Abstract

The paper is discussing academic entrepreneurship in the context of changes in university management and governance ongoing in European universities. The comparative perspective of the paper is provided by the EU EUEREK research project: “European Universities for Entrepreneurship: Their Role in the Europe of Knowledge” (2004-2007, 6th Framework Programme), comprising seven European countries, and it draws heavily from ideas and research results of Burton Clark, Michael Shattock and Gareth Williams. It is intended to view transformations in university governance and management in the context of the European Commission’s recent emphasis on the vital role of changes in institutional governance in its “modernisation agenda for universities”. It starts (section 2) with a general discussion of the EC’s prioritization of areas of transformation of European universities in which governance structures figure prominently. Then in section 3 it discusses the role of (academic, reputational, and financial) risk-taking at entrepreneurial institutions which is viewed as their core feature, and shows the role of risk management in both public and private institutions. The next section discusses the unavoidable clash of old academic and new managerial values at entrepreneurial universities and the institutional ways to deal with it. Tensions between the university center and base academic units are discussed in section 5 and the context is provided by the traditional academic idea of collegiality. A move away from (but not getting rid of) collegiality in university management at public entrepreneurial universities studied is emphasized. Different governance and management structures are reported in small private institutions – they can be simplified to the extreme and the phenomenon is related to their fundamental financial uncertainty, studied as an example of the survival culture developed in the last fifteen years especially in European transition economies. The pivotal role of strategic committees and strong management groups is shown. Section 6 discusses entrepreneurship as a phenomenon appearing at both (not too) centralized and (not too) decentralized institutions and, in more detail, “earned income” policies found at the core of transformations of the University of Warwick from 1980s onwards and the crucial role of strategic committees in changes in resource allocation models and in resulting changes in university’s priority research areas. Section 7 discusses the spread of academic entrepreneurship across institutions and highlights the difference between most entrepreneurial university units in Western Europe (research in natural sciences and technology in public universities) and in most EU transition countries (teaching-related entrepreneurship in social sciences and economics in both public and private institutions). Finally, tentative conclusions are
given.