

Is $1+1 > 2$

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UNIVERSITY OF
EASTERN FINLAND

Content

- A short history of Finnish universities
- University Act 2009
- A case: University of Eastern Finland



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A short history of Finnish universities

- 1640 Queen Kristina established Academy of Turku (3rd university of Sweden)
- 1809; 1828 → University of Helsinki
- 1917 Republic of Finland
- 1918 Åbo Akademi, 1920 University of Turku
- 1960-1980 -→ ad 20 universities
- “Productivity” increased up till 2000
- A long discussion period until 2009: “ something should be done in order to maintain universities at international level”
- A new university Act 2009



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Universities Act 2009

- Very long discussion period during three different governments
- However, it was a surprise for most professors and other personnel
- Number of universities decreased from 20 to 16
- Three new universities emerged from fusions of seven old universities
- Now fourth fusion has been decided (→ 14 in 2013). The process will continue during following years.
- A major change in the legal status

Autonomy

1. The universities **shall have autonomy** with a view to securing the freedom of higher academic and art education. Autonomy entails the right to decision making in matters belonging to internal administration.
- 2. In the drafting of legislation concerning them, the universities shall have an opportunity to give their opinion on the matter.

Legal capacity of public universities

- 1. The public universities are independent legal persons.
- 2. The public universities may undertake commitments, obtain rights in their own name and possess movable and immovable property. **A university may pursue business activities** which support the performance of the mission.
- 3. The public universities shall be **liable for their commitments** with their own funds and **have the rights to pursue and defend litigation**

Composition of the board of a public university

1. **The board** of a public university shall have 7 or 9–14 members. The university **collegiate body** shall decide on the number of board members.
2. At least 40% of members and a chairperson must come from outside
3. The board must include the representation of the following groupings in the university community:
 - (1) the professors of the university;
 - (2) other teaching and research staff and other personnel;
 - (3) the students.

Main practical aims of the new act

- To improve the level of teaching and to implement the Bologna-model with bachelor degrees to the Finnish university system
- To ensure shorter mean time used for the university degree
- To improve the level of research
- To facilitate the profilation of universities
- To renew recruitment process of students

A case: University of Eastern Finland

- 1.1.2010 fusion of University of Kuopio and University of Joensuu, both about the same size
- Two main campuses, 140 kms apart
- 15 000 students, (plus >10 000 students in open university and supplementary education)
- 3000 staff members and budget about 250 mE
- A public university

A case: University of Eastern Finland

- **MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND**
- *The University of Eastern Finland conducts internationally recognised research and its training provision is of a high international standard. The university **has a strong profile in its areas of expertise** and takes a particular interest in promoting the regional development of eastern Finland.*
- **VISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND**
- *The University of Eastern Finland is an internationally recognised research and teaching university, which is among the three most important universities in Finland and among the leading 200 universities in the world.*

Restructuring of the fusion university

- A new name: University of Eastern Finland
- 13 faculties were consolidated into 4
- Deans have very broad operative power
- About 150 person years were reduced from the administration and resources were transferred into research and teaching. A huge psychological effect!
- A new research strategy was created
- A lot of bachelor and master programs were consolidated, tenure track-established, a funding model based on results was established etc

Areas of expertise in research of the University of Eastern Finland

- *Forests and the environment*
- *Health and well-being*
- *New technologies and materials*

What has happened

- Too early to make final conclusions, **but**
- In terms of research activity (publications) and education (number of MSc-, PhD- and other degrees) year 2011 was better than any previous years.
- A number of applicants for student and staff positions has increased a lot
- A substantial amount of financial resources has been re-channeled from administration and rents to research and education
- A lesson we have learned: Our university is full of talented people. If you provide positive incentives they will do the job!

Merge of two small universities to obtain one medium sized: Is $1+1>2$?

- Conclusions:

1. Very demanding operation; stressful for all members of organizations. Will take years.
2. Gives an excellent opportunity to streamline administrative and educational processes.
3. Most of the benefit observed in research activity.
4. In case of administration $1+1<2$; we were able to reduce about 150 person years from central administration without major difficulties (except personal pain because of layoffs)
5. Own experience: In case of research and education $1+1>2$; no question!