

**Leadership
Foundation**
for Higher Education

ENGAGE

YOUR MAGAZINE FROM THE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

UNDERSTANDING STRATEGY AND MAKING IT WORK?

BY PROFESSOR PETER SLEE, UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD

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Higher education reforms: risks and opportunities

Student services: value and impact?

Management development resources roadshow: Book your place

Wellbeing and engagement for challenging times

Calendar of events

YOUR MAGAZINE FROM THE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



The uncertainty that heralds the 2011-12 academic year has been well-vaunted in the last few months. In this issue of ENGAGE Chris Hale (p5) from UUK points to some of the risks but also the potential opportunities for the sector to show leadership as higher education policy continues to emerge and evolve across the UK. Such a 'rally to arms' will take different forms and have a different focus depending on mission group, location and each institution's circumstances, but making sense of changing contexts and associated leadership challenges is, more than ever, a key attribute for leaders and managers at all levels in the sector.

Other feature articles in this issue suggest some approaches to sense-making: Peter Slee (p10) offers his perspective on understanding strategy and making it work, with helpful hints in feeling the way through change and adapting approaches to suit. In Practice (centre pages) brings insights into using a 'sense-making' framework to understand and implement leadership development following the merger of three institutions in Finland and the major reform of Finnish

higher education policy. Dr Andrew West, chair of AMOSSHE, describes (p6) a recently-launched toolkit designed to help evaluate the impact and value of student services and generate improvements, whilst colleagues from the University for the Creative Arts (p12) highlight how they have been addressing the leadership and cultural issues facing a merged and geographically dispersed institution.

The Leadership Foundation will continue to engage with leaders, managers and governors across the sector to make sense of the changing landscape and meet associated development challenges for individuals, teams and institutions. Why not let us know how you are making sense of and leading change for future issues of ENGAGE?

DR LESLY HUXLEY
EDITOR

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ENGAGE

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Next Issue Winter 2012

Engage ISSN 1752-401 (Online)

Submissions: We encourage contributions to ENGAGE.

Please contact the editor by email. We regret we cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or any other material.

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Charity: The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education is a registered charity – number 1101959

Printed on paper sourced from sustainable forests.

IN PRACTICE
ISSUE TWENTY SEVEN

SEE CENTRE PAGES

MAKING SENSE OF ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

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Going Global 2012



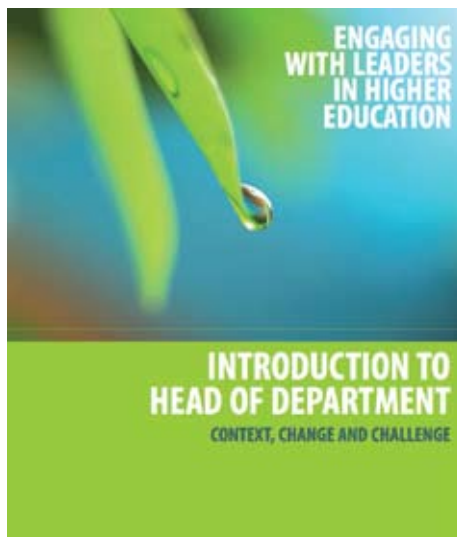
Going Global 2012

The Going Global conference returns to London for 2012, opening with a reception at the Royal Courts of Justice on Tuesday 13 March and with the main conference running until Thursday 15 March at the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre.

As the world's population reaches seven billion, how will institutions broaden their remit and access parts of the population that would otherwise be excluded? The title for Going Global 2012 is 'Changing education for a changing world', focusing on three key themes in exploring this issue: *The future world, The connected world and The winners and the losers.*

Going Global 2011 attracted over 1,000 delegates from 70 different countries, and it is expected that Going Global 2012 will be fully subscribed. **E**

If you have any questions regarding Going Global 2012 then please email going.global@britishcouncil.org or visit their website for further information: www.ihe.britishcouncil.org/going-global



Introduction to Head of Department (IHoD)

The Leadership Foundation is launching a new three-day UK-wide 'Introduction to Head of Department' (IHoD) programme aimed at those aspiring to be a head of department, or those already appointed but who have not yet started the role. Based on a HoD programme we have been running successfully in Scotland for some time, the programme will also serve as a refresher for those returning to a head of department role after a break from departmental management. We shall also continue to offer the established 'Head of Department' programme for current heads of academic departments and senior staff leading an administrative or professional service department.

The programmes will be held in different locations around the UK, with the first 'Introduction to Head of Department' taking place in York. Ginnie Willis is the Leadership Foundation's programme director for both IHoD and HoD, supported by Dr Paul Gentle, as co-director. **E**

Further information about both IHoD and HoD programmes is found on our website: www.lfhe.ac.uk/support If you would like to book a place on the IHoD programme, please contact Tori Senior, programme and event coordinator, at **E**: tori.senior@lfhe.ac.uk



International Higher Education: distinctiveness and branding

The Guardian, in partnership with the Leadership Foundation and UK HE International Unit have announced the date for their new international higher education event. 'Distinctiveness and Branding' takes place on Thursday 3 November 2011 at The Guardian's offices in London.

Following a similar successful event, which took place in June this year, 'Distinctiveness and Branding' will focus on how to make a success of brand identity in the international market. During the half-day event, questions will be explored, including: What to avoid? What works well? And how to turn strengths at home into results overseas?

The contributors to the event are from a range of UK and International backgrounds and will bring expert points of view and best practice on building a successful brand for an international audience. Confirmed speakers include: Rosemary Stamp, Director, Stamp Consulting; Arnold Longboy, Managing Director, Executive Education and External Relations, EMEA, University of Chicago Booth Business School of Business (London Campus); Professor Stephanie Marshall, Director of Programmes, Leadership Foundation; John Cavani, Head of Marketing and Rob Tomlinson, Head of Media and Communications, both from the University of Edinburgh. **E**

If you would like to book a place on the event then please visit: www.gdnihedb1.eventbrite.com

Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.

Michael Jordan former American professional basketball player, 1963

Management development resources

As part of our 'develop the developer' objective the Leadership Foundation is providing a set of six free Management Development Resources to all member institutions. These Resources cover the hot topics of: Managing effective performance; Managing change in higher education; Emotional intelligence, personal impact and personal effectiveness; Lean management; and The current higher education context. Commercial skills for academics and researchers, the last Resource in the set, will be available in spring 2012.

Each Resource consists of five or six modules which will take approximately half a day to

present; the whole set taking approximately 18 days. All the necessary materials for the facilitator and the participants, typically middle managers from both academic and professional areas, are included. The facilitator can tailor the Resources to their institution's requirements, using the powerpoint presentation, facilitator guide and handouts provided on the Resource CD.

Supporting the launch of these Resources are five free training seminars. These two-day roadshows are being held around the UK and will introduce your facilitators to these exciting free Resources for Leadership Foundation

member institutions. The roadshows are limited to 20 people each and are only open to member institutions: book your place now. More details about the Management Development Resources can be found at www.lfhe.ac.uk/membership/lfmrp/index.html **E**

Roadshow dates are:

Monday 24 - Tuesday 25 October, York
Thursday 27 - Friday 28 October, Bristol
Tuesday 8 - Wednesday 9 November, London
Thursday 24 - Friday 25 November, Edinburgh
Wednesday 7 - Thursday 8 December, London



Starter for Ten

**Dr Sharon Ding, Dean and Director of Studies,
Faculty of Education and Language Studies, Open University**

Sharon took her first degree (BA Psychology) and her PhD (awarded in 1996), from the University of Nottingham. She was appointed Staff Tutor in Education in the Open University in the South in 1998, and then as Associate Dean (Course Presentation), Faculty of Education and Language Studies from 2002-2005. In 2005 she moved portfolio to that of Curriculum Development, and in 2006 she also took on the role of Director of the Psychology Programme at the Open University. These roles continued until she was appointed as Dean of the Faculty of Education and Language Studies from August 2007. The Faculty has programmes of study in Education, Languages and Childhood Studies and teaches over 25,000 students each year. Sharon is an alumna of TMP 21.

What is the best piece of management/leadership advice you have ever been given?

Get as much information and advice as you can, but then make your decisions and be accountable for them.

Who would you most like to have worked with/for?

Shami Chakrabarti - witty, intelligent, passionate and principled.

What is the biggest change you have seen in management/leadership approaches?

The focus on outputs, rather than inputs and activities.

Who has inspired you most in your working life?

No one person. I regularly come into contact with able and committed colleagues at all levels in HE, and they continue to inspire me.

What was the best professional move you made and why?

Moving to the OU. It is an incredible organisation and I have learned so much by being a part of it. However, if I had known the direction my career was to take I would have run a mile in the opposite direction! I'm so glad that I didn't.

Which six leaders, past or present, would you invite to a dinner party and why?

There are lots, but I've decided to go for an all-female group. Women are still underrepresented

at senior levels so I think we should do what we can to promote good female leaders. Joan of Arc - courage, Gladys Aylward - compassion, Baroness Lee of Asheridge (Jennie Lee) - vision, Annie Lennox - inspiration, Vivienne Westwood - a little bit quirky and Victoria Wood - with any luck she'd provide the 'glue' to turn this into a really good evening.

