
La gestión del proceso formativo universitario en el año académico

The steps of the university formative process in the academic year

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Resumen: En este trabajo se presenta un sistema de gestión del proceso formativo en el año académico, que se modeló a partir del diagnóstico del estado actual de ese proceso y mediante la aplicación de métodos empíricos a una población conformada por los 53 profesores principales de año que desempeñaron dicha función en el curso 2018-2019. En el análisis de los datos cuantitativos y cualitativos se utilizó el software profesional SPSS 21.0 y el AQUAD 7. El estudio se desarrolló desde un posicionamiento cualitativo y aporta una alternativa viable para perfeccionar la gestión del proceso formativo en los colectivos de año.

Palabras clave: Sistema de gestión; Proceso formativo universitario; Metacategorías.

Abstract: In the postulate shows up a steps system of the formative process in the academic year, that one modeled starting from the state diagnosis present-day of that process and by means of the empiric methods application to a population once was conformed for the 53 principal year professors that they performed once show in the course was said 2018-2019. The professional software was utilized in the data's analysis SPSS 21.0 and AQUAD 7. The study developed from a qualitative position, and contributes a viable alternative to make perfect the formative process in the year professional associations.

Keywords: System of step; Formative university process; Meta-categories.

Introduction

The management of the training of professionals in Higher Education comprises the processes of planning, organization, direction and control of a set of actions and decisions, in order to seek the solution of problems and at the same time achieve the objectives of this process, which is planned, organized, directed and controlled at all organizational levels.

Horruitiner (2006) considers that the management of the teaching-educational process characterizes the work system of the faculty aimed at perfecting and optimizing it, in correspondence with the demands and needs of the training of professionals. Systemic management of the training process is essential at each level, first of all, in the career, in which two subsystems are identified: the year and the discipline (Horruitiner, 2006).

The academic year is a horizontal systematization of the teaching-educational process that, together with the vertical integration of the disciplines, guarantees the integration of educational and instructional aspects with an interdisciplinary approach. The academic year is the basic cell of the faculty's work and a fundamental pillar of the methodological work in the career.

Starting from the horizontal system of objectives and the knowledge, skills and values of each subject, the year group should work, as far as possible, in the integration of the set of subjects that students receive in a given period (semester or module), to form the general objectives of the academic year as a system.

The fundamental role in the management of the formative process in the academic year is played by the year group, as an advisory body made up of the teachers who teach the subjects in a teaching period and the representatives of the student organizations. The year group is led by one of the professors who teaches the students of an academic year, who is appointed as the main professor of the year. He/she is a leader with pedagogical and scientific preparation, who plays a major role in the planning, organization, direction and control of the formative process.

The educational strategy for the academic year is a management instrument that allows the qualitative change in the formative process of students and teachers to be projected in advance, from an initial state (diagnosis) to a desired state (objectives of the academic year), through the design, execution and evaluation of systems of participatory actions that are interrelated with the general objective pursued and with the methodology to achieve them. The widespread use of the educational strategy as an instrument for planning the educational process in the academic year has conditioned, in some cases, the simplification of the management of the educational process to the design of the educational strategy, reducing the end to the means.

There has been a proliferation of an instrumental approach to the management of the educational process that simplifies it to its planning, to the detriment of the remaining functions of the functional cycle of educational management (organization, direction and control) and that has limited the flexibility of the educational strategies to enhance the involvement of teachers and students in the achievement of the objectives.

The precision of the actions of the educational strategy is sometimes interpreted as the inclusion of very particular actions, which are typical of a work plan. Precision is achieved with general strategic actions that really respond to the needs of the formative process, to the general objectives of the year. Their particularization in more specific actions, will be reflected in the monthly work plans of the year's collective (Pla and García, 2015).

In the management of the formative process in the academic year at the University of Ciego de Avila, there are still difficulties such as: autocratic approaches, which limit the involvement of teachers and students; pragmatic approaches, which underestimate the functional cycle of educational management; reductionist approaches to educational strategy, which simplify it to a plan of typical tasks; the diagnosis is not always used to identify the formative problems; and the needs are not always prioritized according to their degree of essentiality.

