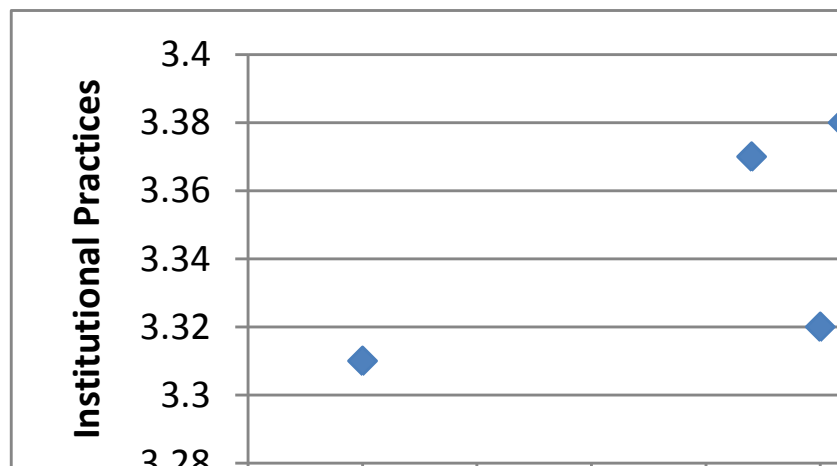
Figure 1: Core Values Manifested in Institutional Practices and Learning Outcomes

Association Between Students' Learning Outcomes and Level of Satisfaction of the Industry. It is shown that the students' learning outcomes have low correlation to the level of satisfaction of the industry with r= 0.288. This indicates that the students' learning outcomes is slightly related by the perceived level of satisfaction of the industry on the competencies of the graduating students.
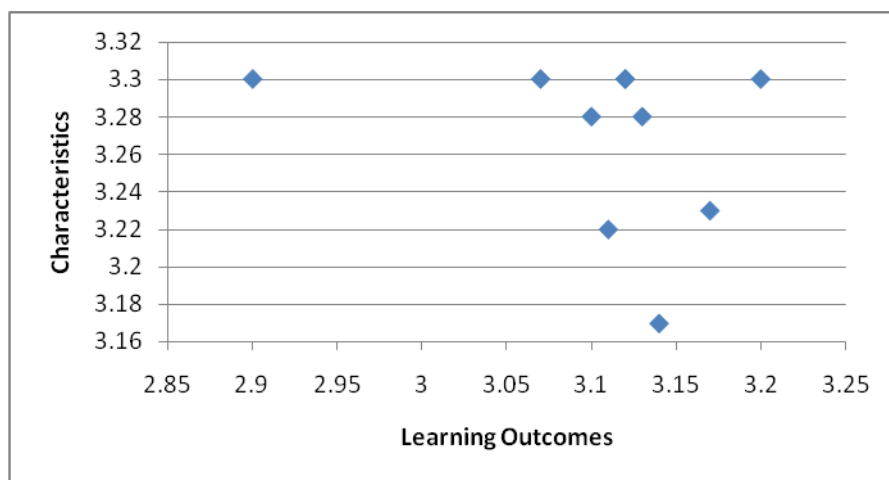
Figure 2: Industry Engagement and Learning Outcomes

DISCUSSION:

The faculty members perceived to share with RTU's advocacy of prioritizing students' needs in their academic and service planning. This entails that they understand what the relationship of core values amount to in their everyday activities. Such values normally appear in their communicative interaction and other organizational activities wherein the recepients are the students (Grof, 2001). The idea suggests that the university is successful in providing real life experiences that are not available in traditional learning environment. According to Calder (2011), values can be associated to general terms like "improved student success". Evidently, RTU students possessed the necessary skills and competencies required that of the industry. This is contrary to the findings of the study done by Othman (2011) wherein he showed students' inability to work while in industry. According to him students were not ready yet to work directly in industries. When they came to the industry for training, the industries had to teach them from the beginning. Lawson (2011), however, pointed out that successful engagement of Industry can be considered to be a factor that would have an impact on the learning outcomes of the students. Involving the industry either by collaboration or through industry-led initiatives are beneficial to the delivery of services (learning) of the university. Thus, in the case of this study, students were given very satisfactory rating by the industry counterparts because they believed that students have learned and gained more knowledge during their practicum in their businesses and industries.

The following suggestions can be made on the basis of the findings of this study:

- Colleges may review their core values and these may be instilled to their faculty members with the aim that these may be reflected in their institutional practices.

- There is still room to enhance the acquired learning outcomes of the students. A value-driven institution may regularly visit its institutional statements, which would serve as marker for students to work towards excellence.
- In order to produce quality manpower to work at industries it is necessary for the institution to identify the standards that the industry look forward too. These standards would serve as benchmark in improving the delivery of services (learning) by the institution.
- The faculty members may continuously uphold its commitment to the university's institutional priorities to fortify the implementation and communication of the core values to the students so as to sustain the institution's educational mandate – quality education or simply excellent learning outcomes among its learners.
- The University may review and revisit its quality assurance principles and standards anchored on the institutional statements (Vision, Mission, and Core Values). They may also engage the participation of the industry in the development, delivery and evaluation of curriculum to ensure future employability of skilled and competent graduates.

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