

Quality Assurance Initiatives of a Local City Government University

ELEUTERIO SC. SISON

Doctor of Public Administration
Urdaneta City University
Proferry.sison@gmailcom

NOEL L. GUEVARA

Doctor of Philosophy
Major in Development Education
Urdaneta City University
noelguevara@ucu.edu.ph

Abstract — The objective of this study was to assess quality assurance initiatives taken by Urdaneta City University, a local institution managed by the city government during the academic years 2022-2023. The researchers were able to come up with the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the university's quality assurance mechanisms and proposed policies to improve them. The study employed a descriptive research design. The analysis revealed ample physical space for the institution's facilities, infrastructure, and activities. The institution is well-established and offers a wide range of programs to cater to the large number of students and their academic interests. Furthermore, an adequate workforce is provided to support the students, a relatively favorable level of staff accessibility, and a moderate level of teaching faculty. In line with the research area, there is a need to improve the international publication endeavor. However, improving extension services can be particularly beneficial in terms of effectiveness. Despite this, several good practices have been put in place to meet the high standards set by the Institutional Sustainability Assessment. The study recommends that the university collaborate with other higher education institutions locally, nationally, and internationally to improve research, extension, and instructional delivery. Additionally, the administration should create an assessment committee for each area to ensure compliance with every criterion. The university should also consider benchmarking activities with other higher education institutions within the national and global community to learn from their best practices.

Keywords — *Performance, Quality Assurance Initiatives, Local City Government*

I. Introduction

Quality Assurance (QA) has become a crucial component of higher education institutions, both locally and internationally. The success of local universities and colleges in implementing QA best practices is largely due to the support of quality managers, faculty members, and support staff. Each team member has an important role to play in promoting effective quality management.

With the constant advancement of technology, the demand for QA continues to rise. The efficiency of an organization is dependent on its processes and its human resources. According to Miranda and Reyes (2021), while higher education institutions have implemented results related to product and process, customer-focused, and workforce-focused outcomes, they have not fully adopted results related to leadership and governance, financial and market outcomes, and customer outcomes.

The Office of Institutional Quality Assurance and Governance of CHED (2017) has a vision for Philippine higher education that embodies principles of good governance and positive cultures of great quality, contributing towards nation-building. To achieve this vision, the Institutional Sustainability Assessment Evaluation Document (ISA-SED) is proposed as an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) tool that, when used reflectively by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), can help them evaluate their internal QA systems and ensure high-quality programs and outcomes. An established internal QA system is essential for an HEI to translate policies into successful outcomes.

Thus, it is essential to evaluate the quality assurance efforts of the local government university, with particular attention to its academic programs.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. What is the profile of Urdaneta City University in terms of the following?
 1. 1. Total Land Area
 1. 2. Number of Years of Existence
 1. 3. Number of Programs Offered
 1. 4. Number of Student Population
 1. 5. Number of Non-Teaching Personnel
 1. 6. Number of Faculty Members
 1. 7. Employee-Student Ratio
 1. 8. Faculty-Student Ratio
2. What is the level of performance of the Quality Assurance initiatives undertaken by Urdaneta City University along the following Key Result Areas as assessed by the middle management?
 2. 1. Governance and Management
 2. 2. Quality of Teaching and Learning

2. 3. Quality of Professional Exposure, Research, and Creative Work
2. 4. Support for Students
2. 5. Relations with the Community
3. What is the extent of readiness of Urdaneta City University for an Institutional Sustainability Assessment based on the performance of its quality assurance initiatives as assessed by the respondents?
4. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the quality assurance initiatives of UCU?

II. Methodology

The study used a descriptive research design which required a sound decision-making process to support thorough analysis in presenting, scrutinizing, and discussing the study's findings. This approach aligns with Ismail et al. (2022) who argue that employing a descriptive method in the theoretical aspect and analysis in the application is crucial. This helped the researchers draw meaningful conclusions and recommendations.

DATA GATHERING TOOLS

For the study, a questionnaire was used based on the standardized instrument from the CHED's Institutional Sustainability Assessment Self-Evaluation Document, also known as ISASED.

