

# University Leadership and Role Distribution

JOZEF HVORECKÝ

Vysoká škola manažmentu, Bratislava, Slovakia

**Abstract:** Universities are large corporate structures where many of the operation functions that are imperative for the effective operation of the university are not directly connected to education or research. Therefore, the structure of these managerial functions requires a variety of abilities and skills in which typical academicians are not trained and experienced. The specific aim of our paper is to dispute a Central Eastern European (CEE) conviction that only academicians can become appropriate academic leaders and occupy higher functions in the university organizational structure. Since a majority of positions at universities are knowledge workers, our paper uses a knowledge management perspective in our analysis of the university workforce. In pursuit of this, the following questions are discussed:

*Can the expected abilities and skills be categorized in cluster university knowledge workers? What do we expect of individuals belonging to a particular cluster? Are knowledge workers of every cluster present at our universities in sufficient proportions and numbers? Are these knowledge workers recognized and adequately rewarded?’*

Our analysis does not provide an optimistic outcome for universities in the CEE and in particular the Slovak Republic due to the intransient position and the limited desire and motivation of the academic community to transform its traditional structure.

**Keywords:** university knowledge worker; university human resources; university management; balancing explicit and tacit knowledge.

## 1 Introduction

Traditional managerial approaches are concentrated on people as manpower, not on exploitation of their intellectual capital. Peter Drucker [1] was the first one who pointed to the fact that people’s knowledge is another production power and awarded the persons who “think for living” by the term “knowledge worker”. These people’s primary source of income exploits their cerebral capacity and intellectual capability. Their position in the production process is very specific – they are rarely involved in it directly: which is a logical consequence of work distribution.

From this point of view, the situation at Slovak universities, and similarly at many universities in CEE, is not consistent with Drucker’s perspective of managerial positions. The university top management is not only selected among educators – they are expected to continue their education and research work in parallel with their executive functions. Such an approach is not consistent with the belief that the main aim of work distribution is specialization – the process of concentrating on and becoming an expert in a particular subject or skill. These employees of CEE universities are expected to be simultaneously an educator, a researcher and a top manager. Thus, these individuals can hardly develop his/her knowledge and intensify his/her skills in all three directions. In addition, the Slovak University Law [2] indirectly

mandates this. Rectors and Deans are elected for the periods of four years, and their deputies are nominated for the same period. All of them can hold the same function for one more four-year period only. Since their future destiny in the university environment is unspecified, they continue acting in the two other positions. As a result, these individuals often do not even try to become experts in management. Furthermore, the old adage applies to the Slovak university manager: ‘If you try to do too many things at once, you ultimately will not be successful in any one of them’. Thus, due to the academic administrators’ intensive managerial duties, both their skills as a manager and their expertise in education and research suffer.

## 2 Managing Knowledge Workers

In companies, knowledge workers occupy a variety of positions: designers, developers, marketing managers, etc. Each of them requires different knowledge, skills and experience influenced by their education, position, and practice. Knowledge worker positions also vary substantially and, consequently, shape the individuals occupying them. Due to this, a knowledge worker cannot be shifted from his/her position to a new one without detailed consideration whether the person is capable of adapting to it.

Traditional managerial approaches address organization of production. Thus, they do not fit a knowledge worker’s outcomes, which are often invisible or virtual [3]. Traditional management can be (to a certain degree) applied to explicit knowledge extension and depth – it can be tested and measured, which can hardly be functional in handling the knowledge worker’s tacit knowledge. Unfortunately, elite knowledge workers are “selling” the latter one, thus, moving the expert above average. Mládková [4] responded to this challenge by presenting tailored methods of approaching them, where the knowledge workers’ typical driver is implementation of motivational approaches over orders. In this, Mládková stresses that excellent knowledge workers are more motivated by difficult tasks than extrinsic rewards.

To find an appropriate motivation strategy is not possible without taking into account specifics of the particular branch of industry and the typical structure and functions of its knowledge workers. For example, Bohumelová and Hvorecký [5, 6] applied Knowledge Management to the field of exhibitions in museums and art galleries. Rábeková [7] exploited a similar dialogue-based approach to adult education. She designed and developed a method of facilitating educators’ potential via their collaboration with their would-be learners. In accord with her methodology, the learners become co-designers of their course – they collaborate on designing the content and educational approach. This method is appropriate for training of small groups of professionals in a narrow field relevant to their expertise [8]. Šestáková [9] points to the importance of distinguishing between different approaches to knowledge development for specialists executing higher positions in banking and finance.

Compared to the preceding examples, universities in the Slovak Republic (and other universities in the CEE) represent more complex bodies with huge numbers of specialists from very distant and diverse fields, often focusing on very broad and complex problems that border on the edge of existential bodies and knowledge. Solving difficult problems requires setting up very specific conditions and their systematic, uninterrupted development. Nonaka and Takeuchi [10] denoted the term “ba” as the environments designed and developed for knowledge workers to originate, dialogue, exercise and systemize their knowledge.

