

## **Stakeholder Expectations in Spanish Public Universities: An Empirical Study**

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### **Abstract**

*The application of social responsibility to the field of higher education implies, among other issues, the identification of the expectations of the different stakeholders involved, the establishment of the proper mechanisms of dialogue with these stakeholders, and a greater tendency towards accountability. Universities are now forced to interact with more numerous and more varied stakeholders. These connections and interdependencies are related both to the external functions of universities, such as the economic, social, and environmental externalities that they generate, and the direct services that they provide, such as teaching, research, and knowledge transfer. Therefore, in order to assure their role in modern society, universities are obliged to completely reconsider both their mission and their vision, along with the expectations of and relations with different stakeholders. This justifies and motivates this study where the objective, from an empirical point of view, is essentially to identify the expectations and demands that different stakeholders present to Spanish public universities, within a line of research that is still in an incipient stage, given the scarce amount of studies that have analyzed the role of stakeholders in universities.*

**Key Words:** stakeholders, university, social responsibility

### **1. Introduction**

The growing concern in recent years about the role and the impact of externalities that companies provoke in their social and environmental context has led to a wealth of literature on company social responsibility or corporate social responsibility. Nevertheless, at least from a scientific or research point of view, this concern was less evident in the public sector (Ball and Grubnic, 2007; Ball and Bebbington, 2008) and, specifically, in the field of higher education.

The need for greater involvement of universities in their social context and an increased accountability to society has been stated in various national and international declarations, among which we can highlight the Lisbon Summit (2000), the Barcelona Summit (2002), the European Commission (2003, 2005, 2006), and VII ANECA Forum (2006). Moreover, there have been several institutional declarations on a European level which make express reference to the social dimension of universities [e.g. the document “*A social dimensión to higher education*” (ESIB, 2006), the Graz Declaration (2003), and the Bergen Declaration (2005) among others]. In the Spanish context, the modifications to the Organic University Law, the position of central government and, in the specific case of Andalusia, the funding policies of the Department for Innovation, and Science and Business of the Autonomous Government of Andalusia, all stress the importance of a series of concepts applicable to the new university framework such as autonomy, professionalism, the search for private funding, quality, planning, involvement with the social context, and, above all, accountability.

The application of social responsibility in the field of higher education implies, among other issues, the identification of the expectations of different stakeholders, the establishment of means of dialogue with these groups in addition to the consolidation of university accountability. Regarding this issue and in line with Jongbloed, Enders, and Salerno (2008), with greater intensity over the last few years and regardless of the geographical context in which they operate, universities are now forced to interact with more numerous and more varied stakeholders who each have their own specific visions and demands of higher education institutions. These connections and interdependencies are related both to the external functions of universities, such as the economic, social, and environmental externalities that they generate, and the direct services that they provide, such as teaching, research, and knowledge transfer.

The aforementioned factors justify the need to include social responsibility in the strategy and functions of universities. Although this need has come to be regarded as of paramount importance over the last few years, it is not a new concept. However, in documents studied in this field it was usually included in what is known as the *third mission* of universities. Indeed, as long ago as 1973, there was active debate about the changes necessary in the social contract between universities and society (ILO, 1975).

In the same vein, although much nearer in time to the 2020 Strategy of the European Union which has been applicable from 2010 onwards and which substituted the objectives defined in the European Strategy on Sustainable Development and in the Lisbon Agenda. The 2020 Strategy specifically seeks to facilitate a broad political, economic, and social consensus to help meet the objectives of the new paradigm of sustainable development and promote the changes necessary to regain confidence, which is included in the description of the purposes of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) of the United Nations for the period 2004-2014. In the case of Spain, this is specifically stated in Article 41.1 of the Organic University Law: *“Universities will develop quality research and effective management of knowledge and technology transfer, with the aim of contributing to the advancement of knowledge and technological development, innovation, and the competitiveness of companies, improving the standard of living of citizens, social and economic progress and development which is fair, responsible and sustainable, as well as guaranteeing the quality in the service they provide.”* Furthermore, and in order to help universities to achieve the aforementioned goals, the Spanish government, within the framework of the 2015 University Strategy, has drawn up two blueprints for reflection and debate about university government and funding. These blueprints establish the role that universities should play in social and cultural development and in the extension of a series of human and civic values.