What will you remember most about TMP?

The people I met there.

What will be the most enduring learning point?

We can learn lessons from the most unlikely sources. As a result of this I always try to overcome my irritation at what might be perceived to be a speaker/meeting which doesn't seem to be anything to do with me.

Have you continued to meet/engage with your TMP Fellows?

Yes - 2 or 3 times a year with my action learning group and annually with everyone.

What piece of advice would you give to someone starting off their career?

Take the opportunities offered to you and enjoy yourself. Chances are that your life plan will emerge later (I'm still waiting for mine, but having a great time!).

What one thing would make your job easier?

Unlimited access to an oracle, or a crystal ball at the very least.

What's been your biggest professional challenge and how did you overcome it?

The one I'm undertaking at the moment. I'm tackling it in the way I usually do - gathering information, analysing the problem, getting more information and re-analysing in the light of this. At the same time of course consulting as widely as possible, and drawing on others particularly when I can't see which way to go next. I'll let you know in six months whether or not it has worked.

Tell us a secret about yourself?

I was East Midlands junior ballroom dancing champion.

If you could get tickets to any event in the world what would it be?

The original Woodstock in '69.

What can't you live without?

Earl Grey tea. I don't go anywhere without a teabag or two.

What would you be if you weren't a dean?

A property developer.

Favourite Book?

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak. I've spent many happy hours reading this with my (now 25 year old) son. **E**

Strategic reflections: Risks and opportunities

In England decisions made by the current government will lead to significant change within higher education. The proposals focus on increasing competition and choice, improving information for students, and placing greater emphasis on the quality of teaching. Universities UK and others have broadly supported a number of the government's policy objectives. However the scale of change will introduce instability and uncertainty into the sector. Change will need to be carefully implemented, phased and monitored. The proposed reforms require the sector to be more flexible, but the government will also need to be responsive and recalibrate the policies where necessary.

A responsive policy environment will be essential to the interests of students. For example, deregulation of student number

controls is a logical step as we move toward a system where funding follows the student. However, the proposals put forward represent uncharted territory, and to an extent are driven by uncertainty around the costs of the loan system as much as by the desire for greater choice and competition. Furthermore, the government has only focused on reforms to teaching funding and will need to be clear on the implications for other higher education activities.

On the other hand, the proposals provide the sector with opportunities to embrace change. For example, there will be more flexible regulation, particularly in quality assurance. Protecting the quality of UK higher education should be the driving principle of any changes in this area, but change should be welcomed as an opportunity to reduce regulation. The

challenge for the sector is to look beyond familiar processes and think innovatively. There are also areas where it is in the interests of the sector to lead the agenda. The UUK Efficiency and Modernisation Task Group*, for example, has developed a strategy for change which identifies areas where it is in the interests of the sector to develop national frameworks, for example in realising the potential from procurement. Government can support the sector and reform regulation, but the success of this approach will be derived from strong leadership at the sector and institutional level. **E**

Chris Hale is deputy director of policy at Universities UK. His portfolio includes the planning, co-ordination and management of UUK's policy work.

***The Leadership Foundation in collaboration with Hefce has launched a £1m Innovation and Transformation fund to support the implementation of the UUK Task Group's recommendation.**

The full version of this article is online www.lfhe.ac.uk/publications/leadinglines

The research managers programme



Dr David Langley

Are you or a member of your team looking to step up to a director of research position? The Research Managers Programme is designed for experienced research managers and specialists who aspire to a research director's role. This intensive two-module programme aims to give participants the insight and perspective required to respond with agility to the rapidly changing demands of the higher education environment.



Kate Tapper

Participants will develop the inner resources needed to lead in research management and the situational awareness needed for successful strategic development.

Kate Tapper and Dr David Langley will lead the programme. Module One, (Tuesday 8 - Wednesday 9 November 2011) taking place over two days in Bristol, will begin by exploring the participants' leadership style after

pre-programme completion of an MBTI profile questionnaire. During the module they will hear from senior professionals in research management about the developments and issues challenging directors of research at this time. With real case studies to explore, the participants will work in groups to unpick tangible research management problems that they will be grappling with within their institutions. They will discuss and question the role of research management, and will respond to an after-dinner provocation on the subject. In their groups, participants will present their case study work, consider how to deal with a constantly changing environment, and establish their work-based development project for completion before Module Two.

The one-day Module Two (Friday 9 December 2011) follows in London a month later. This will involve presentations of the project outcomes to an expert panel who will give individual feedback to each participant on how to progress their specific challenges. **E**

Booking forms and full details about The Research Managers Programme are at www.lfhe.ac.uk/support/professionalpartnerships/rmp/index.html

INTERVIEW

Student services: value and impact?

AMOSSHE, the UK student services organisation for higher education, recently launched a toolkit to help student services teams assess their value and impact. Dr Andrew West, director of student services at the University of Sheffield and chair of AMOSSHE, talks to Dr Lesly Huxley about the evolution of the toolkit, how it can be used to support service improvement, and next steps.



Dr Andrew West

AMOSSHE represents the senior leads for student services in UK higher education, with institutional membership currently around 90% of the sector. Andrew explains that the organisation is "largely about professional and leadership development, with policy and lobbying work on a range of national issues becoming an increasing part of our business". AMOSSHE members lead a broad range of service areas, at the core of which are functions like careers, accommodation, counselling, health, financial advice and support to international students. This group was the main focus of the *Value and Impact* project.

Andrew explains the evolution of the toolkit project: "Part of the inspiration was work we'd done here at Sheffield which we called 'holistic evaluation', which was in turn inspired by the Assessment Reconsidered research [Keeling et al 2009] in the United States. At sector level, the

strategic driver for the project had its origins in work undertaken by Hefce's [2008] Financial Sustainability Strategy Group (FSSG) which reported on the core segments comprising sustainable teaching and learning. AMOSSHE contributed to the FSSG report, and whilst there was a lot to say anecdotally about the value and impact of student services there was no clear set of data or metrics, no obvious mechanism to consider them in a systematic way."

The *Value and Impact* project, with funding from Hefce's Leadership, Governance and Management fund and support from a wide range of sector bodies, was intended to close that gap. Andrew is quick to praise the researchers from the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI) at the Open University who undertook the background research and produced the project report: "We commissioned them in 2009/10 with a very tight 15-month timescale and they did an excellent job." The first stage was to undertake a literature review "to see what was out there, and then to develop a toolkit to help student services to assess value and impact in a coherent way on the basis of what the literature suggested. We then intended to pilot the approach, refine it and launch it." In reality, the literature review demonstrated that assessment of value and impact was a gap not only in the student services literature but in the literature in general. So, as Andrew says, "developing a toolkit on the basis of the literature was very challenging" and piloting it on a very short timescale at a particularly busy time of the year even more so. A 'skeletal' toolkit was piloted in the universities of East London, York, Surrey and Brighton. "We asked each of the universities to cover at least two service areas, so we had

a good cross-section. It was a huge amount of work for them, as the toolkit had hardly any of the practical templates and worked examples it has now."

The toolkit comprises four main sections with questions to prompt a holistic view of evaluation. "It takes the service leader through the purpose of the service, what its intended outcomes are. The service manager identifies impact and value 'indicators' based on answers to these questions, with similar formats used for assessing impact and value for money". There is also an important section on ethical considerations – "because of the student services territory, HEIs' ethical frameworks can come into play strongly" – and another on gathering data using a wide range of qualitative and quantitative assessment instruments. Templates and tools are provided throughout with worked examples, vignettes, quotes, testimonials and honest commentary on where they work best, drawn from pilot sites' experiences.

As Andrew acknowledges, gaining student engagement with some of these evaluation mechanisms can be challenging in itself. "During the pilots, some sites used 'voucher' or other reward methods, but the pilot site that had greatest take-up was very upfront about why they were doing it, that is, to help improve the student experience. And students bought into that and were very interested; they could see the benefits, even if for future cohorts rather than themselves."

Andrew is clear that using the toolkit may prove challenging, particularly where services have grown organically or without periodic review.



Whilst worked examples are provided, “the key is for services to take the approach into their own context. Many of these questions won’t have been considered together before. You need to be honest; this represents a different way of thinking. We’re all used to evaluating what we do, but that’s often done in a fairly one-dimensional way, focusing on satisfaction. It’s all very well asking students if they’re happy with a service, but you also need to get to the heart of it – how does what we do impact on their learning, their development as a young adult, as a citizen, as an independent learner? How does it impact on retention? They’re all important questions but very challenging to answer.”

Those who want to use the toolkit have a choice between downloadable print or an interactive version on the web. As Andrew explains, “the beauty of it is that you don’t have to do the whole thing, it’s a menu. Purely considering some of the key preparatory questions would be useful to get people thinking about the impact and value of what they do”. And although the focus and framework is around the student experience, most of the templates are generic enough to be applied to other service areas. For Andrew, the project has three key strategic benefits: “Firstly it underpins the evidence base for the contribution of student support services; secondly it goes to the heart of professionalising the student services community; and finally this richer, more comprehensive form of evaluation helps us to improve the student experience, it has a real impact on the ‘user’.”

