SIR MICHAEL BICHARD, UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON, ASKS THE QUESTION...

IN THIS ISSUE:

IN PRACTICE: A continuous improvement initiative
LSE staff take to the waves
Do we need visionary leaders?
Calendar of development programmes and events
Working together for development is a theme running through several articles in this third edition of ENGAGE: the LSE takes to the waves to focus on team-work; small HEIs are coming together in the MASHEIN network; a cross-section of support staff is joining with researchers to improve leadership and management of research at the University of Bristol and services across the University of Central Lancashire are looking together at cross-institutional processes.

Sir Michael Bichard also makes the point that we need to work together creatively; he challenges Vice-Chancellors (and everyone else) not to take themselves too seriously!

Individuals and groups across the sector are engaged in some very exciting research and practice. Outcomes of recent meetings of the Organisational Development in HE group and the Staff Development Forum, and the work of the LFHE Fellows, research and small development projects could fill these pages many times over. This edition only skims the surface, but we are planning a special publication later this summer to showcase more of this work.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy reading about the creative, positive and fun approaches to development featured in this issue.

Lesly Huxley
Editor
“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.”

Nelson Mandela Inaugural speech, 1994
MASHEIN LAUNCH
Support to Small and Specialist HEIs

“Smaller higher education institutions are vital to the diversity, strength and richness of the sector… we in the Leadership Foundation are very pleased to have picked up the baton of a project which already has a five-year history and track record of success.”

So said James Ross, chair of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education’s board, at the official launch of the Management of Small Higher Education Institutions Network (MASHEIN) at One Great George Street, London on 21 March 2005. MASHEIN was previously funded by the HEFCE Good Management Programme.

Dr Kim Howells, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, reiterated that “small institutions play a crucial part in the sector” in his address to delegates. He participated in a dynamic question-and-answer session, and MASHEIN was delighted that he was able to give additional time to the event to answer further questions.

During the question-and-answer session, Professor Gary Crossley (principal, Central School of Speech and Drama) noted that the excellence recognised in UK higher education at the international level is in part driven by small, specialist institutions. He suggested that it is important to protect such institutional brands to prevent damage to the competitive position of the UK higher education sector. Dr Howells responded that “we are profligate about how we deal with brands… we mustn’t forget that reputation is very important.”

Following the launch event, MASHEIN held the first training seminar of the new programme, on the theme of applying for degree-awarding powers. Dr Adam Biscoe (assistant director, Reviews Group, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) outlined the processes involved and responded helpfully to questions and comments from delegates. Professor Crossley discussed his own and his institution’s experiences of the degree-awarding powers process, and was able to offer advice and suggestions to those institutions considering applications.

MASHEIN is open to all HEIs in the UK with fewer than 3,000 higher education full time equivalent (FTE) students, and fewer than 4,000 FTE students in total (FE and HE).

MASHEIN provides member institutions with a training seminar series, a work shadow placement scheme, and networking opportunities amongst small institutions in the group. It also conducts research into the position of small institutions in the higher education sector. The MASHEIN office is at Bishop Grosseteste College in Lincoln. For more information contact Rebecca Bull, E r.j.bull@bgc.ac.uk

LSE staff take to the waves

By Chris Connolley, Head of Staff Development, London School of Economics and Political Science

For a number of years, a senior colleague at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) has been trying to organise some ambitious outdoor development, with the aim of taking people out of their central London zone and introducing them to an entirely different out-of-town environment. His active preference was to do something at sea.

This spring his dream became reality when the Royal Navy offered us a unique opportunity, opening up their warship HMS Westminster to scrutiny by an LSE crew. This gave rise to the first initiative in our new overarching LSE talent project which, as its strapline puts it, strives “to bring new people in and current people on.”

LSE Talent is all about recognising the flexible boundaries of both work and development, and is articulated around a need to more fully engage staff at all levels within a deeply federal organisation. The purpose is to undertake the widest range of creative learning and development opportunities, as often as possible outside of the classroom, and in this case, outside of the schoolhouse altogether!

Dimitra Koutsantoni has joined us in the role of research officer, co-located in the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and the Observatory for Borderless Higher Education (OBHE). The Leadership Foundation and the OBHE’s research interests converge in certain areas (future developments in HE and their impact on strategic leadership, governance and management) and target similar audiences (senior managers in HE and policymakers).

Dimitra has significant research experience and good knowledge of the UK higher education sector. At the Leadership Foundation, Dimitra monitors and tracks information and data of value to the organisation’s mission, objectives and projects, and analyses trends and issues which arise. Areas of her research include (but are not limited to): key strategic issues for the UK HE sector; LMG models of good practice; the international HE context; visits or exchanges for senior staff; and issues and topics that need to be addressed through programmes or other development activities for the benefit of the HE sector.

Products of her research will include briefings, news articles, and reports for Leadership Foundation staff and clients, as well as OBHE subscribers. Other outputs will include public presentations of the Leadership Foundation’s work as opportunities arise.

Dimitra will be working closely with Robin Middlehurst, providing her with general research support and assisting her with various research undertakings. She will also contribute to consultancy and development work for the Leadership Foundation as needs arise.