Regarding this issue, in order to consolidate universities’ role in contemporary society, they must completely reconsider both their mission and their vision, as well as the expectations of, and relations with, their different stakeholders, and the analysis of this issue, which is the underlying justification for this study. Furthermore, due to the lack of academic studies focusing on the concept of social responsibility in higher education and paying particular attention to Stakeholder Theory, it is necessary to provide evidence of the expectations that different stakeholders have regarding higher education institutions. These expectations can lead to a conceptual framework for social responsibility in universities based on Stakeholder Theory.

Therefore, the main objective is to identify, from an empirical point of view, the expectations and demands that different stakeholders have in Spanish public universities. This is a research field that is still relatively undeveloped as there are few studies that analyze university *stakeholders*. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, we must first analyze the literature on university stakeholders. Then define the scope of this study and the methodology used, and, finally, present the results and the conclusions obtained.

## **2. University Stakeholders**

The concept of *stakeholders* comes from business and economic literature (Freeman, 1984) and may be defined as any group that can influence or be influenced by the decisions and achievements of a specific organization. The literature on this issue reflects the enormous influence of stakeholders on the actions of any organization (Thompson, 1997; Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington, 2006) with stable and long-term results (Daake and William, 2000). Although universities are rather different than conventional business organizations, this approach may be applied because, according to institutional theory, any organization is a social system with a need for legitimacy and social acceptance (Galán, 2006). This is certainly in line with what society demands from public universities.

In this new scenario, and in order for universities to face this new mission, vision, and consequently design new institutional strategies, it is necessary to know the expectations of stakeholders. Nevertheless, and in spite of the important social function of universities, there are still very few studies that include university stakeholders as the subject of research.

The work of Burrows (1999) can be considered a pioneering study in the field and proposes a classification from a theoretical perspective of university stakeholders:

Using the theoretical framework of the aforementioned study, Caballero, García, and Quintás (2008) analyzed the influence of certain stakeholders on the time that university directors or deans devote to improving the employment prospects of their students.

The interconnection and interdependence amongst universities, society, and the economy, and the need to increase the relationship between universities and their stakeholders are issues dealt with at length in the work of Jongbloed, Enders, and Salerno (2008). The authors, following the work of Burrows (1999) also recognize the approach or theory of *stakeholders* as an instrument that can help university managers and also highlight the need to classify them according to the type of influence they exert. Regarding this issue, they consider that this systematization is particularly relevant at present since universities are now expected to fulfill their so-called *third mission*. This mission involves their contributions to the social and economic development of their environment, and should go hand in hand with the fulfillment of their two traditional missions: achieving excellence in teaching and research. In this sense, socially responsible actions should be related to this emerging third mission.

Using a similar approach to the previous study, Benneworth and Jongbloed (2010) started with the hypothesis that those academic disciplines that belong to the arts, humanities, and social sciences have a clear disadvantage regarding technological and scientific areas in terms of the interest shown by political authorities and their willingness to provide research funding, in addition to the fact that they are undervalued as they cannot contribute in the same way to the third mission of universities if this is narrowly defined and understood in terms of patents, spin-offs, and technology transfer. With a different approach, the study by Okunoye, Frolic, and Crable (2008) empirically analyzes the influence of stakeholders in the implementation of an information system for strategic management in a private American university.

From a theoretical perspective, Gaete (2009) analyzed the participation of university stakeholders in the process of assessing university management as an indicator of socially responsible behavior.

There are some other studies which deal with the role played by stakeholders in university governance. Using an empirical approach, De Wiy and Verhoeven (2000) analyzed the type of influence exerted by external stakeholders on the management of higher education institutions in Flanders (Belgium) both at universities and at higher education colleges, through four case studies and using as a theoretical basis the Neo-Institutional Theory and the Resource Dependence Theory.

