

MANAGEMENT IN THE GREEK SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract – *This article aims to outline the relationship between the Ministry of Education and the institutions of higher education in Greece. The co-ordination of this relationship is an issue vital for both the academic institutions - which require a degree of administrative independence to do their work on behalf of society; and for the State - which wishes to assure itself that the institutions of higher education are serving adequately the needs of society. The article concludes by arguing that the Ministry of Education exercises its control in the higher education sector through laws and regulations and intervenes in the day-to-day administrative work of the academic institutions. The institutions in higher education are entirely subordinate to the State and have a limited voice in the decisions affecting their future development. Therefore, ministerial supervision may be considered as a case of 'bureaucratic overcentralisation' rather than as 'guidance' of the State.*

Introduction

In this study we focus on the organisation and management practice of Greek academic institutions and their relationship with the State, aspects of higher education which are becoming increasingly significant in many democratic countries. The co-ordination of the relationship between the State and institutes of higher education (IHE) is as old as the institutions themselves and is an issue vital for both. In the first place, institutions require a degree of independence to do their work justly and properly, on behalf of society; and in the second place the State wants to be assured that the IHE are adequately serving the needs of society, providing an efficient and comprehensive system.

The problem of integrating and co-ordinating institutions of university learning into a coherent system of higher education occurs in every country because in today's world the IHE perform an indispensable public service. The provision of such a service is increasingly expensive, however, and is made so by the number of students and faculties involved and by the cost of expensive facilities such as library resources and laboratory equipment. In some countries costs are mainly carried by the private sector, while in Greece, almost all funds are provided by the State, and that of course implies that the relationship between higher education and the state is critically important.

The current scene of higher education in Greece

Higher education is offered at a variety of educational institutions, which can be divided into two main sectors: University-level education and the non-University level education. These institutions are financed and supervised by the State and are organised in line with specific laws which deal with their operations.

University-level education

Historical development

Greece has a long tradition in the fields of philosophical and scientific thinking and education, initiated by the famous philosophical schools of the classical period such as the Academy of Plato and the Lyceum of Aristotle. It is therefore not surprising that soon after the constitution of the new free Greek State, the first university institution, the University of Athens, was founded (in 1837). The university was established according to the German pattern (Dimaras, 1978) and included four faculties: theology, law, medicine and philosophy.

The Greek system of higher education developed rather slowly in the beginning (Saitis, 1988). Two other institutions, the National Technical University and the School of Fine Arts, were founded in Athens almost simultaneously with the University of Athens; the former was only granted university status in 1914, and the latter in 1930.

In 1920 two new institutions of higher education were added to the list of full universities. These were: (a) the Athens School of Economics and Business Sciences (now the Athens University of Economics and Business) and (b) the Agricultural College of Athens (now the Agricultural University of Athens). By 1920 Greece had four IHE - all of them with their seats in Athens. This leads to the conclusion that the elementary strategy relative to the full development of the country as a whole was ignored.

The first Greek university outside the capital, the University of Thessaloniki, was founded in Northern Greece in 1925. Unlike the university of Athens, the new university placed an emphasis on certain distinct features of higher learning. For specialisation purposes, each faculty was subdivided into several departments, many of which were totally new to the Greek academic community (Margaritis, 1976).

Eleven years later another IHE, the Panteios School of Political Sciences, (now the Panteios University of Social and Political Sciences) was established, again in Athens. By 1958, two Schools of industrial studies in Piraeus (now

University of Piraeus) and Thessaloniki (now Macedonian University of Economics and Social Sciences) had received charters.¹ These institutions are an outgrowth of the Free Schools of Industrial Studies which were founded in 1938 and 1948 respectively.

Thus, in the 1950s, the Greek system of university education includes three universities and six university-level schools, all of which were located in urban centres either in the capital, in Piraeus, or in Thessaloniki. This fact has led many Greek peasants, who place a high value on educating their children, to see these cities as the best place to live in, so that the exodus of the population from the rural areas to the above cities, between 1950 and 1960, can be partially ascribed to the centralisation of the universities as well as other government services in the three big cities.

In the 1960s the second phase in the development of Greek higher education started. In fact, the social pressure for greater access to higher education, the need for further economic and cultural development (especially in outlying areas) and the demand to modernise the structure and organisation of the Greek universities led to a sequence of decisions. The main developments during this phase, which is still in progress, are the creation of a series of new universities in the regions and attempts at further modernisation of the structure and organisation of the Greek universities. From 1964 to 1992, ten new universities – the University of Patras (1964), the University of Ioannina (1970), the University of Thrace (1973), the University of Crete (1973), the Technical University of Crete (1977), the University of the Aegean (1984), the Ionian University (1984), the University of Thessaly (1984), the Charokopeio University (1990) and the Open University (1992) in Patras – were established, bringing the number of higher education institutions in Greece to a total of nineteen (see Table 1).