At Sheffield, Andrew is looking forward to extending the use of this more comprehensive set of methodologies: “We’ve already used

it in the area of student discipline, which is a notoriously difficult service to evaluate. This approach means we can look at the educative value of the service, not just the punitive element. You just don’t get that depth of learning from satisfaction surveys. As a result, this year we’ll approach the preparatory phase of the disciplinary process differently and also help academic departments to do more follow-up. Next year we’ll be using it for student finance – in the runup to 2012 that’s an area that is really going to be in the spotlight.”

The response from elsewhere has also been very positive. “What’s encouraging is that the pilot sites are all still rolling it out and expanding it. When we launched it at the AMOSSHE conference other HEIs said they were actively considering using it, and Universities UK is recognising its importance in the context of the work of the Efficiency and Modernisation Task Group being led by Professor Ian Diamond.”

Two follow-up projects have just been launched. The first aims to gather worked versions of the templates to extend those from the pilot sites into “use in anger of the finished toolkit”. The second reflects that “it’s just not enough to hand over the toolkit for people to use as best they can. We will create development resources to help leaders and teams implement it.” AMOSSHE is also planning to run practical workshops over the coming months. The project was not designed as a benchmarking framework; Andrew recognises that this could, “arguably, be a natural next step, but we have no worked-up plans currently to move in this direction”. As he says in the foreword to the toolkit, “This strategic

approach does not constitute a ‘quick fix’ for service managers and neither will it lead to the generation of superficial indicators supporting a league table mentality.” He is more interested in the rich evidence generated and the notion that, over time, the approach will mean that new services will be developed with in-built points at which relevant data can be gathered and evaluated.

For the future, AMOSSHE members’ focus will no doubt be on users of their services: “Whatever you think about the funding regime from 2012, it’s inevitable that user expectations will rise. So the toolkit can help people find out where they’re delivering the most impact and value. There is also a key question around the extent to which there is a strategic, integrated approach to the student experience in an institution, which this kind of holistic evaluation can help to address.”

References

Keeling, Richard P., R. Underhile, A. F. Wall and G. J. Duncy (2008). *Assessment Reconsidered: Institutional Effectiveness for Student Success*. Waldorf, Maryland, NASPA.

The *Value and Impact* toolkit and background information can be accessed at www.vip.amosshe.org 

Hefce (2008). *The Sustainability of Learning and Teaching in English Higher Education*. Report prepared for the Financial Sustainability Strategy Group by JM Consulting. www.hefce.ac.uk/finance/fundinghe/trac/fssg/FSSGreport.pdf

PROJECT UPDATE

How are you doing? Skills for effective staff reviews

Free resources for staff review training**SDP project reference:** www.lfhe.ac.uk/research/smallprojects/sdp2010leicesterbid.html**Lead organisation:** University of Leicester

This project aims to provide a resource for facilitators and/or individuals to enable them to develop appropriate skills to conduct effective staff review (appraisal) meetings. The project will result in a website containing specific video examples of review meetings taken from the HE sector. Supporting materials for workshop facilitators and individual learners will also be available from the website free of charge.

Whilst there are many training videos and other resources available to help with staff reviews, there have so far been no resources available that focus specifically on higher education. This resource has been developed to fill this gap and uses scenarios that occur in the university environment.

The resource is not about the objectives, benefits and outcomes of a review, nor is it about the review process and paperwork. It deals purely with the skills necessary to conduct an effective review meeting.

Personal experience of running review skills workshops has identified several scenarios which cause concern for reviewers. Further discussions with colleagues in staff development here at Leicester and elsewhere, and with members of focus groups, identified additional scenarios, some of which are specific to certain disciplines.

How are you doing? Skills for effective staff reviews explores five specific scenarios, and suggests ways in which reviewers will be able to enhance the effectiveness of their review meetings by acquiring some basic skills.

The resources include three videos, which explore the following scenarios:

- | Manual services - the reviewer feels that she has nothing to talk about during the review of a part-time member of her team;
- | Administration - a team member asks his reviewer to support his application for a more senior role, but the reviewer doesn't consider the team member's application appropriate;
- | Technical - a team member believes he works harder than his colleague and he therefore deserves a pay rise;
- | Research - a reviewer is concerned about her team member's lack of preparation for his next role;
- | Lecturer - a reviewer has received negative comments about a lecturer's style, and feels that he needs to be more inclusive.

Video 1 Introduction introduces the topic of staff reviews and uses the five scenarios identified above to illustrate how review meetings can go wrong.

Video 2 Key skills identifies the key review skills and shows them being used in two different review situations.

Video 3 Effective review interviews returns to the five scenarios identified in Video 1 and illustrates the effective use of key review skills during part of a review meeting. Video 3 is split into five scenes, each of which can be viewed independently, to allow facilitators to tailor the scenes to the specific requirements of a group.

Specific resources for workshop facilitators are available on the website, including an outline workshop, PowerPoint slides, suggestions for using the videos, and handouts. The website also includes an Individual Learners Guide, for staff who may wish to refresh their skills. These materials are available as pdf documents or can be viewed online. The supporting materials incorporate links to appropriate scenes in the streamed videos.

How are you doing? is a free resource for staff developers and individual learners. The resource is designed to be flexible to suit you and any group that you are working with, and the material may be adapted to fit more closely with your particular identified learning needs. The resources are available at no cost to any university or university employee who wishes to use them.

I would like to thank my colleagues at Leicester and in the wider staff development community for their help in developing this resource. **E**

The resource will be available at www.le.ac.uk/appraisal from September 2011.

Contact: Helen Robinson, Learning and Development Adviser, University of Leicester

E: hmc10@leicester.ac.uk

Call for 2012 Small Development Projects

We are delighted to announce that the call for proposals for the 2012 Small Development Projects (SDP) is now open. Higher education institutions that are members of the Leadership Foundation (or groups of members) are invited to bid for up to £10,000. These projects are part of the Leadership Foundation's commitment to investing in innovation in higher education. More information is available at www.lfhe.ac.uk/research/smallprojects

MAKING SENSE OF ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

BY HANNA-LEENA LIVIO, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES, AALTO UNIVERSITY AND
HENNA TOMPERI, HEAD OF LEADERSHIP AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Foreword

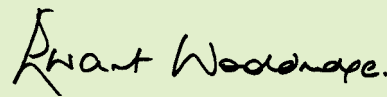
This compelling story of organisational development initiatives to underpin a merger of three universities in Finland resonates with me in many ways. It relates to our own growing Leadership Foundation activity to support universities in the area of collaborations, alliances and mergers, our current research into academic leadership, and the increasing importance of 'sensemaking' in the practice of leadership.

UK higher education has a mixed history of experiences of merger. This article stresses the importance of taking the long view, and of realising the payoff from integrating the reality of the change with embedded learning processes allowing for action and reflection.

The Leadership Foundation is working in support of Hefce on a major project on collaborations, alliances and mergers. The focus of this work is to make a determined effort to learn from the experiences of carefully chosen case studies, and to stress that this area is not just about mergers, that there is the potential to

benefit from a wider range of partnerships and collaborations, underpinned by sound development processes.

At a time when some may be stressing the importance of the business of managing universities in a competitive and complex world, they may be missing the point that it is the quality of academic leadership which may be crucial to embedding change. In the Finnish example, the linkage between academic leadership and sensemaking in their related processes of leadership development is very powerful. It clearly helped with the processes of redefining identity, and I believe, in the current upheavals in UK higher education, there is a crucial role for sensemaking or interpretative leadership.



Ewart Wooldridge CBE

Searching for leadership in academia

When you take three organisations – each with more than one hundred years of history – and merge them together, what is the most important element in ensuring the success of the venture? Yes, it is leadership. Based on years of experience and research on mergers and acquisitions, most corporate leaders accept that they need to pay attention to how a change like this is led. But if you take three universities with long traditions – each the best known of its kind in the country – and merge them together, how do you lead academic people through the change? Is there such a thing as academic leadership, or is it actually impossible to combine these two words, as many claim?

In any merger or acquisition, it is typical for all members of the merging organisations to feel that their culture is the only right one, the natural one to guide the daily work in their organisation. With academic institutions, different disciplines often attract different types of people and thus make space for different cultural and value systems. The systems of other institutions can then be very difficult to understand. In theory we all accept this, but in everyday situations it may be extremely difficult to understand why colleagues behave in a totally different way – and often in a way that seems irrational for someone representing another organisational culture.



Main entrance to Aalto School of Art & Design

MAKING SENSE OF ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

A year ago we were challenged to look into the leadership of the new Aalto University, a merger of three prominent universities in Finland: the Helsinki School of Economics, the Helsinki University of Technology and the University of Art and Design Helsinki. Based on dozens of interviews with academics and academic leaders inside Aalto University and benchmarking with universities on both sides of the Atlantic, we decided to share some lessons learned on academic leadership. And to be clear about our aim: this is not an academic text on leadership in practice, but a practical article on leadership in academia.

Background

Most departments in Finnish universities were originally built around single professorships. They have traditionally had a lot of power and as a consequence quite individual cultures depending on the leadership of the professor(s) and any specific characteristics of the discipline. There is no tradition of providing formal leadership training for academic leaders, and thus there are quite different interpretations of what good academic leadership is all about.