These factual manifestations have led to the identification of the scientific problem: How to contribute to the improvement of the management of the formative process of the academic year at the University of Ciego de Avila? The objective of the research is to propose a management system of the formative process of the academic year. The research is a scientific result of the Project: "Improvement of the management of the training process of professionals in the year groups" (Code: PI-10060).

The research assumed the qualitative methodology, action-research type. The usefulness of action research has been recognized by authors such as: Elliott (1999); Fernández (2000); Carrasco (2003); Castellanos et al (2005); Colás, Buendía and Hernández (2009) and Barrios (2020), because in addition to constituting a valid research model, it is a methodology for the participatory construction of scientific solutions to educational problems (Barrios, 2020).

Methods and techniques of the empirical level were used, such as interview, focus group and survey.

The SPSS 21.0 professional software was used in the quantitative data analysis. The analysis of qualitative data followed the methodology proposed by Rodríguez, Gil and García (2004), supported by the professional software AQUAD 7. The research population consisted of the 53 main teachers of the 2018-2019 academic year at the University of Ciego de Avila.

Development

1. Diagnosis of the state of the management of the training process in the academic year.

In order to diagnose the state of the management of the formative process in the academic year, a survey was applied to the main professors of the year, the Teaching Vice Rector and the methodologists of the Teaching Vice Rector's Office were interviewed and "discussion groups" were developed with the Teaching Vice Deans and coordinators of the career group.

The content analysis of the answers to the semi-structured interview questions of the key informants, by integrating the information of several categories, generated the following meta-categories and meta-codes: role of the main professors of the year in the management of the formative process (RPP), difficulties in the management of the formative process of the academic year (DGP) and strategic planning of the formative process in the year (PEP).

The meta-category: role of the main professors of the year in the management of the formative process (RPP), was reflected in the opinions of four informants who agree that some main professors assume the management of the formative process without having the ideal preparation for it and without always having the support of the rest of the professors of the year. They point out that in some careers; the inexperience of the main professors limits their leading role in the direction of the teaching and methodological work to be carried out in the year group.

In the meta-category: difficulties in the management of the formative process of the academic year (DGP), they recognized that they do not always start from the analysis

of the general objectives of the year and the diagnosis of the development of the students and professors of the year, to determine the formative problems of the academic year; that a correct hierarchy of the formative problems according to their degree of essentiality is not always achieved, nor is the involvement of the teaching staff and students in the solution of the problems.

In the meta-category: strategic planning of the educational process during the year (PEP), five informants agreed that the work with the educational strategy is often mediated by formalism and improvisation; that it is not always planned strategically and that the strategy does not anticipate the dynamics of the management of the educational process during the academic year.

In the "discussion groups" with the coordinators of career collectives, ten informants participated in each group created. From the content analysis of the ideas expressed, meta-categories and integrating meta-codes were derived. The meta-categories and meta-codes created include: protagonism of the main professor in the management of the formative process (PPP), difficulties in the management of the formative process in the academic year (DGP) and strategic planning of the formative process in the year (PEP).

In the meta-category: protagonism of the main professor of the year in the management of the formative process (PPP), the informants pointed out that the main professors of the year assume the direction of the academic year, but not all in the same way, because it depends on their experience, preparation and level of leadership.

In the meta-category: difficulties in the management of the formative process of the academic year (DGP), they referred to the following insufficiencies: the main formative problems are not always correctly determined, in some year groups due attention is not given to the integration of the subjects, the full involvement of the teaching staff and students in the decision making about the formative process is not always achieved, and the methodological work does not always respond to the real formative needs of the teachers.

