PROGRAM FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF "BIZNESI" COLLEGE - PRISHTINA

The Program for Professional Development of Teaching and Administrative Staff of BIZNESI College was drafted in accordance with the Decision of the High Scientific Teaching Council, based on Law no. 04/L-037 "On Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo"; and Statute of the College Article 81; on all other applicable legislation and as approved by the Decision of the High Scientific Teaching Council dated 25 September 2020 of Biznesi College approving the following:

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Executive Summary

Professional development is a planned program of activities and events that anticipate and contribute to the personal and professional improvement of employees. Professional development opportunities are for all employees in all job categories. Biznesi College in its policies and strategic goals recognizes that human resources are its most valuable asset. The College is committed to developing the potential, knowledge, skills, abilities and talent of its human resources. We value our employees and understand that continuous learning benefits both the College and the students by developing and maintaining employee skills and supporting successful leaders at all levels. This commitment is realized as a joint responsibility between each employee and the College. If Biznesi College wants to attract and retain talented and experienced employees, it must invest in employee growth and development, given that innovation and improvement is the result of an organization that promotes continuous learning and improvement.

The purpose of this plan is to examine the status of professional development priorities, policies and practices in the institution of higher education, Biznesi College, based on the analysis, in order to identify areas for improvement. The basic purpose of interviews is to identify the needs for staff professional development and understanding of policies and practices, to raise their awareness of the nature of continuous learning for professional academic staff. The three main training priorities as defined by the academic faculty were 1) research, 2) teaching and learning, and 3) subject specialization, followed by career development, leadership skills, and foreign language training. It is worth mentioning that there were no differences between the main priorities of the study programs in the institution. Moreover, for administrative staff there are no differences regarding professional development priorities. In general, the three main priorities of the administrative staff were 1) specific training related to the work they perform, 2) leadership skills, and 3) career development - followed by the management of the higher education process and foreign language training.

The analysis of existing policies and practices for professional development reveals that the staff of Biznesi College Institution believe in the importance of supporting further training of both academic and administrative staff. Furthermore, there is no governmental or non-governmental body in the country that addresses the professional development needs of these institutions. There are specific areas for professional training that can be adapted according to the disciplinary

focus (i.e. business, law, emergency, etc.), but there are also important generic areas such as teaching/learning processes, leadership skills, research design and research analysis in which areas Biznesi College academic staff can collaborate with mutual benefit and cost-effectiveness. Higher Education Institution, Biznesi College is constantly exploring opportunities for the exchange of good practices in professional development and collaborates to provide generic professional training for study program staff throughout the institution. The main goals set are the benefits of exchanging ideas, the use of external experts for professional development and the creation of networks for continuous training and policy development that have not been realized so far within the institution of higher education, Biznesi College.

The importance of professional development in higher education

As a socially responsible institution, Biznesi College seeks to support all staff to achieve their personal and professional potential and, thus, achieve the highest possible levels of performance and success in their roles. Human resources are the backbone of any university, college or specialist institution. Qualified and dedicated staff is essential to ensure that higher education institutions fulfill their mission of teaching/learning, research and community service. To ensure that academic and managerial staff are prepared to face the challenges that higher education faces today and are constantly expanding their knowledge and skills, to ensure and improve the quality of higher education is important and essential and to have professional development opportunities available.

The focus of this program is the policies and practices of the highest level professional development in study programs at Biznesi College. The main goals of the report are to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of professional development for teaching, research and administrative staff; identify the training needs and priorities of the higher education academic staff and administrative/management staff; and to stimulate the exchange of information, cooperation and capacity building between study programs as part of the higher education institution in terms of training development and the compiling of interrelated policies and programs between institutions.

Changes in higher education and implications for professional development

Changes and challenges faced by higher education in scope and content are quite large. Some of the key changes that are important to higher education institutions in Biznesi College can be incorporated as follows:

1) New developments in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT), as well as progress in social media affect students and academic staff in both, teaching/learning process and the management of the institution. Further training can help academic and administrative staff benefit from ICT progress and develop new knowledge and skills.