On the other hand, there has been a continuously growing demand for structured management – not leadership – practices, necessitated by the universities' public role. Until the end of 2009, all academic personnel were actually civil servants. So the shared general understanding of the role of academic leaders was that they were administrators and managers, not true leaders.

A change in the legislation governing universities in Finland enabled Aalto University to start its life after the merger as a new type of a foundation university. It permitted the university more independence, and required less reporting of information to the government. At the same time, leaders at all levels of the organisation were challenged to rethink the role of leadership in the organisation.

So a lot has changed. However, there is one key ingredient that will mainly stay the same: the people. Academic staff and their expertise form the core of any university, and thus it is important to make the change happen in such a way that the majority of the existing faculty remain on board. However, one way of changing things in practice is to bring in new people where necessary, and when recruiting new people during a major transformation it is crucial to pay attention to the type of people who are selected.

During major changes new people are often recruited to bring in competences and characteristics that represent something of the desired future, something that the organisation realises it does not have but will need in the future. What is often ignored is that it is the existing people who are responsible for the recruitment of the new ones – and recruiting panels often tend to gravitate towards candidates who share their existing value system. Additionally, the success of the new recruits relies heavily on their ability to adapt to their new environment. When recruiting people in the hope of bringing in changes, it is important that those people are able to show cultural intelligence, in other words to know when to adapt their own behaviour and when to stand firm and resist the old ways. And the existing staff naturally play a key role in either supporting or rejecting the new people and the new ways of working they introduce.

At Aalto University the transformation has also affected the leadership ranks. Some of the leaders already had leadership positions before the merger, but there are also new leaders, either brought in from outside the organisation or identified as potential leaders and promoted from within the three universities. So the leaders of Aalto University are not a unified group of people – on the contrary, individual situations and backgrounds vary quite a lot. Considering this, it is amazing how unified a picture we get of academic leadership when we talk to these people about their daily work as academic leaders!

Making sense of academic leadership

Even though this is not an academic article, we have found an academic framework useful in structuring the findings from our interviews and discussions both inside Aalto University and with representatives from other universities. The framework we are using as basis for this discussion is that of sensemaking as proposed by Karl Weick – simply because it seems to make sense!

Weick (1995) proposes that sensemaking has seven key properties that are closely linked to one another (see separate box). We have grouped these seven properties into three bigger areas. We will start by discussing the identity of an academic leader – how the academics see their identity and how that identity is either strengthened or challenged by their working environment and their own actions. Secondly we will look at the transformation of expectations for leadership, examining how academic leaders make sense of these changes in their environment retrospectively, continuously and together. Thirdly we will discuss whether and how things will change in practice by looking at what kind of information academic leaders need about the new leadership, as well as how they create plausible explanations for either accepting or rejecting the expectations for changes in their leadership role.

This sensemaking approach allows us to handle leadership in the academic community from two viewpoints: how academics make sense of leadership, and what the end result of that sensemaking process is.

According to Weick (1995), sensemaking is:

- | Grounded in identity construction;
- | Retrospective;
- | Enactive of sensible environments;
- | Social;
- | Ongoing;
- | Focused on and by extracted cues;
- | Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy.

The identity of an academic leader

An academic leader, whether new or more experienced in the leadership role, is still more than anything an academic. All the academic leaders we interviewed emphasised that academic leadership was not a career they had planned. People stay in academia because they are interested in research and education, not in leading other people. If an academic shows interest in the career of an academic leader, it is usually seen by others as a sign of an unhealthy will to promote one's own interests. Academics also seem to look at academic leaders as competitors in the

field of research – competitors with power over some key decisions affecting the whole research community. Against this background it is understandable that most academic leaders are keen to stress they are leaders out of a sense of duty; not willingly, but because somebody needs to take on those roles.

At Aalto University, academic leaders at all levels of the organisation often refer to their own disciplines, their own research results and their experience as researchers and research group leaders when introducing themselves. They may be department heads or vice-presidents, but first and foremost they are professors of a specific discipline. Many professors openly admit that the “real” discussions, the powerful and meaningful discussions in academia, are those related to research topics. Even as a successful ex-researcher you may become an outsider to these discussions if you do not continue your own research alongside your leadership role.

One clear identity-related challenge that academic leaders have is that they willingly admit the characteristics of a good academic – a great researcher – are not necessarily those of a good leader; quite the contrary. How do you build self-confidence and a strong identity as an academic leader, when all of a sudden the strengths of an academic become the weaknesses of a leader? This challenge to self-confidence is intensified by the academic environment, which typically sees leadership as something negative and thus exposes academic leaders to continuous criticism of their behaviour, and even of the purpose of their behaviour.

From collegial relationships towards a new type of academic leadership

An interesting lesson learned during the change is that it seems easier to build something totally new than to change existing ways of working. A good example of a new concept is the Aalto University Design Factory, an innovation platform that brings together researchers, students and business representatives in a funky, inspirational setting. It was not a direct replacement for any existing structures but was created with the aim of building something new and innovative, and it seems to be very much appreciated as a new opening. However there are a lot of other examples that have not been as successful. Where there are existing structures or ways of working they often seem to be linked to individuals or groups of people, and it seems very difficult to stop doing something that has previously been successful and useful. Thus the expectation for big changes often ends up realised as minor modifications to existing systems.

Many leaders feel challenged by the expectations for new ways of working. With the new university legislation there are fewer legal requirements. As a consequence, there are continuous requests from individual leaders at all levels of the organisation for internal guidelines – especially for areas that used to be strictly governed in the earlier operating environment. Leaders seem to find it difficult to act as leaders when they should be making more decisions and taking more initiative than previously, and as a result they are still operating as they would have in the old environment. By requesting more rules and guidelines, they are in sense maintaining the status quo.

Another challenge in breaking the old practices is the lack of social support for the new type of leadership. Many leaders feel there is a need for peer support in developing their own leadership skills and handling challenges in their daily leadership. However there is a clear competitive undertone in most peer discussions, which results in peer support actually turning into peer pressure. In some situations the social aspect of sensemaking in leadership may not be based on real experiences by leaders, but they may need to behave as if it was easy for them to act as academic leaders. As a result these peer discussions can become a burden to leaders who are still building their leadership identity.

On the other hand, peer support is seen as very important by the leaders. For many leaders the biggest change is that the new leadership role is a role of real authority; the leader is no longer just one of a group of colleagues but actually the one who needs to ensure everyone plays by the shared rules. In the academic world there is – and there should be – a lot of room for movement in an organisation's culture and ways of working, but on the other hand the leaders are responsible for ensuring a safe and secure working environment for all their staff. So all occurrences of, for instance, anti-social behaviour need to be identified and tackled as soon as possible. Based on our interviews with academic leaders, this element of “not always being able to please everyone” seems to be one of the most difficult to accept. There seems to be a lot of need for affirmation before leaders will accept that disciplinary actions are accepted – and even expected – when the best interests of the work community and organisation are under threat. The fact that disciplinary actions should not be used by leaders to promote their own interests or in competitive situations with other researchers does not mean they should never be used.

Getting there in practice

So how is this type of change implemented in practice? The answer is “slowly and with small steps”. Organisational sensemaking regarding changing expectations for leadership will take time; it is only through examples showing how the new behaviours will bring positive results that the institutionalised beliefs about academic leadership will be changed. What makes it exciting is that none of us can yet tell what the result of this ongoing process of sensemaking will be. We have jointly, with dozens of leaders, defined Aalto leadership principles as a starting point for the new type of leadership. Only time will tell how these are institutionalised into Aalto's ways of working through the process of sensemaking.

As with many things, most academic leaders seem willing to try out small changes one at a time. By behaving differently and observing the changing reactions from the rest of the organisation, the leaders start making sense of what the new way of working means in practice. However, the continuous sensemaking and analysis of cues extracted from the environment may also have an opposite impact. If new leadership behaviours are tried out without full understanding and commitment the results may be negative, and thus the sensemaking on the new leadership also becomes negative: “This just does not work.”

One example of this type of leadership behaviour has been an attempt to involve employees in decisionmaking using new approaches. The change was made willingly, but that willingness did not always extend to keeping matters truly open for discussion, and decisions have

been made before involving certain employees. As a consequence people feel cheated, and leaders draw conclusions about the new type of leadership not working.

It is not just the leaders who find it difficult to make sense of the new behaviours. Leaders have explained how their attempts to act differently are met with disbelief from the people around them. This makes it more difficult to introduce new leadership styles – big, sudden changes simply do not make sense or do not seem natural to other people, and often it may seem that the most plausible explanation for the leader's different behaviour is that they are trying to achieve something suspicious.

Another important element in making the change become real is the example set by the top leadership of the organisation. What the change really means is to a large extent interpreted through analysis of the real-life actions of the top-level leaders: Do their actions match the message? This is naturally challenging for the top academic leaders, since they traditionally share the same framework as the other academics. So while the top leaders are in fact making sense of what the changing expectations mean to them personally, they are at the same time very much affecting the interpretation of the new leadership by the rest of the organisation.