In complex environments (which universities undoubtedly are), building appropriate ba’s represents a key to success. Consequently, a substantial portion of knowledge workers’ effort

must be devoted to their design and development. To maximize the outcomes, work distribution is needed. To outline its directions and to classify them is our paper's aim. Thus, it might help us to understand better how the university goal-related duties can be accomplished to the benefit of its entire community.

In our paper, we will primarily concentrate on two problems of university management: first, on leadership, and second, on academic role distribution. In order to tackle the first problem, we will explore distinctions between book-smart and street-smart individuals. Using Kess' typology [11], where he divides knowledge workers into six categories, we will look at university workers' role assignment, where some members design and develop university's ba, while others exploit their outcomes to attain the maximum results in education and research. Without their mutual collaboration and information exchange, universities do not reach their expected standards of quality and high performance.

### 3 Book-smart vs. Street-smart Leaders

In this analysis, we will look first at: book smarts vs. street smart leaders.

At Central Eastern European universities, there is a consensus that the leaders must come from the university community on the principle *Primus inter pares* (first among equals) – the traditional principle presuming that the leader of the community must be elected from it. It refers to the Middle Age continental Europe with universities as the only islands of freedom of speech [12]. To protect the privileges and to minimize the risk of their loss, the promotion to leading positions within the academic community was based on a stepwise promotion, that being that candidates were only selected from those “consecrated” i.e., those whose loyalty and steadiness were vetted beyond any doubt. As universities have been built upon academic excellence, the leading positions were and in Central Eastern Europe still are occupied by individuals with high academic achievements. The Urban Dictionary [13] denotes such individuals as “book smart” ones in comparison to the opposing group of “street smart”. (This is not to say or infer that a book smart person can't have street smartness, but frequently there is a focus on one or the other).

The concepts and their definitions were originally developed to explore the “figuring” of smartness through the perspectives of the marginalized youth [14] and to capture why some of them are regarded as reputed personalities and/or leaders. The concept of street smartness is a direct challenge to the dominant discourse of smartness as it operates in schools and universities and uses a completely different criterion to measure it. To the marginalized youth, “street smarts” are more important because they are being able to maneuver through structures in their lives such as poverty, the police, street culture, and abusive “others.” Street smart individuals' intelligence is practical. It has been gained using their specific experiential way, primarily through trials and errors or by self-learning. They tend to be impromptu, are ready to take risk and capable to solve sudden problems in the event of crisis. A street smart individual has a lot of common sense and knows what's going on in the world. This person knows what every type of person has to deal with daily and understands all groups of people and how to act around them. He/she also knows all the current changes going on in the “streets” and everywhere else and knows how to make his/her own right decisions, knows how to deal with different situations and has his/her own independent opinions. He/she occasionally sets up his/her own rules of game which are then accepted by his/her neighborhood by the power of authority.

Conversely, the school smart beings are valued by “well-mannered” communities especially for their predictable and systematic behavior. They have highly developed analytical skills obtained during their education at schools and universities and further professional development. They think things through, tend to be organized and thoroughly prepared with having pre-elaborated back-up plans in case something goes wrong. During the years spent in their profession, they learned to rely on their expert knowledge. In extreme cases, they presume that their systematic and well-elaborated methods applied in their beloved area can equally be applicable to every life situation. As a result, they often fail because the situation requires a substantially different approach. As an example, let us mention a university president – a former marine biologist – whose every example in management is related to dissection of a sea animal.

The antinomies and similarities between those two natures can be learned from Blair’s book [15]. This text shows that entrepreneurs have to become (at least to a certain degree) street smart in order to successfully compete in their “entrepreneurial jungle”. Universities are organizations and, despite their distinctions from production-oriented bodies, they share many features with them. Likely, the most important one is the necessity to compete with all other entrants present in the same field of activity. This also means that academic leaders have to possess a certain degree of street smartness. A good academic leader has to be familiar with all the current changes going on in the “streets” (i.e. not only within his/her internal academic community but also in its surrounding world), to have his/her own independent opinions, to be able to formulate and take his/her own right decisions, and to have the skill to deal with evolving situations including needed compromises. It is necessary to add that many of these skills are also part of university courses. Thus, it implies that compared to “pure” street-smart leaders, the street smart university managers do not need to rely on their uninformed experience only; they can exploit knowledge stored in books and other sources. However, in reality the book-based knowledge is insufficient for excellence in leadership (it is often the debated topic whether leadership can be taught). If it truly could be obtained through books alone, every attentive reader could become a top manager. In business life, there are many situations in which fully-rational decisions do not bring optimal solutions. Also, data show that the managers apply rationality in their decisions much less frequently than the readers of textbooks on Management might think [16].