In the meta-category: strategic planning of the formative process in the year (PEP), they expressed that some senior year teachers need to develop managerial skills and

prepare themselves in the theory and practice of strategic planning; that the main formative problems of the year are not always accurately identified; that in some cases the management of the formative process is reduced to the management of the educational strategy of the year and that the institution lacks a systemic conception of the management of the formative process in the academic year.

Subsequently, a purposive sample of 45 main teachers of the year was interviewed, representing 85 % of the population. The data captured with the application of the questionnaire were processed with the professional software SPSS 21.0, which facilitated the calculation of percentages. Values 5 and 4 on the scale (strongly agree and agree) were interpreted as acceptance of what is stated in the item and values 2 and 1 on the scale (disagree and strongly disagree) were interpreted as denial of what is stated in the item. The analysis of the data was based on the percentages of negative responses, in order to make the corresponding inferences.

26.6 % of the interviewed expressed that when determining the formative problems of the academic year, the diagnosis of the students and the general objectives of the year are not always taken into account, which evidences the lack of objectivity in the identification of such problems. 46.6 % recognized that in the academic year the conscious application of the functional cycle of management is not achieved and that functions of the same are omitted.

The level of involvement of teachers in the management of the educational strategy was negatively evaluated by 26.6 % of the interviewed and 22.2 % thought that the students of the year do not participate in a leading role in the planning, organization, execution and evaluation of the educational strategy. The use of group work techniques for decision making was negatively evaluated by 37.7% of the interviewed and 17.7% expressed that students' concerns are not systematically analyzed in the year group.

24.4 % of the interviewed persons were of the opinion that in the year group the progress of the teaching-educational process is not systematically analyzed and 26.6 % expressed that in the year group the fulfillment of the general objectives of the academic year is not systematically evaluated. The level of correspondence of the

methodological work with the formative needs of the teaching staff was negatively evaluated by 22.2 % of the interviewed.

With the quantitative and qualitative data obtained, a methodological triangulation was carried out, which revealed that the main teachers of the year assume the management of the formative process, without some having the appropriate levels of expertise and preparation; that they do not always start from the analysis of the general objectives of the year and the diagnosis of the development of students and teachers to determine the formative problems; and that teachers and students are not always involved in decision making, nor are group work techniques always applied.

It was also evidenced that the work with the educational strategy of the year is mediated by formalism, that it is not always planned strategically and that the whole functional cycle of management is not fulfilled; that students do not always participate in the planning, organization, execution and evaluation of the strategy; that the methodological work of the year group does not always respond to the needs of the teachers and that in many cases the management of the formative process of the year is reduced to the management of the educational strategy.

The analysis of these inadequacies justifies the need to design a management system for the formative process in the academic year, which can be a methodological reference to transform the state of the management of this process in the academic year.

2. The management system of the formative process in the academic year.

The presentation of the management system of the training process in the modeled academic year includes the following structural sections: justification of the need for the system, objectives, characteristics and explanation of its elements and the relationships between them.

3. Justification of the need for the system.

Research conducted in recent years in Cuban universities on the management of the formative process in the academic year (Cardoso, 1999; Fernández, 2000; Carrasco, 2003; Díaz and Alfonso, 2004; Ruiz, 2004; Pla and García, 2016) and the diagnosis of the current state of the management of this process have revealed autocratic, pragmatic

and reductionist approaches to the management of the formative process in the academic year.

It has also been appreciated that the integral diagnosis of the students is not always taken into account, to identify the formative problems; that the formative problems are not always prioritized according to their degree of essentiality for the achievement of the objectives of the academic year and that an accurate diagnosis of the formative needs of the teaching staff is not always achieved.

The management of the training process is systemic; it has its objectives, components that are interrelated among them, that have determined functions and that maintain interactions with the social environment. However, the importance of the functional cycle of educational management, which includes the following actions: planning, organizing, directing and controlling, is sometimes undervalued.

Among the causes that generate these inadequacies is the lack of a systemic conception of the management of the formative process in the academic year, this management has been based on a pragmatic and incomplete acting model, which has paid empiric, improvisation and formalism. Therefore, the need arises to model a management system of the formative process in the academic year at the University of Ciego de Avila.