Many leaders also openly admit that they would like help with learning to lead in a new way. In particular, competences needed in people and team leadership seem to be important from their point of view. What makes the situation challenging is that there are very experienced people who still have no formal education in leading people – and, depending on their personal views on leadership, they have invested a varying amount of time in developing their own personal leadership style. In this situation individual learning processes – for example through mentoring, coaching, peer support and tools such as 360-degree assessment – have proven successful. Reflection and discussion with others can help individual leaders to make sense of the new requirements for leadership, and to find ways of making the new behaviours plausible and understandable for themselves.

One final thing we have learned during this past year is that it is impossible to please everyone. An example was our work on reviewing the incentive practices across the university. The different cultures became evident when we asked for input regarding the development of new financial reward systems. In the School of Art and Design you need to be careful when rewarding people with extra money, as it can be seen as manipulation of artistic freedom. On the other hand in the School of Economics it is often money that talks; people who deal with money and financial systems as part of their everyday work may see financial rewards as the only ones with real meaning. So in many cases the wisdom seems to lie in knowing what has to be shared in order to create the necessary unity and what can stay different in the various parts of the organisation.

The final word goes to a participant on one of our leadership development programmes. He pointed out that he and the other participants represented such a mixed group of people that it was impossible to create a programme that would fully please everyone. Equally, though, he emphasised that it was those very differences, and the debates we had based on a variety of views, that made the whole

programme meaningful for the participants. For all of us in the classroom, his words crystallised how difficult a task we all shared in aiming to build a university that would offer the best for all its faculty and staff – and where bringing together different views without any of them losing their edge was the key strategic aim. **E**

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Biographies

Hanna-Leena Livio (DTech) works as director, human resources (HR) for Aalto University. She is part of the President's Management Team with overall responsibility for human resources for both faculty and staff. Before joining Aalto University at the beginning of 2010, she worked in HR roles for UPM plc and Nokia plc with responsibility for the global development of management, professional expertise, employee processes and data systems. Previously she worked as a specialist for the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation Tekes and as a special researcher for VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland.

Henna Tomperi (MA) is head of leadership and competence development at Aalto University with overall responsibility for the human resources development and well-being of both faculty and staff, having taken up this role in April 2010. She has more than 15 years of experience as an expert and a leader in a variety of HR and Communications roles at UPM plc and Nokia plc. She was also the winner of the first European HR Award by EAPM in 2009. She is currently on study leave working on her PhD on ethical leadership.



Aalto has built strong collaboration with Tongji University in Shanghai. In the picture Aalto and Tongji students together

SDF: Announces review results

Each year an SDF review takes place to inform future SDF direction and plans, and assure the Leadership Foundation as funders/key stakeholders that their investment in SDF is of value to the sector. Firstly, many thanks to those 100 plus people who gave their views through the survey or telephone interviews – for me this demonstrates a much appreciated keenness to engage with SDF.

The review suggests that we have made considerable progress over the last couple of years, and a number of very useful suggestions and observations were received that should enable us to direct future effort.

The good things: the Spring Conference remains widely regarded – *“it’s great for practical staff developers”*; SDF’s visibility, branding and general profile is felt to have improved – *“great work on the website, new events and publicity”*; there was general support for pursuing the CPD Events programmes, though cautiousness that they had not yet fulfilled their potential in the current economic context – *“the programme this year is comprehensive and relevant – problem is lack of time and reluctance to ask for funding for*

too many things in the current environment”. At present there are mixed views about the SDF Accredited programmes – *“I can see the potential appeal for younger ‘career’ staff developers... good for those who have not done previous accreditations... this is probably the area in which I have given least attention in the light of other priorities.”*

On the negative side a minority of respondents felt that SDF was ineffective and had lost its way ‘vision’ wise – *“hard to know what it is trying to do, why it exists and how it serves people apart from the few and privileged to be in its inner circle.”* The view also arose again that new blood was needed to bring ‘fresh perspective’ to SDF to counter the self-interest of the ‘old timers.’

Other positive critical comments suggested that: we strive to become more ‘strategic’; review relationships and collaborations with other groups; and *“bring in some more external perspective. Connecting us with ‘not HE’ development thinking and practice”*. Also that our CPD offerings become more contemporary, focused and cutting-edge.

By the time this update is published, the review report and full survey results will be available on our website. The SDF Council meeting in October and planning session in January 2012 will consider the findings in depth, and actions will be built into our operational plan. In addition, this particular ‘old timer’ would encourage you all to look at the review report, discuss with colleagues, and let us have your views – as ever all contributions are welcome. We have much good to build on: *“DF is our professional community, our natural home, and if we lose the benefits it provides, there is no other HE-based organisation for us to seek support for our professional endeavours.”* **E**

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staff development
forum

Wellbeing and engagement for challenging times

The results of three years of work by the national Improving performance through wellbeing and engagement project were launched at a high-profile conference held at Leeds University Business School on 9 September 2011. The project’s final report explores the evidence for the impact of wellbeing and engagement initiatives on staff performance, and how the key principles can be used by institutions to support staff as they cope with and thrive through change, performing to the best of their abilities and emerging as strong, resilient organisations.

The report and an accompanying suite of case studies, reports and guidance, together with presentations from the conference, are now available at www.wellbeing.ac.uk. These draw on the project’s work over three years, including: a programme of consultation workshops to understand what wellbeing and engagement mean for our sector; a programme of 13 interventions piloted and evaluated in 12 diverse institutions, including the development of detailed case studies

and associated guidance materials; a piece of work to explore the relationship between the results of employee wellbeing surveys, student satisfaction and research performance; and extensive consultation with sector associations and varied institutions.

The project started with a Hefce Leadership Governance and Management (LGM) funded pilot project in 2008, which aimed to understand current practice across the sector around wellbeing and begin to build engagement around this agenda. The second phase of the project gained additional funding from the Scottish and Welsh funding councils (SFC and Hefcw) to allow their respective institutions to participate. It has seen the project’s influence within the sector grow, along with the number of institutions engaging with the project and the wellbeing agenda.

This latest phase of work has been delivered through a consortium of 12 institutions across the three nations, led by the University of Leeds. The project has worked closely with major

sector associations and trade unions to inform their work and to ensure that it meets the needs of the sector.

During phase two, individuals from over 78% of institutions in England, Scotland and Wales subscribed to the project website. Over 300 places were taken at the project’s workshops, by individuals representing 131 different organisations.

Building on the successful work of the past three years, from October 2011 the project will be run by the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA). They will be working with stakeholders over the coming months to agree the scope of the work, and are keen to hear from institutions which would like to be involved. **E**

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Understanding strategy and making it work?

Professor Peter Slee, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Huddersfield



Professor Peter Slee

I have an old photograph in my office. I am 30 years younger, on skis, travelling at about 60mph and airborne. It is on my wall to remind me of the dangers of complacency. Back then I thought I was a pretty good skier, but this was my first (and only) attempt at a natural ski jump, and I was in new territory with no prior training or instruction in how to manage it. The picture shows me struggling to maintain balance and equilibrium, and recognising that the technique which had carried me through under the old familiar circumstances of the piste was not well adapted to this new and unfamiliar terrain.

I have been looking at the picture a lot lately. We in England, at least, have stepped over the edge and into a revolution in higher education. No other country in the developed world has ever made such swift and savage changes to the public funding of higher education. We do not know what effects it will have on the country, on our own institutions, on the people we serve, or on ourselves. But there can be no pulling back. We are on the down slope,

accelerating into the future, and all we have to guide us are the strategic tools we have used and tested in more benign and familiar conditions. The question is, will they still work in the world to come?

Aligning day-to-day activities to the achievement of strategic objectives, in order to bring about change and make it stick, is a core skill for any leader and manager. So how do you do it? There is, of course, no magic formula. But there are two steps you can take to make it easier.

First, understand the way your HEI tackles strategic planning. There is more than one approach, and the differences can fundamentally affect the space you have to do your job. Second, learn to go with the grain. Adjust your practice to the cultural/strategic norms. There comes a point where beating your head against the brick wall of established practice just hurts too much to make any sense. And the sight of blood does become distracting.

Approaches to strategic planning

In my university library there are 1200 books about strategy. The Oxford Handbook of Strategy (Faulkner and Campbell 2003) identifies 15 different approaches, and leading Harvard gurus Kaplan and Norton claim, "A generally accepted way to describe strategy does not exist." Nevertheless it is possible to identify among all the claims and counterclaims three distinct types of strategy formulation in UK HEIs, and to see them in operation, often alongside one another.

Planned strategy, at its simplest, involves understanding where you are now (situation), knowing where you want to be in the future (aspiration), and agreeing what you need to do to get from the one to the other (planning). It is ostensibly a future-oriented approach, assuming a high sense of organisational coherence expressed through a series of

supporting plans (marketing, widening participation, research, learning and teaching, HR, finance, estates etc). The planned strategy has been a feature of universities for the past decade, largely because it has been a Hefce requirement as a condition for funding. And in a relatively stable environment where change is slow it can be said to have some advantages.

