
MINUTES WP1 MEETING / PANEL DISCUSSION

Student conference "The Reform of Higher Education and Student Organizing", Zlatibor, December 16, 2011

University of Nis (UNI) was the leading partner for the SIGMUS project WP1 "Evaluation of student participation in the university governance and management and student services in the consortium members". The session on WP1 activities during the student conference organized by Student Alliance Belgrade (SAB) in Zlatibor was one of the concluding activities within the WP1, with the aim to present and to discuss the results of the WP1 activities and to define the conclusions which will be given in the final overview report.

The WP1 meeting and the following panel discussion were chaired by Dr. Zlatica Marinkovic, UNI staff representative and Kristina Davidovic, SAB contact person.

Participants were staff and student representatives of all Serbian SIGMUS project partners as well as student representatives of the BOKU student organization, and Middlesex University Students' Union.

10:00-10:15

Welcome note and presentation of activities within the scope of WP1

Dr. Zlatica Marinkovic, UNI staff representative welcomed the presented participants and gave brief overview of the WP1 activities, with special focus on the survey for reviewing the current state of student participation in Serbia. She gave details on the process on defining and distributing the questionnaire and collecting and analyzing the corresponding data.

10:15-10:30

Role and participation of students in NCHE

Mario Spasić, student representative in the National Council for Higher Education gave a presentation on the role and participation of students in NCHE. He presented the NCHE structure. There are two student representatives in NCHE, one representing the university students (SKONUS member) and the other representing the students of the schools of applied studies (SKASS member). He talked about the participation of the student in NCHE activities, with the special attention on the student participation in the process of accreditation of the HE institutions in Serbia. Moreover, since he is the SKASS representative in the NCHE he gave several facts on the SKASS activities.

10:30-10:45

Participation of students in HE institutions management in practice

Milos Nestic, UNI student representative and president of the UNI Student parliament, spoke about the participation of student in HE institution management in practice. He gave a brief presentation how the participation of the student in the management of the HE institutions are defined by the Law on HE and the acts of the University and HE institutions. He pointed out that in some cases there are HE institutions which do not follow the Law on HE rules related to student participation, especially for the student participation in the HE Teaching Scientific Boards and the HE council. He gave an example explained how the University of Nis, solved problem of the student participating in the Teaching Scientific Boards, in which, according to the Law on HE, students participate "up to 20%", by defining in the University statute that the 20% of the HE Teaching

Scientific board should be student members. In that way, the university prevented particular HE institutions to consider “up to 20%” defined by low as “0 %” or very small percentage which happens in some HE institution in Serbia.

10:45-11:00

SKONUS participation in finding solutions of current student problems

Fikret Halilovic, SUNP student representative, who is SKONUS representative in NCHE, gave a presentation on the activities of SKONUS (i.e. Student Conference of Serbian Universities) aimed to solve current problems of Serbian students. Moreover, he presented several initiatives of SKONUS, such as activities for connecting students and industry and about recently held Forum of students and Industry. He paid special attention to the student action “10-ka za Srbiju” aimed to improve the studying conditions in Serbia.

11:30-12:00

Results of a survey on the student participation in the governance and management at Serbian HE institutions

Nenad Jovanovic, UNI student representative presented the most important results of the survey on the student participation in the governance and management at Serbian HE institutions. The survey questionnaires were filled by both, the HE institutions and the student parliaments. He put special attention on the results related to the student participation in the HE bodies, commenting not only percentage of the students in the bodies but also if the students can participate actively in the work of the bodies, i.e., if are allowed to participate in the discussion and if their vote is considered in the decision making process. It was found that there are HE institution which do not follow, or not follow completely the rules about the student participation in HE bodies defined by the Law on HE or if they follow the rules, there are the cases that students are present at meetings of the HE bodies but are not allowed to participate in discussion and/or in the decision making process. Further, he gave results related to surveys on assessing the academic, staff, student elections, financing of student organizations and solving student problems. More details of the survey will be in a separate report within the final overview document of the WP1.

12:00-13:00

Panel discussion resulting in conclusions and guide for further actions

On the bases on the results of the survey results presented by Nenad Jovanovic, there was fruitful panel discussion aimed to define the conclusions and the guidelines for further actions in order to improve the state of the student participation in the Serbian HE institutions. The focus was put on the following topics:

- Student participation in the bodies of the HE institution (Teaching Scientific board, Council, Collegium, Commissions)
- The role of surveys assessing the academic staff and other surveys
- Elections for the Student Parliament, the method of choice (independent candidates, lists of organizations, etc.) and the electoral system (parliamentary, majority, mixed)
- Funding of Student Parliaments

The detailed Minutes of the panel discussion containing the conclusions the defined guidelines will be given in a separate document.

Dr. Zlatica Marinkovic,
UNI staff representative