2) Currently, there is acute pressure on higher education institutions to ensure that their graduates meet the needs of the local labor market. This is especially true in the Republic of Kosovo and in Biznesi College, where there are concentrated efforts to diversify the needs of certain sectors in society. Organized professional development workshops are mainly focused on curriculum review, with a focus on learning outcomes and

competencies, can help ensure that academic programs are more relevant to the needs of the jobs.

3) The added emphasis that the academic staff of study programs carry out more scientific research in addition to their educational responsibilities is widespread in all institutions of higher education and Biznesi College is no exception to this. The role of universities to contribute to the knowledge economy is directly related to applied research and innovations realized by the framework of higher education institutions.

4) Finally, the international dimension of higher education is becoming increasingly important, as evidenced by the increase in the number of students enrolled from abroad. Biznesi College is actively becoming attractive to students from countries in the Western Balkans region, but also beyond, which means that the number of educational and administrative staff may increase significantly in the future. Workshops for all staff on a variety of topics such as quality assurance procedures, registration requirements, counseling, teaching in Biznesi College and the nature of student relations are particularly relevant to situations on the main campus of Biznesi College and in branch campuses. These challenges and new changes in the higher education sector have multiple implications for higher education institutions, including the impact on professional development policies and programs.

The impact of technology on teaching and learning.

The use of information and communication technology in the dissemination and management of education is one of the most important trends in higher education. As increasingly more debate continues to take place about the pros and cons of using technology, the rapid pace of technological change is likely to continue. Thus, it is very important that higher education staff be updated with technological innovations so that they can apply best practices in different education contexts. Professional development can play a key role in equipping educational staff with knowledge of the benefits, risks and consequences of technology. Technology training can cover a wide range of topics, including technologies as tools for teaching and learning in the classroom, as tools for research, as a way to undertake the design of a joint curriculum and provide it with partners who may be close to or far from each other, as alternative ways to expand the number of courses provided to students by different providers and as a means to reach new students who wish to have access to higher education.

Use of technology for professional development

More and more academic and administrative staff are interested in having some form of official recognition of their professional development activities. Although this can be documented through certificates of participation, there is growing interest in recognized (accepted) diplomas and diplomas for completed professional development activities. In response to this interest, institutions offering specialized higher education courses provide online degrees as well as undergraduate (first cycle) and master (second cycle) degree programs. Such programs address a variety of topics such as the teaching model, higher education administration, and student issues. Massive online courses offer opportunities for faculty staff to take specialized courses in their disciplines or areas of work. New technologies provide ways and opportunities with different

forms for individual or collaborative professional development, short-term or long-term and with or without credits.

Personalized professional development opportunities based on the institution

As important as these new online opportunities are, they do not deny the importance of the institution itself that offers its activity for professional development. The benefits of institution-based professional development programs include their importance to the institution's specific priorities, their networking and collaboration across study programs across the institution, their sensitivity to institutional culture, and finally their ability to adapt the training to the expressed needs of the institution and the local workforce. Furthermore, the demand for job-ready graduates requires further training in curriculum design and career counseling.

Professional development for administrative staff and the institution

Professional development opportunities for administrative staff are often overlooked or given low priority in higher education institutions. Everyone agrees on the critical role that administrative staff plays in the functioning of these institutions, but, in general, the challenge of prioritizing the professional development of academic staff means that administrative staff has fewer training opportunities. The most common form of professional development for administrative staff is membership in professional associations, which often provide workshops, webinars and conferences.

Career planning and development.

Another increasingly important area of professional development for higher education staff is career planning and development. This issue is important for Biznesi College because many of the staff in the study programs are regular staff, and some of the staff are on contract, generally the staff is often mobile internationally. In such situations, career development involves more than pursuing the academic hierarchy from assistant, to assistant professor, then to professors, or to administrators, from staff, to officer, to assistant director, finally director.