For more information contact Dimitra Koutsantoni, E dimitra.koutsantoni@lfhe.ac.uk

Page 4

Your magazine from the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education

PAGE 4

The former Minister for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education

The London School of Economics and Political Science

By Chris Connolley, Head of Staff Development, London School of Economics and Political Science

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We asked the Royal Navy to develop a day programme that offered our people a perspective on a very different organisation, and which allowed us to get a handle on some of the critical organisational issues involved in working with a 200-strong team, around the clock, out at sea.

Recognising that this was a definite one-off and a chance to work with an entirely new formation, we also wanted to generate the most inclusive crew. We decided to invite applications from across the organisation. We hoped the application mix would represent the diversity of roles and staffing at the School, which employs around 2,700 people, supporting up to 8,500 full- and part-time international students in the heart of London.

To be honest, we were privately worried that we would end up with a set of thirty something boy sailors keen to reminisce on a misspent youth in the Sea Cadets. Our fears proved unfounded, with abroad application profile offering a mix of different ages, ethnicities and lengths of service. Four of the sixteen selected crew members were women, and the final group included a professor, a trade union learner representative, three service heads and a senior business strategist, as well as six representatives from frontline service areas such as estates and security.

Given the early start, we also arranged for hotel accommodation the night before the sailing, allowing staff to share a meal and their varied stories about life at the School. By morning, an energised and engaged LSE crew took to the water for their day at sea. This was structured around small team observation and input into a set of ‘stances’, including fire control and a man overboard simulation, as well as the chance to meet and exchange narratives with Royal Navy personnel at all levels.

This is the area that excited most interest in our event evaluation, with open and broad-ranging discussion across a wide range of themes including communication, leadership and team working. Our people were deeply impressed by the calibre of officers and staff, and were able to think through and make clear connections between the different environments and approaches. There was evidence of a desire on the part of many of the LSE crew to offer the Navy a return visit, to derive their impressions of us, which is currently being worked on as a follow-up activity.

In fact it was so successful as a venture that people are already speculating on what we can do next year. Any offers?

For details of LSE Learning at Work Day 2005 see www.lse.ac.uk/collections/staffDevelopment/

Orchestrating Change: Development Challenges in HE

STAFF DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE   BRISTOL, 2-4 NOVEMBER 2005

This year’s conference is organised in partnership between the Leadership Foundation and the Staff Development Forum and opens and closes with creative sessions reflecting the musical element of the theme.

Keynote speakers include Malcolm McVicar, VC, University of Central Lancashire, Tom Kirby, CEO, the Games Workshop, Brenda Stern, Director of the Private Sector Unit at the Commission for Racial Equality, Sir Michael Bichard, KCB, Rector of the University of the Arts London and Patricia Broadfoot, PVC, University of Bristol.

28 workshops and seminars have now been selected for the four parallel sessions. These cover all of the conference’s sub-themes and several allow delegates to experience alternative and creative approaches to development.

As if the programme weren’t enough, Bristol is a great place to visit and easy to reach by road, rail and air. We are hoping to offer some optional social activities at appropriate times during the conference and on the final afternoon for those who can stay. The revitalised harbourside and new exploratory centre, @Bristol, are a short walk from the conference hotel. Close by are shops, theatres, bars and restaurants and there are plenty of historic buildings (not to mention the Clifton Suspension Bridge and the SS Great Britain) to explore if you are able to stay for the weekend.

Programme, booking and venue details are available at: www.lfhe.ac.uk/networks/sdc05/

The closing date for bookings is Friday 30th September.

CONFERENCE THEMES:
- Harmony: Diversity and work-life balance
- Unchained melodies: Alternative development approaches
- Fine-tuning: Key skills for staff developers
- All that jazz: Creative development solutions for specialist staff groups
- Making sweet music: Collaborations and strategic alliances
- Singing from the same sheet: Gathering and using data
“VCs take themselves far too seriously,” says Sir Michael Bichard, rector of the University of the Arts London, known previously as the London Institute.

“Sure, everyone in the sector has to work hard, but I think that some people don’t understand the pressures that leaders in other sectors have to face, where no time is your own, ever.”

The University of the Arts London brings together five famous art and design ‘brands’: Chelsea College of Art and Design; London College of Fashion; London College of Communication; Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design; and Camberwell College of Arts. Granted university status in May 2004, the University of the Arts London is the largest art and design institute in Europe.

Sir Michael’s route to the role of rector was unorthodox; his experience is more varied than that of most senior leaders in the sector. He has been chief executive of two local authorities – Brent and Gloucestershire – and in 1990 became chief executive of the government’s largest executive agency – the Benefits Agency – with 65,000 staff and an administration budget of £2.5 million.

He was then recruited through open competition to be permanent secretary of the Employment Department in 1995 and became permanent secretary of the merged Department for Education and Employment later that year.

With this range of experiences behind him, Sir Michael believes that the differences between leading a large higher education institution (HEI) and leading any other large organisation are exaggerated:

“Higher education seems to me to be an introspective world, which persists in thinking it has characteristics which are very different from elsewhere. I think, for instance, that the collegiality notion is exaggerated – people do expect some leadership, they don’t really want endlessly to be debating ‘where next?’”

“In leading any large organisation the key imperatives are to be clear about the vision and the values and then to design systems and processes which underpin both. In HE, I find you need to attend to the systems and processes almost without people noticing and to be relentless in selecting what you do and what you don’t do, so that the vision and values are continually reinforced.”