From the above description it is clear that in the last thirty years higher education in Greece has received special attention and assistance by the State. This is indicated by the founding of new universities in the regions as well as by a number of legislative measures (e.g. Law 815/1978, Law 1268/1982, Law 2083/1992) aiming to match the Greek higher education system more closely to the ever-growing scientific technological and social demands of the country. Associated with this growth are a number of problems that the Greek government has to face. Among the most important of these are (a) the concentration of students in Athens, Piraeus and Thessaloniki, which between them absorb 76.9% of all the student population in the higher education sector (see Table 1); (b) the problem of student emigration;² and (c) the problem of the highly centralised, highly bureaucratised politico-administrative system within which education operates (OECD, 1997: 191).

TABLE I: Teaching Staff and Student Population in Greek Universities

Institution /Faculty-Department	Academic Year 1997-1998		
	Students*	All Teaching Staff**	Staff /Student Ratio
1. UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS			
Faculty of Theology	1708	41	1 /41.6
Faculty of Law, Economic and Political Sciences	6041	189	1 /32.0
Faculty of Arts	7239	231	1 /31.3
Faculty of Sciences	4051	407	1 /10.0
Faculty of Health Science	3578	836	1 /4.2
Independent Departments			
Dept of Sciences Physical Education and Sports	1885	82	1 /23.0
Dept of Primary Education	1431	33	1 /43.3
Dept of Pre-school Education	1861	17	1 /109.4
Dept of Communication and Mass Media	499	15	1 /33.2
Dept of Music Studies	164	10	1 /16.4
Dept of Theatre Studies	288	11	1 /26.1
Dept of Philosophy and History of Science	147	14	1 /10.5
2. NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS			
Dept of Civil Engineering	1024	65	1 /15.7
Dept of Electrical and Computer Engineering	1150	74	1 /15.5
Dept of Architecture	693	104	1 /6.6
Dept of Chemical Engineering	829	76	1 /10.9
Dept of Mechanical and Mineral Engineering	324	34	1 /9.5
Dept of Mechanical Engineering	895	42	1 /21.3
Dept of Rural and Surveying Engineering	618	35	1 /17.6
Dept of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering	279	16	1 /17.4
General Department	-	116	-
3. ARISTOTELE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI			
Faculty of Theology	1882	52	1 /36.2
Faculty of Law and Economic	4309	114	1 /37.8

Faculty of Arts	5037	225	1/22.3
Faculty of Sciences	4282	346	1/12.3
Faculty of Health Sciences	3292	602	1/5.4
Faculty of Geotechnical Sciences	2438	254	1/9.5
Faculty of Engineering	5036	303	1/16.6
Faculty of Fine Arts	788	35	1/22.5
Faculty of Pedagogical Studies	1020	56	1/18.2
Independent Departments			
Dept of Science of Physical Education and Sports	1712	87	1/19.6
Dept of Journalism and Mass Media Studies	180	5	1/36.0
Branch of Primary and Pre-school Education (in Florina)	315	14	1/22.5
4. ATHENS UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS			
Dept of Economics	854	23	1/37.1
Dept of Business Administration	1261	23	1/54.8
Dept of Statistics	275	14	1/19.6
Dept of International and European Economic Studies	427	15	1/28.4
Dept of Management Science and Marketing	351	11	1/31.9
Dept of Applied Informatics	427	21	1/20.3
5. AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS			
Dept of Agriculture	498	31	1/16.0
Dept of Animal Production	185	17	1/10.8
Dept of Agricultural Biology and Biotechnology	170	20	1/8.5
Dept of Agricultural Economics	237	16	1/14.8
Dept of Agricultural Industries	259	24	1/10.7
Dept of Land Reclamation and Agriculture Engineering	204	13	1/15.6
General Department	-	23	-
6. SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS			
Dept of Pictorial Arts	770	44	1/17.5
7. PANTEIO UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES			
Dept of Political Sciences and History	946	20	1/47.3
Dept of International and European Relations	1893	25	1/75.7
Dept of Communication and Mass Media Studies	409	12	1/34.0

