WHAT DO I KNOW NOW THAT I WISH I’D KNOWN THEN?
ЭВАРТ ВУЛДРИДЖ НА ЛЕДАРШИП ЛЕССОНС

IN THIS ISSUE:
IN PRACTICE: Leading cities and places
Academic leadership: dimensions and dynamics
Connecting creatively
Maintaining happiness in gloomy times
Calendar of events
While the economic climate and policy uncertainties have rather dampened any sense of spring fever in the sector, this issue of ENGAGE illustrates that higher education institutions are not only seeking to address current challenges, but are also recognising the need to think creatively and be proactive in equipping themselves to make the most of whatever the future holds.

Our Leadership Summit in February (see p5) attracted over 200 people for lively discussion around agility, creativity, innovation and technology; ‘Leading transformational change’ (p9) attracted similar interest; the Creative Connect Process described on p12 harnesses left- and right-brain thinking for team development; Ewart Wooldridge offers suggestions on how to address the conundrum of offering leadership which creates a continuing sense of agility, creativity and innovation in organisations; Dr Tom Kennie and Professor Robin Middlehurst et al. reflect separately on the dimensions and dynamics of academic leadership - in the UK and in China - while In Practice focuses on the needs and preparations for an innovative development programme for leaders of cities and place.

On p14 we record our thanks to Professor Mike Pittilo, following his early death in March. I am very glad to have had the opportunity to work with Mike over the past four years through Change Academy; he was a supportive, insightful and inspirational leader.

It will be interesting to see how the balance between immediate challenges and future capacity is reflected in proposals for the 2010 Change Academy (deadline 1 April). Stories from the 2009 Change Academy will be highlighted in future issues of ENGAGE.

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IN PRACTICE

ISSUE TWENTY THREE

SEE CENTRE PAGES

LEADING CITIES AND PLACES: A NEW TRANSFORMATIONAL ‘PLACE-BASED’ LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
IN FOCUS

“There is no such thing as the perfect leader. If there is one, he is only pretending, like a pig inserting scallions [spring onions] into its nose in an effort to look like an elephant.”

Liu Shaoqi Second President of the People’s Republic of China (1898-1969)

New HEaTED website

HEaTED have announced the launch of a new website specifically aimed at helping all parts of the HR community, especially those with a people or organisational development responsibility.

Developed by and for the sector, the site not only features how your institution can take advantage of a whole range of HEaTED services, but also features over 200 specialist technical skills courses and workshops pooled into a single place so that we can all make the most of our ever stretched staff development budgets.

How often do your technical staff have specialist training needs but you just don’t have the numbers (or increasingly finance) to meet them in-house? Well this site offers the opportunity to deliver crucial development to your technical staff for a fraction of the price. It has been developed so you and your technical colleagues/managers can easily navigate by role or subject specialism with a simple online booking form to secure your place.

This informative website can help form part of your staff development offer to technical staff and their managers.

www.heated.ac.uk/home.php

Advice in a crisis

Innovating from a crisis: shared challenges and future directions
Monday 7 June 2010, London

Share and learn from the experiences of Californian colleagues at this one-day conference. This event will provide the opportunity to explore and discuss the shared challenges facing higher education institutions in the United Kingdom and California.

Higher education in California is often recognised as a model that provides access, institutional diversity, and excellence in teaching and research. However, the current recession has hit the golden state hard. How will institutions fare in an era of drastically reduced public expenditure? With a $20 billion deficit in the State of California and two consecutive years of budget cuts, the ten-campus University of California system is facing a $1 billion shortfall.

The event is designed for members of senior management teams in further and higher education institutions and those with significant institutional responsibilities.

www.lfhe.ac.uk/evt-crs-prog/innovatinginacrisis

New governance support

New JISCMail list
The Leadership Foundation is pleased to announce a new JISCMail list: GOVERNANCE. The list is intended to provide a forum for university managers working in higher education governance support to exchange ideas and to help to develop and share best practice in these challenging times. It builds on the development of the governance www.lfhe.ac.uk/governance (see page 13) but should be of most interest and value to governance practitioners rather than governors themselves.

If you are interested in joining this new JISCMail list or finding out more about how it works please contact Susie Norton E: susie.norton@lfhe.ac.uk or visit www.lfhe.ac.uk/governance/governancejiscclist.html

Getting to grips series: new publications
The Leadership Foundation and the Committee of University Chairs are collaborating to develop new easy-to read resource guides for all governors on three key areas: academic quality and the student experience; internationalisation; and understanding research. This work is part of an ongoing suite of activities being undertaken with funding provided by Hefce to support the enhancement of governance in higher education. Look out for more news on these resources late autumn 2010!

www.lfhe.ac.uk/governance
NEWS

Starter for Ten

Jon Baldwin joined Warwick as registrar in 2004. Prior to his appointment at Warwick, he was secretary and registrar at UMIST from 2000 to 2004 and registrar at the University of Wolverhampton from 1995 to 2000.

Jon has also held management, teaching and administration posts at Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh and Lancashire Polytechnic, as well as teaching at the Open University and in Further Education and publishing papers and articles on a wide range of education-related topics.

He is past president of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA), an associate of the National Health Institute for Innovation & Improvement, a member of the Executive Committee of the Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA), a former member of the Executive Committee of the Association of University Administrators (AUA) and has previously been a School and Further Education College governor. He is a regular conference speaker and contributor to national and international debates. Jon is an alumnus of TMP 5.

What is the best piece of management/leadership advice you have ever been given?  
90% of success is preparation.

Who would you most like to have worked with/for?  
Sir Alex Ferguson.

What is the biggest change you have seen in management/leadership approaches?  
Too much process, prescription. The removal of judgement.

Who has inspired you most in your working life?  
Tim Curtis, former deputy director at Lancashire Polytechnic. Taken far too soon.

What was the best professional move you made and why?  

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

What will you remember most about TMP?  
No mobile phones(!) Those who know me will understand.

What will be the most enduring learning point?  
That it’s up to you.

Have you continued to meet/engage with your TMP Fellows?  
Informally but helpfully.

What piece of advice would you give to someone starting off their career?  
There is still no substitute for hard work.

What one thing would make your job easier?  
Prevention of lazy and inappropriate use of e-mail.

What’s been your biggest professional challenge and how did you overcome it?  
Through the creation of the new university in Manchester, effectively managing myself out of a job. Securing my current position at Warwick was a lovely way to leave.

Who would you choose to be stranded on a desert island with?  
Eric Cantona. He knew when to stop and was willing to try different things.

Who would you choose to throw out of the balloon?  
The heaviest person.

Quentin Tarantino, Neil Jordan or Martin Scorcese?  
Neil Jordan.

If you could get tickets to any event in the world what would it be?  
The last ever Morrissey concert.

Coventry or Warwick?  
Coventry.

What can’t you live without?  
My early morning swim.

What would you be if you weren’t a Registrar?  
Retired!

Jamie Oliver, Gordon Ramsey or Nigella Lawson?  
Jamie Oliver.

Favourite website/blog?  
RedNews.co.uk

With thanks to Professor Pittilo

As we were about to go to press, we learned with great sadness of the death of Professor Mike Pittilo, vice-chancellor and principal of Robert Gordon University, chair of the Leadership Foundation Membership Advisory Group, and chair of the Change Academy Board.

Many good things will doubtless have been said about Mike by his many friends and colleagues by the time this edition of ENGAGE is published. We would like to mention just one of the many areas where his interest, support and leadership were highly instrumental and greatly valued, and will be much missed. Mike was, typically, an enthusiastic co-originator of the now well-known and established Change Academy. He was a key member of the team that visited the US to study the Summer Academy model several years ago, and helped shape the UK model. He remained closely involved, and was appointed the first chair of the Change Academy Board in 2008. His ability to lead was only matched by his ability to bring out the best in everyone. Today’s successful Change Academy owes much to his personal commitment and support.

Many of us have lost a good friend, and higher education is the poorer for his passing. He was a truly inspirational man.

Brenda Smith, co-originator of the Change Academy

Bob Thackwray, Change Academy team and honorary professor, Robert Gordon University
Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) has been identified as one of the UK’s top 100 employers for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. The university appears at number 85 in Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index 2010.

The Index is based on a range of key indicators, which this year included the largest ever survey of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees (with over 7,000 participants). LJMU is one of only two universities to appear in the top 100.

