

Striking the Balance: Cost and Quality at a National University in Guyana

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Maintaining quality higher education while improving operational efficiency through cost reduction is desirable by the Government of Guyana. The funding model for the University of Guyana has substantially changed to be principally state-funded as of 2025. The realization of the objectives that address cost reduction will be challenging; however, these objectives require a multi-dimensional approach so as to realize value for money. This paper explored the actions that can be taken by the university to improve its operational efficiency while maintaining academic integrity in the academy. The reduction of cost without compromising quality must include interventions such as process optimization through technology integration, comprehensive employee training, strategic negotiation with suppliers, and the establishment of myriad sustainable practices. These interventions include the formulation and implementation of a sustainable building and equipment maintenance policy, the outsourcing of secondary activities, the implementation of just-in-time systems for efficient inventory management, and the inclusion of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of higher education delivery. These initiatives must be supported by training employees to build capacity and develop skills within the university. In addition, the university must enhance employees' knowledge to reduce the inevitable resistance to change. Moreover, employees must be involved in planning and decision-making related to the changes so that they can take ownership. The measures undertaken by the university must be more efficient so that it can simultaneously improve quality, reduce cost, and create value for money in the higher education environment.