At the University of the Arts London, Sir Michael thinks that by now “the vision is OK,” but that “the values are not yet expressed with anywhere near enough clarity.” With that in mind, the university is currently conducting a major consultation, working through open meetings with staff and students across all five colleges. The consultation is posing the question ‘What’s special about this place?’ Its outcomes will help to fashion the university’s strategy for the next five years, develop a clear statement of values and contribute to a revised brand identity. Sir Michael would also like to see all those outcomes linked to an explicit exploration of the management capabilities that the university will need if it is to achieve its intended progress during the next five years.

Sir Michael suggests that his institution, like other HEIs, has paid too little attention to succession planning:

“Leadership and management capability does not yet extend deep enough – that’s a real worry, but things are improving. We need to provide management development opportunities tailored to specific career points – course director, dean – rather than just leaving those choices about development to the individual. We’ve started now to have conversations about who we should be developing for the future – the Civil Service and private companies have been doing that regularly for years. I’m surprised too that the sector doesn’t have more of a culture of personal learning: coaching, mentoring and action learning sets. The demand for such experiences seems to be limited – elsewhere they are recognised as crucial learning routes.”

One area where Sir Michael has found significant differences between HE and elsewhere is in resource terms:

“In resource terms you’re always on the edge. I have to spend a great deal of my time and energy on fundraising if we are to have anything like the scope and flexibility we need to respond to the opportunities and challenges out there in the international scene in which we now operate. In the current funding regime we’re rarely enough money to buy in that kind of flexibility.”

“Internationalism has to be a key driver in the sector now. If this university is to continue to succeed it will be because we are genuinely international – and that means more than just having international students. Cultural diversity is the spark that fires creativity – and we have to build an organisation where creativity is valued and will thrive.”

Creative leadership is a theme which Sir Michael continues to explore:

“The best creative leaders will first ensure that they stay fresh themselves. How many of us mellow, conform and become the antipathy of creative thinking just at the time of life when we should be stretching our comfort zones?”

“We can also become increasingly skilled at inhibiting the creativity of others. It seems to me that the most creative leaders challenge hierarchies and abhor status. All the evidence suggests that hierarchical, status-conscious organisations are not creative, but too many leaders still take comfort in both hierarchy and status. They show by their behaviour that they find it difficult to cope with challenge, but creativity often flows from staff at any point in the organisation feeling able to challenge accepted wisdom and to do so directly to staff in the most senior roles.”

“At the same time, though, we need to be wary of too much scepticism and intellectual detachment – in HE it can be cool not to commit. Sarcasm can become an art form. It seems to me that in leadership little is achieved without passion, although it’s a lot easier to be a spectator. If we always value those who critique ideas rather than those who produce them, we will produce sterile, self-satisfied organisations. We need to develop cultures where energy levels are high and recognition pervasive – we need to keep asking ourselves ‘how much fun are you to work with?’”
“The best creative leaders will first ensure that they stay fresh themselves. How many of us mellow, conform and become the antipathy of creative thinking just at the time of life when we should be stretching our comfort zones?”
**SMALL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

The Leadership Foundation is currently supporting 14 projects across UK HEIs which tackle specific learning and development issues in institutions and provide rich material for dissemination across the sector. This feature continues our series of updates on the projects and their emerging learning points for leadership and organisational development in HE. Contact project leads or LFHE Associate, Stuart Hunt, stuart.hunt@lfhe.ac.uk, for more details on these and our other Small Development Projects.

**Developing Action Learning Expertise and Knowledge**

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E s.petrie@derby.ac.uk

The project intends to deliver action learning to 36 managers in institutions across the East Midlands region.

The main activity for this phase of the project has been to establish membership of six senior manager action learning sets and one set of staff developers. The participants are senior managers drawn from the six universities involved, with meetings commencing from early March. Each set of senior managers is facilitated by a head of staff development from the participating universities.

The additional set for staff developers is being supported and facilitated by Maggie Steel of the Action Learning Centre. The aim of this group is to: develop and enhance the key skills of action learning facilitation and to support each other throughout the project; maintain an ongoing evaluation of the responses of senior management to the action learning programme; determine what further action may be taken to improve and build on the experience gained by both facilitators and participants.

**Innovative Leadership Development Programme**

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Our aim is to explore the opportunities for leadership development afforded by melding the collaborative and creative approaches integral to an Innovation Lab (iLab) based leadership development experience, with approaches derived from appreciative enquiry and action learning. The project includes four stages: development of a leadership framework, programme design, delivery and evaluation.

We have now developed a leadership framework, and are currently in the process of planning the programme to support it and identifying potential programme participants. There is general consensus from participants at this stage that the behaviours recognised as contributing to outstanding leadership fall into three general categories: organisational leadership, people leadership and personal leadership.

Behaviours include:
- promoting a firm, clear and shared vision
- enabling change
- inspiring a sense of purpose and determination to succeed
- empowering others
- exhibiting strong interpersonal skills including listening and demonstrating an interest in staff
- showing self-awareness and taking responsibility for actions
- inspiring confidence and respect
- open and effective decision making.

The programme will incorporate the transformational leadership 360-degree feedback tool and will run over three days, with masterclasses being taken by Professor Kay Stables, Sir Martin Harris and Professor Julia Goodfellow.