Stonewall chief executive Ben Summerskill said, “Competition was fiercer than ever to secure a place on the 2010 Top Employers list. We received more entries than any previous year from employers who understand and have benefited from Stonewall’s research, which found that gay people are far more likely to buy goods or services from companies they know are gay-friendly. The Index is a powerful tool used by Britain’s 1.7 million gay employees and 150,000 gay university students to decide where to take their talent and skills.”

Meriel Box, LJMU’s head of staff development and chair of the LGBT Equality Network commented:

“We are really proud to be listed as one of Stonewall’s Top 100 Employers. It is a tremendous achievement for our university after many years of hard work, and clearly puts LJMU on the equality map for supporting and recognising our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff and students.”

“The key to our success is the support of senior management, robust policies and established equality staff networks that effectively contribute to the continuous improvement of our workplace. Diversity is respected, valued and celebrated at LJMU.”
What do I know now that

Ewart Wooldridge CBE is founding chief executive of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. Here he talks to Dr Lesly Huxley, editor of ENGAGE, about aspects of leadership that he wishes he had known earlier in his career, as expressed recently in a prize-winning article for The Guardian’s Ashridge Public Sector 2009 essay competition.

Like most of his generation with a range of management experience from the mid-1980s onwards, Ewart’s leadership career has been set against a backdrop of ‘performance assessment by measurable outcomes – from Management by Objectives to Public Service Agreements, from Payment by Results to Key Performance Indicators’. While he acknowledges that deliverables and outcomes matter, he also wonders whether he might have understood earlier “a sense of leadership as a journey rather than as a series of episodic achievements (or failures), where assessment of performance is as much to do with direction of travel and espousing of the right values and behaviours as it is with delivered targets”.

Ewart believes that followers look to leaders to provide an “inner beacon of values, energy, hope, challenge, motivation and support” - attributes that chime strongly with the notion of the ‘authentic leader’ described by Goffee and Jones in ‘Why Should Anyone be Led by You?’ (2006). He believes that one of the many challenges facing leaders is in facing up to the fact that “leadership is a complex and multi-faceted thing that thrives on being nurtured, that needs time and does not thrive from being ‘done to’”. He points to Barack Obama as an example of someone who has taken this mixture of odd manoeuvres and to give them confidence. That process of offering interpretation and reassurance is as important as reaching the destination. The interpretative model of leadership is something I’ve come to appreciate much later in my career.”

Ewart also wishes that he had known and understood sooner the concept of ‘emergent change’, which challenges the premise (still prevalent in many target-based approaches), that change management simplistically involves steering a project from point ‘A to point ‘B’. “The truth however, is that in today’s change management journey we will only know a limited amount of the terrain we are crossing, and most of the challenges – or indeed necessarily changed goals – will emerge as we go.”

Over time, Ewart has come to understand better that developing leadership capacity is about equipping staff and organisations to be ‘change ready’ - to be resilient in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty. “I cannot promise them a clear route map for a particular change initiative, but I can interpret for them, coach, mentor and advise. Whilst competences are important, the other ‘c-word’ - confidence - may be of equal validity as a leadership trait and something that leaders must critically impart to and develop within their team.”

However, he acknowledges that the conundrum remains of how to offer leadership which creates a continuing sense of agility, creativity and innovation in organisations. He points to three challenges posed in ‘Hamel’s The Future of Management’ (2007); although focused on the private sector, Ewart believes these are also valid for education and the public sector more widely. They include the challenge of broadening employee freedom by managing less, without sacrificing focus and order. Ewart points to the need to “strive to move from a parent-child to an adult-adult relationship”. He suggests that the reflective leadership practice encouraged by approaches such as 360-degree feedback needs to be taken more deeply into organisations, “to create a more resilient culture of self-awareness and mature reflection with coaching, mentoring and action learning at all levels”.

Hamel’s second challenge relates to the creation of organisations where a spirit of community (rather than the ‘machinery of bureaucracy’) binds people together. Ewart reflects on the strong sense of ‘place’ prevalent in many of the organisations he has worked in and which underpinned much of staff’s commitment. Even without a ‘geographical’ common place, “a good leader can identify where that sense of common territory can be found – through shared values or professional ideals – and use them to create a binding effect. An additional concept which I’ve learned a lot from in recent years is that of services that are ‘co-created’; this is particularly relevant to the world of education and can underpin the sense of shared place”. With the wider public sector as well as education in mind, he is interested in the pilot ‘total place’ initiatives (led by Sir Michael Bichard and the Institute of Government) and their potential for enhancing cross-service delivery.

Hamel’s third challenge builds on the previous two: how can you create a sense of mission that people feel across an organisation, that will justify ‘extraordinary contribution’? Ewart believes that ‘motivational leadership’ plays a key part in determining the ‘psychological contract’ - the “mutual expectations in the employment relationship” which underpin the sense of fair treatment and an acceptable deal
Ewart’s research with the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) in the 1990s showed that private sector staff undergoing significant restructuring and redundancies had stronger, positive perceptions of the psychological contract than those in the public sector because “staff preferred the clear, straightforward deal, although the climate was tougher. The expectations were too complicated in much of the public sector, generating resentment and dissatisfaction, notwithstanding the relatively favourable conditions of employment they enjoyed”. This raises interesting implications for the current environment in higher education and the public sector.

When asked for a ‘Desert Island Discs’ style selection of one leadership theory, book and quote to sum up his personal leadership journey, Ewart reflects:

“On the theory, I’d opt for the ‘leader as interpreter’ model. We’re getting much clearer about the relevance of this style to contemporary issues – as followers, we need believable leaders who interpret a very complex world for us, who engage well internally and externally, and who coach as much as command, and support as much as challenge”.

For the book, “It has to be ‘The Age of Unreason’ by Charles Handy, one of the few UK authors on leadership with genuine global reputation. It covers his concept of ‘tight loose’ leadership, very relevant to today’s world where we want the tightest bottom line combined with maximum innovation. And he always told a compelling story (often very funny), which is a critical characteristic of good 21st century leaders”.

And the quote? “Probably I would choose the final paragraph of Nelson Mandela’s ‘The Long Walk to Freedom’, because it conveys that sense of a journey - a long haul - and leadership through inner personal values – ‘...for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended’.

References
1 An edited version of Ewart’s essay can be found at: www.guardianpublic.co.uk/ashridge-essay-competition-wooldridge and the full version can be found at www.lfhe.ac.uk/publications/reports
**PROJECT UPDATES**

**Delivering more with less**

*LGM project reference: LTC 030  
Lead organisation: University of Exeter*

With increasingly constrained resources, managers may be struggling to continue to deliver improved services. This project, 'Delivering more with less: learning resources for managers to succeed in a new funding era' aims to help deliver transformational change by providing managers with an intelligent and accessible set of learning resources that helps them do just that: deliver more with less.

Exeter is working in partnership with three other institutions on this 18-month Hefce-funded project. Each partner will focus on specific projects that combine cost reduction with delivering service improvements. Two of the partners (the University for the Creative Arts and University College Falmouth) will concentrate on major organisational change and process projects, while the University of Sussex and the University of Exeter share a particular focus in their change work on preparing their managers to deliver more with less.

The lessons learned across the projects will be shared by the partners in a dynamic way, and the outputs from these projects will feed back into developing the learning resource. These experiences will be shared within the sector at a mid-point in the project as well as at the end – in this way important findings will be disseminated as quickly as possible, which will be particularly important if resources from public funds decline swiftly.

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**Developing and communicating distinctiveness**

*LGM project reference: LTC 016  
Lead organisation: Oxford Brookes University*

A difficult economic climate, constant change within the sector, uncertainties of market behaviour, and rising student expectations linked to higher fees all contribute to a more competitive environment in which it becomes increasingly important for universities to be able to communicate a distinctive identity.

The project involves three members of the University Alliance - Oxford Brookes University, Bournemouth University and the University of Bradford. Each one could be described as being positioned in the 'squeezed middle' of higher education institutions, where it can be particularly challenging to identify distinctiveness. The three universities are working together to identify, develop and share good practice, to enable institutions to become more adept at devising distinctive strategies which give clear direction and are engaging to staff, students and external stakeholders.

Using an action learning set model, and looking outside the higher education sector to identify successful approaches which might be transferable, the project aims to produce a better understanding of: what distinctiveness might look like and how it can be achieved; how stakeholders can be effectively engaged; and what this means for the training and development of senior managers to support them in addressing this agenda.