Furthermore, the study by Maassen (2000) highlighted the new role played by external stakeholders in the governance of higher education institutions in the Netherlands. Similarly, the work of Magalhaes and Amaral (2000) studied the importance of university regulations for stakeholders in the Portuguese university system, and stressed the weakness of the role still played by these stakeholders in the governance structures of public and private universities. In the face of a changing paradigm, in terms of the concept of good governance, Musial (2010) showed how external stakeholders have consolidated their role to the detriment of internal stakeholders in the context of recent reforms at Scandinavian universities. Finally, Pavicic et al. (2009) empirically analyzed the level of market orientation of higher education institutions in Croatia in relation to stakeholders, and stated that the level of orientation aimed at those stakeholders considered to be most relevant at universities is still quite insufficient.

In summary, and taking into account the limitations imposed by the scarce amount of studies devoted to the analysis of the role of university stakeholders, we can observe a certain consensus in the identification of stakeholders. In this respect, the authors consider public administrations, management teams, teaching and research staff, administration and services staff, students, university foundations, employers, the media, trade unions, voluntary workers, and academic accreditation, and quality agencies. Moreover, some studies considered as stakeholders both financial institutions and secondary schools that educate future university students.

Nevertheless, in the literature analyzed, we can observe a notable absence of studies that deal with the expectations of university *stakeholders* from an empirical perspective.

### **3. The Scope of the Study**

The objective of the study is to learn what the current expectations of different stakeholders at Spanish public universities are. Since the scope of the study is very broad, we must limit the article to a more specific context which will allow us to offer a more detailed and profound analysis of the situation, but which will also allow us to extrapolate the conclusions reached to the whole of the Spanish university system. Therefore, we have focused on public universities in Andalusia. The Spanish university system is mainly public. In Spain there are a total of 48 public universities, 47 of which offer traditional classroom attendance, and one which is purely a distance-learning institution. Although they have a common structure and legislation, Spanish universities are divided into 17 regional systems (one for each of the autonomous communities into which Spain is divided

Therefore, for our study, we selected one of these 17 university systems in order to observe a set of universities whose geographical, financial, and legal context is as homogeneous as possible.

In terms of the overall panorama of universities in the Spanish education system, the choice of Andalusia as a case study has several advantages. Firstly, it offers the highest number of degrees in Spain and accounts for 18% of the total of degrees offered to Spanish students (Martin and Lacomba, 2008).

Finally, higher education in Andalusia is provided by 10 public universities and is thus the autonomous community with the highest number of universities.

Furthermore, these universities through their own teaching centers or associated centers cater to 226,687 undergraduate students and 20,123 postgraduate students (9,389 PhD students and 10,734 students enrolled in other postgraduate study programs). Observing this data from a relative point of view, Andalusian universities account for 20% of the total of university undergraduates in Spain, 12% of postgraduate students and almost 18% of university staff.

Therefore, we have chosen Andalusian universities as a representative framework for this study. In our opinion, both in terms of absolute and relative size and in terms of the number and variety of degree courses offered, this option allows us to observe stakeholder expectations through a significant sample which can allow us to analyze the real situation of Spanish public universities.

### **4. Methodology**

The identification of stakeholders in Andalusian public universities is based on an initial review of the literature. In this respect, we identified teaching and research staff, administration and services staff, students, society, companies, university management teams, the administration of the autonomous community and university quality accreditation agencies (ANECA and AGAE) as *stakeholders* in the context of this study. Nevertheless, we have concentrated on the expectations of staff, students, companies, and society.

Regarding the opinions expressed by university managers, we can find complete information in the study made by Larrán, López, and Andrades (2010), and, with reference to the expectations of the autonomous administration, we can cite the Funding Model for Public Universities in Andalusia 2007-2011, passed at the Government Council on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2007 and published in the Andalusian government's official bulletin (BOJA) on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2007. In this model, the main funder of Andalusian public universities clearly states what it expects from them until 2011. Additionally, there is the 2008 Program Contracts agreed upon between the Department of Innovation, Science, and Business of the Autonomous Government of Andalusia and the public universities of Andalusia.