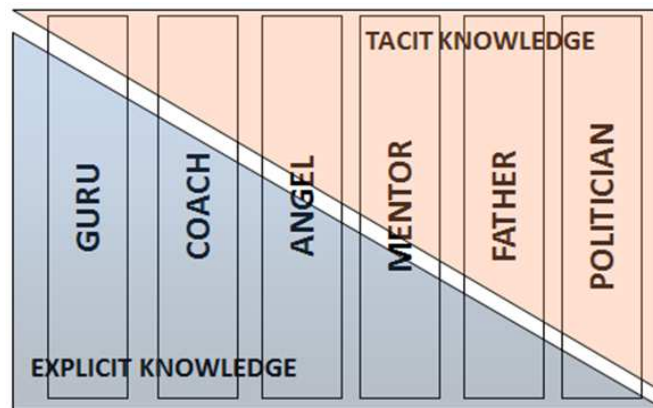
#### **4 Role Distribution Among Knowledge Workers**

Using the Knowledge Management terminology [17], book smartness is primarily based on explicit knowledge whilst street smartness benefits predominantly from tacit one. Prospective academic leaders must demonstrate both of them in accord with their positions and situations they face. The dominance of book smartness with its dominating accent on explicit knowledge and suppression of intuition becomes a worldwide issue. The numbers become a “golden calf” to be praised by scientists [18]: *“In the Netherlands, counting output started off with the number of publications, then international publications, after which only English-language publications, counter hereafter articles in high-impact journals, and eventually often-cited publications (leading to a high ‘h-index’).”* All this leads to the suppression of intuition, creativity, comprehensive and long-term thorough analysis and synthesis.

In this section, we therefore study the relationship between explicit and tacit knowledge. Many of the readers of this paper are aware of the “knowledge iceberg”, where Nonaka and Takeuchi in their book *The Knowledge-Creating Company* [19] highlight the distribution of explicit and tacit knowledge. Following our above specification, by explicit knowledge we

designate book-smart-oriented knowledge as facilitating, systematic, well-organized knowledge; i.e., “true-academic”. Tacit knowledge is knowledge which is more intuitive, difficult to describe n level of risk-taking. Exploiting their proportions in an individual will help us to form several levels of them, make smoother distinctions between “pure book smarts” and “pure street smarts” and demonstrate their influence on the university management.

Kess [11] identified six categories of knowledge workers and distributed them by different proportions between their tacit and explicit knowledge – see Figure 1.



**Fig. 1** Kess' typology of knowledge workers

#### A. Guru

Gurus have deep professional knowledge of their specific area. Their interests are strongly connected to his/her expertise and may not go far beyond it. Their long and rigorous expertise helps them to solve their professional problems in a creative and innovative way – more efficiently than most specialists working in the same field would do. Their tacit knowledge is both extensive and intensive in their domain of expertise but may not be applicable in areas outside it. This makes the gurus a bit “autistic”. As a result, they are quite impractical in solving problems beyond their own specialization. When they are exactly defined (mostly as a narrow field of science or technology), they demonstrate their high qualities.

The guru has a book smart oriented personality. As a pure thinker, he/she is entirely focused on his/her field of expertise and is devoted to it. (Often, he/she has never been required or expected to perform anything else.) The amount of his/her field-oriented knowledge can be tremendous but it is primarily tied to his/her daily routine whatever “routine” it is. As an indirect result of his/her external interests, he/she tries to measure all the world by the criteria of his discipline and, whenever it is possible, expresses his/her opinions by numbers or formulas. In the University environment, the individuals with this style of thinking create and enforce scientometrics [20] as a quality measure only and are convinced that it is the best metrics. Often, their most effective place within the universities is laboratory settings, where the university will benefit from their knowledge and they are most happy as their expertise will be maximized here. Interestingly, even gurus working in humanities tend to stress exact components of their discipline. They concentrate on introducing solid and rigid terminology and on defining and utilizing strict rules of manipulation with the terms. This helps them to advance and promote the formalized subdivisions of humanities. Their systematic character corresponds to their orientation and mentality.

A problem with gurus can be their unwillingness to share their knowledge with their neighborhood in order to hold “knowledge power” i.e. a disciplinary power [21] based on strengthening their own position by keeping certain knowledge exclusive for themselves and by prohibiting others from obtaining it – they keep it close to the chest so to speak and use it as a source of power.

### *B. Coach*

The coach is also a specialist in a narrow and well-defined discipline but – unlike a guru – he/she also comprehends the importance of making connections between his/her field and the rest of the world. He/she is interested in them, in their mutual intersections and their reciprocated influences. He/she is capable of innovativeness, not only inside his/her specialization, but also in creating new links between it and its surroundings. Due to this, the coach understands informal (unspoken) requirements on his/her field’s outcomes applicability. It makes him/her capable to tailor these outcomes to their future users’ needs with respect to their qualification, mentality and habits.

Coaches are those who bring gurus’ results to life. The combination of their expert (explicit) knowledge with knowledge relevant to their field (tacit) bridges the newly gained guru’s knowledge with partner fields such as engineering, technology, psychology, marketing, education and others. Coaches are often ready to take a step out (of their domain and specialty) and search for applications of their “mother” specialization. Often, they can ignite interdisciplinary research or open a new research field. While gurus’ dreams are discoveries, coaches are satisfied with inventions because they look for prosperity coming from new knowledge. At universities, they often benefit in positions oriented towards collaboration with the university community partners in industry, social services, health care, education, etc.