A web forum will facilitate wider consultation, discussion and dissemination during the middle and later stages of the project. Sector-wide dissemination and engagement will be achieved through a national conference on the project and its findings in autumn 2011.

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**Practical customer service skills in higher education**

This Leadership Foundation Small Development Project examined the underlying theory of customer service, and probed the drivers and effectiveness of solutions for service quality in HEIs. It had a particular focus on the 'support services' that underpin the whole student experience.

The resulting 'Handbook to Help with the Basics' includes a review of current research, input from commercial training providers and consultants, plus case studies of four HEIs (Imperial College London, Bath, Middlesex and University of Exeter). The latter provide a fascinating insight into how different institutions have approached a variety of issues around service provision, organisational culture and student experience.

In addition to the Handbook, the project has produced an annotated slideshow, suggestions for discussion topics, and a thorough account of the background research (including data from other HEIs and a comprehensive reference list). The project outcomes have attracted a lot of interest in the community, and the project lead (Clive Betts, University of Exeter) is busy on the spring conference circuit and welcomes further enquiries about this work.

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Details of the 2010 Small Development Projects will be announced shortly.
Leading Cities and Places: A new transformational ‘place-based’ leadership development programme

LYNNE HOWLETT, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

The project team from Newcastle University. From left to right: Dr Paul Vallance, Research Associate; Lynne Howlett, Leadership and Management Development Adviser; and Professor John Goddard OBE, Emeritus Professor and formerly Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

The challenge

In December 2008, Newcastle and Northumbria universities, supported by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, won a Hefce Leadership, Governance and Management grant to explore the case for, and potential scope of, a leadership development programme. The programme would support those managers from universities and their civic partners who are responsible for building bridges between higher education and cities. All UK universities are developing partnerships – and each city is seeking to build relationships with ‘its’ universities, to enhance its national and international competitiveness and contribute to the development of inclusive communities. Universities are also seeking local support for their ambitions in terms of their research, teaching, and business and community engagement.

In addition, the government has recently promoted a new approach to integrated public service delivery through its Total Place initiative. The initiative looks at how a ‘whole area’ approach to public service delivery can lead to better services at less cost. Pilot projects in 13 localities are seeking to identify and avoid overlaps and duplications between organisations, delivering a step change in service improvement at the local level as well as across Whitehall.

The National School of Government has linked this initiative to the improvement of leadership across public services through the adoption of a ‘whole systems’ approach. Their proposal includes the concept of ‘leadership of place’ where ‘leaders from across the whole (public service) system in a particular place come together for joint leadership development programmes.’ They argue that ‘whole system inter-organisational cross-service leadership in a particular locality is increasingly not an option but a necessity as agencies are required to respond both to complex fast-changing needs of their communities and also the need at the local level to “join-up” the wide range of disparate national policies and programmes’ (Benington and Hartly, 2009).

Clearly these developments pose leadership challenges for those in universities responsible for civic engagement, and for those outside seeking to reach into universities. Programmes like Common Purpose’s Meridian go some way to supporting large numbers of city leaders to develop networks and lead beyond their own areas of authority. However the intention with this proposed programme, if support were found for it, would be to specifically bring higher education and city/place-based leaders together to develop their partnership working skills while working on real-time, real city/place-based challenges – thus developing simultaneously the city/place and its leaders in a way that other leadership programmes do not.

This article describes some of the partnership challenges being faced by higher education leaders and their city/place-based partners, and explains how the Leadership Foundation’s new Leading Cities and Places programme was designed and why.

Consultation

Consultation took place in three cities (Bristol, Sheffield and Newcastle). The 19 interviewees were vice-chancellors and pro vice-chancellors from pre- and post-92 universities, selected CEOs, and other partners from across each city. Interviews had two parts: an initial focus on city challenges and partnership working, followed by an in-depth look at the skills and behaviours of effective city leaders and the most effective way to develop those skills. Findings were shared with the project’s steering group, who also contributed to the final recommendations. All findings were also shared with the original interviewees, who were given the opportunity to comment at each stage.

Partnerships between universities and cities

The interviews indicated that university leaders are becoming more committed to a civic engagement agenda, and recognise the mutual benefits of building strong formal and informal relationships with partners from their city – including local authorities, NHS trusts, economic development organisations, local schools and cultural organisations.

For post-1992 universities this was emphasised to be part of their ‘core business’, with activities such as applied research, consultancy, and professional or vocational training and placements requiring them to be externally engaged at the level of individual academic units. For pre-1992 university leaders it seemed to be an agenda that is currently articulated more strongly at a strategic level, but one that they are increasingly seeking to place at the centre of their institutional missions alongside research and teaching activities. A feature of these trends which is encouraging for their local partners is that, as well as competing on a number of fronts, local universities also appear to be working together to a greater degree on common issues in the interest of their cities.

Interview respondents in general believed that the current economic downturn, despite the obvious threat that it represents for universities and many of their public-service partners, would make partnership
working more important, as organisations are forced to find new collaborative ways of delivering services and meeting shared goals with fewer individual resources.

The barriers to partnership working

However, the research also identified a number of significant institutional barriers that might prevent universities fulfilling this expanded role within their cities. These barriers reflect the always challenging nature of partnerships between large organisations with their own distinctive interests, structures and working practices. University leaders emphasised that civic engagement activities are often limited by the resources available to them, or come into conflict with the funding of their core teaching and research functions. A further set of issues concerned the ability of universities to engage effectively in their city’s political sphere, including: the often geographically fragmented nature of local government across city-regions; instability and frequent changes in the leadership of city councils; and more generally the overlapping range of regional and local organisations that are involved in the economic and political governance of UK cities. There was also a feeling among some respondents that universities were still perceived in negative terms by some potential partners, especially in the business, community and voluntary sectors.

For non-university leaders the most consistent problem was that, while they may have enjoyed close interpersonal relationships with the vice-chancellor and other members of the university’s executive team, they found that things agreed at this level were frequently not followed up further down the system. Many civic partners said they were not always sure who to work with below this top level of universities (on both academic and administrative/support service sides of the institution), and that universities’ size and diversity made it hard to get a single view from people there. In addition civic partners often do not fully understand the organisational structures and procedures of universities, and particularly the terminology used to describe them. They also often found that universities will operate at a slow pace compared to their own organisations.

These obstacles meant that some non-university leaders felt there was scope for academics within local universities to potentially do much more to contribute to their cities, through, for instance, undertaking more research with tangible outcomes for the city and taking a leading role in translating their thinking into practical advice for other local public authorities.

Leading in cities

Leadership was seen to have an important part to play in supporting good civic partnerships. The interviews indicated that this could take two relatively distinct forms: the internal leadership of organisations like universities to encourage external public or civic engagement; and collaborative leadership within city partnerships that involve multiple organisational stakeholders.

The first of these, interviewees emphasised, is primarily about recognising and supporting the potential of outstanding enterprising individuals in their organisation who are themselves able to assume a leadership role in their area of engagement. The second form, when it is successful, is characterised by the various civic leaders being as committed to the mutual benefits the partnership will bring to the city as they are to the interests of their own organisations. The common element to both of these forms stressed by interviewees was that they required leaders to mobilise other groups by effectively articulating the direction in which their organisation or city needed to develop.

Effective city leaders

This part of the research required the interviewees to focus on the skills and behaviours of the most effective city leaders and provide their views on the best ways to develop these skills. The list of skills and behaviours was extremely long but broadly fell under five key headings:

- Commitment to the city;
- Delivery of vision;
- Communication skills;
- Personal skills;
- Relationship management.

A majority of interviewees described effective city leaders as those who demonstrate complete commitment and belief in developing their cities. They articulate the future of the city at every opportunity and link their own organisations’ successes with the city. They accept that leading cities is political, and at times show a willingness to put their own or their organisation’s goals second to the city by stepping back from their personal agendas.

“You give up a bit but you gain a lot. We can only deliver a prosperous Sheffield collectively.”

All interviewees said that effective city leaders have a clear vision, share the city vision and persuade others to work towards it. They possess skills around scanning the environment, carrying the concept and joining things up for others. They are action-oriented and tenacious about city improvement agendas.

Effective city leaders demonstrate a commitment to continuous open communication and a willingness to ‘put their cards on the table’. They strive to use a common language, rather than their own organisation’s jargon which can confuse and alienate their city partners. They are skilled at managing/chairing meetings so as to make the most of the expertise around the table. Many also described networking skills, and a willingness (as well as the stamina) to engage in numerous civic engagements, often out of hours.