General objective of the system:

Improve the management of the educational process during the academic year by means of a systemic model that considers the functional cycle of educational management and serves as a methodological reference for the performance of the main teachers of the year.

System characteristics:

The management system of the formative process in the academic year at the University of Ciego de Avila is a didactic, open, flexible, dynamic and projective system, where the optional implications predominate, as an expression of the level of flexibility. The system is didactic because it constitutes a formal theoretical construction, which, based on scientific and ideological assumptions, intends to interpret the educational reality and direct it towards certain educational purposes. Its

didactic character lies in the fact that it constitutes a methodological reference for the management of the formative process in the particularity of each academic year of the different careers.

It is open because of its level of openness to the university educational context and by revealing the complex educational and work interrelationships involved in the formative process in the academic year. It is flexible because in the system there is a predominance of optional implications and not mandatory ones, where the belonging of some elements is not essential for it to be functional and organized. It is dynamic because it conceives the management of the formative process in the academic year as a process in movement and development, involving elements, processes and individuals that maintain stable interrelationships. It is projective because it reveals a way of managing the formative process that can be adapted to each contextual situation that is, to each year and career.

Explanation of the elements of the system and the relationships between them.

The management system of the training process in the academic year is made up of four fundamental components: planning, organization, direction and control.

The first component of the system is planning, which is the starting point of the functional cycle of management, and the function in which a set of integrated decisions is adopted to transform the state of a process to a desired and qualitatively superior level of development. Planning is the decision making to achieve a desired future, taking into account internal and external factors that influence the achievement of objectives, is to decide in advance what to do, who should do it, and how it should be done.

The characteristic actions of planning are: defining the desired state (vision), determining the actual state (diagnosis), and characterizing the gap between the desired state and the actual state, formulating objectives, defining deadlines for achieving them and planning strategic actions to achieve them.

The logical actions included in the planning component of the formative process in the academic year are: to specify the desired state in the formation of the students (general objectives of the year); to determine the actual state of the process (diagnosis of the

development of the students, their formative contexts and the teachers of the year); to compare the actual state with the desired state to identify the formative problems that are manifested; to rank the problems according to their level of importance and to develop the planning of strategic actions to overcome these problems, setting deadlines and the implications of the actors involved.

Planning, as a component of the system, permeates the three formative processes that take place during the academic year: the teaching-educational, the extension and the socio-political. During the academic year, teaching planning is developed, which includes the teaching schedule and the programming of work practice activities, the meetings of the year group and the brigade assemblies. The main teacher participates in this planning and takes into account the criteria of teachers and students. Cultural activities (festivals, events and contests), sports and social impact tasks are also planned.

The educational strategy for the academic year is also planned, which includes the system of actions that are projected according to the three dimensions of the formative process. In the planning of the strategy, actions should be planned to promote integrative and award exams; the movement of student assistants; the presentation of papers in scientific events; the participation in tasks of social impact and the integration of subjects for the achievement of the general skills of the year and the formation of values.

In the planning of the strategy, actions should also be planned, in the dimension of university extension, to achieve the incorporation of students to the amateur artists' movement; to community projects; to the sports movement and participation in sports and student residence activities. Actions are planned in the socio-political dimension to achieve the participation of students in morning and political events, in debates on current issues and in the development of brigade assemblies.

In the year group, the methodological work of the year is planned, which is the work carried out by the professors who teach during the year, supported by the Didactics of Higher Education, with the purpose of achieving optimal results in the formative process. In order to plan the methodological work, we start from the diagnosis of the methodological preparation needs of the teaching staff of the academic year to develop

the educational work and we also analyze the main formative problems identified in the academic year.

The planning component is involved because its belonging to the system is necessary for it to work, to keep it organized and it is a mandatory implication, because if the planning component disappears, the management system also disappears. This component is differentiated because there are differences between it and the other components, which are necessary to maintain the integrity of the system; they are functional differences because each component has a specific function.