The coaches’ personal characteristics are highly valued around the world because they communicate their university’s results to the public. Unfortunately, it does not apply in our universities in Slovakia. The accreditation criteria in the Slovak Republic (and often other CEE nations as well) expect everyone to have a narrow orientation. The accreditation bodies do not support interdisciplinary activities [22]. Due to its standards, the Slovak accreditation commission often refuses to recognize an interdisciplinary-oriented research publication because the paper does not fit within a clearly defined “box”. As a result of this indirect pressure, interdisciplinary studies have been substantially reduced during the last decade. Similarly, it often discounts and neglects the value of inventions, new surgery methods and other innovative approaches and techniques. For example, a coach who is absent at Slovak universities is a “textbook writer” – an individual capable of presenting his/her field of knowledge in the way relevant for novices. Again, this function is not adequately valued by university officials and does not substantially contribute to the person’s promotion. Surprisingly, uninformed outside observers may get the opposite feelings because the publication of learning materials (named “skriptá”) is an obligation for promotion to the docent or associate professor position. However, the applicant can frequently write material of any quality – there is no rigorous checking and balances, so many works of low quality, sometimes even plagiarized, are passed through.

Unless the Slovak tertiary education system develops incentives to activate and incentivize its potential coaches, no progress in this area will become noticeable in the near future. The coaches of all directions will remain extinct species.

### *C. Angel*

Angels are facilitators, so called engines of progress. They do not need to belong among the top field specialists; they build their optimal work conditions. Their main role is to facilitate the development of appropriate ba for other knowledge workers – “true” field specialists (gurus and coaches). Their contribution to their particular field is made indirectly by assigning needed resources or by their capability to acquire them and to control their effective and efficient utilization. The angel’s tacit knowledge must include a broad understanding of their surroundings and the disciplines in the field and the ability to identify areas in which his/her team’s efforts can be expanded in ways which will bring the maximum benefits. The angel’s determination is critical for the success of the team.

Angels are another extinct species at Slovak universities. As stated above, they are the persons taking care of the optimal working conditions for others. They should systematically build working environments, enhance positive atmosphere and build and develop organizational culture for all partners. They do not need to be top experts but have good orientation in the field. They must possess organizational skills and emotional potential to create friendly atmosphere to maximize the efforts of the team and to “sell” them to the community in order to gain further resources for the team’s growth, progress and prosperity.

Universities in the Slovak Republic and elsewhere in CEE nations which want to prosper should open relevant positions and assign appropriate persons who could serve as potential “Angels”. For example, former researchers have solid and well-consolidated knowledge making them capable of estimating future trends and looking behind horizons. The university should give these individuals decisional power (including finance) to support the university’s progress in promising areas selected by them. Often, no additional new positions would need to be created, e.g. when professors emeritus could be used in this capacity. Angel’s roles could also be executed by the heads of departments. Unfortunately, in Slovakia, the decisional power of department heads is very limited by the University Act [2]. In addition, the budget of Slovak public universities is stated separately for every calendar year. Thus, this restricts their freedom of long-term planning and may make angels’ long-term visions obsolete.

#### *D. Mentor*

Both angels and mentors are characterized by their balance between tacit and explicit knowledge. While angels are oriented to the development of their field of knowledge, mentors are typically willing to share their knowledge with the community. In this way, they prepare the followers, who will presumably join their field of interest. Their tacit knowledge must, therefore, include the ability to select gifted candidates. They will deliver their knowledge, experience and skills to them. The mentors also contribute to the development of their field by organizing its “marketing” i.e. by presenting it to the public. (Here, the term “marketing” is used in a very broad sense describing any promotion activity and publicity related to the field/product/idea.) By their daily activities, the mentors guarantee that the field will continue to exist and will remain vital.

In a way, the mentors’ key role is to guarantee that the university will fulfill its functions at the expected level of quality, i.e. they make the future come. As educators, they pave the road to the massive application of gurus’ and coaches’ knowledge by designing and developing new study programs, by verifying vitality of their ideas, by spreading the concepts among laymen, by designing, developing and trying new teaching methodologies and performing experiments in laboratories, and so on. They cooperate with gurus in order to perform their respective activities in their intended (simplified, public-oriented) ways and communicate with angels, who plan and sponsor these activities.

Often, the mentors also collect information from external sources – research centers and leading universities – in order to facilitate design of an innovative and competitive university vision and to develop a realistic strategy for its implementation. The university must have an army of high quality mentors to fulfill its functions in both education and research. To keep their faithfulness, their efforts should be regularly recognized and adequately rewarded.

#### *E. Father*

The father represents the “face” and the historical background of the business. For his/her organizational neighborhood, he/she serves as a symbol. (In our interpretation, the “family” can be any team glued by its members’ collective vision, values and collaborative activities.) Father’s knowledge is strongly combined with his/her “family” values. The “father’s” sheer presence ensures to the outsiders that everything is as it should be, i.e., demonstrates historic continuity. As Kess [11] shows, fathers play their critical role in two moments of life: during launching of the company and during its depression. In the first case, their enthusiasm can inspire the others and lead them towards new aspirations. In the second case, he/she has to demonstrate the team’s vitality and engage it in its regeneration. Hence, the father has to be a compassionate leader. In academy, he/she has to be capable of setting up a holistic vision across the university’s research and study fields.