The most effective city leaders are described as patient, tenacious and unafraid of failure. They develop and use extensive networks and have a ‘pick up the phone’ style. They use well-honed influencing skills and demonstrate a genuine affiliation/interest in others and their organisations. They have the strength to lead and be unpopular at times, but demonstrate diplomacy and humility at the same time. They accept that conflict is inevitable and commit to not letting conflict stall progress at any level. Trust and confidence in themselves and their partners were also frequently cited.

By far the most frequently cited development needs were in the areas of:

- Strategic thinking;
- Visioning skills;
- Conflict management skills;
- Effective communication;
- Partnership working;
- Environment scanning;
- Networking skills;
- Influencing skills.
In contrast to the skills and behaviours listed above, some interviewees also described the characteristics of the least effective city leaders. They were seen as dominating, glory-seeking empire-builders, only interested in their own futures and those of their organisations. They were described as often being aloof, arrogant and insular. They tend not to empower others, and rarely create cultures where leading outside their organisation is as important as leading within it. Interviewees were clear that this style of leadership was not appropriate for the future.

Experienced HEIs and their city partners reported that they had gained the skills that made them effective city leaders through both formal and informal processes. Formal leadership development programmes like the Leadership Foundation’s Top Management Programme were cited alongside the more specialised Common Purpose programme. Experience, secondments, political roles, informal mentors, action learning, previous roles, and “the deep end” were all listed.

One leader was open about not possessing some of the key skills described here, explaining that he had recruited a senior team that were outstanding in this respect. None mentioned attending partnership working programmes.

Commitment for a national ‘Leading cities and places’ programme

Of the 19 interviewees, 18 felt that, to develop the skills and behaviours described above, an appropriately pitched programme with tangible outcomes would be of value to the next generation of strategic city/place-based leaders. They felt that delivering the programme to higher education leaders and their partners in their respective city/place groups would add great value. They were clear that any emergent programme or process should be linked to the city/place, stressing that a way to market such a programme would be to talk about developing the city or place almost as much, if not more than, developing its leaders. Some felt that the individual’s leadership development would naturally result from reflecting on approaches to place-based leadership. “It has to be about developing higher education leaders to lead the city, not just lead within the city,” said one.

The concept of city/place-based action research was either raised or well received by almost all interviewees, and the case study approach was suggested by four respondents. Working on real-life challenges was seen as essential by almost all.

“Leadership development, unless it brings together people around a common problem at an appropriate level of detail, just misses the point.”

Developing the city/place was seen as a powerful vehicle for developing the leaders and something that might encourage nominations. One respondent felt very strongly that the programme should not be about “What is your leadership style? It is more about how you are leading the city and what more you can do for your city”.

Complete immersion in each other’s cultures was mentioned frequently, suggesting that a secondment/visit/strategic-exchange idea would also be useful and powerful. There was a strong sense that civic partners did not always understand the importance of each other’s organisations to the city/place, or appreciate each other’s constraints, so a focus on what it is like to work with each other and what more each can do for the city/place was suggested by a number of interviewees.

Involving the cohort in the design of the programme was seen as important, as was the quality/level of the other participants and the facilitators.

Getting the level of the programme correct was regarded as essential. The research suggests that a programme targeted at pro vice-chancellor/dean/head/director level would be more appropriate than at vice-chancellor/CEO level, because a commitment to developing the next generation of strategic city leaders, rather than the current one, was most evident. Vice-chancellors and CEOs are seen to have a role in promoting the programme and getting involved in a small way, but a development programme for the next level had more support.

The researchers suggest that the programme might also be a way of involving more women and black and minority ethnic people in city leadership; only three interviewees out of 19 were female, and only one of those was at vice-chancellor/CEO level. None of the interviewees was black or from an ethnic minority.

Moving the programme of events around the city/place to different venues (theatres, hospitals, schools) was suggested. Some proposed visiting another core city to look at their challenges and to jointly problem-solve. Others referred to civic successes overseas, suggesting the idea of a case study/international study visit (eg Boston, Malmo). “Make it fun, fracture our thinking and take us out of our comfort zones” said one higher education leader.

The emergent ‘Leading cities and places’ programme

Drawing on the preceding analysis, a six-month series of action research and immersion events for higher education leaders and their partners focusing on live, current, key ‘place-based’ challenges has been designed. The original intent to focus exclusively on ‘cities’ has been broadened to encompass the wider, more inclusive notion of ‘place’, and the related notions of ‘place-based leadership’.

Participants will focus on a key city- or place-based challenge. The specific challenges will vary from city to city and place to place but could be, for example, around a social mobility and inclusion theme (a theme which emerged as a common thread throughout all of the interviews). In this example, the programme would therefore focus on how, by working together, city- or place-based leaders (including higher education leaders) could overcome obstacles to social mobility through education and the labour market, and in doing so foster innovation in business, the community and public services.

The intention is to engage participants from all of the universities in a location, to form a Higher Education City/Place-Based Challenge team of six to eight people, typically at senior officer level. Other senior leaders from across the location would be drawn from areas such as health, social care, police, community groups and Regional Development Agencies (depending on the specific challenge), to form a Local Governance team of six to eight people. This would make a core team of 12 to 16 people - we refer to this as the ‘City/Place Challenge’ team.

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The City/Place Challenge team will select from these options:

1. Work entirely locally in a range of venues in their own city (the single city design);
2. Add on study visits to other core cities (the multiple city design);
3. Include international venues (the international city design), all to cities with similar challenges, with the aim of exploring innovative city/place-based leadership and its impact.

These three options will be made available to each City/Place Challenge Team, who will be guided by the City/Place Leadership Group as they design their programme according to the precise challenge they are tackling. In this way the programme for each location will look and feel quite different and will vary in each subsequent year.

The aim of the programme is to develop, over time, a network of skilled leaders from city- and place-based leadership teams and agencies and from across the higher education sector who are able to actively engage in leading the challenges which they face in their local context. These challenges may range from those within the broad umbrella of social innovation and mobility to those which are of a more focused local nature. The final ‘challenges’ will be agreed for each location based on more detailed discussions.

It is hoped that by focusing on different key challenges in each location, leaders from higher education institutions and leaders from other community agencies and political leaders in the local governance system will be able to work together to address real current social, economic and developmental challenges.

The proposed approach combines initial network development and scoping, action research and practical workshops to help understand the policy environment, the development of skills such as partnership working and relationship management, and help with building the capacity to deliver actions which will make a serious difference to the community.

A critical element of the success of the programme will be to ensure that the members of the ‘core’ team from all of the stakeholders involved also engage with the wider community in their host organisations.

The perceived benefits of the programme are:

City/place: the opportunity to create a network of skilled leaders who develop closer relationships, and who will use their collective intelligence to address how the location can become even more effective at responding to social, economic, skills and developmental challenges. It is believed that these areas of challenge will become even more significant as the consequences of the impact of cuts in public sector expenditure develop.

Universities: an opportunity to build local and regional networks which will offer a greater understanding of major place-based challenges, as well as the opportunity to use and leverage the broad expertise within higher education to contribute to the resolution of the challenges.

Individuals: an ability to interact with and build closer relationships with other colleagues across the city/place, and to develop and enhance skills in partnership working and leading in a different context.

Policy agencies/makers: an opportunity to engage with a cadre of place-based leaders who are actively engaged in addressing major challenges.

Taught input will be kept to a minimum and could include optional Sessions on topics such as: leading social mobility and innovation; policy and delivery; effective relationships and partnership working; and strategic city futures – scenarios, positioning and promotion.

The immersion in each other’s culture will take the form of a two-way problem-focused study visit in which participants will be hosted by the city/local councils and universities. They will be invited to investigate a real-life, current organisational challenge, and present back their collaborative solutions to the host organisation. In doing so, they would begin to understand the complexities, challenges and contribution of each other’s organisations. The need for such understanding is a key finding from the research.

The programme will establish clear tangible outcomes at the outset, and the final stage of the programme will bring the vice-chancellors and CEOs back to examine the progress of the City/Place Challenge Team on their particular challenge and to evaluate their learning about city- or place-level partnership working.

The key difference between this leadership programme and many others is that the Leading Cities and Places programme will be tailored for each city/place with the input of its most senior leaders, and a major beneficiary of the programme will be the city/place itself.