Once we had identified the stakeholders, our objective was to discover their expectations for which we applied the following strategies: a) information received directly from university stakeholders, b) treatment and systematization of the information, and c) creation of a document summarizing all of these findings.

In order to obtain the information related to the expectations of different stakeholders in Andalusian universities, a series of working meetings were organized at each of the public universities in the autonomous community. As part of the agenda for these meetings, we set up workshops and created different working groups for each group of stakeholders, except for public administration and accreditation agencies.

The methodology used for the working meetings is based on the principles of the *Nominal Group Technique*, which has been widely accepted in the literature (Van De Ven and Delbecq, 1972; Delbecq Van De Ven and Gustafson, 1986; Fink *et al.*, 1984; Chapple and Murphy, 1996, and Carney, Mcintosh, and Worth, 1996). In our case, the working groups were made up of a number of members which ranged from 4 to 10 depending on the university in question.

The development and performance of each working group followed a pre-established methodology which is shown in the following table:

**Table 1. Methodology followed in the working groups**

METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED IN THE WORKING GROUPS	
<b>Phase 1</b>	Identification of a maximum of twenty different expectations as a result of the use of a Brainstorming exercise (Osborn, 1953 and Jablin and Seibold, 1978) and these expectations must be as general as possible. The objective of this phase is to be able to compose a map of the group's ideas in a friendly and trusting atmosphere for a period of between 20 and 40 minutes.
<b>Phase 2</b>	Group discussion of each of the expectations and then, with the consensus of the group, creation of a brief description or justification of each expectation in a maximum time period of 50 minutes.
<b>Phase 3</b>	Ordering each skill depending on its importance: each member of the group must order the skills following the method of alternate ordering in around 10 minutes. Thus, each member of the group will assess with a minimum score of 1 and a maximum score equal to the number of expectations stated.
<b>Phase 4</b>	Using all of the points given, the coordinators of each group can establish a hierarchy of the different expectations mentioned. This is then presented to each member of the working group as the result of the process.

Source: Own elaboration

### 5. Results Obtained

The expectations mentioned by each of the working groups are presented in this section. Although there is a wide range of expectations identified, we have selected the ten most relevant expectations mentioned by stakeholders. The contributions of the stakeholders have allowed us to make a clear interpretation of the data and an approach to the real demands of *stakeholders* in Andalusian universities.

#### Administration and Services Staff (ASS)

The participation of Administration and Services Staff in the working groups was very high in comparison to other collectives, and the average attendance was 8.2 members per working group. In this respect, it is also worth noting that there was a significantly high presence of union representatives who gave a clear view of their demands.

Table 2 shows the ten most relevant expectations mentioned by ASS at Andalusian universities

**Table 2. Expectations of Administration and Services Staff**

EXPECTATIONS OF ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICES STAFF
Plan for equality and family Life
Long-term human resources planning
Transparency in management and publication of information
Definition of a catalogue of university services
Plan for professional development
Improvement of human resources management processes
Greater recognition and involvement in decision-making
Plan for in-service training
Fair and rational distribution of material resources
Creation of a greater university social awareness and a closer relationship with society

Source: Own elaboration

Although they were not so highly valued, the Administration and Services Staff also mentioned a number of other expectations related to their working environment and specifically regarding governance, students, society, companies, the environment, and continuous improvement.

Regarding the first points, it is necessary to highlight the need to assess the working environment as well as the health and safety plans for all university staff; furthermore, they stressed the need to establish a code of good practice and adopt measures that encourage greater participation by those collectives who are under-represented.

Introducing university initiatives aimed at charting the professional progress of graduates, offering courses adapted to the needs of society, encouraging subjects related to social responsibility on degree courses, and offering more scholarships to students are all part of the expectations of this collective in terms of students.

Furthermore, in addition to the greater promotion of voluntary work and social assistance provided by universities, this collective also referred to expectations such as increased university contact with business, more research aimed at the needs of society, and the presence of sustainability criteria in the hiring of suppliers.