The questionnaire consists of various sections that highlight the Key Result Areas, which served as the basis for evaluating the context of parameters. The instrument elicited the university's institutional profile, which served as an appropriate template for the quality assurance initiative performance of Urdaneta City University. The initial portion of the questionnaire deals with the institution's profile variables, including the total land area, number of programs offered, years of existence, number of students, number of non-teaching staff, number of faculty members, employee-student ratio, and faculty-student ratio. The data was gathered and analyzed through the documents provided by the various offices. The second part of the instrument raises the question of Urdaneta City University's Quality Assurance initiative. Finally, the last part of the questionnaire inquires about the extent of readiness of Urdaneta City University's ISA-SED.

TREATMENT OF DATA

For Problem No.1, we used frequency (f) and percentages (%) to determine the profile of the institution. To make the calculation easier, we assigned numerical values to the categorized

profile variables. We reviewed the available documents for deeper examination to confirm our findings.

For Problem No.2, we employed the weighted mean (W.M) to determine the Quality Assurance initiative undertaken by Urdaneta City University.

For Problem No.3, we again used the weighted mean (W.M.) to determine the extent of readiness of UCUs ISA-SED. The Scoring Guide for Rating the Extent of the Readiness of the University ISA-SED is presented in Figure 1.

KRA Parameters	4	3	2	1	0
Presence of Mechanism	All aspects in place	Most aspects in place	Many aspects are in place	Some aspects in place	No aspects in place
Extent of Readiness	Fully Ready	Ready to a great extent	Ready to a moderate extent	Ready to a limited extent	Isolated initiatives
Outcomes	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Effectiveness of Implementation	Good practices that make it a model system	Good practice in most aspects	Good practices in many aspects	Good practices in some aspects	Lack of good practices

Figure 1. Scoring guide on the extent of readiness for ISA-SED

III. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents, interprets, and analyzes the data of the study.

Profile of Urdaneta City University

The profile provides and describes the background information of the institution in terms of the following: Total Land Area; Number of Years of Existence; Number of Programs Offered; Number of Student Population; Number of Non-Teaching Personnel; Number of Faculty Members; Employee-Student Ratio; and Faculty-Student Ratio.

Table 1:
Profile of Urdaneta City University

Variables	Indicators
Total Land Area	35, 544 sq. m.
Number of Years of Existence	57 years
Number of Programs Offered	53
Number of Student Population	14852
Number of Non-Teaching Personnel	314
Number of Faculty Members	461
Employee-Student Ratio	1:19
Faculty-Student Ratio	1:32

Total Land Area. Urdaneta City University spans a total land area of 35,544 square meters or 3.55 hectares. The campus houses at least 14 buildings that comprise 10 colleges and one graduate school. In addition to classrooms, students have access to the university's gymnasium, mini gymnasium, amphitheater, library, quadrangle, clinic, and other facilities. This implies that the land area provides ample space to accommodate the university's population of students and employees, with sufficient buildings and facilities in place.

Number of Years of Existence. The institution has been operating for approximately 57 years, since its establishment in 1966 by Dr. Pedro T. Orata, the founder and a recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award. Originally named Urdaneta Community College (UCC), it is recognized as one of the first community colleges in the Philippines and is considered a cornerstone of local colleges and universities in the country.

Number of Programs Offered. The university is currently offering 53 programs. These programs are managed by ten undergraduate colleges, namely: (1) College of Criminal Justice Education; (2) College of Business Management and Accountancy; (3) College of Hotel and Tourism Management; (4) College of Engineering and Architecture; (5) College of Teacher Education; (6) College of Information Technology Education; (7) College of Health Sciences; (8) College of Human Sciences; (9) College of Pharmacy; and (10) College of Arts and Sciences. In addition, UCU Graduate School offers graduate and post-graduate programs. According to Chamala et al. (2021), the administration considers program expansion a top priority. This is in response to the need to increase specialized disciplines that cater to a graduate program employing a multidisciplinary approach.

Number of Student Population. The Second Semester of the Academic Year 2022-2023 has 14,852 enrolled students, which is a significant increase compared to the first semester of the

Academic Year 2017-2018 which had 8,984 students. The university's steady increase in student population is a clear indication of its remarkable achievements and reputation. According to David J. et.al (2022), good governance practices of a high-quality and competitive university have a significant impact on the community.

Number of Non-Teaching Personnel. Urdaneta City University has 314 non-teaching personnel, including library staff, medical personnel, administrators, security management, and others. **Number of Faculty Members.** UCU's Human Capital Management reported a total of 461 faculty members in June 2023, comprising permanent, casual, and part-time faculty.

Employee-Student Ratio. The ratio of employees to students is 1:19, meaning each employee serves 19 students. This ensures adequate service.