**Leadership as Learning: aligning individual development and review to institutional strategic goals through professional development planning**

Collette Bleakley  
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Within a context of development planning and with access to a wide range of learning opportunities, this project seeks to align the Institute’s strategic plan, HR strategy and learning and teaching strategy with individuals’ self-regulated, continuous learning. Success to date has been in the recognition of the need for strategically planned staff development, and we have aligned the Professional Development Programme (PDP) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) frameworks with Institute objectives. We have clarified role descriptions for academic staff, and we have enhanced teamworking as the key tool to ensuring common purpose and direction as a key motivator. The strong commitment of several senior colleagues has proved invaluable.

Further developments include the endorsement of the HE Academy for the PDP model, and the employment of roles and responsibilities criteria to assist discussions about development and performance for directors/principal lecturers/senior lecturers/lecturers/associate lecturers.

There will be more on the Small Development Projects in future editions.

The next round of funding for the Small Development Projects will be available from September 2005, but with no cut off date for applications.
USING THE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION KNOWLEDGE BANK

The Knowledge Bank is a resource service for LFHE member institutions, providing a wealth of topics, including an extensive toolkit for trainers, that can be used to great effect in a range of organisational situations in order to develop performance and support development.

Since the launch at the Staff Development Conference 2004 we have been delighted with the level of response to the service, provided in partnership with *goodpractice.net. There are case studies and support materials relating to 28 topics in the broad areas of organisational, management and personal development.

Leadership Foundation for Higher Education members have identified easy access to new ideas, helpful case studies and excellent sources of information as key attributes of the service. Here is a sample of the feedback received so far:

“As a staff developer, I use the Knowledge Bank in a number of ways. For example, sourcing material for a new training course, writing reports, forwarding specific articles, models or references to individuals, or keeping up to date with the latest thinking on a topic. I often rely on the Knowledge Bank as a launch pad to get quick ideas and examples of designing training events. The material is updated regularly and I like the balance the Knowledge Bank sets between theory and the practical ‘toolkit’. It’s fantastic to have so much comprehensive information in one place and I make regular use of it.”

Catriona Wilson, University of St Andrews

“The Knowledge Bank is an excellent resource for development and training staff and has proved invaluable for course development to tight deadlines. I appreciate the range of material, which continues to expand, and whilst much of it is not specific to HE it is easy to customise.”

Malcolm Harper, University of Manchester

“I have found the Knowledge Bank to be a quick and succinct reference point that is easy to navigate and is a source of useful information and ideas for exercises, but which also triggers ideas for new topics to explore. The case studies of organisations are very helpful. There are also a number of topics that I haven’t yet explored and which I know I’m going to learn from!”

Colleen Harding, Bournemouth University

“I am finding it useful when looking for ideas on models and to source ideas for training exercises (eg team building, facilitation skills). Once you have become a bit more familiar with what’s in there and how it is structured, it is easy to dip into for myself or for colleagues in the training and development team who may be looking for a quick fix on something.”

Louise Harden, Northumbria University

News from the Staff Development Forum
BY PAUL BLACKMORE, CHAIR, STAFF DEVELOPMENT FORUM

Members of the Staff Development Forum (SDF) met in Cambridge in early May to discuss progress and make plans. A review of purposes led us to reaffirm our central commitment to assisting the staff development community to grow and to develop a distinctive voice. We felt that the core conception was of a community of practice. We spoke of ensuring that appropriate development opportunities were available for new and established staff and emphasised the importance of communication, collaboration and the sharing of resources.

The Staff Development Forum’s first major activity, the Strategic Staff Development Project (SSDP), is now well under way, funded by the Leadership Foundation. Three themes will consider conceptions of development in higher education, and will explore the capabilities of staff practitioners and leaders. We anticipate that there will be much to report at the November conference, where sessions will give conference participants the opportunity to contribute their ideas. Details of the SSDP can be found on the Leadership Foundation at [www.lfhe.ac.uk/networks/ssdp.html](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/networks/ssdp.html)

The SDF has also decided to embark on a number of developments. An induction event will be held for those new to staff development. Mentoring will be made available, for both new and established staff, on an informal basis. A survey of other CPD frameworks will be undertaken, to ensure that the SDF’s own work is informed by the best practice elsewhere. The SDF already has a web presence, with the help of the Leadership Foundation. A further task group will develop the SDF’s own website, which will become a central means of communication.

If the above ideas interest you, or you would like in some other way to be involved in the work of the SDF, do please get in touch with me at: E p.blackmore@warwick.ac.uk

Access (via a login provided to Leadership Foundation members) is from the Membership Services section of the Leadership Foundation website at [www.lfhe.ac.uk/members/kb/](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/members/kb/)

To apply for a password and login please contact Louise Taylor at louise.taylor@lfhe.ac.uk

MISSOURI WELCOMES BOB

The LFHE is collaborating with HEFCE to study the practices of Northwest Missouri State University. If the pundits are right, Northwest is set to receive America’s highest award for performance excellence in education. The findings of how this has been achieved, and learning points for UK HE, will be presented to the sector in a joint LFHE/HEFCE programme of eight presentations in the UK later this year and in 2006. These will be posted on the LFHE web site. Pictured are the Leadership Foundation’s Professor Bob Thackwray and Dr Dean Hubbard, Northwest’s President, during one of the site visits to Missouri.
Professor Richard Chait’s keynote at the Leadership Foundation’s first Leadership Summit last December was carefully crafted, offering a coherent overview of the literature and highlighting contradictions and tensions with humour and insight. I wanted to hear more of his view that visionary leaders weren’t necessarily always what were needed, and that we could be “blinded by vision”. He was happy to oblige…

“...we have new university presidents every six years; the average tenure of faculty is 30 years. Having a new vision presented every six years isn’t really helpful – in fact it can be quite destabilising. I think we talk too much about leadership with a capital ‘L’, and raise expectations of the ‘attractively unattainable’ with visionary activity. I often think new presidential candidates should demonstrate that they’re already captivated by what the university is about, and that what they can offer is direction and guidance that will help enhance and progress that – give a sense of purpose and priorities. You shouldn’t expect to change a university completely – particularly not every six years!”