Dept of Public Administration	1995	29	1 /68.7
Dept of Economic and Regional Development	1641	24	1 /68.3
Dept of Sociology	1848	22	1 /84.0
Dept of Social Policy and Social Anthropology	576	14	1 /41.1
Dept of Psychology	330	11	1 /30.0
General Department of Law	-	23	-
8. UNIVERSITY OF PIRAEUS			
Dept of Economics	1196	18	1 /66.4
Dept of Business Administration	1031	28	1 /36.8
Dept of Statistics and Insurance Science	780	11	1 /70.9
Dept of Banking and Financial Management	419	8	1 /52.3
Dept of Industrial Management	340	9	1 /37.7
Dept of Maritime Studies	560	15	1 /37.3
Dept of Informatics	323	12	1 /26.9
9. MACEDONIA UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES			
Dept of Economics	749	23	1 /32.5
Dept of Business Administration	877	17	1 /51.5
Dept of International and European Economics and Social Sciences	368	10	1 /36.8
Dept of Accounting and Finance	402	9	1 /44.6
Dept of Applied Informatics	364	19	1 /19.1
Dept of Educational and Social Politics	50	-	-
10. UNIVERSITY OF PATRAS			
Faculty of Science	2276	202	1 /11.2
Faculty of Health Science	871	130	1 /6.7
Faculty of Engineering	3025	156	1 /19.3
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	736	45	1 /16.3
Independent Departments			
Dept of Economics (in Agrinio)	417	10	1 /41.7
11. UNIVERSITY OF IOANNINA			
Faculty of Arts	2211	98	1 /22.5
Faculty of Science	1602	144	1 /11.1
Faculty of Education	851	26	1 /32.7
Independent Departments			
Dept of Headicine	665	111	1 /5.9
12. DEMOCRITOS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE			

Faculty of Engineering	1239	87	1 /14.2
Independent Departments			
Dept of Law	1749	45	1 /38.8
Dept of Medicine	419	63	1 /6.6
Dept of Science of Physical Education and Sports	726	18	1 /40.3
Dept of Primary Education	245	18	1 /13.6
Dept of Nursery Education	270	9	1 /30.0
Dept of History and Ethnology	256	15	1 /17.0
Dept of Greek Literature	187	2	1 /93.5
Dept of Social Administration	113	-	-
13. UNIVERSITY OF CRETE			
Faculty of Arts	876	58	1 /15.1
Faculty of Science	1427	113	1 /12.6
Faculty of Health Science	509	92	1 /5.5
Faculty of Social Sciences	657	24	1 /27.3
Faculty of Education	664	35	1 /18.9
14. TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF CRETE			
Dept of Electronic and Computer Engineering	169	12	1 /14.1
Dept of Production and Management Engineering	272	11	1 /24.7
Dept of Mineral Resources Engineering	142	12	1 /11.8
General Department	-	13	-
15. UNIVERSITY OF AEGEAN			
Faculty of Social Studies	447	30	1 /14.9
Faculty of Administrative Studies	411	12	1 /34.2
Faculty of Science	289	11	1 /26.2
Faculty of Greek and Mediterranean Studies	604	17	1 /35.5
16. IONIAN UNIVERSITY			
Dept of Foreign Languages Translation and Interpreting	266	11	1 /24.1
Dept of Music Studies	145	3	1 /48.3
Dept of History	228	13	1 /17.5
Dept of Archive and Library Sciences	137	5	1 /27.4
17. UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY			
Faculty of Humanities	300	12	1 /25.0
Faculty of Technological Sciences	580	38	1 /15.2
Faculty of Health Science	323	17	1 /19.0

Independent Departments			
Dept of Science Physical Education and Sports	122	3	1 /40.6
18. CHAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY OF HOME ECONOMICS			
Dept of Home Economics	125	4	1 /31.2
Dept of Dietics	125	5	1 /25.0
Total	114,778	7,189	1 /15.6

Notes: * "inactive" students are not included (viz. student that have remained at University much longer than the minimum period of time to complete their studies).

** It includes special teaching staff (E.E.P.).

Source: MNERA, Athens, 1997.

Academic structure

The institutions of university education are composed of faculties. The faculties are divided into departments which constitute the basic academic unit. The syllabus of a department leads to a uniform degree. Responsibility for formulating teaching and research policy in connection with the subject areas for which degrees are awarded now lies with the departments. The sections are responsible for implementing the basic policy decisions taken by their respective departments. Each department is run by a general council which formulates teaching research policy and exercises control over all of the department's affairs.

The teaching and research staff consists of full professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers. Full professors and associate professors have tenure.

Administrative structure

The organisation, structure and management system of Greek universities are similar. According to Law No 1268 /1982, the highest governing body is the Senate. It has principal authority in academic and financial matters and consists of the Rector, the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans of the Faculties and representatives of the teaching and special administrative staff as well as of the students of the institution. The Rectorial Council, responsible for the implementation of relevant decisions of the Senate, consists of the Rector, two Vice Rectors, one representative of the students and one representative of the administrative staff as an adviser.