Regarding the environment, among the commitments that universities must accept, these stakeholders mentioned the implementation of systems for residue recycling, the application of sustainability criteria to university infrastructures, along with initiatives that encourage the use of public transport to attend classes. Finally, with reference to expectations related to continuous improvement, they suggested greater coordination within Andalusia in terms of e-administration as well as the implementation of a unified system for suggestions and complaints to be made available to all university stakeholders.

**Teaching and Research Staff (TRS)**

The participation of Teaching and Research Staff in workshops was extremely interesting, and practically all of the Andalusian universities created a working group for this collective. The average attendance for these working groups was 5.7 members and there was also a significant presence of their union representatives.

A defining feature of the work carried out by this collective was that, the vast majority of the expectations mentioned referred to structural factors related to the university system and there were very few examples of demands in terms of general deficiencies at the university in question.

Table 3 shows the ten most important expectations for these stakeholders:

**Table 3. Expectations of Teaching and Research Staff**

EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHING AND RESEARCH STAFF
A University Model in terms of respect for workers’ rights: stability, assessment, promotion, salaries, collective agreements, professional development, balance between work and family life, working environment...
Improvement in material resources and their distribution between different areas. Rational allocation of resources in teaching and research
Improvement in environmental management
Improvement in the recognition of the activity of TRS
Health and safety at work
Fulfilment of the social function of universities (independence, opinion forming)
Encouraging of ethical values, good behavior, respect, good manners among students...
Transfer of research to society
Measures to promote equality
Continuous in-service training for teachers

Source: Own elaboration

The TRS also mentioned a series of expectations related to the specific interests of teachers, students, and society as well as others connected to governance. In the first case, they mentioned the implementation of policies and strategies aimed at encouraging excellence in teaching and research, and improvements in incentives for research, such as more job stability for research students.

Furthermore, they also mentioned the need for universities to define a quality program of work placements for students as well as improvements in the practical employment prospects of degrees, in addition to more social initiatives, greater internationalization, and more accessibility to university services.



In relation to university governance, TRS mentioned several expectations: the desire for more transparency in the management of universities, improvements in the communication between teachers and different levels of university management and vice versa, greater participation of TRS in management and decision-making as well as more accountability in terms of teaching. Finally, and regarding the question of continuous improvement, they stated that it was necessary to take measures to create a balance between teachers from different academic areas and to encourage a generational changeover.

### Students

The participation of students in the working groups was quite complicated because of the dates on which they took place which was near to the official exam period. Nevertheless, the average attendance was 8 students per session. This level of attendance made it possible for us to reach valid conclusions from the information gathered, although in some universities it was not possible to create a working group with students. This collective was composed of both undergraduates and graduates as well as some former students.

The top ten expectations mentioned by students in order of importance are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Expectations of Students**

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS
Better quality and more practical teaching adapted to social reality
Career orientation and access to future labor market
Greater cooperation between universities and more exchanges
Improved communication with students. Publication of university initiatives.
Greater participation of students in university life and in decision-making
Education in human values: open-mindedness, freedom, critical spirit, motivation...
Effective allocation of resources according to real needs and improvement of infrastructures
Promotion of ethical awareness both in teaching and in research
Practical research responding to the needs of society
Permanent link between current and former students. Post-graduate education adapted to the needs of former students

Source: Own elaboration

Although they scored lower, students also mentioned other expectations for their particular collective and some others linked to the university's relationship with society, with companies, and with the environment. In the first case, students think that universities should further develop the concept of social responsibility, entrepreneurial culture, and the use of new technology.

In terms of society, their demands were focused on encouraging voluntary work adapted to degree programs. Regarding the relationship between universities and companies, they pointed out that it was necessary to create new companies as well as give more information on the professional prospects offered by the university itself and on any agreements between the university and companies and/or associations. And, finally, they thought it was also necessary to transfer the results of university research to society.

Expectations linked to the environment include recycling materials and actions to improve access to campus by public transport.

### Companies

The participation of company representatives in the working groups was both interesting and constructive. In practically all of the universities, it was possible to set up a group for this collective and the average attendance was 6.5 representatives per session.

