

## Abstract

**Policy Diagnosis and Strategies for Higher Education Innovation (III):  
With a Focus on Improving National University Governance**

Bo-Eun, Moon(KEDI)

Jeung-Yun, Choi(KEDI)

Ji-Ha, Kim(KEDI)

Young-In, Seo(KEDI)

Ye-Lim, Yu(KEDI)

Hye-Ji, Gill(Chungbuk Univ.)

Do-Hee, Kwon(Yeonsung Univ.)

Sang-Mi, Park(KEDI)

This study was conducted in the last year of a three-year study titled "Policy Diagnosis and Strategies for Higher Education Innovation," with the purpose of helping make the autonomous management of universities easier on a macro level. Globally, university governance is emphasized as a key task in higher education reform. Even in Korea, there is great interest in policies on the democratic and cooperative management of universities. In particular, the need for the cooperative governance of national universities is rising, as they face conflicts among the members due to passive management or other governance issues. Therefore, comprehensive research on improving national university governance is needed with a view to establishing a reasonable governance system and more effective operation.

This study suggested the following four research questions based on its necessity and purpose. First, what are the concepts, structures, and components of national

university governance? Second, what are the current conditions and issues of national university governance? Third, what are the perceptions and needs of members regarding national university governance and how does society perceive it? Fourth, what are strategies and challenges for improving national university governance? The research methods included a literature survey, international case study, Delphi survey, focus group interviews (FGI), text big data analysis, and conferring with an expert council.

The main findings are detailed below:

According to the results of the Delphi survey, the concept of national university governance was defined as follows:

National University Governance

- Value: Founding values of national universities include public performance and accountability
- Subject: Various internal and external stakeholders of universities with authority and responsibility
- Purpose: To ensure sustainable development and healthy functioning of national universities as autonomous entities
- Method: Running reasonable systems and procedures based on cooperative and democratic communication
- Content: Important decision-making related to national university management and the structure and method of university operation

The national university governance structure comprises (1) the relationship between the government and national universities regarding the latter's foundation and management; (2) internal governance, which is the relationship between the president and the university, faculty, and administrative councils for cooperation and holding each other in check; and (3) auditors as an external governance body.

The study analyzed the status of national university governance based on regulatory data, and the findings are as follows: First, in terms of presidential elections, more than half of the universities relied on an indirect election system but many of them planned to convert to a direct one in the future. About half

of the universities allowed presidents to serve consecutive terms, and the candidate criteria differed from one university to another. Although faculty members, administrators, students, and teaching assistants could participate as voters, votes from students and administrators were reflected in the election results with a lower ratio. In the case of the recommendation committee, various members such as alumni and external stakeholders were allowed to participate.

Second, in terms of the formation and operation of the university council, the total number of members ranged from 11 to 30, and participating members included administrators, teaching assistants, students, external stakeholders, and faculty members, who comprised the largest proportion. The chairman was mostly elected from among its members, and the functions of the university councils were found to differ, as some councils allow only deliberation or deliberation and consultation, while others allow deliberation, consultation, and decision-making. Third, in terms of formation and operation of the faculty council, there were different formation methods such as election through faculty meetings and direct secret ballots by colleges; more than 80% of the universities ruled out the participation of administrative council members in such elections. Deliberation was a function most commonly assigned to the faculty council, but universities that authorize decision-making functions were also identified. Fourth, regarding the formation and management of the administrative council, most of them were chaired by the university president, and council members comprised various personnel such as the vice-president, graduate school deans, deans, directors, secretaries-general, and general managers, and their given roles included deliberation or decision making.

The following result was obtained from analyzing the issues of national university governance through the Delphi survey. First, issues regarding the relationship between the government and national universities were identified as the relationship with the Ministry of Education, improvement of the secretary-general system, and expansion of university financial support and the national university

network. Second, the internal governance issues included problems with the university presidential election and the authority of the president, university council formation and operation, roles of the administrative council, and the appointment of deans. Lastly, external governance issues were regarding external audits and evaluations.

The results of the focus group interviews conducted revealed that the internal members of national universities had the following perceptions: First, regarding the relationship between the government and national universities, problems related to the excessive influence of the government, bureaucratic management of university organizations and lack of policy consistency, distrust and lack of communication with universities, and dispatching of secretaries-general were perceived by the internal members. Second, they recognized the president's strong authority on academic affairs and decision making as well as issues regarding the presidential election and the presidential system. Third, they were also aware of problems due to the obligation of establishing the university council for internal governance, problems caused by the council creation and the participation ratio of the members, and issues regarding authority and status, role changes and conflicts of the faculty council, decision-making effectiveness of the fiscal committee, and questions concerning its expertise. In addition, the internal members also perceived representative issues of administrative staff organization, limitations of student participation in the decision-making process, and the problems with the deans' appointment. Fourth, external governance members recognized the controlling nature of evaluations and audits, issues with the expertise of the audit organization, problems of information disclosure, and issues of outsiders' participation in university management.

Next, the study conducted a text big data analysis on the perception and needs of the internal members of national universities to illustrate the following results: First, the internal members perceived the national university presidential system somewhat negatively. Second, the members of national universities understand the

interrelation, and it seems that there is a demand for invigorating the participation of students. Third, the perceptions of the members related to the audit and disclosure system were found to be negative, and the need for enhancing the expertise and credibility level of the external audit organization and strengthening the management of disclosed information was highlighted. Fourth, regarding the case of secretaries-general, given the fact that many negative words such as “one-sided” and “domination” were mentioned, improving the secretary-general system should also be considered. Fifth, roles, functions, and participation of various members including not only faculty members but also administrative staff and students were emphasized as keywords.

External social perceptions of national university governance were analyzed, and the results are as follows: First, the public opinion of the current presidential system of national universities is known to be negative, and discussion on improving the system is urgently needed. Second, the need for improving the perception of various members regarding national university governance was highlighted. Third, the perceptions on the changing role of evaluation and the management and inspection of disclosed information were illustrated. Fourth, the word “Ministry of Education” appeared frequently but had a correlation with negative words, which implies that improving the relationship between the government and universities is necessary. Fifth, although reports on national university governance have mainly focused on faculty members or presidents, there were an increasing number of issues regarding the development of regional national universities; thus, the need for participation of various stakeholders and the need for the expansion of national and regional support for national universities were confirmed.

Predicated on the abovementioned research results, the study proposed improvement strategies for national university governance and projects for follow-up research as follows: First, the purpose of improving national university governance is to promote sustainable development and healthy functioning of

national universities as autonomous entities through operational improvement of the national university governance system.

The improvement strategies were divided into (1) improvement of the relationship between the government and national universities; (2) improvement of the university presidential system; (3) improvement of internal governance; and (4) improvement of external governance. First, in order to improve the relationship between the government and national universities, the authors of this study suggest establishing a trust-based relationship between the government and national universities, expanding governmental support, improving regulations, introducing intermediate institutions, and improving the secretary-general system. Second, improvement of the university presidential election and other systems related to the presidential system were proposed. Third, establishing an internal decision-making structure, ensuring more effective operation, improving governance at the college level, fostering mutual respect and understanding among members, and enhancing the capacities and roles of members were proposed, aiming at improving internal governance. Fourth, improvement of the audit, disclosure, and evaluation systems and strengthening cooperation with local communities were suggested to improve external governance.

Follow-up research projects of this study were identified as follows: First, national and international case studies of successful management of national university governance, second, an analysis of the change process of national university governance, and, finally, studies on the governance of the overall national university system.

Keywords: national university governance, university presidential election, university council, decision-making structure, university management