At the level of Faculty and Department, there are the following bodies: the General Assembly of Faculty, the Deanship, the General Assembly of the Department, and the Board of the Department. These bodies consist of members

of teaching staff, special administrative staff and students of the Faculty or Department. The Dean of Faculty is elected by the members of Faculty for a three-year term. The Head of the Department and the Director of the Sector are elected by the members of department and sector, respectively. Finally, the Head of the Secretarial office is elected by the Senate, for a three-year term. It should be noted that all the above officers and members of university bodies are appointed by the Minister of Education on the nomination of the Senate.

In conclusion we can say that firstly, the university officers of each level have limited powers – compared to those of some other public organisations – in the sense that the power lies with a decision-making body comprising either the whole staff of the unit or at least representatives of each group. Secondly, the collective bodies of Greek universities do not include members outside the university and so one might say that policy and power lies in the hands of academics and students. Finally, the existing structure of university bodies lead to a ‘serious’ fragmentation of university work. Particularly, the university organs constitute a ‘chain’ which place responsibility for final decisions in the hands of upper level committees, Senate or Rectorial Council. There is no doubt about the democratisation of the decision-making process within the field of university government. The problem, however, is the efficiency of university management because as we shall see below, the administrative apparatuses outside the academic sector (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Council of the State, etc.) raise questions about the efficiency of Greek universities.

Non-university level education

The Institutes of Technological Education (TEI) belong, together with the Universities, to the higher level of education. The TEI are self-governed legal entities subject to public law and receive financial support from the State. In other words, as in the case of universities, there is no private provision of TEIs in Greece.

Historical development

Until 1970, most higher technical schools were in private hands. The exceptions were three State Higher Schools for sub-engineers in Athens and Thessaloniki. The demands for higher technical and vocational education were chiefly met by various private schools and these three state schools. The ever increasing number of young people in higher education and the growing demands of the labour market for highly trained personnel in the 1960s made it unavoidable for the State to take the necessary steps towards organising the non-university higher technical

education on a realistic and systematic basis. The outcome was the law for higher technical education of 1970, which established the legal frame for a modern system of technical training.

Act 652 /1970 provided for the creation of State-operated Centres of Higher Technical Education (KATEE in Greek) with many branches of specialisation, which gradually became the main institutions for non-university tertiary technical training. The objective of these Centres is 'to provide its students with the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge, so that they may become higher level technical specialists, able to assist in the development of the national economy'. In 1983 Act No 1404 reorganised the Institutions of Higher Technological Education. By this Act the hitherto controversial KATEEs were abolished and replaced by Technological Educational Institutions, known as TEI. Greece currently has 14 TEIs (see Table 2).

Despite the rapid development of regional TEIs in the last two decades, the student population of these institutions is relatively small and their contribution to technological higher education rather limited in this respect. In the academic year 1996-97 there were approximately 70,384 students at the TEIs; 50% of them were concentrated in the Athens/Piraeus and Thessaloniki urban centres, where only three TEIs are located. The remaining 50% are divided among the other eleven TEIs (see Table 2).

Academic and administrative structure

The TEIs are distinguished from universities, in term of their purpose, function, staff qualification and hierarchy, the length of programmes, and the level of studies they offer. However, their organisation and operation is similar to those of the universities. Each TEI comprises at least two faculties and each faculty at least two departments. Each department is subdivided into different classes. Each class corresponds to a specific academic and technological level. Freedom of academic teaching is guaranteed within the framework of the curriculum, scientific research and the communication of ideas in the TEI.

The permanent teaching staff are grouped according to three scales: laboratory professors, assistant professors and professors. Within the framework laid down in Educational Act 1404 /1983, the existing administrative structure of TEIs is the following: Assembly of TEI, TEI Council, President and Vice-President. At the level of Faculty and Department, there are the following bodies and officers: General Assembly of Faculty, Director of Faculty, General Assembly of Department, Head of Department. The governing bodies of the TEI are elected by all members of teaching staff, representatives of the administrative staff and the students.

TABLE 2: Teaching Staff and Student Population in Greek T.E.I.s.