Q: You suggested that ours is one of the few sectors that doesn’t feel it necessary to train and develop people for leadership and management roles and that, indeed, individuals are often loath to put themselves forward for academic leadership. Do you think we should try to change that? And if so how?

“It’s always amazed me that we spend our lives in universities teaching people to practise...
professions (and I include ‘science’ in that), that we train people in methods of inquiry, but that we don't put that into practice in developing the people who lead and manage our institutions. It's folly to say that you can lead a university based on experience or desire only. It's like an academic in my discipline saying 'I've always had a hankering for physical chemistry, so I'll just start now.' What kind of signal are we sending out by saying 'if you manage in this organisation you need no preparation?'

"In the US we have any number of programmes to support new and early-career leaders. One of the most effective, I think, was what we called an ‘institute for new presidents’. We held it at Harvard, it was one week long and it was for presidents in their first year of office, or presidents-designate. It meant they were still open to learning, vulnerable even; what tends to happen after a year or so is that they become too self-secure, too engaged with their own ‘brilliance’! I have to say I was a bit dubious when I saw the ‘best of times/worst of times’ session advertised in the programme for this Leadership Summit – but I was wrong. I was so impressed by the candour and reflectiveness of the VCs and principals who participated. It must be indigenous – you wouldn't see that in the States, people just wouldn't admit to any kind of mistake or error of judgement, no matter how small. That session was refreshing as well as insightful."

Q: You were provost and have worked in a number of universities during your career. What would you describe as your worst and best of times?

“That's a very good question. The worst would have to be when I was deputy provost of a large university with around 4,000 staff. I was totally mismatched to the university's aspirations; I was not in tune with their notions of collegiality and I just didn't fit with the cultural norms. In the end, the provost and four deputies were removed by the president because we were just totally at odds with the culture.

The best of times… well, I have fairly pedestrian credentials for the kind of thing I do. I come from a low-to-middle income family, so I feel sometimes that I'm the biggest hoax in the academy! I've had a lot of help on the way, but I still feel that it's a bit of a hoot! I guess that may not translate too well, but it gives me some amusement that I've got to where I am, it's a good feeling. It's wonderful working at Harvard, but even after all this time I'm not really one of them – and that gives me great pleasure!"

Q: Your keynote featured some big names in the leadership research field, but if you had to recommend just three pieces of work, what would they be?

“Oh, that’s an easy one: Leadership and Ambiguity by Cohen and March. Jim March is my all-time hero; he’s the only person I’ve ever asked to autograph a book. Then How Academic Leadership Works by Robert Birnbaum and, from a conceptual perspective, Karl Weick’s work on loosely-coupled organisations. And then I’ll give you another if I may: Lee Bolman and Terence Deal who wrote an article about reframing management that has particular relevance to higher education. I'm also a huge fan of Henry Mintzberg. He's thoughtfully critical of strategic planning, which I think is very healthy: strategic planning is so often uncritically accepted.”
Lesly Huxley’s conversation with Professor John Taylor gives food for thought on the potential twists and turns of an unusual career in today’s higher education sector.

Until three years ago, John Taylor had had a totally conventional career in higher education. He completed his PhD in history in 1981 and, at a time of massive cuts in the service, decided to ‘go into’ the management of UK HE rather than follow an academic path. Over the next two decades he achieved promotion through a number of administrative roles (both faculty and centrally located), ending most recently as director of planning at Southampton. He was privileged to work with a number of inspirational vice-chancellors including Lord Edward Boyle at Leeds, Sir Gareth Roberts at Sheffield and Sir Howard Newby at Southampton. Their characters and leadership styles were very different and distinctive, but John cites them all as outstanding leaders and as inspirational for his own development.

John maintained an interest in HE beyond his day-to-day work, partly through a part-time MA in comparative higher education. He published a little, contributed to some of Southampton’s in-house development programmes and enjoyed sharing enthusiasm for management research with other colleagues. His next career move to a registrar’s role was on the near horizon. However, in 2002, when an opportunity arose to join the University of Bath as director of the International Centre for HE Management, John leapt at it!

After 20 years in ‘the administration’, it has to be said that this was rather an unusual ‘leap’. Whilst many academics assume (and, more rarely, seek) senior management roles, far fewer senior managers within HE move wholly into the academic domain. It was also a potentially risky move, given that John had, in effect, to ‘start again’, building up an academic record and developing the doctoral and research programmes at the Centre. But he felt it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to change direction. It was, in his view, a risk worth taking. Three years later he returned to Southampton to a chair in higher education management and policy.