The executive programme director will be Dr Tom Kennie, who will be supported by experienced facilitators and national experts in city leadership including John Goddard, emeritus professor of regional development studies at Newcastle University.

How to get involved

If you would like to know about the study, the interviews and/or the findings please contact Lynne Howlett, leadership and management development manager, Newcastle University. E: lynne.howlett@ncl.ac.uk

The final report upon which this In Practice is based is entitled ‘Researching and Scoping a Higher Education and Civic Leadership Development Programme’ is published by the Leadership Foundation; Newcastle University and its Centre for Urban and Regional and Development Centre, March 2010. Copies will be available at www.lfhe.ac.uk/publications/reports

The pilot Leading Cities programme will be managed by the Leadership Foundation, and is supported by the Public Service Leadership Alliance, the English Core Cities group and the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement.

If you would like to know more about the programme or you are in a position to nominate a team of key university/city/place-based leaders please contact either Ewart Wooldridge CBE or Dr Tom Kennie. E: ewart.wooldridge@lfhe.ac.uk or tkennie@ranmore.co.uk

References

Leading transformational change conference

Sir Alan Langlands, chief executive of Hefce, opened this annual leadership, governance and management (LGM) event with an outline of trends, challenges and opportunities in the higher education landscape. Beyond economic constraints and uncertainties, he highlighted: the increasing globalisation of higher education; shifts towards more flexible learning modes, fairer access and employability; the “transformative effect of technology” and the balance between ‘curiosity driven research and national priorities’. He made clear Hefce’s continuing commitment to development – of staff and organisations – and the need for the sector to work together “to make a smart case for investment” in higher education.

The conference’s focus obviously struck a chord; the event was over-subscribed, with more than 220 people coming together to hear presentations and engage in workshop discussions around four key themes: sustainable/healthy universities; governance; people and the workplace; and supporting higher education; shifts towards more flexible learning modes, fairer access and employability; the need for collaborative, team management and what she sees as the crucial ‘outputs’ of higher education: “highly trained people to drive the economy”.

In the people and the workplace workshop, Kim Shutler-Jones, project manager, outlined the first of the LTCs ‘Delivering sustainable high performance through an engaged, resilient workforce’ (LTC20), led by the universities of Leeds and Bristol. She stressed that “staff engagement is critical at a time of recession” and announced the wide range of support and resources which will become available at the well-being website (www.wellbeing.ac.uk). The sustainable/healthy universities workshop featured two of the LTCs: ‘Delivering more with less’ (LTC030), University of Exeter (see p8) and LTC012, led by Professor Gavin Henderson, principal of the Central School of Speech and Drama, which focuses on ‘implementation of the University’s vision for organisational development strategy despite the exacting pressure placed on the organisation as a result of recession’. A fourth LTC was presented in the supporting higher education through change workshop by Dr Anne Gwinnett, Oxford Brookes University on ‘Developing and communicating distinctiveness’ (LTC016, see p8).

The conference closed with ‘Points of view’ from Professor Lisa Jardine CBE, of Queen Mary, University of London. Outlining her academic leadership and management experience, she noted the sector’s focus on individuals as leaders, called for greater recognition of collaborative, team management and what she sees as the crucial ‘outputs’ of higher education: “highly trained people to drive the economy.”

Overall, around a dozen LGM-funded projects at varying stages of development contributed to workshops and a poster session, clearly demonstrating Hefce’s continuing investment in – and HEIs’ capacity for – transformational change.

For more information about the LGM 2010 conference please visit www.lfhe.ac.uk/evt-crs-prog/previousevents/lgm2010

Staff development forum springs into action

The Staff Development Forum (SDF) has been extremely active over the last year. A number of exciting projects are underway, including an accredited continuing professional development (CPD) framework and supporting programme of short courses. This will enable colleagues at all levels to gain a recognised higher-education-specific qualification.

The CPD framework will cover leading, delivering and administering staff development - with potential for the development of pathways to support human resources/organisational development professionals whose roles include a development element. The target launch date is the Staff Development Conference in November 2010.

The framework sits alongside a programme of standalone short courses run by the regional Staff Development Groups and credit-rated through a system agreed with the awarding body, the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA). Not only do the events allow individuals registered on the programme to choose CPD to suit their needs, they are also open to non-registered colleagues. The programme has the full support of Universities Human Resources (UHR) and Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK).

SDF Council has also approved the appointment of its first national coordinator, a critical part-time post to support and promote SDF activities. We are delighted to announce that Becky Robson from Teesside has accepted the post and starts on 1 March 2010.

Finally, spring is thankfully on its way and will be welcomed in at the Spring Conference in Bristol, (29-30 April 2010) organised by Council and Executive member Clive Betts. The conference’s theme is the Changing Role of Staff Developers, and it aims to explore the range of professional expertise that staff and organisational developers now need in order to do their jobs effectively. (NB. If you’re interested it’s not too late to sign up!)

Sue Law
Chair: Staff Development Forum

For more information: Spring Conference www.staffdevelopment.ac.uk/?q=content/sdf-spring-conference-0
CPD framework www.staffdevelopment.ac.uk
Academic leadership: Dimensions and dynamics

Dr Tom Kennie, founding director of the Ranmore Consulting Group, proposes a model for understanding academic leadership.

The component dimensions and practice of ‘academic’ leadership vary in a number of ways from those processes associated more with ‘managerial’ leadership, although an area of common territory exists. To explore this assumption further I have developed a conceptual framework which builds on prior work by Andrew Munro, a fellow consultant, and Whatmore (1999) but is to a large extent based on my personal experience as an academic, consultant and coach working within a number of academic settings. My framework – outlined below and shown in figure 1 – is based on six different dimensions of academic leadership. Here I offer examples of some of the ways in which effective leaders deploy them in an academic context, and some early thinking about the dynamics at work, based on the interplay and patterns which arise from different combinations of the model’s six key factors.

Dimensions

1. Credibility
Academic leadership can only be truly practised if the academic leader has built a strong foundation of credibility. Without this fundamental underpinning, the ability to lead is likely to be severely limited; indeed leadership may even in some situations become impossible. Credibility needs to be demonstrated and earned in four domains: personal (academic achievements), peer (positive support from the academic community), positional (building the reputation of the wider academic unit) and political (dealing with the inevitable political challenges which arise in higher education).

2. Curiosity
Effective academic leaders possess and demonstrate consistently high levels of academic curiosity. They have an infectious fascination for their discipline, well beyond their own personal field of interest. Academic leaders require curiosity on a wide scale if they are to engage and inspire others. Through this intellectual curiosity, they also exhibit two other important attributes:

Challenge: Through engagement with others, academic leaders set and develop the academic agenda for their unit. Collins and Porras (2004) suggested to ‘managerial leaders’ that they need to articulate a BHAG (‘Big, Hairy Audacious Goal’) for their team or organisation. I contend that academic leaders also need to establish the Big Hairy Academic Goal.

Creativity: Breakthroughs in any area of enquiry typically demand a different way of looking at a problem. To facilitate breakthroughs, academic leaders need to foster the conditions which lead to intellectual risk-taking. Creating a culture where creativity is encouraged is key.

3. Collegiality
Academic leaders need to demonstrate collegiality personally, and encourage the process in others. From an outsider’s perspective, academic leadership might be perceived as being undertaken in a highly competitive, no-holds-barred, hyper-challenging environment. However, there is also open sharing of ideas, the contribution of colleagues in the field is encouraged, and a willingness to offer help to others is widely practised.

4. Capabilities
Capability is probably the area which has the greatest level of overlap with ‘managerial’ leadership. However, while the functions might be familiar, the emphasis is also slightly different. I suggest five domains:

Horizon scanning: Success in any field requires close attention to the wider external context and an ability to adapt accordingly. Horizon scanning helps to inform the leader’s approach to the future agenda. Successful academic leaders combine managerial horizon scanning with intellectual horizon scanning.

Sense-making and planning: No amount of horizon scanning can compensate for the capacity to make sense of any findings and translate them into tangible plans and actions. Successful academic leaders recognise the importance of preparing for possible contingencies before they become critical.

Performing: In some fields of academic inquiry a single contribution may make such an impact that it becomes a seminal work in the field. In many other cases consistent performance over long periods of time is more likely to be key to success. To facilitate ‘performing’, the academic leader will need the skills to deliver high levels of output by their team: defining outcomes, setting standards, regular review of performance and so on.