Currently, one can hardly speak about any true fathers at Slovak universities. “Being a father” is a lifelong duty and must be taken by a person who is ready to dedicate his/her soul to it. For that reason, fathers are quite exceptional in all organizations. In addition, at universities, another problem arises. Due to the size and complexity of these structures and organizations, it is not easy to find a person with a vision covering the entire (or at least substantial) field of their interests. For this reason, he/she can hardly be found among book-smart persons. To understand and properly interpret the mutual interests of many groups with frequently contradicting interests, a street-smart personality is required. Therefore, it implies that the university top management should be selected from among fathers.

In Slovakia, as well as other CEE nations, this is a difficult task due to legislative mandates. The University Act [2] limits duration of academic functions to the maximum of eight years. This same act also gives significant power to self-governing bodies (the academic senates). One can express it as follows: “*Rectors and Deans are responsible for the University but have no power while academic senates have power, but no responsibility*” [23]. The fathers can, therefore, lack the power to implement their visions. They can manage them under the presumption that they persuade the academic senates to follow their visions. Unfortunately to them, many Slovak academic communities are conservative and not ready to leave their “comfort zones”. Consequently, they are not ready to accept those visions which threaten to disrupt the status quo.

Currently, a new national strategy of education named Learning Slovakia is under preparation [24]. Hopefully, it will give more autonomy to universities. This could ignite (at least some) universities to form an organizational structure which simplifies implementation of their fathers’ visions. Hopefully, some “fathers” capable of designing and implementing positive visions still live and will elevate the system.

#### *F. Politician*

The last category of knowledge workers identified by Kess [11] is the politician. For Kess, politicians have to have substantial knowledge of local, national and even international policies relevant to their business operations. In organizations, they lead the varied bodies of the entire



company (or of its relevant part). They communicate on behalf of their groups and present their interests to their surroundings. The role of politicians is to “open the door” of a particular business to the society, e.g. by building demand, getting public and private sources, as well as making steps towards changing legislation in the directions suitable for his/her business. It all implies that he/she must have excellent negotiation skills, too.

The politician has to be capable of creating the organization’s long-term visions and of implementing short and long-term strategies. The politician does not need to be capable of solely formulating these strategies, but he/she must be a key voice in helping to shape them, and very importantly, in communicating these strategies both inside and outside the organization. The true politician puts an equal sign between his/her personal success and the success of the vision he/she (re)presents.

Among all types of knowledge workers, the politicians’ dependence on their tacit knowledge (e.g. on instincts and intuition) is the greatest. In order to obtain quick and short-term gains and results, they must be capable of performing qualified guesses which must have a high probability of success. These estimates should address social trends, business opportunities and risks, market trends, future innovative technologies, areas of investment and others. Since not all of the guesses will be correct, they must be capable and able to orient themselves in unexpected situations and to find the path to navigate through their mistakes and troubles.

## **5 University as a Collaborative Workplace For Different Types of Knowledge Workers**

Do not number any page of your contribution. It is a duty of the

Based on the above cases of book-smart gurus and street-smart politicians, one can easily guess that Kess’ knowledge typology predetermines success of a particular type of knowledge worker in a particular position. The human resources policy at universities should respect the typology in assigning people into their positions. Not doing so would lead to their individual discomfort and sub-optimal performance.

For example, the gurus are “pure thinkers” focused on their field of experience (and not looking much around). The positions of leading researcher, as previously mentioned, are appropriate for them. In such a role they can concentrate on their topics and exploit their explicit and field-oriented tacit knowledge to the maximum. They will not be troubled and distracted by other duties. To create optimum working conditions for them should be a duty of others, e.g. coaches within their field of expertise. In contrast, placing such people outside their narrow scope of knowledge would require them to change their orientation and might result in unwanted problems. In this case, they would most likely continue applying their formerly learned routines to the new field (mistakenly) presuming that they are omnipotent and applicable to all life situations. The usage of scientometrics as an omnipotent measuring method of research, technology and innovation outcomes is a typical example of such a faulty practice. It neglects the fact that research publications must have their added value(s) exceeding their sheer existence.

This leads us to proposing a model of role distribution at universities. Its application presumes that the current management is able to recognize the potential of its knowledge workers, to motivate them, to select the best fit for people in respective positions, and to organize their optimal collaboration. Thus, following the dictum for [4], knowledge workers

can't be ordered to execute a particular task; they must be invited to join the respective team(s). Therefore, the university processes must be based on a voluntary process with a focus on intensive collaboration among its knowledge workers. In the existing university environment, the model should work as follows:

- Fathers propose their vision of the university development; for example, establishment of a new study program or research field. The motivation or impulse to do so will likely come from coaches who have discovered new opportunities for the university's activities due to their communication with gurus and mentors and their (coaches') capability to excerpt innovation elements from their notes.
- Politicians evaluate their suggestions and decide which of them might be worthy of "investment", i.e. of their implementation as a new element of the university's profile.
- The fathers then invite coaches to design the research or educational project. The fathers' responsibility will be to build bridges between existing (traditional) fields and the proposed ones, in order to find appropriate "marketing" strategies, as well as to motivate relevant candidates to join the concept – especially among gurus (in the case of research projects) and mentors (for study programs).
- When the vision is approved, politicians and fathers invite angels to start forming conditions for its implementation inside the university (including inviting appropriate external staff to relevant positions). The politician's role will be to find external financial and organizational support for it. (That's why the marketing strategies must be already prepared.)
- When the new field gets its final green light and relevant ba's have been built, gurus and mentors are invited to accomplish the vision.
- Eventually, the loop can start again.