The second type of formulation is **emergent strategy**. In the 1980s business theorists began to notice that nearly 70% of large organisations never achieved their long-term financial plans, and that what they were doing after 10 years was often very different than they had predicted. Why? First, because big organisations are simply too complex to operate in such a rigidly planned way. Second, the world has a habit of changing in ways not predicted by corporate planners. And third, because paper strategies are often artefacts produced simply to satisfy specific audiences like the stock market or, heaven forbid, Hefce, and can bear little relation to the working lives of staff further down the organisation. These are the people, so the theory goes, who make literally thousands of day-to-day decisions which have their own internal logic and which, over time, shift an institution's direction incrementally in relation to its changing environment. In Henry Mintzberg's phrase, "Strategy originates not in the mind of the strategist but in the interaction of an organisation with its environment."

Realised strategy is the "third way" in strategic planning. It takes Eisenhower's view that "plans are nothing, planning is everything". We must plan on the basis of evidence at our disposal, but also be prepared to adapt our plans to changing circumstances. Underpinning this approach are three major concepts. First, the idea that strategy should be "tight/loose". Purpose and direction should be clear, but the steps taken to achieve them should be open to interpretation by those doing the job. Second, the idea that the real aim of strategy is to ensure that an organisation learns to capitalise on its

resources and use them to respond positively to its internal and external environment. Third, the concept that planning has two key phases: orientation (agreeing the direction of travel) and animation (ensuring assets and resources are properly mobilised and aligned to achieve the aims).

Making it work

As a middle manager in a **planned strategy**, your job is turning the words in the planning document into results. The politics of the situation are simple. You work upwards by creating a plan which references the formal corporate strategy and demonstrates a clear tie-in between your work and the delivery of that strategy. Then you work crossways and downwards to mobilise the resources you need to achieve your goals. There is no easy way to do this. You have to create a local legitimacy for the delivery of the corporate plan. You will have to persuade those on whom you will rely that what you want them to do is in fact their idea, and the obvious response to the real issues they have been seeking to address all along. Your energy and commitment to constant communication and cross-functional working will be critical.

In an **emergent strategy** the limits of action are largely prescribed by a combination of market conditions and professional standards. This approach tends to prevail in stable environments characterised by a fairly weak external perspective and with relatively short-term goals, among sub-units where collaboration is low and where established practices are firmly embedded. An environment like an academic department, in fact, or a process-driven support service.

As a middle manager you may find that the university is working to a planned strategy but your colleagues in the school or service are either unaware of it or choosing to pay only lip service to it, and what passes for a departmental

plan is simply the enaction of one damned thing after another, daily and forever. Here you may face the contradictions of a boss, who will expect you to be delivering on top-down targets, and colleagues, who may feel your sole role in life is to create more work for them in order to justify your own position. They may be so detached that they are unable or unwilling to take your professional help and advice.

To be successful in this kind of system you have to be able to create elbow room for yourself. You can do this by demonstrating to colleagues a real added value, one which saves them time or money or gains them brownie points (improving NSS scores, recruiting international students, winning a research grant). Alternatively you can stress the obvious benefits of compliance (cue health and safety, equal opportunities, purchasing). You will have to work with the grain and you may have to express genuine sympathy for their position, trapped as they are between a rock and a hard place. There is no mileage in complaining or wishing/stating your colleagues were more receptive or strategically aware. They do not exist to make your life easier.

In a **realised strategy** directions and targets are top-down, although often with a greater potential degree of buy-in than in the more detailed planned strategy. However you will have enormous discretion over the planning of service or academic delivery. To succeed you will have to generate "animation", getting your team(s) onside so that they believe both in the direction of the corporate plan and in their ability to make a key contribution to it. The problems of collaboration and buy-in are no less than in any other strategy, but you will find much less prescription limiting your approach. This is an exciting way to work, but it does not suit everyone. In a realised strategy you take a great deal more responsibility into your own hands.

So what will work best?

I have worked at four universities over the last 25 years and laboured under all three of the different types of strategic plan. Which worked best? The planned and emergent strategies were reasonably effective in their specific contexts, but in my view that is because – despite some financial shocks – operating conditions were relatively benign. Back in the early '90s, at least, most HEIs could grow their way out of trouble simply by capitalising on the external political trends towards expansion and by, in effect, learning to do a little more for a little less. But it will perhaps be obvious that I prefer the realised strategy as a way of working, and that I think it may be best adapted to the radical changes of the future where the past may be no real guide to success.

The sensible answer, though, is that what will work best is really what will work best for you in the constraints of your own organisational culture. The speed of the change we have to face is greater than the capacity of most of our organisations to shift mindset, culture and established patterns of decision making. The most effective way to manage the kind of organisational changes we face right now is to go with the grain, and to work with it rather than fight against it. **E**

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CAREERS



Working together to achieve excellence

FOLD: addressing strategic development priorities

Rosemary Lynch, University Librarian, UCA

The Forum for Organisational Learning and Development (FOLD) was established as part of a strategic programme to address the leadership and cultural challenges facing a merged and geographically dispersed institution – the University for the Creative Arts (UCA). An in-depth staff survey in 2007 revealed four priorities for engaging staff in the transformational change that UCA sought: strong leadership, effective management, good communications, and reward and recognition. FOLD was tasked with responding to these priorities in a way that reflected UCA's values of collaboration, creativity, distinctiveness, respect and sustainability.

FOLD has pioneered a creative and inclusive approach to organisational development. Championed by UCA's vice-chancellor, FOLD deliberately sits outside the university's committee structure so that it can act as a critical friend, regardless of hierarchy. FOLD works equally with staff at grass roots, senior managers and the executive to reveal issues and identify solutions. Members are drawn from all areas of UCA.

Under FOLD's direction UCA has implemented an accredited leadership and management programme, a bespoke leadership and management competency framework, a reward and recognition framework and an annual leadership and management conference. These

initiatives played an important role in the re-accreditation of the Investors in People award for the university, achieved at the new Bronze level in 2011.

FOLD introduced the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) accredited Level 5 award programme to the university in 2008. The programme was designed to meet UCA's specific requirements and to underpin the development of a Leadership and Management Competency Framework. To date, over 23% of managers have enrolled and the pass rate is 100%. The Competency Framework, introduced in 2009, uses a visual approach to link leadership and management expectations directly to UCA's strategic objectives and values, and is integrated into appraisal and recruitment processes.

As part of the reward and recognition framework, annual awards for "Excellence in Leadership and People Management" and "Individual Merit and Achievement" were developed in response to feedback from the staff survey solution finding groups. The awards seek to recognise excellence, share best practice and celebrate the achievements of individual staff.

FOLD's flagship initiative is the UCA Leadership and Management Conference. Typically, the conference takes people out of their comfort

zones and gives them space to reflect and collaborate. Participants have come to expect an energising and thought-provoking day with valuable learning outcomes.

The inaugural event in 2008 brought managers from all areas and levels of the organisation together for the first time, and demonstrated in a highly visible way that effective leadership and management was as critical to UCA's success as the quality of its teaching, learning and research.

The 2009 conference "Working together to achieve excellence" was attended by over 50% of UCA managers and engaged them in a range of outdoor challenges which relied on teamwork for success; it proved pivotal in changing attitudes. Engagement with leadership activities initiated by FOLD subsequently increased significantly – UCA's bespoke ILM programme was oversubscribed, attendance at performance management workshops rose, and the newly launched 360 feedback scheme achieved 100% senior management participation.

The 2010 conference, led by Gareth Malone of Bafta award-winning series *The Choir*, pushed the boundaries of active participation further. Through music, debate, writing and drawing, staff explored the impact of communicating and collaborating creatively and discovered new ways of working across teams to deliver the "big picture" for the university.

The conference has established the importance of leadership and management within UCA's culture. It is now a regular event in the annual calendar and staff participation has increased year on year. Feedback consistently emphasises a shift in behaviour as a result of attendance.

The introduction of FOLD was timely for UCA. Since the project was initiated, the institution has faced major organisational challenges, including a sustainability review designed to ensure the long-term financial viability of the university. These events, coupled with the introduction of a new academic and professional support structure, have made effective leadership and communication more important than ever.

FOLD has promoted new ways of working which have been adopted across UCA and contributed to increased staff engagement and higher morale, as measured by our biennial staff survey results. Managers are better equipped to lead and manage their areas of responsibility, which has had a direct impact on student satisfaction, with course organisation and management attracting higher scores in the most recent National Student Survey.

With FOLD's support, UCA has made effective leadership and management an everyday, all-staff agenda. **E**

Rosemary Lynch, University Librarian, University for the Creative Arts (UCA)

How strategically does your team manage information and technology?

In partnership with the Leadership Foundation, the University of Nottingham is leading the way in assisting Information Services (IS) leaders and senior management within the higher education sector to align their institutional and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategies.

The use of ICT in supporting the delivery of higher education's core business goals has become increasingly important to university senior managers, yet research by the Nottingham team and its partners indicates that HE institutions differ widely in the maturity of their strategic use of ICT.

The importance of constant engagement between senior IS professionals and their institutions' senior management teams was underlined recently by Parmjit Dhugga, researcher development manager in the faculty of Financial & Business Services at Nottingham. He was speaking after a national JISC meeting at Nottingham on 10 August, held to mark the successful development of the Strategic ICT Toolkit (SICT). The event was attended by senior

managers responsible for SICT field tests at 12 HE institutions across the UK.