Research Project Design, Scope and Limitations

The focus of the research project is the policies and practices of professional development of higher education institution Biznesi College. The main purpose includes evaluating the policies and activities that currently exist in Biznesi College study programs to identify the needs and priorities for training and development of academic and administrative staff. Specific research objectives are the following:
- to design and analyze existing policies and strategies that address professional training and development needs of academic and administrative staff in the institution of higher education, Biznesi College;
- identify good practices in professional development policies, as well as in those areas that need to be strengthened; and

- undertake evaluation of study programs and staff development priorities, as determined by the staff themselves, and raise staff awareness of the importance and practice of continuing professional development.

The planned program is focused only on issues related to professional development for academic and administrative staff. This program does not address broader issues in human resource management related to performance, review, hiring or staff promotion. A key element of the study was the inclusion of training policies, practices and priorities for study programs, for academic and administrative staff.

Terminology used

Professional development, human resource development and management are widely used notions in the private and public sectors. For the purposes of this report, professional development refers to "*the process of improving and enhancing staff skills through access to a variety of short-term and long-term education and training opportunities*". Human resource development and management is a broader notion and includes personnel management issues not addressed in this report. The notion of academic staff includes staff who are involved in teaching, research and service. The notion of administrative staff includes all those who have administrative and managerial responsibilities in the institution, in departments such as student affairs, finance, enrollment, human resources, public relations, quality management, career centers and institutional effectiveness.

Program compilation methodology

Interviews and review of documents (policies) of the institution will be the main way of gathering information and will also serve to raise awareness among respondents on issues related to professional development. The realization of the program will not use the survey as an instrument, but interviews accompanied by a predetermined set of open-ended questions. The interviews will be tailored to the respondent's level of understanding and involvement in professional development work. Initially a pilot interview creates the main categories of professional development activities in the institution.

Each employee of the institution is sent an e-mail from the Career Office that is the implementer of the program in the institution giving a brief description of the activity, describing the purpose and meaning of professional development. A deliberate effort will be made to interview a cross-section of academic and administrative staff in each study program. Each interview is planned to last approximately 30 to 40 minutes and begin with a general discussion of the meaning, importance and benefits of professional development. This will help in ensuring that there is mutual understanding among respondents before policies, practices and priorities are discussed. It will also serve to raise staff awareness of the critical role that professional development plays in their work and in the overall quality of their respective institution. At the end of each discussion, respondents will be asked to prioritize their three categories for further training and provide examples of which specific topics would be most relevant to them. The professional development categories will be developed from the information gathered from the pilot interview and from common practice topics for higher education professional development. The categories

for academic staff, as teachers and researchers are described in Table 1 and those for administrative staff are presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Professional development categories for academic staff

Category	Description
For discipline/for subject	Addresses the specific disciplinary or research interests of the academician
Leadership	Includes generic leadership or soft skills training in areas such as interpersonal communication, time management, teamwork, problem solving and intercultural communication
Teaching and learning	Focuses on topics such as teaching/learning effectiveness, curriculum design, student assessment, student motivation, technology-enabled learning, and problem-based learning
Scientific research	It deals with all aspects of improving research skills, including writing funding proposals, modeling, data analysis, and writing articles in scientific journals.
Career development	Addresses how to strategically plan career development, beyond simple progress through professorship grades or administration
Foreign languages	Includes the desire to learn foreign languages to better serve and interact with students, as well as to improve English language skills and accent

Table 2: Professional development categories for administrative staff

Category	Description
Specific for the job	It has to do with the specific role of the job and the responsibilities associated with it
Leadership	Includes generic leadership or soft skills training in areas such as interpersonal communication, time management, teamwork, problem solving and intercultural communication
Management of higher education	Focuses on knowledge and skills related to organizational development and management in an educational institution
Career development	Addresses how to strategically plan and implement career development paths
Foreign languages	Includes the desire to learn foreign languages to better serve and interact with students, as well as to improve English language skills and accent