Notice that the model defines the roles slightly differently. For example, the father is unlikely the founder of the university. As the lifespan of universities is counted in tens or even hundreds of years, he/she is rather the person who fulfils the father's role of intensive constant support: He/she guarantees that his/her university "family" will not come into a recession or, if so, it will get out of it and prosper again. He/she is, therefore, a person guaranteeing that its academic trek will follow the needs of the society, lead them and benefit of them.

Similarly, the politicians should set up the university policies and not get involved in politics made by political parties at the national or regional level. On the other hand, keeping the appropriate numbers of fathers and politicians is a condition sine qua non for the academic institution. Their abundance might lead to struggle, possibly "wars", among them – with disastrous consequences.

On the other hand, all study branches and areas of research should have their own gurus, coaches, angels, mentors and fathers. They will guarantee their development in their respective academic fields. To progress, they should cooperate with each other on the development of interdisciplinary areas. There is no reason to waste their precious time by internal struggles. Sooner or later these would be reflected in the university image as shown in [23].

In reality, the role distribution in the above meaning does not exist at Slovak universities. Their traditions (verbally also expressed by the accreditation rules [22]) expect each and every academician to become a guru in his/her discipline. This community mindset discourages potential and appropriate candidates to aspire to other roles "until they reach the guru status".

Then, it is usually too late to reorient the person's knowledge, skills and mentality as the following examples indicate:

- A politician cannot stay in the position of a true guru. The guru must be strongly focused on activities in his/her field of professional knowledge. As every field develops quickly, he/she will soon lose the contact with its limits and stops being a guru.
- A guru does not fit the role of a politician. The politician must be equally open to the needs of all university branches. He/she cannot prefer one towards the others – conversely, he must design and develop the optimal opportunities for the most prospective ones, perhaps by lessening those of his/her “parental” one.

All this indicates the inevitability to educate all categories of knowledge workers. The process is to be long-lasting but should start as soon as possible; otherwise, no progress will be made.

## 6 Knowledge Workers' Leadership Duties

The described typology can serve as a framework for the human resource departments of those universities which wish to become Learning Organizations [17]. Their organizational learning should primarily concentrate on the most urgent challenges [25, 26]:

- **Recent failures and their remedy:** About a quarter of high school graduates leave Slovakia to study abroad, primarily in the Czech Republic. The fathers and mentors should concentrate on the roots of the problems and on developing educational methodologies attracting them not to leave or to return.

In 2012, the Slovak Accreditation Commission was expelled from ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The fathers should redesign the university philosophy and change its priorities to make it compatible with the ENQA principles. The politicians should ask for implementing these measures in legislation and returning Slovakia to the European mainstream.

- **Changing the current practices:** No Slovak university belongs to 500 top universities in the ARWU ranking [27]. The university strategy should focus on employing only the mentors, coaches and gurus capable of demonstrating internationally recognized outcomes and get rid of those who produce average and low-quality ones.

To a high degree, the lagging behind is caused by almost-zero academic mobility. Most educators and researchers stay at the same department for all their lives. Their everlasting stability reduces their readiness to get adapted to ever-changing conditions and look over their local horizons. Again, the politicians should concentrate on measures leading to more intensive mobility and getting “fresh blood” from outside their institution.

- **Building universities of the future:** Slovak (as well as most CEE) universities prioritize the so-called Humboldt model. It puts research at the top, followed by education, and neglects the third university role – service to community. Šima and Pabian [28] proved that the Humboldt model was never implemented to its full extent because it fits adequately to the doctoral study only. At Bachelor and Master levels, the university is more oriented towards “mass production” of professionals requested by business and industry. With the increasing role of research and development in product and services innovation, the collaboration between industry and universities

is intensified and leads to a new model – the entrepreneurial university [29]. This concept is factually unknown in Slovakia and exceptional in CEE. Some acts included in the Slovak legislation contradict it directly or indirectly. Logically, most universities do not build visions which would respect it.

Generally, CEE universities work insufficiently on their development towards the most contemporary university models and their sustainability. They are in need of enlightened leaders – especially Fathers and Politicians. Without their deep professional involvement, there will hardly be any progress because there is no one ready to set up visions and specify milestones on the road to them. Some of the hindrances causing their absence are caused by the legislation. For example, the rectors and deans are elected for four years and they cannot occupy their posts for more than two consecutive terms. Due to that, many of them do not see a reason to professionalize their management-oriented knowledge and leadership skills. Without relevant modifications in legislation, the progress is hindered.