Technical Educational Institutions	Academic Year 1996-1997		
	Students*	All Teaching Staff**	Staff/Student Ratio
1. TEI of Athens	16619	1469	1/11.3
2. TEI of Thessaloniki	10240	1001	1/10.2
3. TEI of Patra	5009	438	1/11.4
4. TEI of Larissa	6427	533	1/12.0
5. TEI of Heraklio	4895	678	1/7.2
6. TEI of Kozani	3556	230	1/15.4
7. TEI of Messologi	1721	177	1/9.7
8. TEI of Piraeus	8392	632	1/13.2
9. TEI of Kavala	2627	227	1/11.5
10. TEI of Serres	3089	281	1/11.0
11. TEI of Chalkida	3011	242	1/12.4
12. TEI of Kalamata	1649	104	1/15.8
13. TEI of Hepeiros	1316	229	1/5.7
14. TEI of Lamia	1833	261	1/7.0
Total	70,384	6,502	1/10.8

Notes: * (1) temporary data
 (2) "inactive" students are not included

** It includes nonpermanent teaching staff (62.4 percent).

Source: MNERA, Athens, 1997

However democratic the structure might seem, there are some doubts about the effectiveness of the management within the TEI in the sense that: (a) most of TEI decisions need ministerial approval (see below), and (b) the members of governing bodies (mainly the President, the Vice-President and the Heads of Departments) are not elected according to their administrative ability but according to criteria foreign to their experience and skills.

Central administration: the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (MNERA)

Mission and role

The central education authority in Greece is the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (MNERA). It is the role and mission of MNERA to develop and lead educational policy (Law No. 175/1973), and it is therefore the state which carries the responsibility for ensuring the provision of knowledge and national identity to all children and young people of Greece through schools and universities.

This ministry is a 'productive' public agent because education is, without any doubt, the most important and efficient enterprise on which the substructure of a nation is based. It increases the flow of skills and assists people to acquire new technologies. Education, therefore, helps to strengthen the economy, for it is an investment in human power (Kokkotas, 1978; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985; Cohn, 1979). However, quantity of education by itself is not enough. It must be geared to the needs of the people and prepare them for life and change.

The function of the Ministry is defined by law as the promotion and dissemination of education and religion. In the field of education the Ministry is responsible for the integrated planning and coordination for the development of improvement of educational services at different levels and in different areas. It also provides guidance and advice to regional education authorities, and operates a number of educational establishments, such as the Institutions of Higher Education. Finally, it assumes various responsibilities relating to the administration and management of these establishments.

Organisation structure and staffing

The MNERA is the highest administrative unit of education and it is directly under the jurisdiction of government. Its task is to execute the policy of the government, report to government on educational developments and work at all

levels of education. Supreme responsibility for the function performed by the Ministry falls upon the Minister who is usually of Cabinet rank. He or she is appointed by the President of the Republic upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister and is therefore responsible to Parliament, to Government and to public opinion for the decisions of the civil service in the Ministry. The undersecretary Ministry and the Secretary-General are politically appointed and are the Minister's chief assistants. The Minister and the chief assistants are assisted by a small civil service staff organised in what is known as the Private Offices.

The Minister, Undersecretary and Secretary General are assisted in their work by the Heads of General Divisions, each of whom is concerned with certain aspects of the Ministry's work. Following Presidential Decree No, 147 /1976, the General divisions of the Ministry are divided up into divisions and each division into departments, each of which deals with a clearly defined block of work and is usually under the charge of the head of division. There are also 'independent' divisions and departments, such as the Inspectorate, the Library division, and so on. These perform duties which, in one way or another, concern all the other departments. Close contacts are maintained between the departments on all matters of common concern and this principle is followed throughout the central administration of the MNERA.

Today the Central Service of the MNERA consists of 6 General Divisions, 35 divisions and about 115 Departments; in 1995 it had a total staff of about 947. An analytic breakdown of the composition of staff in the Central Service of the MNERA shows that:

- 245 are graduates of university-level institutions.
- 52 are graduates of technological education institutions.
- 255 are graduates of secondary schools.
- 46 are graduates of primary schools.
- 350 are teachers who have been detached from their schools to undertake various educational and occasionally administrative task in the MNERA.

From the above description it is evident that:

(a) The administrative structure of the MNERA is horizontal. All Divisions are under the Secretary-General, while further up the structure, and depending on their role and function, they fall under the authority of the respective Deputy Ministers and/or the Minister himself. The Minister nevertheless remains responsible for all activities. This type of organisation leads to the over-concentration of important administrative responsibilities under the jurisdiction of the Secretary-General and the Ministers – in spite of considerable delegation of power to the heads of divisions and departments.

(b) While the nature of the composition of the staff of the central services of MNERA may be sufficient for the day-to-day executive process, it does not induce one to believe that employees can contribute very much to the promotion of educational development strategies. This is because in the first place, they spend nearly all their time in fulfilling executive functions (e.g. in considering appointments and the promotion of teaching and administrative staff). The administrative structure of the MNERA is horizontal. All Divisions are under the Secretary-General, while further up the structure, and depending on their role and function, they fall under the authority of the respective Deputy Ministers and/or the Minister himself. The Minister nevertheless remains responsible for all activities. This type of staff, and secondly, the employees are not qualified to carry out research on educational matters, or to make suggestions for the formulation of educational policies.