Faculty-Student Ratio. To ensure quality instruction and effective classroom management, it is recommended that one teaching personnel be assigned to a maximum of 32 students (1:32) in a university setting. This allocation allows teachers to cater to the needs of each student, without compromising the quality of their instruction. In Wang et al.'s study (2022), student outcomes were significantly related to student-faculty ratios, but not consistently with other school factors.

Performance Quality Assurance Initiative of Urdaneta City University

Table 2 shows the Performance of the Quality Assurance Initiatives of UCU in terms of the KRA "Governance and Management" under the core indicator "Governance". As seen in the table, the highest weighted mean is within the parameter "Presence of Mechanism" which has a weighted mean of 3.59 and a descriptive equivalent of "All Aspects in place" while the lowest weighted mean is 3.38 on the parameter "Outcomes" which received a description equivalent of "Excellent".

Table 2:
 Performance of the Quality Assurance Initiatives in terms of the KRA Governance and Management

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Parameter
1. There is a system to ensure integrity and objectivity in the transaction of its business.	3.59	All aspects in place	Presence of Mechanism
2. The organization follows institutional processes with respect to governance because members of the governing body and management were selected based on clear guidelines and procedures.	3.47	Fully ready	Extent of Readiness
3. Administrators clearly articulate, follow and implement the guidelines set by the governing body.			
4. Decisions of the governing body are disseminated to the Urdaneta City University (UCU) community.			
5. There is a culture of transparency and integrity at all levels of the UCU, shown by the respect for the process, knowledge of guidelines and protocols, and observance of communication channels.	3.38	Excellent	Outcomes
6. Stakeholders are satisfied with the transparency, integrity, and objectivity of the governing body in decision-making.			
7. There is evidence that the UCU keeps the highest levels of ethical standards in its operations.	3.44	Good practices that make it a model system	Effectiveness of implementation, based on outcomes

Legend:

Numerical Value	Statistical Range	KRA Parameters			
		Presence of Mechanism	Extent of Readiness	Outcomes	Effectiveness of Implementation
		Descriptive Equivalent			
4	3.20-4.00	All aspects in place	Fully ready	Excellent	Good practices that make it a model system
3	2.40-3.19	Most aspects in place	Ready to a great extent	Very good	Good practice in most aspects
2	1.60-2.39	Many aspects in place	Ready to a moderate extent	Good	Good practices in many aspects
1	0.80-1.59	Some aspects in place	Ready to a limited extent	Fair	Good practices in some aspects
0	0.00-0.79	No aspects in place	Isolated initiatives	Poor	Lack of good practices

Table 3 on the next page contains the Performance of the Quality Assurance Initiatives of UCU in terms of the KRA Governance and Management under the Core Indicator Governance on the Element Strategic Vision. The table indicates that 3.53 is the highest weighted mean which belongs to the parameter “Effectiveness of implementation, based on outcomes” which has a descriptive equivalent of “Good practices that make it a model system”. The parameter "Extent of Readiness" had the lowest computed weighted mean of 3.22, which is equivalent to "Fully Ready" in terms of description. Academic institutions can make use of Kundu, et.al (2016) recommended checklist of standards for quality assurance initiatives.

Table 3:
Performance of the Quality Assurance Initiatives in terms of Strategic Vision

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Parameter
1. The strategic plan is well documented and disseminated to the organization. 2. There is a system for monitoring and assessing the achievement of goals. 3. The policies (academic, financial, quality assurance, and resource allocation) of the institution are consistent with the vision, mission, and goals of the institution.	3.34	All aspects in place	Presence of Mechanism
3. There was a process followed in formulating and approving the plan, which also allowed the participation of stakeholders. 4. There is a clear articulation of who are responsible and accountable for the implementation of particular parts of the strategic plan.	3.22	Fully ready	Extent of Readiness
5. Stakeholders support the strategic plan because they took part in putting it together. 6. The organization demonstrates robust performance according to its goals and desired outcomes.	3.38	Excellent	Outcomes
7. There is evidence that the strategic plan energizes the UCU in working towards its goals and targets.	3.53	Good practices that make it a model system	Effectiveness of implementation, based on outcomes

In Table 4, the Performance of the Quality Assurance Initiatives of UCU in terms of the KRA Quality of Professional Exposure, Research, and Creative Work under the Core Indicator Research Capability on the Element Research Strategy and Capacity is illustrated. The highest weighted mean is 3.41 with a descriptive equivalent of “All aspects in place”, it is on the parameter “Presence of Mechanism”. 1.34 is the rating of the parameter “Effectiveness of implementation, based on outcomes”, it has a descriptive equivalent of “Good practices in many aspects” and it is also the lowest weighted mean. This implies that the research productivity of the faculty has significant policy implications in terms of quality assurance initiatives of the institution as stressed by Moon et al., 2020.