95 interviews have been planned to be completed, which include 75 with faculty members and administrative staff. 20 interviews will be divided into two categories. From this group 10 interviews will be conducted as pilot - five with the teaching staff and five with the administrative staff - and the remaining 10 interviews will be conducted with senior study program managers and higher education experts at Biznesi College. The purpose of interviews with senior management is to better understand the context of the institution and to learn the

meaning of formal policies and practices from the perspective of the institution's leadership. Discussions with higher education experts at Biznesi College will provide opportunities to obtain further information and knowledge on the local context and government policies in the country. The anonymity of the interviewees will be a condition determined by the participating study programs. To ensure anonymity, no demographic or personal information will be obtained about the interviewees.

The results of the analysis regarding the policies and practices that will be done at the total level will ensure the anonymity of the staff of each study program. However, the analysis of needs and priorities for professional development and training for educational and administrative staff will be done at a general level for study programs, for the purpose of comparing the data.

Each of the 95 respondents will list his/her top three priorities for their professional development. Their answers will be analyzed in terms of frequency of response and in terms of priority weight. Thus, the first priority will be evaluated with a weight of three points, the second priority will have a weight of two points, and the third priority will have a weight of one point. The overall result based on the calculated frequencies and weights will enable the ranking of priorities in categories from one to six categories. Calculations will be made for each study program individually and then on a general basis (aggregated) for the entire institution of higher education, Biznesi College.

Recommendations for professional development practices

Biznesi College addresses staff development and training in order to reflect the priorities, interests and context of the institution itself. For this reason, the existing professional development practices at the level of the institution of higher education in general, and in particular for study programs, are first examined, taking into account their specifics. Orientation sessions will determine the institution's commitment to relevant policies and practices relevant to professional development. A series of meetings will enable staff to effectively understand professional development policies, which may even be included in the staff orientation program for each academic year. Educational staff within study programs who have participated in professional development opportunities in the past can motivate their colleagues to pursue similar activities.

Internal and external lecturers, seminars, workshops and conferences.

The most common way to gather a larger group of training staff is to hold professional development meetings in the premises of the institution (at campus). This method has many advantages in terms of access, but also has some disadvantages. It was often suggested by the interviewees that in-house training is conditional and personalized; however, the presence of staff from other institutions participating in professional development activities may bring about different perspectives and discussions by stimulating different thinking among participants from the institutional norms.

External lecturers and internal workshops/seminars may be the most common form of professional development activities offered by the institution of higher education, Biznesi College. These initiatives will be open to all, usually focusing on gaining new knowledge about a discipline or subject area and are the most effective way to involve a large number of staff in professional development activities.

External professional development experts or lecturers can also be helpful. As long as a trainer of the institution itself knows the organization well and can ensure that the training is relevant to its context, external workshop providers can bring different expertise. Experience shows that, for job-specific training (for administrative staff), it is better to have a workshop trainer who has a lot of knowledge about the administration processes and organizational culture of the institution. On the other hand, generic training related to leadership skills, teaching/learning practices, research and writing skills is often effectively accomplished through an external trainer who has an internal person in the institution as an associate.

Attendance at internal or external conferences is the second most common form of professional development process for academic staff that can and should be utilized by Biznesi College. If a professor has a paper accepted by the conference organizing committee, it is usually possible for him or her to receive financial support to cover travel expenses from his/her institution. If the work of a member of the institution is to be presented, his or her institution will often provide free time for the study program member to attend the conference. Professors should attend academic conferences to maintain knowledge of their discipline and the work of their colleagues. For this reason, future professional development policies should consider funding for those members of the institution who do not present papers, to participate in relevant conferences and seminars.

Prishtina, on ____/____/2020   HTSC of "Biznesi" College
                                                                                            Chairman

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                                                               / Prof. Dr. Shyqeri Kabashi/