5. Character
Integrity • Resilience • Distinctiveness

6. Confidence
Inner • Outer

An academic leader will also need to protect the individual and the team from distracting forces which may limit their ability to make progress on the academic BHAG. Whatmore (1999) offers further insights on the process of leading creative groups as do Goffee and Jones (2009) in their work on fostering and leading ‘clever people’. The style of leadership is also important.

figure 1: some dimensions and domains of academic leadership.
Connecting: The work of academic leaders in most fields can be enhanced by the contributions of others in the wider intellectual community, both internally and externally. Peer collaborators and access to private and public data sources or to instrumentation in other institutions will depend on building an academic network. This becomes even more crucial when leading an academic group.

Celebrating: The positive reinforcement of success through the celebration of individual and group achievements can be of real value. Not only does it act as a powerful source of individual motivation, it also builds cohesion within an academic team and ultimately builds enhanced levels of loyalty to the group.

5. Character
The notion of character in relation to leadership evolved from our use of this dimension in the area of managerial leadership. I propose three sub-elements, which remain of significance in the academic leadership domain:

Integrity: Integrity is central to all aspects of academic inquiry. In the academic leadership domain it is equally critical. Do standards exist and are they upheld in relation to ethics, plagiarism, recognising contributions? Without high ethical standards, academic leadership can become exploitative, dishonest and ultimately toxic as minor blemishes or oversights lead, over time, to seriously flawed and unethical practices.

Resilience: If the old adage that academic success is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration is only half true, it suggests that academic leaders require the capacity to keep going personally when they find themselves ‘up an academic cul-de-sac’ or with inadequate resources to complete a project. Such resilience is also crucially important in relation to leading academics, and inspiring others to keep going.

Distinctiveness: Academic reputations are demonstrated and sustained on the basis of becoming known and respected through a series of distinctive contributions. As an academic leader, building a distinctive reputation is a key function.

6. Confidence
Confidence is another dimension which one might find shared with a more ‘managerial’ approach to leadership. All good academics need to possess a degree of inner intellectual strength and confidence if they are to take forward and develop their ideas. This also allows the academic leader to be more comfortable in the company of others who approach their work in a very different way. A lack of such ‘intellectual groundedness’ will ultimately limit the leader’s effectiveness. There will also be occasions when the academic leader requires a degree of ‘external confidence’ to fulfill, on behalf of the group, an advocacy role or ambassadorial function.

Dynamics
The way in which the various dimensions may interact with each other can be brought together in a ‘spidergram’. The dimensions of the model are independent factors, although some could conceivably be more correlated – say, credibility and capabilities – where it is probable that high (or low) score on one is likely to lead to an equivalent score on the other dimension. Others such as curiosity and collegiality may be correlated but could equally be quite different.

To aid interpretation, I have developed a pilot self-assessment tool to enable individuals to identify to what extent they have strengths or areas of potential weakness in each of these factors. On the basis of the relative effectiveness on each dimension, it is possible to create schematically an academic leadership profile. A copy of the self-assessment questionnaire to enable individuals to evaluate themselves is available for pilot usage.

Conclusions
The next step in the development of this work will be to gain feedback from others involved in academic leadership and leadership development. On the basis of this, it is hoped that a more complete model and associated diagnostic tools may be developed, to help both new and experienced academic leaders to be even more competent in the skills and processes required ‘to herd those academic cats’.

A full version of this article, including illustrations, is available online at www.lfhe.ac.uk/publications/reports

References


Dr Tom Kennie is a founding director of the Ranmore Consulting Group (www.ranmore.co.uk) and is programme director (with Professor Robin Middlehurst) of the Top Management Programme (TMP). He is also a key associate of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and a visiting professor at both Nottingham Business School and the School of the Built Environment at the University of Salford.

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Connecting creatively
Harnessing the power of left- and right-brain thinking for creative team development

Simon Bolton, Professor and Director of the Centre for Creative Competitive Design, Andy Logan, Praxis Centre founder and Visiting Research Fellow, Mary Mills, Praxis Centre Business Director, Cranfield University.

Starting point
Twelve months ago the Praxis Centre and the Centre for Creative Competitive Design at Cranfield University brought together a development team with an unusual combination of design thinking, organisational behaviour and experiential psychology expertise.

The purpose of this ‘creative collision’ was to foster new creative approaches to collaborative learning, directed at two key areas - developing team strengths and performance, and helping teams resolve complex dilemmas.

The team wanted to explore new ways of unlocking, embedding and realising creativity and innovation in people and organisations, by breaking down the notion that many individuals and teams do not see creativity as an everyday activity, and that they perceive creativity as a highly evolved skill that only certain people have.

Creative collision – harnessing the power of left- and right-brain thinking
The outcome of our creative collision has been the development of the Creative Connect Process. Creative Connect is a unique, repeatable, practical and structured process that integrates space and time for deep reflection, to encourage individual and collaborative creativity and the vivid envisaging of the change process.

The Creative Connect Process uses the power of symbols and images to release the subconscious creative source at an individual and team level. It empowers individuals and teams to build their own meanings and values associated with their selected symbols and images. The ability to build their own meanings, reflect and then re-reflect on the decoded meanings of the emergent issues and themes helps to create a process that is non-threatening, and one that encourages latent creativity.

The Creative Connect Process was rigorously tested before going live. This entailed three intensive test workshops with learning and development experts, and public- and private-sector participants. The Creative Connect Process principles have creatively evolved through these developmental activities, and are embedded in our programme designs:

- Exploration of emergent issues and themes through participatory and collaborative activities;
- Use of visual-based resource tools to help conceptualise emergent issues and themes;
- Space for deep personal/team reflection on emergent issues, themes and change strategies;
- Employing visual-based transformational strategy tools to support the realisation of individual and/or team-based change strategies.

Going live – the Creative Team Development programme
The partnership between the Praxis Centre and the Centre for Creative Competitive Design has resulted in the development of the Creative Connect Process and the design, launch and delivery of the Creative Team Development (CTD) programme. The programme is aimed at operational teams who want an exciting, innovative, experiential yet structured approach to team development.

The CTD programme enables a team to review, renew and re-imagine the team that they can be. This is achieved through a series of innovative processes, collaborative learning and imaginative visioning. A team creates a future desired form for itself, together with a practical path for achieving that form.

The embedded Creative Connect Process enables a team to identify a goal and path for its own growth. During that process, it teaches the team a method of creative design and collaborative learning that can be applied to future situations or opportunities. Each individual (and the team as a whole) learns how to creatively identify how they see the team at present, how it is seen by others, and how they want it to change in the future.

The programme provides a clear journey map for the individual and the team, underpinned by a series of defined, interconnected steps.
It allows each team member to identify their strengths and build them into the change process. These two factors have facilitated higher degrees of individual and team ownership and empathy towards the resulting change strategies.

**Procter & Gamble (Belgium) have used the CTD programme successfully and identified three key benefits:**

“Allowed each team member to individually express what the team tensions were all about (thanks to the pictures), in a way that was not intrusive and not perceived as destructive for the team.”

“By the end of the session it was great to translate these learnings into an immediate action plan that the team felt good about because they participated in its design.”

“Adding each individual’s strength as part of the Creative Connect tool was great because it helped everyone see where he or she fitted.”

**Conclusions**

The aim at the beginning of the project was to bring together a unique combination of expertise to develop new collaborative learning approaches for developing teams and for resolving complex dilemmas. The development journey was as important as the outcomes – it put each team member into new and challenging spaces, resulting in a creative dialogue which led to the unlocking of new ideas and ways of working with each other. The outcome of this journey was the Creative Connect Process.

The process enables a flexible and adaptive approach to creative programme design by linking creativity and innovation with application and delivery. The Creative Team Development programme is the first programme design that embeds the process. The new programme facilitates higher degrees of individual and team ownership and empathy towards the resulting change strategies. It embeds, for the individual and the organisation, the transferable skills of the creative process for exploring future individual/team-based development needs.

For further information contact Mary Mills, Praxis Centre, business director.

**Support and practical guidance for governors**

Governors and council members in higher education are facing unprecedented challenges. Substantial cuts in state funding have already been announced and more seem inevitable; there have been reports of several high-profile breakdowns between governing bodies and vice-chancellors; the 2006 Charities Act places additional burdens on governors as trustees, and Hefce, in England, has proposed significant changes to its Financial Memorandum with HEIs.