The profile of higher education (in government and in the media) has never been higher, yet John feels HE is considerably under-researched compared to management roles, far fewer senior managers within HE move wholly into the academic domain. As director of CHEMPaS (Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy at Southampton), he is keen to establish a strong research study group, drawing together interests in the multiple aspects of HE closely linked to professional practice. His own particular interests lie in strategic planning, resource allocation and the management of research, but the Centre brings together specialists in a wide range of policy and management issues affecting higher education. He also emphasizes the importance of a strong international perspective, arguing that there is much to be learned through the sharing of experiences and good practice from around the world.

Keeping in touch with the management literature is not always a priority for those colleagues in the thick of leading and managing in HE, whether they work in academic or support units. But relevant development programmes can raise awareness and support managers in broadening their understanding of their work, both through focused research and reflective practice. Universities are sometimes reluctant to draw on in-house knowledge which might actively foster links between research and practice (not only from business and management schools but also, for example, from engineers, lawyers and computing specialists). John points to one potential cause: the “unfortunate separation between academic and support activity” in universities. Having worked on both sides of the ‘divide’ he is less inclined to accept this division and wants to see closer working relationships founded on mutual confidence and professional respect.

To date, the notion that professional good practice and qualification frameworks may be better appreciated by academics through mixed-development programmes, and that professional administrators can ‘talk the same language’ as academics by engaging in and with research, may seem more hopeful than realisable. But the climate is most certainly changing. The Universities Leading Edge Programme (ULEP) offered by CHEMPaS aims to offer professional service managers opportunities for research and the kind of inspiration and regeneration of ideas John Taylor experienced during his administrative career. His return to Southampton illustrates and provides an example of changes in the HE career landscape. Accepted and respected as an academic colleague, John also finds his knowledge of professional administrative networks and his overall understanding of university systems and processes of considerable value as an academic leader.

UNIVERSITIES LEADING EDGE PROGRAMME (ULEP)
ULEP is a national programme offered by CHEMPaS on behalf of the Association of University Administrators (AUA) and the Association of Heads of University Administrators (AHUA). It “aims to meet the changing needs of staff working in professional services, including registry, finance, planning, marketing, research and teaching support, human resources and estates”. The intake each year is small, with the emphasis on networking and sharing the wealth of experience brought to the programme by participants. Structured teaching is via three residential modules with invited speakers and a workplace-linked project that can be management-oriented or research-focused.
ISSUES AND CHALLENGES
Research staff in research-led universities are clearly central to the achievement of organisational goals and aspirations. There is, however, a view in higher education staff development circles that engaging this specific group of colleagues in development activity is difficult. Comments such as “We put on sessions and they don’t turn up,” or “What’s the point? They are only here for a short period of time,” or “How can a central function make any impact on a person who is engaged in a highly specialised field?” are frequently encountered. Perhaps as a consequence of these views, the HE sector is currently facing a number of significant challenges in relation to the manner in which research staff are employed and developed, and the need for solutions is more pressing now then ever before.

THE RESPONSE
The University of Bristol has re-engaged with the issues and, in collaboration with research staff themselves, facilitated a number of responses. Actions include the development of:

- a research staff website and email list linked to the personnel database to aid communication before and during employment
- a contacts database to help current research staff make contact with former research staff in order to discuss career paths
- a Research Staff Working Party to steer strategic developments
- a half-day workshop for all academic staff (research staff supervisors) entitled ‘Supporting and developing research staff’, now attended by 400 academic staff
- a new research staff recruitment campaign to promote research opportunities at Bristol
- a ‘showcase’ annual Research Staff Conference
- a database of research ideas and interests to aid longer-term employment (currently under development)
- a progressive approach to the reduction in the use of fixed-term contracts of employment agreed with the Association of University Teachers

Further outcomes emerging from consultation with research staff include a significantly increased commitment to generic skills training and development, leading to nationally recognised qualifications in subjects such as teaching and learning and front-line management. University developments have also been underpinned by:

- the appointment of a research staff career and development adviser and a personnel manager with specific responsibility for research staff
- the establishment of an award-winning annual web-based survey of research staff views to evaluate the impact of new developments

Bristol has tried to involve research staff as much as possible in the development of its people development strategy. This has taken place mainly through the new research staff representatives system but also through the Association of University Teachers. Sue Moyers is the AUT research staff representative at Bristol and provides a union perspective on developments.

“We have an unprecedented opportunity to radically rethink how research is conducted at Bristol, how people are employed and to develop a more strategic approach to managing research – although I appreciate that we are working within the constraints of research funding bodies and the norms of our finance department.”

CONTRACTS AND CHANGE
As Sue Moyers points out, the method of funding research staff salaries is normally via the use of fixed-term contracts of employment (FTCs). Consequently, a number of good management tools such as full induction, appraisal, training and development and careers guidance are not always systematically employed with research staff. The advent of new fixed-term contract legislation will go some way to encouraging HEIs to look more broadly at the manner in which they use the skills and knowledge of their research staff. However, legal compliance is not normally the best way for an organisation to change its employment practices in a meaningful way.

‘ROBERTS REVIEW’ FUNDING
The good news is that higher education institutions are now in a position to access funds specifically to facilitate solutions to many of these challenges. All HEIs that employ research staff will have received ‘Roberts Review’ funding to be used specifically for research staff career-development initiatives. This is therefore a good time to examine a range of ‘development’ tools over and above those perhaps traditionally associated with the staff development function. These tools can include job evaluation and reward, better consultation, communication and careers guidance, in addition to appropriate training and development.