Table 4:
 Performance of the Quality Assurance Initiatives on Professional Exposure, Research, and Creative Work under Research Strategy and Capacity

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Parameter
1. The UCU has a strategy and corresponding systems to 1) set research agenda; 2) manage, develop, apply, and assess research, and 3) continuously improve research capability of faculty and students.	3.41	All aspects in place	Presence of Mechanism
2. An office/person oversees the research strategy, systems and programs, as described above; oversees its outcomes/publications; helps manage resources; and assists in research linkages.	3.22	Fully ready	Extent of Implementation
3. Information on research program mechanisms and grants is disseminated regularly to faculty and staff.			
4. An active research community, composed of faculty, staff, and students, regularly publish and present papers in conferences.			
5. Faculty members have publications/ patents/ policy papers that contribute to new knowledge in the discipline and/or to national/regional development.	2.28	Good	Outcomes
6. Students and faculty have research competencies.			
7. Research exposure gives better opportunities for graduates to be employed in the relevant industry.			
8. There is evidence that faculty and student research outputs bring the UCU closer to meeting its institutional goals.	1.34	Good practices in some aspects	Effectiveness of implementation, based on outcomes

Table 5 shows the Performance of the Quality Assurance Initiatives of UCU in terms of the KRA Relations with the Community under the Indicator Extension Programs on the Element Extension and Outreach. With the highest weighted mean of 2.5.3a, the parameter “Presence of Mechanism” got the descriptive equivalent of “All aspects in place”. The lowest weighted mean is at 1.34 on the parameter “Effectiveness of implementation, based on outcomes”, the descriptive equivalent is “Good practices in some aspects”. This is supported by the study of Guevara (2021), that the Local City Government University has implemented a long-term extension policy in partnership with industries to address educational issues within city districts.

Table 5:
Performance of the Quality Assurance Initiatives Extension and Outreach Program

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Parameter
1. The UCU has a comprehensive plan and clear mechanisms for its extension programs that promote local/regional/national development.	3.38	All aspects in place	Presence of Mechanism
2. There is an office/person in charge of overseeing the mechanisms and support for its extension programs.	2.41	Ready to a great extent	Extent of Implementation
3. Faculty and students participate actively in the extension activities, including service-learning courses.			
4. The UCU aligns its extension program with its instruction and other academic activities according to its type:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Professional Institution - application of skills and competencies · College – use of creativity and innovation · University – use of research results 			
5. The institution contributes to local/regional/national development.	2.28	Good	Outcomes
6. There is evidence that community extension programs help the UCU to achieve its institutional goals.	1.34	Good practices in some aspects	Effectiveness of implementation, based on outcomes

Summary of the Extent of Readiness of Urdaneta City University’s ISA-SED The summary on the Extent of Readiness of UCU's Institutional Sustainability Assessment Self Evaluation as Assessed by Respondents can be seen in Table 8 of this study. The highest average weighted mean across all key areas falls under the KRA “Support for Students” on the parameter “Presence of Mechanism”, it has a rating of 3.46 which translates a descriptive equivalent of “All aspects in place” interpreted as “Very Ready”. The lowest average weighted mean tallied is under the KRA “Relations with the Community” on the parameter “Effectiveness of Implementation”, the rating recorded is at 1.65, and a descriptive equivalent of “Good practices in many aspects” translated to “Moderate Ready” based on the readiness scale. According to Dupra et al.'s study (2023), it is necessary to re-evaluate the readiness of HEIs in terms of documentation and improvement of their systems. This is to ensure effective and efficient delivery of academic programs to their stakeholders.