The vast majority of governors carry out their work and meet these obligations in their own time and without financial reward, and it is vital that they have ready access to resources and support. Most HEIs offer induction and development programmes for their governors or council members, and the Leadership Foundation now offers a range of high-quality events. A major additional resource for governors – the Leadership Foundation’s Governance website – is now available to supplement these programmes.

The website contains material on the **practice** of governance, as well as providing up-to-date background information on higher education for those unfamiliar with the sector. It covers the whole of the UK and has links to other key sites and publications. It is being well used – hits have increased by 38% from 7,737 in February 2009 to 10,705 in December 2009.

The website is also appreciated – Dr Jim Glover, until recently pro-chancellor and chair of Council at the University of Birmingham, sees the site as ‘an excellent source of information and guidance’ which is ‘easy to access and navigate’ and ‘achieves the difficult task of combining precise summaries of theory with practical advice’.

[www.lfhe.ac.uk/governance](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/governance)

**North West staff developers’ retreat**

The Staff Development Forum’s North West Group held their fourth Annual Retreat on 21 and 22 January in Windermere, attended by 26 staff developers and two Leadership Foundation guests. This year’s theme was Engendering Positivity in Troubled Times - intended to alert colleagues to future challenges for staff developers in higher education; and to enable them to better manage their own direction and personal resilience.

The agenda included personal reflection using the Human Synergistics Life Style Inventory, and consideration of mediation as both a development and conflict-resolution tool in higher education. A Dragons’ Den type challenge encouraged teams to develop novel business products for higher education staff development, and there was also a rousing teambuilding through song session!

**Feedback from participants was very positive:**

“Excellent opportunity to catch up with colleagues across the region, and the singing (even though it really didn’t appeal to me before I went - and was very apprehensive) was fun.”

“An opportunity to try out new development interventions in a ‘safe’ environment.”

“Appreciate the less tangible things like the feeling I have that I can call others for a chat, or that I have a supportive network to back me up in my day job.”

“A good balance of input, networking and exercises. I loved the Dragons’ Den and thought it generated some good ideas.”

“An ideal spirit lifter at a dark time of the year.”

Anyone interested in finding out more about the North West Group should contact their regional SDF council member, Paul Dixon, head of the Staff Training and Development Unit at the University of Manchester. E: Paul.A.Dixon@manchester.ac.uk
Holding the mirror up: Leadership challenges in the UK and China

Professor Robin Middlehurst, David Lock, Leadership Foundation and John Fielden, CHEMS Consulting

The Leadership Foundation hosted the final day of the three-week-long ‘Advanced Programme for University Leaders of China’ at the British Academy on 4 December 2009. The programme was funded by the Chinese government and involved 24 university presidents, vice-presidents, chairs of university councils and officials from ministries and agencies.

The Leadership Foundation helped with the design of the programme in partnership with the Universities of Edinburgh, Manchester and Birmingham (which each hosted parts of the programme). This final day was aimed at sharing what the Chinese leaders had learned about the challenges facing UK higher education – and how the challenges compared with those in China – as well as exploring the leadership skills required in Chinese higher education compared with the UK.

UK challenges

The brief opening presentation by John Fielden, director of CHEMS Consulting and international associate of the Leadership Foundation, drew attention to some of the main challenges facing UK universities. John asked whether these were reflected in the visits the group had made to the three UK HEIs, and how they compared to the challenges facing Chinese higher education.

The Chinese leaders felt these challenges were a broadly an accurate reflection of what they had learned from their visits. They had noted the economic impact of the downturn on UK HEIs, the challenge of graduate employability, and the current high levels of graduate unemployment in the UK.

Chinese challenges

There were many resonances between the challenges facing Chinese universities and those facing UK HEIs. These included funding and graduate employment in China, as well as the debate over the way Chinese universities could best support economic recovery. Some challenges were very familiar to a UK audience - for example, the challenges facing the best staff as they sought to produce excellent research and deliver high-quality teaching.

Leadership skills, qualities and characteristics

Robin Middlehurst introduced two pieces of research commissioned by the Leadership Foundation. These explored the skills, qualities and characteristics needed by leaders at departmental and institutional levels in higher education. The first was derived from a review of the literature on leadership in higher education by Professor Alan Bryman (University of Leicester). The second was an empirical study of vice-chancellors by Professor Glynis Breakwell and Michelle Tytherleigh (University of Bath). The Chinese considered the skills and characteristics they sought in their leaders, and these were compared with the UK evidence. Once again there were many similarities and resonances with the UK.

Several observations might strike a chord with UK audiences - for example: ‘developing a culture of tolerance between academics where people could listen better to each other and learn from each other; ‘dealing with local and national government with regard to funding’.

The day provided an invaluable opportunity to exchange experience and insights about leadership and the challenges facing leaders today in the UK and China. Viewing your own challenges and experiences through the eyes of leaders from a different culture provides valuable perspective. Equally valuable is the opportunity to identify comparable experience where mutual learning across cultures is possible.

For a longer version of this article please visit www.lfhe.ac.uk/publications/reports

Bookmarks

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

Top Talent: Keeping Performance Up When Business is Down.
ISBN-10: 1422140423 (hardback). Available from Amazon.co.uk @ £8.80

The author describes what has happened to top talent in the recession and explains how organisations can re-engage and re-energize their ‘stars’. The book draws on ‘virtual strategy sessions’ with 14 major companies and presents ‘top picks’ for managers looking to motivate in tough times.

The Necessary Revolution: How Individuals and Organisations Are Working Together to Create a Sustainable World.
Senge, P., Smith, B., Kruschwitz N., Laur J. and Schley S. Nicholas Brealey Publishing. 2010
ISBN-10: 1857885325 (paperback). Available from Amazon.co.uk @ £11.69

This book offers a toolkit with specific strategies and points of action – and plenty of examples from companies already leading the way - to help change how organisations think and act in relation to climate change and environmental and business sustainability.

Transforming Higher Education through Technology-Enhanced Learning.
Terry Mayes, Derek Morrison, Harvey Mellar, Peter Bullen and Martin Oliver (Editors). Higher Education Academy, 2009.
Available from the Higher Education Academy at: www.tinyurl.com/ylmeaa8

This book draws on the e-learning Benchmarking and Pathfinder Programme (2005-2008) and contains a thought-provoking edited collection, far more than a straightforward account of outcomes of that national programme; broad in scope and reflective in tone, it can be downloaded in full or in parts as PDF files.

Public Service Leadership website: www.publicserviceleadership.org.uk

Public Service Leadership provides a network for the exchange of ideas and a vehicle for collaboration aimed at improving leadership in public service. The website offers a resource library with slideshows and documents, details of events, programmes and collaborations between the 11 partner organisations.
Maintaining happiness in gloomy times

If I had been asked to write this review a year ago, I wouldn’t have chosen this book (even if it had been published then). I can’t say it - as opposed to its author - has yet had a chance to have an enduring or major impact on my leadership, nor that I had seen the questions it raised as being at the top of my agenda of areas of major concern.

However, as PA Consulting (2009) has argued, this is a time of climate change in higher education. After seven years as principal of what has been an expanding university college, where annual budget discussions have started with debates about which of our list of desirable new posts were the ones to fund, suddenly it is a different and less friendly world. As we try to hold on to our core beliefs and values while managing the impact of a declining budget and static student numbers, the questions which David Watson raises in this volume are increasingly those with which I am preoccupied.

This is not going to be a standard book review. I can’t say I have yet fully digested the arguments in the book and I am certainly not in a position to critique them. What I can do is identify some dilemmas David Watson raises which resonate with my own preoccupations - and that is why this book is one I’ll be returning to over the months ahead as one way to challenge my thinking, and why it is the book I’ve chosen to review.

At present, staff and student wellbeing - how to maintain happiness in gloomy times - is exercising my mind. David Watson suggests that we may have a false and unnecessary expectation of happiness, created by what he characterises as a ‘happiness industry’ (p11). However, he also draws comparisons with the medical profession, and what can be seen as the damaging negativity of a complaining culture. These apparently conflicting positions reflect a paradox, which leads to a concluding position positing the notion of a ‘quantum of happiness’ - how much happiness is necessary to enable universities to survive as successful communities. The ‘happy enough’ HEI is one idea from this book which has influenced my choice for this review.