(c) There is not a rational distribution of employees among the divisions and departments, with some having one or two, others two or three, and some more than five employees.

Today, it is increasingly being recognised that there is a need to reorganise the Central Service of the MNERA so that greater efficiency and delegation of work can be achieved (Exoysia, 1996).

However, this awareness has not led to reform, as public administration has remained impervious to changes for the past decades, despite the severe criticism that has been addressed in its direction (Makrydimitris, 1996). Restoration plans have had to be shelved and it is doubtful whether they will find their way to Parliament. Consequently, more of the aims of reorganisation can be attained since the Greek Government does not seem to try hard enough (Kathimerini, 1996).

Relationship between the MNERA and the IHE

Statement of the administrative sectors

Our concern in this study lies in the analysis of the administrative activities connected with the MNERA and the IHE. These activities belong to the following sectors:

- Organisation and established of the IHE.
- Personnel (Appointed according to qualifications).
- Financial Budgeting and Expenditure.
- Students (Admission to the IHE and scholarships).

- Arrangements for international and national conferences or meeting of teaching staff.

What a country needs is a contemporary administrative system in order to correspond with the current public needs. Therefore, good management can act as an instrument that helps formulate policy under political direction, establish how to achieve aims, get the parts working together, and see how well the operation is doing and identify any necessary modification (Garrett, 1980).

How the administrative work is carried out

Example from the financial sector: budgeting in the IHE

Almost all the activities of an IHE involve the expenditure of money. The financial sector, therefore, can be considered as the most important area of a university's organisation. The main function of this sector is the drawing up and the approval of a Budget. In the broadest sense the 'Budget' itemises the organisation's sources of income and describes how the income will be spent over a specific period of time. The period covered by a budget is usually a year, referred to as a financial or fiscal year.

Like other public units of public administration, the Greek Institutions of Higher Education are, in budgeting terms, firmly tied to a comprehensive system of government resource allocation and expenditure control. This means academic institutions are bound by the Central Government budget. The procedure for preparation and approving the IHE budgets follows the stages given below:

Stage A: Activities within the IHE

- Decisions of Faculties about expenditure for the next financial year;
- Sending budget documents to the Financial Division of University or TEI administration for the formation of a budget;
- Preparation of the Institution's budget by the appropriate Division and then sent to Senate or TEI's Council for approval;
- Senate's or TEI's Council approval obtained it is sent for typing and then to MNERA.

Stage B: MNERA's activities

- Registration of the budget by the MNERA;
- Referral to the appropriate section of the financial management of MNERA;
- Estimation and classification of expenditure checked;

- Ministerial decision drawn up and signed by the Minister;
- Forwarded to the Ministry of Finance.

Stage C: Activities in the Ministry of Finance

- Receipt of the budget by the appropriate Division and Section;
- Ministerial decision about the approval or otherwise of the budget drawn up;
- Final decision made and Minister's signature obtained;
- Notification of decision to the MNERA and to the IHE.

Stage D: Activities in the IHE

Once the size of the Ministry of Finance's grant is known the IHE can put into operation its budget according to their instruction. At first glance, the above-mentioned procedure may be considered short. The main problem, however, is in the utilisation of particular accounting methods in the exploitation of the public money. For example, a special service of the Ministry of Finance in the MNERA checks and controls all university and TEI spending. Our experience suggests that for the same university matter (e.g. filling of an academic vacancy) the Ministry of Finance checks and controls it at least four times (Saitis, 1985).

While, clearly, the Ministry of Finance is the centre of the government machine and it is its Minister who is responsible for overall financial policy, it is nevertheless important to note that:

- the IHE do not receive their money in equal monthly installments but they may receive the first 15% of the total amount and then the 25% and so on. As a result, IHE do not receive all the money approved by the government;
- transposition of the appropriations from one code number to another code number is forbidden, since it has not been approved by Parliament. In such a case, special procedures have to be taken to secure the Ministry of Finance's approval. Transposition of university, or TEI funds thus requires a new bureaucratic process similar to that for the approval of the Budget.

It is obvious then, that Greek IHE are not free to manage their own money as they wish to do, and the existing budgeting system is overcentralised and inflexible. Centralised financing means more centralised control and indicates the direct intervention of politicians in the various aspects of public administration in contrast to other countries (e.g. Great Britain) where universities are autonomous self-governing corporations (Saitis, 1986: 237-242) which are, in budgetary terms, firmly tied to a comprehensive system of government resource allocation and expenditure control.