Nevertheless, a considerable portion of guilt falls on the Slovak academic community. It does not do intentional harm to universities; its guilt lies in something else. The academic community is:

- **Conservative:** It refuses all changes that might modernize the university environment. Recently, the eight biggest universities have signed a document in which they rejected the proposal Learning Slovakia and the amendment to the University Act changing the legal status of the Slovak Accreditation Commission [30]. Both documents want to open the door to the international academic community and local stakeholders.
- **Passive:** Its passivity is an indirect consequence of the conservatism. To avoid any changes, the academicians do not come up with initiatives that would lead to innovations and might affect status quo. For example, the above-mentioned refusal was not accompanied by a proposal what else to do for modernizing the tertiary education system.

## 7 Conclusions

Thank Slovakia belongs to a small group of countries whose quality control mechanism is not compatible with European standards. To comply with the Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) 2015 standards [31], the university should build its own scaffolding, thus supporting the design, development and critical control of its own activities based on Kess' typology. The shift should primarily lead to lessening the accent on explicit knowledge, to higher recognition of the tacit one and to facilitating the collaboration among the knowledge workers of all types.

Unfortunately, the author is quite pessimistic about Slovak universities implementing some of the aforementioned changes in the foreseeable future. Many of them are divided into smaller alliances by particular interests or groups of departments and faculties. In addition, to some extent, the current ill-fated state-of-the-art is caused by the low budget assigned to public universities and education in general [22]. Also, it is allocated for one year only. It limits any long-term planning. Therefore, the role of fathers and politicians is very rare or non-existent.

A substantial number of Rectors and Deans are, therefore, convinced that the excellence in research and education will automatically appear with greater funds [30] and refuse to make any changes prior to the substantial budget increase. Their fear is not complete fiction. The lack

of money leads to tensions among university faculty. There is a real danger that releasing these tensions might lead to open wars between the various parties or even to the total collapse of the institution. At the same time, they neglect the fact that an increase in the university budget will not automatically lead to better management and that a university budget (high or low) does not correspondingly translate to better fiscal and operational management.

The proposed Learning Slovakia program [22] presumes that the organizational structure of a university would be in its hands, and with this, the university could modify it as desired. Although the universities are aware that their current strongly hierarchical structure is outdated, they are afraid of changing it. However, their organizational structure cannot change until they have got sufficient numbers and proportions of knowledge workers in all six directions. To respond to the above described challenges, the roles of Politicians, Fathers and Mentors in the university's sustainable development should be strengthened. To prepare the future changes, the management should pay its attention to their education. This preparatory stage could also reduce the current conservatism and passivity.

It is obvious that the organizational culture of Slovak universities, as well as others in this group of nations in the CEE, must change significantly. In the previous years, their growth was primarily extensive [32]. This way does not offer further potential due to the declining demographic curve [22]. Incoming changes must address the quality of tertiary education, in particular its diversity. However, to change is to upset the status quo, but as Peter Drucker said: "Not all change is improvement, but without change there is no improvement". He further said: "Change is a gift – it is an opportunity to start again" [33]. Thus, it is change that is needed to bring Slovakia and other CEE universities in line with Universities in the 21st century.

## Acknowledgments

The author expresses his gratitude to Prof. Arthur Rubens for his consultation and support during preparation of this paper.

## Literature

References to other publications should be in the Harvard style, see <http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>

*Reference to a journal article:*

1. DRUCKER, P. F., 1957. *Landmarks of Tomorrow*. New York : Harper & Row, 270 pp.
2. Zákon o vysokých školách, č. 131/2002 Z. z.
3. HVORECKÝ, J., 2016. Knowledge of University Knowledge Workers. In: *Smart City 360°*, pp. 783-789. Springer International Publishing.
4. MLÁDKOVÁ, L., 2012. *Management of Knowledge Workers*. Bratislava : IURA Edition, 190 pp.
5. BOHUMELOVÁ, M. and HVORECKÝ, J., 2015. Digitized art promotes the cultural heritage. In: *Emerging eLearning Technologies and Applications (ICETA), 13th International Conference on*, 5 pp. IEEE.
6. BOHUMELOVÁ, M. and HVORECKÝ, J., 2016. Museums and Galleries: From Traditional to Learning organizations. In: *Emerging eLearning Technologies and Applications (ICETA), 13th International Conference on*, 7 pp., IEEE.

