

The University and its Hierarchical Layers

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Hierarchy is the ranking and subordination system of power layers, categories, positions, and dignity, which is to say, the ranking of values set forth along time in a certain area of human activities.

It is firmly followed in the ecclesiastical setting, as well as in the military line of conduct, so that order, obedience, respect, and justice are clearly defined.

It loses relevance and the emotion involved, and is certainly of no significance at specific competitive institutions where economics prevails. More recently, however, the same has been seen at academic and university settings.

It should be reminded that under such denomination – in addition to the time spent at work at a certain institution – the positions previously held, the curriculum vitae in the specific area, the status acquired both in home country and internationally, the recognition by peers, and even the contribution given to social entities and specialty entities are to be taken into account.

At Brazilian Universities – to the best of our knowledge, while holding a number of elective positions – all those elements making up the hierarchical ranking used to be taken as highly relevant, as well as act in a relevant way.

Therefore, a curriculum vitae (CV), in itself, is quite relevant since it is the basis for any institution to acquire relevance as well, and to become more highly representative in the eyes of governmental agencies, the University itself and society as a whole.

The role played by every individual is to be pointed out both in his/her home country and internationally - scientifically, socially and for the society as a whole. Following the same line, University background and the institutional setting where it was obtained are also of importance.

More recently, however, other criteria have entered the scene. Those criteria supersede hierarchy and CV itself, placing choice at risk when faced by compulsorily arbitrary, and even somewhat authoritative judgment, clearly based on interests and conveniences.

Merit and example are therefore eliminated. Likewise are the general guidelines to rule a University.

And that is when an ethical, productive university career may be interrupted – similarly to a card game: when found not

to be useful, a card is easily discarded, in a pass-time game.

As a consequence, one sees the exclusion of the one element that used to draw admiration and to act as hierarchical example, the expression of diligence, hard work and the individual to be imitated. It may be timely to remind at this point that those old time individuals – their names omitted – have become icons, and will certainly remain so along time.

Such tradition seems to have been terminated. The unduly political and convenience-based appointments for positions to be fulfilled, away from any logical ideology, evidence such termination.

The change poses risk for the future. In addition to clear institutional decharacterization, the diligence typically required by academic life will certainly be put aside to favor another scope of professional life, or other political positionings at that same institution: the new way to reach achievements in full disregard to science itself.

On the other hand, the main objective of a Board at any institution should be to see to the interests of each one of their members with due respect, aiming at more and more productive scientific outcome, which would imply the appointment of the most qualified professionals. The progress of science requires such conduct, which in its turn is indirectly expected by society as a whole: a chain involving individual, family, and governmental responsibilities and requirements.

Against such view, and away from hierarchy, we come to think whether current positions contemplate controversy through the renewal of values – so that people are not accommodated – whenever temporal sequence is taken into account.

The choice for younger individuals for life-time positions, however, in addition to eliminating the rotation of professionals who could be taking them, eliminates the invaluable contribution from the experience acquired by the more experienced ones.

Additionally, such polemical tactics - allegedly towards progress - generates natural uncertainty among people in a given professional group, along with reintegration difficulties on the part of everyone: at least immediately after the imposed changes. Everyday life then undergoes significant change since emotions have to be properly accommodated among all involved so that balance can be restored.

As a result, the proper efforts towards progress in one's career generates a mix of uncertainty, revolt, and anxiety. All this may work in the opposite direction, thus resulting in dissension and stagnation. All enveloped by injustice and unlawfulness, since peace and love should always be associated to justice in a productive working environment. In

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summary: such practice does not follow the guidelines that rule ethical, human, and institutional behavior.

Against such scenario, the institution is damaged by changes that take place in leading, well-established, well-fundamented guidelines. The ideas implemented – although new – not only interrupt the pathway trodden along time, but act as a step backwards in that pathway and in future perspectives.

Therefore, little will one know that such demerit will equally fall on all those responsible for it, since they are turned into accomplices of such unlawfulness and arbitrariness. Consequences are inevitable. As in a chain, they will affect the community as a whole, breeding social evil that is deep enough to affect the very core of that society – family itself.

By the way, I do remember, with regret, the feeling of injustice. It penetrates our inner self intrusively and aggressively, trying to mask all other achievements. Those achievements start being questioned the moment they are looked into. Their value is minimized.

All is aggravated by the silence of most in the community, as if the inevitable did not matter. That silence, however, is ruled by other individual, hidden, and petty interests – in opposed direction to the strengthening of the university ideology based on truth.

At the end, however, through the observations of others – especially those who are peers in scientific teams out of university boundaries – one notices one's trajectory and diligence have been valuable from the representation acquired along time.

Courage is supported by the truth in our inner self.

That explains why although political conveniences still prevail over merit and example, even at academic institutions, the passionate pace of knowledge is always faster. And that explains how actions and activities are being kept, despite initial lukewarm

feelings. Continuity is driven by the will to show superiority.

Criteria are still in force, but they stand out as arguments in favor or against whatever convenience requires. This is actually the beam in the scale.

The university ends up being ruled by sentimental disorders, such as envy and jealousy. And those prevail in arbitrary appointments that supersede example and merit.

As a result, damage affects all.

Let self-proclaimed, world sovereign judges oppose their power to the true desires and wishes of every citizen.

Repeated disobedience to hierarchy – the sparkle to other improprieties – have been heavy burdens on the Heart Institute at the University of São Paulo Medical School since the year 2000. It was mirrored by the deficit in their books. What followed was a very strong blow in institutional credibility. That credibility was built on immeasurable sacrifice on the part of so many who dedicated so much of their time – as of 1976, at the time of foundation: those who idealized it, founded it, and followed up with their diligence.

Misguided administrations lead to failure actions that are successive and progressive, most likely led by over dimensioned power – which in its turn leads to arrogance, with consequent overshadowing of competence itself.

Sweet is the life that is lived in confident hoping, fed by justice. Then, and only then, is it possible for the heart to be nourished with radiant happiness.

Since beauty is not associated to perfection, but to truth, one should not fear what Aeschylus – one of founding fathers of the Greek tragedy – already taught in the year 470 B.C., in his essay Prometheus Bound: "Thou, who art so shrewd, know not that imprudent words always draw punishment?".

The truth may be very hard to be talked about - as now. Equally hard would have been to omit it.