A preliminary analysis of the information collected shows the interest of the Andalusian business community in the universities of the region and they would like to use the synergies that could be created through cooperation between both sectors and are aware of the benefits that they could obtain from university teaching and research. Analysis of the data collected allows us to present the following expectations mentioned by Andalusian entrepreneurs (Table 5).

**Table 5. Expectations of Companies**

<b>EXPECTATIONS OF COMPANIES</b>
Educating students in terms of abilities and skills. Graduates who are more employable
Selection and hiring of suppliers following socially responsible criteria
Speeding up administrative procedures
More information and transparency about procedures
Continuous education
Transfer of knowledge generated by university research to companies
Stronger relationship between universities and local companies
Educating students in business ethics and social responsibility
Information about the costs associated with education
Better planning of teacher and student placements in companies

Source: own elaboration

Furthermore, although this issue was valued slightly lower, these stakeholders also mentioned that universities should increase the involvement of companies in the design of university degrees and would also like to see the innovative services created by companies granted more recognition by universities.

Regarding students, they would like them to have a better level of foreign languages and for universities to help to develop independent, critical, objective, and free-thinking individuals. Furthermore, they believe that university students, whatever degree they are studying, should acquire more practical skills, learn about how to set up and manage companies, and develop social abilities. Finally, they stated that universities should carry out studies on the current employment situation of former students.

Furthermore, in social terms, they believe that universities should defend equal opportunities for men and women and for the disabled, as well as promote economic and social development in developing countries.

Regarding the environment, they expect initiatives to raise awareness of this issue in universities; finally, in terms of university management, they would like to see universities provide information to stakeholders on the cost of degree programs.

### **Society in General**

The participation of different social bodies reflected the opinion of the society that surrounds Andalusian public universities. In those universities where it was possible to organize a working group for this collective, the average attendance was similar to that of the other groups of stakeholders (7.17 members per session).

The case of this collective is quite special since, unlike other groups, their heterogeneous composition led us to approach representatives of different social groups such as NGOs, local government and the mass media.

Based on the information obtained, the following table shows a series of expectations that were considered important by this collective:

**Table 6. Expectations of Society**

<b>EXPECTATIONS OF SOCIETY</b>
<b>Transparent, efficient, and effective management of universities. Exemplary conduct in terms of responsibility</b>
<b>Fluid and open relationship with society (companies, associations)</b>
<b>Respect for social responsibility shown by clients and suppliers</b>
<b>Responsible research in line with social agreements</b>
<b>Education of students to integrate them in modern society</b>
<b>Knowledge of business management and social skills. Creation of companies and self-employment</b>
<b>Overall education in values: a sense of ethics and social commitment</b>
<b>Fulfillment of role as a dynamic force for change in society</b>
<b>Codes of ethical behavior to be accepted by all of the university</b>
<b>Social dimension of universities: access, equity and respect for minorities</b>

Source: Own elaboration



Furthermore, these social stakeholders mentioned a number of expectations related to students, such as making students the center of the university learning process, offering continuous education to former students, improving the quality of the education provided, and, finally, improving the international prospects of students and encouraging student associations.

Nevertheless, there are also some demands focused on social issues such as contributing to local cultural life and encouraging coordination between associations to set up corporate social responsibility programs. Finally, this collective also has expectations linked to university governance among which we can include greater participation of society in the design of degree programs, representation of NGOs in university governing bodies, and compliance with the law in terms of employing disabled people.

### **5.1 Discussion of the Overall Results**

Although the expectations presented were mentioned independently by the specific groups of stakeholders, it is clear that many of them were not exclusively related to their own particular interests and they, in fact, had a universal nature as they were linked to issues such as governance, continuous improvement, the environment, or with specific demands that also affect other stakeholders.

From the results obtained, we can conclude that university social responsibility should not be considered a merely philanthropic framework and should rather be seen as a much more profound concept that transcends mere social initiatives carried out by universities as it also affects fundamental issues such as greater transparency on the part of higher educational institutions in addition to issues related to governance. The study shows there are certain expectations mentioned by at least three of the stakeholder groups that we will now comment upon.