7. RÁBEKOVÁ, L., 2016. *Vzdelávacie stratégie pre malé skupiny špecialistov*. PhD. Thesis, Vysoká škola manažmentu v Trenčíne, 206 pp.
8. RÁBEKOVÁ, L. and HVORECKÝ, J., 2015. Learning Strategies for Small groups of Professionals. *Proceedings of the international conference on Interactive Collaborative Learning (ICL)*, Florence.
9. ŠESTÁKOVÁ, M., 2016. New Demands for Abilities and Skills of Knowledge Workers in the Financial Sector. In: *International Workshop on Knowledge Management*, Trenčín : Vysoká škola manažmentu v Trenčíne.
10. NONAKA, I., TAKEUCHI, H., 1995. *The Knowledge Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation*. Oxford University Press. UK. 304 pp.
11. KESS, P., 2014. Knowledge transfusion from external sources to small and medium companies. *Proceedings of the conference „Human capital without borders“*, Portorož, Slovenia, pp. 1157-1164.
12. HVORECKÝ, J., 2004. From Secret Brotherhoods to Knowledge Factories: Slovak and European University Transition. In: *Bruno S. Sergi, William T. Bagatelas (eds.): The Slovak Economy and EU Membership*. Bratislava : IURA Edition.
13. Urban Dictionary: Street Smart. Available at <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=street%20smart>.
14. HATT, B., 2007. Street smarts vs. book smarts: The figured world of smartness in the lives of marginalized, urban youth. *The Urban Review*, 39(2), pp. 145-166.
15. BLAIR, R. and D. YAEGER, D., 2013. Nothing to Lose, Everything to Gain: How I Went from Gang Member to Multimillionaire Entrepreneur. New York : Penguin Group.
16. HVORECKÝ, J., ŠIMÚTH, J. and LICHARDUS, B., 2013. Managing Rational and Not-Fully-Rational Knowledge. *Acta Polytechnica Hungarica*. Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 121-132.
17. HVORECKÝ, J. and KELEMEN, J., 2011. *Readings in Knowledge Management*. Bratislava : Iura Edition.
18. HALFFMAN, W. and RADDER, H., 2015. The Academic Manifesto: From an Occupied to a Public University, *Minerva*, Vol. 53, No. 2.
19. NONAKA, I., TAKEUCHI, H., 1995. *The Knowledge-Creating Company*. Oxford Press, 305 pp.
20. Wikipedia, Scientometrics. Available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientometrics>
21. HUCZYNSKI, A. A. and BUCHANAN, B., 2013. *Organizational Behavior* , 8th ed. Pearson, Harlow, p. 770.
22. Akreditačná komisia Vlády SR, Kritériá akreditácie. Available at: <http://www.akredkom.sk/index.pl?tmpl=kriteria>.
23. HVORECKÝ, J., 2015. *Testament vedca*. Bratislava : Promedia, 105 pp.
24. BURJAN, V., FTÁČNIK, M., JURÁŠ, I., VANTUCH, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, E., VOZÁR, L., 2017. Učiace sa Slovensko, Národný program rozvoja výchovy a vzdelávania, Bratislava : Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR,. Available at [https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/6987\\_uciace\\_sa\\_slovensko.pdf](https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/6987_uciace_sa_slovensko.pdf).
25. HVORECKÝ, J., 2013. A Transformation of Education Inspired by Knowledge Management. In: *Proceedings of ICETA 2013*, Starý Smokovec, Slovakia, pp. 159 – 164.
26. HVORECKÝ, J. a VIŠŇOVSKÝ, E., 2017. Universities Should Also Learn. *Proceedings of ICL 2017*, Budapest, pp. 1481 – 1491.

27. Academic Ranking of the World Universities. Available at:  
<http://www.shanghairanking.com/ARWU2017.html>.
28. ŠIMA, K. and PABIAN, P., 2013. *Ztracený Humboldtův ráj*, Praha : Slon.
29. RUBENS, A., SPIGARELLI, F., CAVICCHI, A., RINALDI, C., 2017. Universities' third mission and the entrepreneurial university and the challenges they bring to higher education institutions. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*. Vol. 11 (2017), Issue: 03, pp.354-372
30. Stanovisko výskumných univerzít k návrhu novely zákona o vysokých školách a návrhu zákona o zabezpečovaní kvality vysokoškolského vzdelávania. Available at:  
[http://uniba.sk/detail-aktuality/back\\_to\\_page/aktuality-1/article/stanovisko-vyskumnych-univerzit-k-navrhu-novely-zakona-o-vysokych-skolach-a-navrhu-zakona/](http://uniba.sk/detail-aktuality/back_to_page/aktuality-1/article/stanovisko-vyskumnych-univerzit-k-navrhu-novely-zakona-o-vysokych-skolach-a-navrhu-zakona/)
31. Standards and Guideline for Quality Assurance in the European higher Education Area. ENQA, Brussels, 2015.
32. NESTOROVÁ-DICKÁ, J., 2013. Vysoké školstvo v krajinách Vyšehradskej štvorky v čase postsocialistickej transformácie. *Acta Geographica Universitatis Comenianae*, 57 (2013), pp.195-2011.
33. Brainyquote.com. Available from:  
[https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/p/peter\\_drucker.html](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/p/peter_drucker.html). [Retrieved September 19, 2017].

**Contact data:**

**Prof. RNDr. Jozef Hvorecký, PhD.**  
Vysoká škola manažmentu v Trenčíne  
Panónska cesta 17  
851 04 Bratislava, Slovenská republika  
[jhvorecky@vsm.sk](mailto:jhvorecky@vsm.sk)