Example from the Personnel Sector: request for leave of a member of the teaching staff for educational reasons

Here our example will be the request for leave by a member of the teaching staff of the TEI for educational reasons. According to the law (No 1404 /1983 article 20) a member of the teaching staff must submit his/her application and all necessary documents to the MNERA through the appropriate department and the TEI's Council. More particularly this administrative work requires the following procedure:

Stage A: Activities within the TEI

- Teaching Staff Member's application registered with the appropriate Department;
- Chairman of Department/appropriate clerk/studies all the data and then writes his suggestion for the general Assembly of the Department;
- General Assembly of the Department decides about teacher's application;
- Minutes ratified by the appropriate clerk, and a document drawn up for the central administration of TEI;
- Document goes through the departmental hierarchy for Chairman's signature;
- Document sent to the Central Administration (for the council of TEI);
- General Secretary forwards document to relevant section;
- A suggestion is made regarding the request for teacher's leave, and this is sent to the Council of TEI;
- The Council meets to issue a decision;
- Minutes are ratified, and a clerk draws up a document for the MNERA.
- Chairman's signature is obtained;
- Registrar of TEI sends it to the MNERA.

Stage B: Activities within the MNERA

- Register of the MNERA/clerk.
- Appropriate department.
- Appropriate clerk/checking all documents/drawing up a document-decision about teacher's leave for educational reasons.
- Hierarchy/General Secretary's signature.
- Typing of document/Sending it to the appropriate-TEI.

Stage C: Activities within the TEI

- Register of the TEI/ General Secretary.
- Appropriate clerk notifies the Ministerial approval to appropriate teacher/ Department.

When we consider this procedure in an analytic manner, we note that there are 19 bureaucratic interventions, involving approximately 70 people over a period of four months. The question which arises is, naturally: Is such a procedure necessary? At first sight, the Minister's approval could be considered as a necessity in the sense that the MNERA is responsible for the national education policy and so it has to control and coordinate all the activities of IHE. The implication here is that institutional management is controlled and influenced by the Ministry of Education, while the relations between MNERA and IHE are characterised by day-to-day activities and routine matters.

However, one could imagine a different state of affairs, where the decision is arrived at by the appropriate TEI's Council. In this way the procedure would be shorter, with the TEI's administration taking responsibility for its own activities. An added advantage would be that it is this council which knows the needs of its own institution, and presumably understands them more than those in the top-management positions in the Central administration of the MNERA.

On the basis of what has been said, one could conclude that, from a managerial point of view, some of the Ministerial approvals can be considered as needless work in the sense that the MNERA is a primary, self-existent unit of the State, and as such should engage more in staff tasks (e.g. developing educational policies), and less in day-to-day bureaucratic activities. As things stand, the present methods of administration entail over-staffing at the centre, without providing adequately the services required by the country. The characteristic features of the Greek administrative system could be therefore said to be centralisation, over-staffing, complexity and traditional methods of work. As a result, there is very little difference between the system as it is now, and the way it was in the past (Saitis, 1986: 277-289).

Towards greater efficiency in the system of higher education

From the above analysis we realise that the Greek IHE are not organised or managed in a way which has enabled them to cope with the problems of modern society. We therefore propose a series of changes in the structure of the IHE's administrative system. A programme of reform should include administrative decentralisation, a change in financial regulations, an internal reorganisation of

the IHE, and a restructuring of MNERA. It is to a consideration of these aspects that we now turn.

Administrative decentralisation

Within the field of IHE, the phrase 'administrative decentralisation' means that the decisions about the university problems and affairs should be taken by the Senate or TEI's Councils, or management of the IHE. Actually, according to the Greek Constitution, the IHE are self-governed organisations supervised and financed by the state. It implies that the IHE should have their charters and function as 'self-governing' public institutions while the 'supervision' of MNERA should have been confined to the control of the legality of IHE's acts. In our view, the day-to-day administrative control of MNERA over the IHE's activities is a strong bureaucratic expression rather than constitutional 'supervision' because, as the examples outlined earlier made clear, the MNERA does not scrutinise the legality of IHE's activities but carries them out. Thus, we believe that by administrative decentralisation the IHE can be justified as an efficient provider of public services in ways which the MNERA cannot match. There is the argument that Higher Education Institutions' authorities will know and understand their needs and wants far better than central administration, and can also respond to changes in these far more effectively than could the centre. Moreover, it is efficient because it is democratic and expresses the IHE's opinion, it cuts down routine and loss of time and bureaucratic action, and it overcomes the physical inability of central administration to deal with detailed problems up and down the IHE.

To give, therefore, the Greek IHE real self-administration it is necessary for the parliament to pass a new law which would include:

(a) First, the devolution of power from the MNERA to the IHE. At this point it is very important that the legislator defines exactly the authority of IHE because authority is the basis for accountability. Accountability here means that the IHE's body concerned shall render an account of its action to secure higher authority (viz. MNERA) and that this authority, if dissatisfied, shall take radical steps to put matters right. This suggests that the IHE have to run exactly on the lines laid down by their charter and may not go outside these powers.