Table 6:
 Summary of the Extent of Readiness of Urdaneta City University's ISA-SED

Key Result Areas	AWM	Descriptive Equivalent	Parameters	Interpretation
Governance and Management	3.43	All aspects in place	Presence of Mechanism	Very Ready
	3.26	Fully ready	Extent of Readiness	Very Ready
	3.21	Excellent	Outcomes	Very Ready
	3.21	Good practices that make it a model system	Effectiveness of Implementation	Very Ready
Quality of Teaching and Learning	3.28	All aspects in place	Presence of Mechanism	Very Ready
	3.37	Fully ready	Extent of Readiness	Very Ready
	3.18	Very good	Outcomes	Ready
	3.00	Good practice in most aspects	Effectiveness of Implementation	Ready
Quality of Professional Exposure, Research, and Creative Work	3.32	All aspects in place	Presence of Mechanism	Very Ready
	3.21	Fully ready	Extent of Readiness	Very Ready
	2.70	Very good	Outcomes	Ready
	2.32	Good practices in many aspects	Effectiveness of Implementation	Moderately Ready
Support for Students	3.46	All aspects in place	Presence of Mechanism	Very Ready
	3.38	Fully ready	Extent of Readiness	Very Ready
	3.31	Excellent	Outcomes	Very Ready
	3.27	Good practices that make it a model system	Effectiveness of Implementation	Very Ready
Relations with the Community	3.39	All aspects in place	Presence of Mechanism	Very Ready
	2.69	Ready to a great extent	Extent of Readiness	Ready
	2.07	Good	Outcomes	Moderately Ready
	1.65	Good practices in many aspects	Effectiveness of Implementation	Moderately Ready

However, the subject faced certain threats that required careful consideration and mitigation strategies. The absence of affiliation with any accrediting body jeopardized the subject's reputation and limited its access to certain benefits. Delays in the grant of government subsidies, linked to RA 10931, could hinder the subject's financial stability and operational efficiency.

Additionally, the removal of the option to utilize a blended learning approach by CHED (Commission on Higher Education) could disrupt the subject's teaching methods and necessitate adaptation. Lastly, the limited infrastructure available to accommodate the total number of students in the event of a 100% face-to-face learning scenario posed challenges in terms of scalability and resources.

Armed with these insights from the SWOT analysis, the subject could chart a path forward by leveraging its strengths, addressing weaknesses, capitalizing on opportunities, and mitigating threats. By implementing strategic initiatives, fostering partnerships, and continuously adapting to the evolving educational landscape, the subject could position itself as a leading institution committed to delivering quality education and preparing students for success.

Figure 2. SWOT Analysis of Urdaneta City University’s ISA-SED Outcome


IV. Conclusion

1. The physical space available for the institution's facilities, infrastructure, and activities is enough. The institution is already established and offers a great number of programs to accommodate the substantial number of students and their academic preferences. In addition, there is a sufficient workforce dedicated to supporting the students consisting of a relatively favorable level of staff availability as well as a moderate level of teaching faculty.
2. The rules, policies, and guidelines set by the administration at Urdaneta City University comply with the standards set in the Institutional Sustainability Assessment as well as the area that focuses on student development in both academic and non-academic services. On the other hand, areas that center on research and extension services need improvement

especially on the part of effectiveness even though good practices are set in a lot of aspects to comply with the high standards set in the Institutional Sustainability Assessment.

3. KRA's Governance and Management Support for students is prepared for ISA-SED while KRA's Quality of Professional Exposure, Research and Creative Work, and Relations with the Community need further evaluation to increase its level of performance.
4. The SWOT analysis can be used to determine the problem areas as well as the good practices that should be maintained. It can also be used to come up with mitigation plans, development plans, and strategic planning that targets improvement on the monitoring processes across all key result areas.

V. Recommendations

1. The Urdaneta City University Administration may investigate areas of research and extension services by preparing a matrix of approved research, ongoing, published, and presented. Likewise, extension service may consider the monitoring, and evaluation as to viability and sustainability to attain the readiness of forthcoming ISA-SED evaluation.
2. The administration may consider the engagement of faculty, and non-teaching personnel in extension services and participation of faculty and students in local, national, and international fora for a research presentation.
3. Collaboration with other higher education institutions may established in the local, national, and international to strengthen the instructional delivery.
4. The administration may consider the creation of an assessment committee per area as to the compliance of every criterion.
5. The university may consider benchmarking activities in other Higher Education Institutions to look into their best practices in compliance with ISA SED.
6. The institution may mitigate the problem areas on the effectiveness of rules, policies, and guidelines, by conducting stakeholder engagement in the form of forums and consultations with relevant stakeholders such as employees, researchers, creative professionals, and community representatives.
7. A pre-evaluation may be conducted by inviting an external assessor to help in the compliance of each criterion.

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