JISC infoNet and the Leadership Foundation are to take a lead role in rolling out SICT across the sector. The toolkit (online at www.nottingham.ac.uk/gradschool/sict) includes a range of checklists, case studies and good practice guidelines to help senior managers identify, analyse, assess and develop their current maturity level. The toolkit helps HEIs to further develop the skills and institutional processes necessary to ensure the UK HE sector continues to deliver a first-class experience for its students and partners. Before finding a new 'home' at JISC infoNet, the toolkit will be refined based on feedback from field test sites, all of which reported on its value in generating both discussion and subsequent change.

In practical terms, the Leadership Foundation will demonstrate elements of the toolkit in some of its key programmes, such as Preparing for Senior Strategic Leadership and the Future Leaders Programme. This will provide real

guidance for leaders in higher education, showing them how to make powerful and influential use of information to aid strategic decisionmaking. The toolkit will also provide a structured but flexible process for discussing strategic ICT maturity, and so will create a bridge for communications between information specialists and senior managers with more generic responsibilities.

The toolkit is a product of the two-year-old formal partnership between JISC and the Leadership Foundation, and provides a highly effective way of meeting the identified needs of leaders which might otherwise have remained unaddressed.

The Leadership Foundation is running a practical, interactive one-day programme entitled 'How strategically does your team manage information and technology?' The workshop will take place on 12 January 2012 in central London. And is intended to unpack and demonstrate the full potential of the toolkit. To book a place at this event visit www.lfhe.ac.uk/support/essential/sict **E**

Launch of a higher education training and development evaluation toolkit

HR professionals and line managers across UK universities can gain greater insight into the value of training and investment in staff learning and development thanks to a new HR toolkit. The toolkit was designed by Newcastle Business School in collaboration with HR colleagues from Northumbria and Oxford Brookes universities and University College London, and it is free to HR professionals in the higher education sector.

With support from Hefce's Leadership, Governance and Management Fund, HR academics and practitioner experts from Newcastle Business School and Northumbria University led partnerships with external practitioners and worked closely with colleagues from Oxford Brookes and UCL. They reviewed best practice in learning

and evaluation across organisations, and developed a bespoke higher education HR toolkit to address ongoing sectoral needs regarding the evaluation of training and development.

Specifically designed for universities, the toolkit has been developed in such a way that it can be customised to address specific needs, to align with a university's learning and development goals and overall strategies. To ensure the process is manageable, clear guidance on the tools is offered across the implementation, assessment and evaluation stages. A starting point is to use the introductory tools to benchmark existing practices and identify where gaps need to be filled. Once the relevant tools have been identified they can be quickly adapted to align

with the university's specific requirements, to ensure that maximised benefit is gained.

The toolkit is intended to encourage colleagues to better understand the importance of evaluation, as well as improving processes for identifying learning needs, implementing new ways for HR to manage, record and support the evaluation process, and adapting tools to measure knowledge and skills before and after learning. **E**

UK universities can download the full version for free by visiting www.northumbria.ac.uk/toolkit or by contacting Dr Fiona Robson, senior lecturer in human resource management, Newcastle Business School. **E:** f.robson@northumbria.ac.uk



Anne-Marie Martin, AGCAS president, left, presents the AGCAS Lifetime Achievement Award to Wilma Martinelli.

AGCAS honours Wilma

Our congratulations go to Wilma Martinelli of City University, who was recently presented with an AGCAS Lifetime Achievement Award.

AGCAS is the professional association for higher education careers practitioners and those involved in providing careers and employment advice to students and graduates. The award was presented by AGCAS president Anne-Marie Martin at the association's biennial conference in September.

Wilma, who is also the regional co-ordinator for London for the Leadership Foundation, has over 20 years experience in higher education careers work. She started as a careers information officer at the Polytechnic of North London (now London Metropolitan University) and rose to become director of the Centre for Careers and Skills Development at City University. She has contributed to AGCAS throughout her career, firstly as a researcher and writer and as a board member from 2006-2008. She is best known though for her AGCAS presidency (2008-2010) and for her huge contribution to AGCAS training over many years.

The awards are made in recognition of an individual's significant and sustained contribution to AGCAS over the course of their professional lives. They recognise and reward those who, over the years, have helped to make AGCAS what it is and who have been an inspiration to others following in their professional footsteps. **E**



Book now for last few places

This intensive, participative two-day conference is the premier event for development professionals in UK higher education. The event opens with a panel on **'making sense of the new era'**, featuring Bahram Bekhradnia, director of the Higher Education Policy Institute; Christina Yan Zhang from the National Union of Students and Ewart Wooldridge CBE, chief executive of the Leadership Foundation, followed by a keynote from Tribal Group focusing on **'using objective indicators to measure and improve performance'**.

The afternoon of the first day is given over to a mix of themed plenary and workshop sessions, with contributions from the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement and case studies from across the sector on strategies and approaches for **organisational change and student, staff and public engagement**. The first day closes with workshops on the theme of **leadership and management** development, presentation of the GoodPractice Impact Award and dinner and entertainment reflecting Leicester's cultural diversity. **The role of prestige in understanding academic**

motivation is the focus of day 2's opening plenary led by Professor Paul Blackmore and Dr Camille Kandiko, King's Learning Institute. The rest of the morning features workshops on **'meeting future development challenges'**, looking at both the business case for staff development as well as tools, resources and approaches. An after-lunch **Knowledge Exchange** offers formal networking between delegates, sponsors, exhibitors and poster presenters.

This final day closes with two keynote sessions, the first on using **'lean to realign processes to meet changing competitive needs'** by Professor David Stockton, De Montfort University, and the second led by Jean Harrison from the University of Westminster on **'workforce planning: a missing piece in the strategic HRD jigsaw'**.

Conference proceedings will be captured throughout by a graphical recorder and the programme provides plenty of opportunities for formal and informal networking. **Book now to secure one of the final few places!** **E**

Bookmarks

An occasional feature listing recent publications in print and online relating to leadership, governance and management.



Changing Governance and Management in Higher Education: The Perspectives of the Academy.

William Locke, William K. Cummings and Donald Fisher (editors). Springer. 2011. ISBN-10: 9400711395 (hardback). Available from **Amazon.co.uk** @ £90.00

This is the second volume in Springer's series The Changing Academy - The Changing Academic Profession in International Comparative Perspective (www.springer.com/series/8668). It attempts to analyse the tension between external drivers of change in HEIs, such as technology or a drive towards efficiency, and the values and beliefs that traditionally drive academic work. Using a survey of academics in 18 countries and a series of case studies, it shows where tensions are most acute and where they have been most successfully reconciled.



Better Under Pressure: How Great Leaders Bring Out the Best in Themselves and Others.

Justin Menkes. Harvard Business School Press. 2011. ISBN-10: 1422138704 (hardback). Available from **Amazon.co.uk** @ £16.99

We can all cite examples of leaders who are at their best under difficult circumstances. In this book Menkes sheds some light on exactly how these leaders work their magic, using in-depth interviews with 150 CEOs to underpin his thesis.

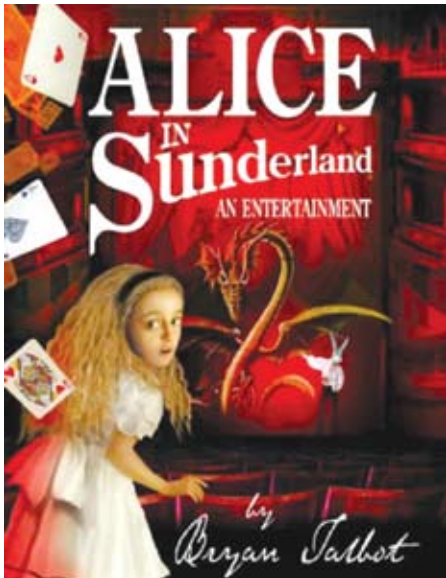


Don't Just Do Something, Sit There: A Guide to Non-directive Coaching and Mentoring.

Bob Thomson. Chandos Publishing. 2009. ISBN-10: 1843344297 (paperback). Available from **Amazon.co.uk** @ £26.60

Thomson, a management development adviser at the University of Warwick, offers a practical guide for line managers and team leaders who might want to incorporate aspects of coaching in their leadership, leaning particularly towards non-directive coaching.

A sense of place... through the looking glass



I was made in the north of England, my early years in one particular part of the north of England – Lancashire – and my most recent years in another. It is now over a decade since I came to Sunderland and the north-east of England, and the journey has taken me via many other places. The invitation to reflect on books and readings which have personal resonance has drawn me to share some reflection and not a little identification with my ‘sense of place’ – of the north as viewed through a particular ‘looking glass’, perhaps.

When I came to Sunderland, the then director of the Town and Country Planning Association, Graeme Bell, himself born in Sunderland, sent me a copy of *Where Ships are Born: Sunderland 1346-1946*, by JW Smith and TS Holden, and alerted me to the need to understand the city’s industrial heritage. Making a home in a city still deeply resentful of the Conservative government it held responsible for the closing down of its shipbuilding and coal mining, where a new economy including a new kind of great civic university was, tentatively, in the making, demanded a sensitivity to place and context. I have benefited from holding dear this ‘sense of place’ consistently in the subsequent period.