(b) Secondly, such a law would provide for an effective control system, as control is one of the basic managerial functions and involves the definition of what people and units are to do, the establishment of criteria against which performance of their activities is to be assessed, and a feedback of information as to what has taken place. In other words, it is useless to try to make management accountable

if responsibilities are not clearly defined, because it is impossible to decide whether tasks have been performed in the way required and, if not, who is responsible. Given that (a) the Greek IHE functions with public money, and (b) the constitutional doctrine on which parliamentary oversight of administration rests on ministerial responsibility, then 'responsibility' in the IHE means not only responsiveness to public opinion but also accountability to the organ of government which confers legitimacy on the decisions and actions of the executive. But it does not mean that the Minister of MNERA must involve himself in day-to-day administration of IHE. The ministerial supervision and responsibility must be confined in the educational policy and control the legitimacy of IHE's activities at the end of the financial or academic year. Thus, a clarification of methods of controlling university activities through, for example, inspectors to scrutiny the budget, recruitment, and so on will be a useful instrument to protect the public from the abuse of IHE authority.

Improvement of financial law

Today the Greek IHE function as departments or divisions of the MNERA. This conclusion comes from the fact that all their activities are carried out through the management of the MNERA. But if we accept that: first every administrative act has its financial implications, and secondly the IHE are self-governed public institutions, then we can say that they must spend their money according to their budgets and the state can check their accounts at the end of the financial or academic year. In this way, universities and TEIs will have the opportunity to perform without the governmental intervention while the MNERA, responsible for the efficiency of IHE, will have the right to scrutinize their activities. This innovation demands a change in the financial law, given that the existing one requires exactly the opposite, i.e. first there is the proposal of IHE, then there is the control of central administration, and finally the procedure for the university or TEI to act.

Internal reorganisation of IHE

The above-mentioned innovations are not enough to increase the efficiency of IHE. In addition, these innovations, are based on some presuppositions. We cannot, for example, decentralise duties and responsibilities to IHE when their Senates and TEI's Councils act under traditional managerial methods, nor can we change the financial law when the university and TEI financial managers lack knowledge and experience in managing the financial affairs of IHE. Given that the Greek IHE remain too traditional in form and function, then it is evident that some internal arrangements in the administrative structure of the IHE's are a necessity.

Reorganisation of MNERA

Decentralisation of administrative power from the MNERA to IHE does not mean only organisational arrangements in the IHE services, but reorganisation of the MNERA, too. More particularly the reform should provide:

- changes in the internal organisational structure of the MNERA and the replacement of traditional work methods;
- the creation of policy planning units and ministerial 'Cabinets' (one for each educational level) of specialist advisers, to facilitate the rational examination of policy options and plans under the direction of the Minister. The members should be appointed by the Minister, after nomination of the authorities to which the members belong and for an adequate period of time;
- the creation of a team of administrative 'watchdogs' who will scrutinize the administrative and financial activities of Higher Education.

Summary

The study of management has mainly been conducted on the basis that, by analysing past experience, it should be possible to determine theories and methods about the way IHE work now, and how they can be made to work better in the future. These ideas should be tested in practice. Although managers often express doubts over the applications of theory to their problems, it must be recognised that good ideas can take their place within the developing body of management principles. In this way, the study and practice of management should serve to promote administrative health, in much the same way as the study of medicine is designed to promote physical health.

In the sphere of Greek reality there are several problems of management in the civil service that need more consideration. Among these are over-centralisation, personnel management, audit, review and control, and so on. Over-centralisation of administrative power in the centre, for example, is the most characteristic phenomenon in the Greek public administration. Students of management, therefore, might usefully analyse such activities and processes, so as to warn ministers and central officials of the difficulties and costs implicit in over-centralised planning.

This study has been concerned with presenting the state of our present knowledge about the common phases of management work devoted to the effort of achieving effective performance of the Greek IHE. But efficiency is not some mechanical goal or an intrinsic end-value. Effective performance means more

than this. It means satisfactory service, responsible performance and efficient management.

The effective functioning of IHE in Greece is an absolute necessity for the country's national survival. This conclusion is warranted on two grounds: first, because the higher education is a fundamental factor for socio-economic-political development of a country, and secondly, because history teaches us that the idea of higher education is Greek and from Greece we must start again in order to make a successful higher educational system.

Notes

1. About the foundation of the Industrial Schools in Piraeus and Thessaloniki, see: Law, No 3876/1958.

2. For example, the number of Students who were studying at foreign universities, was 29,213 in 1994. See: O.E.C.D. (1997: 62).

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