The planning component maintains "causal" dependency relationships with the other components of the system, which means that any change in this component implies a change in the other components, without the same happening the other way around. Changes in planning always imply changes in organization, direction and control.

The second component of the system is the organization, which points to the precision of who will do what must be done and how they must be integrated to do it. The organization is the way in which activities and actions are divided, organized and coordinated to guarantee the optimal development of the process and to provide a stable structure that favors the integration of all the actors to work together and achieve the objectives set.

The logical actions included in the organization component in the management of the training process are: assigning tasks and responsibilities, coordinating the different tasks, establishing relationships between individuals and defining authority and responsibility. The organization is concretized in the concepts: organizational structure, division of labor and coordination. Organizational structure is the way in which the activities of a process are divided for execution by individuals. Division of labor is the disaggregation of a complex activity into parts, so that individuals are responsible for some parts. Coordination is the integration of activities and human resources from different areas of an institution to achieve proposed objectives.

In the management of the formative process in the academic year, coordination has a particular significance, because almost all the teachers of the year belong to different departments and must be integrated to carry out the teaching activities. The lack of

coordination has a negative impact on the results of the management of the formative process in the academic year.

The organization as a component of the system also permeates the three formative processes that take place during the academic year: the teaching-educational process, the extension process and the socio-political process. In the academic year, the teaching-educational process is organized, the teaching load is divided by subjects that are taught by professors from different faculties and departments, which requires the coordination of these human resources.

Other activities are also organized, such as the individual diagnosis of each student and of the group, whose complexity requires a disaggregation into tasks; the horizontal integration of the subjects is coordinated for the achievement of the formative purposes of the curricular strategies, for the achievement of the objectives of the research work practice of the year and for the development of the general skills of the year and the formation of values. Other activities of the teaching-educational process are also organized, such as the scientific activity of the students; the realization of integrative and award exams; the incorporation to the movement of student assistants and the participation in tasks of social impact.

University extension activities are organized, such as the incorporation of students to the movement of amateur artists; to community projects; to the sports movement and participation in sports and student residence activities. Socio-political activities are organized, such as the participation of students in matinees and political events, in the debate on current issues and in the development of brigade assemblies.

The educational strategy of the academic year is organized, which requires the disaggregation of some activities and actions to be carried out by certain teachers of the year and the coordination to ensure the participation of teachers from different departments in the development of strategic actions of the three dimensions of the strategy. The meetings of the year's collective are organized and individual responsibilities are assigned to students, the methodological work system of the year is organized, which requires coordination with other areas.

The organization component is involved because its belonging to the system is essential for the system to remain organized; it is a mandatory involvement, since if the component disappears, the system disappears. The organization component is differentiated because its reciprocal differences with the other components are essential for the system to maintain its integrity. It is a functional differentiation because the organization has a function that cannot be fulfilled by another component. The organization component has a "causal" type of dependence, since a change in this component implies a change in other components.

The third component of the system is management, which is the constant, systematic and stable activity of the subject of management over the object of management in order to lead human groups towards the achievement of previously established objectives. Management requires management skills such as: communication, motivation, leadership, conflict resolution, consensus building, teamwork, decision making and change management.

The functions of the management component, within the management system, are: to regulate through the exercise of authority the changes in the system so that it meets its objectives, has stability and is continuously improved; to guarantee the synchronized execution of all the functions and ensure that all contribute to the fulfillment of the system's objectives; to execute the decision-making process based on the flow of information and guarantee that decisions are converted into concrete actions. The logical actions included in the management component are: appointing people, coordinating efforts, orienting, communicating, motivating, leading, resolving conflicts, working with groups, making decisions and managing change.

The management component is deployed in the management of the three formative processes of the academic year: teaching-educational, university extension and socio-political. In the academic year, the teaching-educational process is directed and for this purpose the main professor of the year must communicate with the collective of professors and students, motivate and involve them in all activities and strategic actions aimed at achieving the objectives of the year, work with them in groups and apply group dynamics to make collective decisions that are assumed with commitment by professors and students.