Improvement in the means of information and communication between universities and stakeholders, greater involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process at higher education institutions, and a greater transparency in university management are all major expectations cited by stakeholders. This relates to governance.

In relation to students, the main demands mentioned by stakeholders are an education adapted to the real needs of society and one which provides them with skills that will improve their job prospects, education in values and more content related to social responsibility and ethics on degree programs, in addition to the adoption of policies designed to improve the employment rate of former students. In a social context, an expectation mentioned by all stakeholders was the establishment of policies to create commitments between universities and society; moreover, they also mentioned expectations related to the need to develop voluntary work programs and for the university to become a center for continuous education.

Another expectation mentioned by stakeholders in terms of companies is the creation of research agendas, which include the demands of society and the need for this research to be transferred; moreover they expect universities to establish policies regarding the contracting of suppliers based on socially responsible criteria and for these policies to be publicized.

Finally, another common expectation for all stakeholders is related to continuous improvement and the environment. They expect universities to manage and allocate resources with efficient criteria and they would like to see priority given to environmental issues.

The rest of the expectations mentioned are focused on the specific interests of each collective and should serve as a source of debate and reflection for university management teams in order for them to design initiatives to meet these expectations, except in certain cases where universities have actually taken measures and stakeholders do not know about it, in which case steps must be taken to make these measures public. Some of these expectations refer to staff training, mobility, improvement in organizational structures as well as in human resources, student scholarships, language training, a more efficient contracting process, better infrastructure based on sustainable criteria, etc.

Nevertheless, some of the expectations mentioned are of a more structural nature such as those related to job security, leveling of salaries or, in the specific case of TRS, externally defined criteria for the assessment of this staff's research and teaching performance; in this respect, universities do not have the authority to introduce changes.

Therefore, Table 7 reflects a number of strategies and commitments that universities should consider in the future in order to meet the expectations mentioned by stakeholders and these have been classified in terms of various issues linked to social responsibility such as governance, staff, students, society, companies, continuous improvement and the environment.

**Table 7. Demands that should be part of strategies and commitments for universities to deal with the expectations of stakeholders.**

STRATEGIES AND COMMITMENTS THAT UNIVERSITIES SHOULD ADOPT RELATED TO SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	EXPECTATIONS MENTIONED BY UNIVERSITY STAKEHOLDERS				
	ASS	TRS	STUDENTS	SOCIETY	COMPANIES
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>ASS</b>	<b>TRS</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>SOCIETY</b>	<b>COMPANIES</b>
Transparency in university management (actions, investments, liquidation of budgets, costs associated with education...)	X	X	X	X	X
Encouraging the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making at universities	X		X	X	X
Establishment of codes of conduct	X			X	
Improvement in the means of information and with different stakeholders	X	X	X	X	X
Compliance with rules	X			X	
<b>STAFF</b>	<b>ASS</b>	<b>TRS</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>SOCIETY</b>	<b>COMPANIES</b>
Equality policies	X	X			
Policies to balance work and family life	X	X			
Education adapted to the needs of staff and including social responsibility	X	X			
Recognition and publication of work done outside of the university	X	X			
Policies for promotion and professional development	X	X			
Policies and plans for health and safety at work	X	X			
Promotion of excellence in teaching and research		X	X		
Improvements in research incentives		X			
Policies for the promotion and mobility of staff		X			
Adapting organizational structures (human resources and materials) to needs	X	X			
Improvement in management processes in human resources and planning for generational changeover	X	X			
Improvement of the working environment	X	X			
<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>ASS</b>	<b>TRS</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>SOCIETY</b>	<b>COMPANIES</b>
Education in skills which are more practical and better adapted to social needs	X	X	X	X	X
Education in values: social responsibility and ethics	X	X	X	X	X
Greater use of new technology			X		
Tutorials on major issues such as mobility, job prospects, and work placements throughout the degree program			X	X	
Policies designed to improve the job prospects of former students	X	X	X	X	X
More scholarships for students	X				
Language training					X
Accountability in terms of teaching		X			