Christian Carter is a Personnel Manager at the University of Bristol. With Sarah Musson, Careers Advisor, he is taking the lead on support for researchers at Bristol.
2. What are the challenges for the growing and influential TMP Fellows across the higher education sector. Development for strategic leaders from year, offering personal and professional Programme (TMP) is now in its fifth year, offering personal and professional development for strategic leaders from across the higher education sector. Participants become members of the growing and influential TMP Fellows alumni network.

In this series we find out a little about some of the TMP Fellows, and ask them to offer their perspectives on three issues:

1. What are the challenges facing the higher education sector?
2. What are the challenges for development of HE leaders and managers?
3. How do programmes like TMP help prepare tomorrow’s leaders?

Profile:

PROFESSOR PATRICIA BROADFOOT, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), University of Bristol.

Patricia followed a traditional academic path to her current role as PVC, taking steps as lecturer, reader, professor, then head of the Graduate School of Education and dean of Social Sciences. Here she advocates a person-centred approach to leadership development.

Patricia’s name came forward as a result of the ‘soundings’ that traditionally precede the appointment of a PVC. As she says, she was “keen to do it” and adds that, as with all the other leadership roles she has had, her positive response had “a 50% gender motivation”. With the under-representation of women in leadership roles in HE, she feels strongly that no woman with the opportunity to lead should say no. “I was only the second ever female PVC at Bristol, and the third ever female dean (though followed since by two others). This isn’t just a Bristol issue; I have major concerns about the numbers nationally too, with so few female professors, let alone female heads of institutions.”

As a new dean she had had little formal training or support for her new leadership role, but a lot of “learning by experience as head of department”. This time, she felt some formal support was needed and the personnel director recommended TMP; still in its early days in 1998. Patricia wonders whether her gender played a helpful part in joining the programme, given TMP’s recruitment policy of achieving a 50/50 gender balance of participants.

Her reflections on TMP some five years on are very positive, attributing the extent of her personal development and change in the intervening years at least in part to the “really, really useful” programme. The 360-degree feedback was extremely important to her as a relatively new dean and is something she (and others at the recent TMP Fellows reunion) would like to repeat. She is enthusiastic too about the ‘bonding’ between participants (partly due initially, she suspects, to the feeling of terror that they all experience in the first few minutes, expecting everyone else to be “so much more clever”). She gives several examples of how those bonds have developed into strong networks that endure even across some considerable gaps in contact.

TMP input on financial strategies, the management of change, fundraising and exercises in running a business are also of value but, looking back, one of the key learning outcomes for Patricia was in helping her to develop a strategic approach to thinking and an understanding of where the university is going. “Overall, it’s a blend of increasing your knowledge base on the specifics and developing an increased sense of self, of thinking yourself into the leadership role.”

The wider challenges, she suggests, lie in issues of globalisation and the place any particular university has on the world stage. Some institutions appear already to be engaged with the global delivery of teaching and have “a substantial global operation” with large numbers of overseas partners and campuses in countries like Malaysia and China. Online and private institutions such as the University of Phoenix are also major potential competitors: “From where I’m sitting, all this poses challenges around innovation and what balance is needed between traditional and new, blended, or potentially more fragmented, forms of learning.”

With all these global challenges and what she sees as positive opportunities in ‘regionalisation’, Patricia is concerned that we don’t lose the ‘human dimension’ of higher education: “We are in danger of losing the pursuit of wisdom (as distinct from the pursuit of knowledge), and central debates around morals, ethics and humanity; about what kind of communities we want to be and what will distinguish one university as a community from another.” She muses that the three-legged stool of learning, research and enterprise could be made more stable with the addition of a fourth leg: universities’ contribution to values and leadership in society.

However, Patricia notes that leadership in the higher education sector has not always been systematically acknowledged, developed and supported and that “colleagues are still being asked to take on significant leadership roles without, in some cases, recognising that they are significant.” We have also moved in many ways from the 1950s, when, some would say, universities were not really run at all, to the opposite extreme; now “we are in a highly managerial environment where we are trying to be fleet of foot and competitive.” With a sector still very much rooted in what might be seen as traditional male management styles, there is also a case for stepping back and considering a whole range of approaches to management and leadership at all levels.

With initiatives available like the Change Academy, Leadership Foundation for Higher Education fellowships and projects and the raft of programmes like TMP, “the sector is now very well provided for, as long as people can be persuaded to take the opportunities on offer.” Patricia has just ‘signed up’ to the national mentoring scheme and is relishing the “tremendous opportunity” to have the support of another (female) institutional leader. At Bristol, she is leading on a positive working environment initiative that is placing key emphasis on management and leadership development across the institution. With so much going on in higher education, she warns, “we mustn’t lose sight of a need to be person-centred.”
Talk to academic staff in UK universities and elsewhere about staff development and the reaction is often negative. “Irrelevant for my needs”, “a distraction from my research”, “a waste of my time” and “too expensive” would be just some of the views commonly expressed. The problem appears to lie in the engagement between staff development professionals on the one hand and academic staff on the other. A book addressing issues of engagement is therefore most welcome.

The book arises out of a conference held at the University of Cambridge in 2003 and covers a range of issues including the purposes of academic staff development, the institutional and policy contexts within which developers work, and the conceptual frameworks and strategies underpinning the delivery of development programmes. The authors take a commendably broad view of the context for academic development, drawing attention to the impact of forces for change such as globalisation and competitive marketing.

