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The Student's Learning Experience

As we welcome back new and returning students to our universities in the UAE next week, I have been reflecting on students' learning experiences. I strongly believe that prioritizing an exceptional learning experience will enhance all aspects of an academic institution, including rankings, professional accreditation, and research. Unfortunately, universities are often burdened with many non-value-added administrative activities, initiatives, and KPI fatigue, which detracts from focusing on the learning experience.

The **Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research** in the UAE 🇦🇪, through the **Commission for Academic Accreditation** (CAA), has introduced an important outcome-based evaluation framework that requires universities to collaborate closely with industries and prioritize student needs. This framework includes six pillars: employability outcomes (25% weighting), learning outcomes (25%), industry collaboration (20%), research (15%), reputation (10%), and community engagement (5%). The significant emphasis on industry collaboration is essential not only for curriculum development but also for preparing students for the real world. I commend the Ministry and CAA for this bold approach.

Companies need graduates with the right skills, and universities must ensure their programs meet these demands. By working together, they can bridge the gap between education and employment. Higher education is no longer just about lectures and textbooks; it's about preparing students for real-world careers.

Students today seek not only quality education but also diverse experiences that prepare them for a global workforce. Additionally, the advent of digital technologies has transformed how education is delivered, creating both challenges and opportunities for universities. Business leaders worldwide recognize the growing importance of "soft skills," or employability skills, in the workplace. Simply possessing a high Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is no longer sufficient; it is crucial for future employees to understand the various types of intelligence that exist beyond IQ.

In addition to IQ, students should be aware of numerous other types of intelligence, including emotional, cultural, social, spiritual, digital, adversity, creativity, media, curiosity, openness, organizational politics, experience, vision, leadership, ethics, passion, health, and environmental intelligence, among others. Therefore, it is vital for university graduates to develop exceptional skills beyond their areas of specialization by embracing the various types of intelligence mentioned earlier.

At **Abu Dhabi University**, our students are equipped with these types of intelligence to thrive in the workplace. The university-wide graduate attributes are effectively applied to help our students succeed.

#HigherEducation #StudentExperience #Employability #SkillsDevelopment #AI #AbuDhabiUniversity

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