<b>SOCIETY</b>	<b>ASS</b>	<b>TRS</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>SOCIETY</b>	<b>COMPANIES</b>
Policies aimed at increasing university commitment to society	X	X	X	X	X
Measures to include sustainability criteria in research		X		X	
More voluntary work programs	X		X		
Measures for cooperation		X	X	X	
Promotion of gender equality and measures to help the disabled and ethnic minorities				X	
Continuous education			X	X	X
<b>COMPANIES</b>	<b>ASS</b>	<b>TRS</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>SOCIETY</b>	<b>COMPANIES</b>
Transfer of research to society	X	X	X	X	X
Policies for contracting that include social responsibility criteria	X			X	X
Measures to speed up administrative procedures				X	X
Reduction in bureaucracy				X	
<b>CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</b>	<b>ASS</b>	<b>TRS</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>SOCIETY</b>	<b>COMPANIES</b>
Efficient allocation of resources	X	X	X	X	X
Definition of a catalogue of university services	X				
Integration of management systems and unification of processes	X				
A single system for dealing with complaints	X				
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>ASS</b>	<b>TRS</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>SOCIETY</b>	<b>COMPANIES</b>
Improvement in overall environmental management	X	X	X		X
A system of selection and recycling of residues and other waste products	X		X		
Measures at increasing the use of public transport to go to the university campus	X		X		
Improvement in infrastructures with sustainability criteria	X				

Source: Own elaboration

## 6. Conclusions

In this study, having identified the different stakeholders involved in universities, we established a prioritized list of expectations for each group of *stakeholders*: teaching and research staff, administration and services staff, students, companies, and society in general, who interact, influence, and are influenced, in turn, by the actions of public universities. Nevertheless, we have also presented a number of expectations mentioned which, although they were given less importance by some stakeholders, provide extra scope for this study as they allow us an overall perspective of the issue which goes beyond the specific interests of each collective. This does not only mean a contribution to research on the expectations of university stakeholders, but it can also be of use for university managers who want to further the social commitment of their universities.

Moreover, the results of this kind of study can also contribute to the ongoing debate concerning the governance and funding of Spanish public universities within the framework of the “2015 University Strategy.”

In this part of the study, it is necessary to conduct a joint, overall analysis of the different groups of stakeholders, although, in most cases, their perspectives are inevitably biased toward their own collective. In this sense, we must highlight the fact there was a significant unanimity in terms of the expectations mentioned. This has allowed us to establish the universal nature of many of the expectations. Consequently, we have classified the expectations based on issues related to university social responsibility, although we understand the aforementioned concept not as merely a philanthropic construct but as a much deeper and broader social philosophy.

Thus, considering the expectations mentioned by stakeholders, we have identified a number of common demands related to governance, students, social questions, relationships with companies, continuous improvement, and the environment.

Regarding governance, there is a need for greater involvement of stakeholders in decision-making and greater transparency on the part of universities, along with improvements in the means of information and communication with stakeholders. In terms of this last expectation, we should note that one of the major conclusions of the working groups was that there are major deficiencies in the communication structures of Andalusian public universities. Many stakeholders stated that they do not know about many of the activities that take place at universities in Andalusia. Indeed, in several cases certain stakeholders mentioned demands for projects that already existed and that they were unaware of. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a system of effective communication for stakeholders, and this need could be covered by the development and publication of a homogeneous, verifiable, and comparable sustainability report.

Furthermore, taking into account the fact that stakeholders are directly affected by, and benefit from, the adoption of socially responsible criteria at universities, in this study, we have presented empirical evidence of a number of demands that should form part of future university strategies and commitments, along with some possible contents of social responsibility reports based on the results obtained, and have noted that many expectations were shared by different groups stakeholders. Nevertheless, we are aware that some of the expectations mentioned will not become part of individual university agendas as legally they are beyond their scope as is the case with job stability and salary levels, research assessment, and teaching accreditation agencies, synchronization of demands for research transfer to companies with the demands of research funding institutions etc, all of which transcend the sphere of influence of universities and depend on other public institutions.

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