The second half of the book focuses on: scholarship and research in regard to staff development itself; the use of a disciplinary approach; the location of staff development within organisational structures; the importance of relationships with academic staff and senior managers; the use of language in communicating with academic staff.

There is much in these chapters which is thought-provoking. The text combines conceptual reflection and insight with very practical considerations, often illustrated by short case studies and examples.

Arguably, issues of multi-profession staff development might also have been explored, and the difficulties encountered in embedding ideas of continuing professional development among more senior academic staff could have been discussed further. These are minor points, though, given the value of the book overall.

Liz Elvidge is to be congratulated for her initiative in organising the Cambridge conference and for bringing the book to publication so swiftly. It is to be hoped that a second conference in Cambridge in 2005 on good leadership and management is similarly productive.
TOP MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME
A personal and professional development programme for those operating at the most strategic levels in HEIs. Participants should be responsible for a substantial area of the institution's operations, in either an academic or an administrative role.

TPM10
Application Deadline: Monday 20 June 2005
Orientation day: 20 January 2006
Week 1
- Strategic Leadership & Change: 13 – 17 February 2006
- Action Learning: 14 March 2006
- Coaching: 11 or 12 April 2006 (either)
Week 2
- International Visit: 15 – 19 May 2006
Week 3
- Strategic Leadership & Change: 3 – 7 July 2006

TPM11
Application Deadline: 9 June 2006
Orientation: 21 September 2006
Week 1
- Strategic Leadership & Change: 16 – 20 October 2006
- Action Learning: 14 November 2006
- Coaching: 12 or 13 December 2006 (either)
Week 2
- International Visit: 22 – 26 January 2007
Week 3
- Strategic Leadership & Change: 19 – 23 March 2007

VENUE: Elvetham Conference Centre, Hartley Wintney, Hampshire
Venue: Dalmahoy Hotel, nr Edinburgh
Price: £10,500

STRAIGHT STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP
Senior Strategic Leadership is a 5-day programme over 3-4 months for experienced senior strategic leaders. It is designed to engage and assist those facing the challenges of the strategic leadership planning and change agenda. Its focus is on the role of leadership.

SSL1
Application Deadline: Friday 5 August 2005
- Module 1: The harsh reality of leading change 19 – 21 September 2005
- Module 2: Personal impact analysis 15 – 16 November 2005

SSL2
Application Deadline: Friday 20 January 2006
- Module 1: The harsh reality of leading change 5 – 7 December 2005
- Module 2: Personal impact analysis 25 – 26 April 2006

PREPARING FOR SENIOR STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP
Preparing for Senior Strategic Leadership is a 5-day programme over 3-4 months for those about to take up, or new in post as academic and administrative leaders. Its focus is on preparation for a senior cross-institutional strategic role in higher education.

PSSL1
Application Deadline: Friday 22 October 2005
- Module 1: Unpacking Strategic Leadership 5 – 7 December 2005
- Module 2: Strategic Leadership in Action 1 – 2 February 2006

PSSL2
Application Deadline: Friday 31 March 2006
- Module 1: Unpacking Strategic Leadership 15 – 17 May 2006
- Module 2: Strategic Leadership in Action 4 – 5 July 2006

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT PROGRAMME
The Head of Department Programme is a six-month programme involving 4 contact days, and one-to-one feedback and 3 action learning sets. This programme is for those who are holding head of department posts in academic, administrative or professional services environments. The programme addresses the fundamental attributes of personal leadership and its application to the complexities of the HE organisational context in which leadership is to be practised and change to be, managed and achieved.

HOD1
Application Deadline: Friday 26 August 2005
- Module 1: 11 – 12 October 2005
- Module 2: 4 – 5 April 2006

HOD2
Application Deadline: Friday 25 November 2005
- Module 1: 31 January 2006 – 1 February 2006
- Module 2: 13 – 14 June 2006

RESEARCHING LEADERSHIP & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES
A one-day seminar for anyone researching or delivering leadership development activities within an HEI or in other sectors. The keynote speaker, Professor David Altman is the Vice President of Research and Innovation at the Creative Centre for Leadership, which is based in the USA. The UK perspective will be represented by Professor Jonathan Gosling, Director for Leadership Studies, University of Exeter, and Professor Keith Grint, Director of the new Leadership Centre, Lancaster University.

Date: 7 July 2005
Venue: Cass Business School, City of London
Price: HEIs £395
Non-HEIs £495

GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AUTUMN – WINTER 2005
The programme covers a range of topics developed for governors.

7 September: Developing and Reviewing Institutional Strategy and Mission
Venue: BMA, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London

8 September: Seminar for Student Members of Governing Bodies
Venue: Woburn House, Tavistock Square, London

10 October: Governing Body Responsibilities for Infrastructure and Estates
Venue: BMA, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London

25 October: The Governance Implications of the International Role of HEIs
Venue: BMA, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London

24 November: Reviewing The Effectiveness of Academic Governance in HEIs
Venue: BMA, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London

1 December: Governing Body Responsibilities for HR
Venue: Conference Centre, Church House, London

13 December: A Workshop for new Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Governing Bodies
Venue: Conference Centre, Church House, London

* This seminar is for Student governors only.
** This seminar is for new Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Governing bodies only.

Price: £275 per seminar

For more information on all the above programmes please contact:
E: marc.whittaker@lfhe.ac.uk