The ingredients of an understanding of ‘place’ are all around us. The looking glass has many viewing points, and intelligence and empathy come from many sources, including literature. In my twelve years in Sunderland I have read most of the surprisingly extensive published work on the city. But to recommend one book which captures the essence of Sunderland for me is to turn to Bryan Talbot’s magnificent graphic novel *Alice in Sunderland: An Entertainment*.

Bryan Talbot has captured and presented a fascinating characterisation of a place – Sunderland – as well as the story of Lewis Carroll’s Alice, and Carroll’s own journey and story, in and of Sunderland. He suggests that Lewis Carroll’s source of inspiration – and indeed his main character Alice (Liddell) – came from the north-east and not from a dreamy Oxford boat cruise. From one of the world’s leading comic and graphic novelists this is a remarkable piece of work.

Talbot based his book on the research of Carrollian scholar Michael Bute, and describes it as “an entertainment”. A quite wonderful fusion of myth, autobiography, soaring imagination and glorious, rich illustration and artwork, it is my book – and gift – of choice. It sits in my office and in my sitting-room, and I return again and again to it for further discoveries. The scope and detail are wide and deep. The graphic novel genre has surprised me so much, providing a vehicle for the research and findings of literary, scientific and human interest which inform my sense of this place, Sunderland, so strongly.

Place and journeys deep into the spirit and culture of place have always captured my imagination. The richer the understanding of this sense of place, with its complex themes of society, economy, culture – historical and contemporary – the better equipped one is to live and work in a place. I believe this to be particularly true of university leaders, whose institutions have their own sense of place, and importantly have civic and regional place-context which is in many cases integral to their educational objects and purpose.

The leadership textbooks which identify and champion key traits of ‘authentic’ and ‘transformational’ leadership often allude to this understanding of place and context, but rarely put it at the centre of their analysis. In my view, we should admit the possibility that this sense of place, through the looking glass and with many layers and sources, might be more important than we think. Indeed, in my own case, in a university now at the heart of a great city, each with rich and complex biographies, I can’t imagine the leadership without this acute and multilayered sense of place. **E**

An extended version of this book review can be read at www.lfhe.ac.uk/publications/leadinglines



PROFESSOR PETER FIDLER

Professor Peter Fidler joined the University of Sunderland as vice-chancellor and chief executive in 1999. He is a trustee of the Customs House Theatre, South Tyneside, and of two academies in Sunderland. He is a deputy lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, and is proud to be a city ambassador for Sunderland, sit on the city’s Economic Leadership Board, and chair its international strategy board.



ALICE IN SUNDERLAND: AN ENTERTAINMENT

BY BRYAN TALBOT

Publisher: Jonathan Cape (5 April 2007)

Format: Hardback, 319 pages

ISBN-10: 0224080768

Price: £12.49 at Amazon.co.uk

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

TOP MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

A challenging opportunity for participants to broaden perspectives and to act as a force for change at both a personal and professional level. TMP is designed to provide long-term benefit to both the individual, the HEI and the wider higher education sector.

TMP28 **Nomination Deadline:**

Friday 24 February 2012

Orientation: Friday 8 June 2012

Week A: Strategic Responses to a Rapidly Changing Future

Monday 2 - Friday 6 July 2012

Action: Tuesday 11 September

Learning: 2012 and Tuesday 27 November 2012

SLL: **System Level Leadership**
Wednesday 14 November 2011

Coaching: Tuesday 30 or Wednesday 31 October 2012 (either), plus 1 session of remote coaching late December 2012

Week B: Leading the High Performing Organisation

Monday 14 - Friday 18 January 2013

Price: £10,995

International Week: Policy, Power and Politics

Now offered separately. Participants choose one or more options from:

Option 1: London and Europe Destination

Monday 3 - Friday 7 December 2012

Price: £TBC

Option 2: Middle East

Saturday 29 September - Thursday 4 October 2012

Price: £TBC

SENIOR STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

An intensive programme that provides the practical skills, principles and networking for those already operating at a senior level in key positions.

SSL15 **Application Deadline:**

Friday 17 February 2012

Module 1: The Reality of Leading Change

Tuesday 6 - Wednesday 7 March 2012

Module 2: Personal Impact Analysis

Tuesday 15 - Wednesday 16 May 2012

Venue: Marriott City Centre Hotel, Bristol

Price: £3,950

PREPARING FOR SENIOR STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

PSSL is designed to prepare those new in post as academic and administrative leaders to play a senior cross-institutional strategic role in higher education.

PSSL15 **Application Deadline:**

Friday 4 November 2011

Module 1: Unpacking Strategic Leadership

Tuesday 22 - Wednesday 23

November 2011

Venue: York Marriott Hotel

Module 2: Strategic Leadership in Action

Tuesday 17 - Wednesday 18 January 2012

Venue: Edinburgh

Price: £3,250

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

HoD is an intensive personal and leadership development programme for those in head of department posts in academic, administrative or professional services environments. It includes 360-degree appraisal and coaching.

HOD14 **Application Deadline:**

Friday 13 April 2012

Module 1: Tuesday 1 - Wednesday 2 May 2012

Module 2: Tuesday 26 - Wednesday 27 June 2012

Venue: Cardiff

Price: £2,800

INTRODUCTION TO HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

IHoD provides the opportunity to explore the knowledge and skills required to undertake this pivotal role and helps participants identify their personal leadership style.

IHOD1 **Application Deadline:**

Friday 2 March 2012

Dates: Wednesday 28 - Thursday 29 March 2012

Action Learning: Wednesday 25 April 2012

Venue: York

Price: £1,400

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Practical leadership events focusing on contemporary and challenging topics and issues facing HE.

Handling Difficult Conversations

Learn the approaches and skills necessary to hone the ability to handle difficult conversations professionally.

Date: Thursday 3 November 2011

Venue: London

Price: £395

Essentials of Finance

Covers the unique financial attributes of HE.

Date: Thursday 10 November 2011 or

Thursday 17 May 2012

Venue: London

Price: £395

Advanced Leading Your Technical Team

Helping technical managers to focus on people leadership and driving strategy in order to succeed.

Dates: Tuesday 22 - Wednesday 23 November 2011

Venue: Manchester

Price: £800

Shared Services

Introducing the various factors and decision making processes to consider when contemplating shared services as an option for bringing about efficiencies.

Date: Thursday 30 November 2011 (9.30 - 13.00)

Venue: London

Price: £195

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMES

A series of programmes developed in collaboration with higher education professional groups.

The Research Managers Programme

Helps develop qualities and capacity for those looking for a leadership role in research management.

Cohort 1:

Module 1: Tuesday 8 - Wednesday 9 November 2011

Module 2: Friday 9 December 2011

Venue: Bristol and London

Price: £995

Managing Through Complexity

A stepping stone for new and established managers working in libraries, information and digital and student services area of HEIs.

Cohort 2:

Module 1: Tuesday 15 - Wednesday 16 November 2011

Module 2: Tuesday 13 December 2011

Venue: Leeds

Price: £995

The HR Business Partner Programme

A development programme which aims to identify and equip HR professionals with the competencies and political understanding required to stand out as effective, and capable of adding real value to delivery of the institutional mission during challenging times.

Cohort 9:

Module 1: Monday 23 - Tuesday 24 January 2012

Module 2: Tuesday 21 February 2012

Venue: Leeds

Price: £645

GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

A series of development seminars and networking events for Boards and Chairs of Governors in HEIs.

Right side of the law?

Look beyond mere compliance towards full engagement with statutory responsibilities.

Date: Tuesday 1 November 2011

Venue: London

Price: £395

Shifting priorities for Governors in Scottish HEIs

Provide an overview of the key contemporary issues affecting governing bodies.

Date: Wednesday 9 November 2011

Venue: Scotland

Price: £395

Three key issues for governors

Three short sessions covering fundamental topics that are crucial in the current climate.

Date: Thursday 17 November 2011

Venue: Manchester

Seminar 1: The big picture

Times: 9.30 - 12.30

Price: £180

Seminar 2: Financial health

Times: 13.15 - 16.15

Price: £180

Seminar 3: Collaboration

Times: 16.30 - 18.30

Price: £120

Future Proofing Higher Education

Explore different responses to 'future proofing', through examination of a range of innovative projects and initiatives undertaken on behalf of Hefce, DBIS, or the LF.

Date: Wednesday 25 January 2012

Venue: London

INTERNATIONAL

ILDP 2012: International Leadership Development Programme

Two of the most economically vibrant cities in the world will provide the base for delegates to explore global higher education in America and China. These active four day programmes will allow delegates to meet like-minded peers from the UK and other parts of the world to discuss how they are dealing with global economic, social and political challenges.

ILDP: Hong Kong

Dates: Sunday 25 - Thursday 29 March 2012

ILDP: Chicago

Dates: Sunday 13 - Thursday 17 May 2012

Price: £4,450 per programme

To book a place on a programme or event:

Melissa Scuteri, Programme and Events Manager

T: 020 7849 6906

E: melissa.scuteri@lfhe.ac.uk

To talk about in-house programmes, coaching or consultancy:

Sweta Purohit, Consultancy Manager

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