Like many institutions, we are currently exploring ways to reshape what we do and how it is organised, in order to preserve what matters most with a diminished budget. There can be a tendency at times to retreat to overly hierarchical structures, and here this book offers a useful reminder of another paradox - that of the prevailing moral flatness of university structures even where the explicit structures are far from flat. We are challenged to trust students (and, by implication, staff) more and to consider what would make for a grown-up culture. A set of suggested characteristics for such a culture include: emotionally intelligent interactions; pragmatically responsible decision-making; a commitment to corporate self-knowledge; and regular practice of self-care by all groups in the organisation (p130).

We have recently been reviewing our core beliefs and values, and one of the phrases likely to make it into the final version is ‘valuing trust’. Each of Watson’s characteristics provides us with more to think about in terms of what this might mean, and how we live out such an aspiration in the current situation.

From my academic background I have long been aware of the power of narrative in our lives. Thus the ideas raised by Watson around storytelling - what makes an authentic story of an institution, how we can challenge stories which are self-delusional, how we create a new and enduring story that builds on the history of where we have been but also moves us into a new reality - resonate strongly with me.

We are offered some potential conditions for a successful story: it has to be authentic and believable; we have to be in control of the story we tell, so we need autonomy; it may need to be adaptable; it needs to be analytical; and it can be ambitious as long as that ambition is grounded (p102). As we reframe our own institutional stories, these conditions remind us to question, for example, the extent to which we are really autonomous, and whether it is possible to have even grounded ambitions in a period of retrenchment.

Overall I’m not sure yet how I feel about this book - it has so much in it that in some ways it is quite hard to digest - and as a member of GuildHE I was irritated to find the book perpetuating the myth that we are a mission group rather than one of the two representative bodies in HE. But what I am sure about is that the above ideas alone are enough to keep me thinking and encouraging others to engage with me in exploring the question of morale as we try to plan for such an uncertain future.

References

Professor Muriel Robinson became principal of Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln in 2003. She started her career in higher education in the 1980s, and having recently rewatched A Very Peculiar Christmas was depressed to find how well its picture of higher education at that time resonates with the world we find ourselves in again today. In those days she worked at the University of Brighton, and so she knows David Watson has considerable credibility when discussing leadership. Her own time as a leader in higher education has coincided with what are now being referred to as the years of plenty, though it didn’t always feel like that at the time...
TOP MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

A personal and professional development programme for those operating at the most strategic levels in HEIs.

**TMP23**
Nomination Deadline: Friday 30 April 2010
Orientation: Friday 17 September 2010

**Week 1:**
Leading the Changing Organisation
Monday 11 - Friday 15 October 2010
Action Learning: Tuesday 16 November 2010
Coaching: Tuesday 14 or Wednesday 15 December 2010

**Week 2:**
Leading in an International Context
Monday 31 January - Friday 4 February 2011
(The dates may be subject to change as they are dependent upon the location of the international visit)
Action Learning: Thursday 10 March 2011

**Week 3:**
Leading the High Performing Organisation
Monday 4 - Friday 8 April 2011

Venues: Various, TBC
Price: £TBC

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 Mythodrama on Julius Caesar, interactive theatre on handling conflict, 360-degree appraisal, coaching and a dedicated Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

**HOD10**
Application Deadline: Friday 30 April 2010

Module 1:
Tuesday 18 - Wednesday 19 May 2010
Venue: Conference Aston, Birmingham B4 7ET
Price: £3,050

Module 2:
Tuesday 22 - Wednesday 23 June 2010
Venue: Conference Aston, Birmingham B4 7ET
Price: £3,050

RESEARCH TEAM LEADERSHIP

RTL is a two-day programme for research team leaders, and is designed to enhance and develop the participants’ leadership skills. RTL has been designed by and is delivered by experienced former research team leaders.

**RTL13**
Dates: Thursday 13 - Friday 14 May 2010
Venue: Conference Aston, Birmingham B4 7ET
Price: £1,045

LEADING TEACHING TEAMS

LTT is a two-day course, designed to develop the leadership skills of teaching leaders. Participants will discover how to build and lead a teaching team, motivate and support individual team members and develop their role as a communicator.

**LTT5**
Dates: Wednesday 16 - Thursday 17 June 2010
Venue: York TBC
Price: £950

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

One or two-day practical leadership events focusing on contemporary and challenging topics and issues facing higher education.

**Essentials of Finance**
Date: Thursday 29 April 2010
Venue: Bonhill House, London EC2A 4BX
Price: £405

**Political Influencing, Awareness and Lobbying Skills**
Date: Tuesday 25 May 2010
Price: £395

**Introduction to Project Management**
Application Deadline: Friday 4 June 2010
Date: Thursday 17 June 2010
Venue: Manchester Marriott Airport Hotel
Price: £300

TOPOCAL PROGRAMMES/EVENTS

A series of events reflecting current issues.

**Innovating in a Crisis: Shared Challenges and Intertwined Futures?**
Credit economy: Lessons from the Californian Experience
Date: Monday 7 June 2010
Venue: Central London, TBC
Early Bird: £295 (up to Wednesday 5 May 2010)
Price: £345

**Leading Through Uncertainty: Horizon Scanning and Financial Planning**
Date: Wednesday 23 - Thursday 24 June 2010
Venue: Central London TBC
Price: £1,110

GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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

**Equality and Diversity**
Date: Thursday 15 April 2010
Venue: The Hatton, S1-53 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8HN
Price: £370

**Marketing, Branding and Institutional Reputation**
Date: Thursday 29 April 2010
Venue: Central London TBC
Price: £370

**Current Issues for Student Governors**
Date: Thursday 6 May 2010
Venue: Central London TBC
Price: £370

**Strategy and Measuring Performance**
Date: Thursday 20 May 2010
Venue: Central London TBC
Price: £370

**Workshop for Finance Committees**
Date: Thursday 10 June 2010
Venue: Central London TBC
Price: £370

**Income Generation Strategies**
Date: Wednesday 16 June 2010
Venue: Central London TBC
Price: £370

**Meeting for Secretaries and Clerks of Governing Bodies**
Date: Thursday 17 June 2010
Venue: Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HQ
Price: £100

A full list of Governor Development Programme events can be found at [www.lfhe.ac.uk/governance/events](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/governance/events)

INTERNATIONAL

University Leaders’ Network
A dialogue to develop responses to global higher education challenges.

**Orientation Day:**
Date: September 2010, TBC
Venue: Central London, TBC
International

**Dates:**
Monday 17 - Friday 22 October 2010

**Venue:**
Hong Kong
UK Workshop

**Date:**
November 2010, TBC

**Venue:**
Central London, TBC

**Price:**
£5,950 (includes 6 nights accommodation)

For more information or to book a place, please contact:

Melissa Scuteri T: 020 7849 6906
E: melissa.scuteri@lfhe.ac.uk

Full details of all programmes and seminars, with booking forms, are also available online at [www.lfhe.ac.uk](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk)

Your institution must be a member of the Leadership Foundation for the members’ prices to apply.

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**TOPICAL PROGRAMMES/EVENTS**

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**LEADING TEACHING TEAMS**

**RESEARCH TEAM LEADERSHIP**

**TOPICAL PROGRAMMES/EVENTS**

**MINI PROGRAMMES**

**PASS LA Placement Programme**

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

**PSSL12**
Application Deadline: Friday 9 April 2010
Module 1: The Reality of Leading Change
Monday 10 - Thursday 13 May 2010
Module 2: Strategic Leadership in Action
Monday 7 - Wednesday 9 June 2010
Venue: York Marriott Hotel, York Y024 1QJ
Price: £4,500

**PSSL12**
Application Deadline: Friday 9 April 2010
Module 1: Unpacking Strategic Leadership
Monday 26 - Thursday 29 April 2010
Module 2: Strategic Leadership in Action
Monday 7 - Wednesday 9 June 2010
Venue: York Marriott Hotel, York Y024 1QJ
Price: £3,600

**HEADS OF DEPARTMENT SERIES IN SCOTLAND**

Developed specifically for heads of academic and service departments within Scottish HEIs.

**Series 9**
Application Deadline: Friday 24 September 2010
Residential Module:
Dates: Tuesday 2 - Wednesday 3 November 2010
Venue: MacDonald Houstoun House Hotel, Edinburgh West EH52 6JS
Working with People
Date: Thursday 25 November 2010
Venue: Stirling Management Centre, FK9 4LA
Action Learning Day:
Date: Wednesday 1 December 2010
Venue: To be determined by the groups
Price: £1,525

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK A PLACE, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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