Other activities of the teaching-educational process are also directed, such as the diagnosis of students' development; research work practice; student scientific activity; conducting integrative and award exams; the movement of student assistants; student scientific work; participation in tasks of social impact; comprehensive evaluation of students; analysis of students' satisfaction levels and the integration of subjects for the achievement of the purposes of curricular strategies.

University extension activities are directed, such as the incorporation to the amateur artists' movement and the incorporation and participation in community projects and sports activities. Activities of the socio-political dimension are also directed, such as the participation of students in matinees and political events, in the debate on current issues and in brigade assemblies.

The year group directs the execution of the actions of the year's educational strategy, which requires the main teacher of the year to deploy managerial skills: communicating, motivating, leading, working with groups, making decisions and managing change. The main teacher of the year also directs the methodological work system of the academic year.

The management component is involved, because its membership is necessary for the system to maintain its organization and functioning. It is a mandatory implication, since the component cannot disappear without the system disappearing. This component is differentiated because its differences with respect to the other components are necessary for the system to maintain its organization and functioning. It is a functional differentiation because the management has a function in the system that cannot be fulfilled by another component of the system.

The management component has a "causal" type of dependency, which means that a change in another component such as planning and organization can cause a change in management, without the opposite having to happen.

The fourth component of the system is control, which is the management function that permeates all the other functions of the management cycle. Control is the function that aims to check the actual result of the process, reveals the potentialities and difficulties that affect the achievement of the objectives, and includes the analysis of information

and decision making. The control must be systematic, continuous and dynamic; and must be carried out both to the process and to the results.

The fundamental control procedures are dispatches, observation, interviews and surveys, and document analysis, which provide information on the course of the processes. Control is nourished by the information system obtained from each process.

The logical actions included in the control component are: precision of goals and objectives; comparison of the results achieved with the objectives; analysis of the causes and conditions of deviations; and projection of corrective actions.

The control component is manifested in the three formative processes developed during the academic year: the teaching-educational process, the university extension process and the socio-political process. Both the teaching-educational process and its results are controlled, control is exercised from the planning stage, from the initial moment in which the diagnosis of the students' development is developed. In this process, a control is developed in the activity that indicates the course of the process, the fulfillment of teaching schedules, the execution of work and research activities and the academic performance of the students of the year are evaluated.

The main teacher of the year plays a very important role in the development of control over the formative process, for which he/she must use procedures and records to obtain relevant information for decision making. The information can be obtained through observation, communication with teachers and students and the application of standardized instruments.

In the year group, the progress of the educational strategy of the year is controlled, from the very moment of its planning and during the organization and management, to evaluate the process and the results obtained with the strategy. In the control of the process and the results of the educational strategy, the collective of teachers and students of the academic year must be involved, to generate commitment to change and readjustment of the course of the strategy.

The control component is involved, because its belonging to the system is a necessary condition for the functionality of the system, it is an indispensable component. The

type of involvement is mandatory, because if the component disappears, the system also disappears.

The control component is differentiated because its differences with respect to other components are necessary for the system to remain organized. It is a functional differentiation, the control has a function that cannot be fulfilled by another component. The control has a "solidarity" type of dependency, since changes in other components can cause a change in the control and changes in the control also cause changes in other components.

Conclusions

The diagnosis of the state of the management of the formative process in the academic year revealed the autocratic, pragmatic and reductionist approaches that prevail in the management of this process and the need for a new management system of the university formative process in the academic year, based on the functional cycle of educational management.

The management system of the university formative process in the academic year is based on the structural systemic approach and on the functional cycle of educational management, it has the components planning, organization, direction and control, which maintain relationships among themselves and fulfill determined functions. The system constitutes a viable, flexible, dynamic and projective alternative, which can serve as a methodological reference to the main professors of the year to improve the management of the formative process in the academic year.

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