MODULE 1: ***HIGHER EDUCATION IN A GLOBAL WORLD: THE CONTEXT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE***

UNIT 5: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

To design and manage quality assurance systems and processes, we need to be sensitive to the distinctive characteristics and dynamics of higher education institutions (HEIs).

In this unit we explore the nature and operations of higher education institutions from a range of theoretical and practical perspectives. Along the way, we review articles by some eminent writers on higher education as well as some key concepts in organisation theory and organisation behaviour. Even if you have never worked in a university or other higher education institution, by the time you have completed this unit, you should be able to use salient concepts of organisational leadership and management to inform your ideas about institutional and external approaches to assuring the quality of academic outcomes.

You should also have a good idea of which authors and other sources to go to for more information and ideas. There is extensive scholarly literature on management and organisation and also on higher education; the references and further reading at the end of the unit point you to some interesting sources, which in turn may lead you to others. You will see also that each section starts with some readings that will help you come to grips with, and extend the ideas in each of the sections.

As a frame for this unit, we use an updated version of Gareth Morgan's classic *Images of Organization*, which draws on the management literature while at the same time challenging readers to think creatively about the contested ways of making sense (Weick 1995) of what happens in and around institutions of different types, a skill that is useful for those engaged in quality assurance and improvement. You will encounter and use other examples of analogy and metaphor in the early sections of this unit, especially in the first sections, which deal primarily with a structural perspective on higher education institutions as organisations. Although there are good texts specifically on managing HEIs that you may wish to consult (e.g. Brown 2000), it is difficult for these texts to cover all types of HEIs in the evolving context of global competition in education.

Nonetheless, most of the readings in this unit reference English-speaking countries, although general principles about organisations and organising are common across countries. While forms of knowledge and their means of transmission, generation and reproduction are different in different cultures (such diversity being a cause for celebration) all of us who work in and around higher education can be united by a common respect for learning, and for the integrity of learning processes.

In the second section of this unit, we discuss HEIs as organisations situated within specific environments, exploring how these environments allow and also constrain the possibilities of institutional action, a topic that you will encounter in other units. In the third and fourth sections, we consider governance systems in HEIs and elements of the academic 'production process'. In the fifth section we consider some of the more intangible elements of organisations, including culture, power and politics. In section six at some writings on

leadership and management, noting that effective leaders and managers in HEIs need to draw on a wide range of ideas about how organisations work.

The unit concludes with an overview of the large number of networks of HEIs that have come into existence as mutual support and advocacy groups. Examples are provided of national, regional, international and thematic networks.

On completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Identify the features and dynamics of higher education institutions, and a range of differing views on the purposes and nature of universities
- Demonstrate an understanding of major concepts in organisational theory and how these can be applied to the study of higher education institutions
- Analyse key dilemmas and challenges in leading and managing higher education institutions for improved outcomes
- Assess different strategies used by HEIs in responding to their external environment
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which academic work is managed and undertaken
- Conduct an organizational analysis of a higher education institution, to assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses of institutional quality assurance systems.
- Identify networks of HEIs that have particular relevance for your own country.

Part 1: Higher education institutions as organisations

1.1 Why organise?

Readings:

Mintzberg, Chapter 1 (Mrs Raku's pottery)

Morgan, Chapter 1

Organising is a basic feature of societies (human and animal), and is closely related to the tendency we have to ordering our lives and what surrounds us. We are all familiar with many of the norms of order that shape societies ancient and modern: hierarchies of authority (think of the 'alpha male' in primate communities); bonding rituals; rules about reproduction; systems of exchange; and the division of labour, e.g. hunters and gatherers.

Organisations, in a commonly accepted definition, are 'social entities, goal directed, deliberately-structured activity systems, with an identifiable boundary' (Daft 1992). When we think about organisations, we may think primarily of large entities with physical premises, involving many people and a formal structure describing roles and positions. However, organisations come in all shapes and sizes and a formal diagram showing roles is only one element of the many that combine in the complex 'structuring' of organisations: other elements, such as common purposes, shared (or different) understandings, mixed priorities, and acceptance of authority, are easily as important. In sum, an organisation is a socio-technical system for getting things done, in which processes and relationships exhibit (at least some do!) features of regularity and predictability (Quinn et al, p.7). Organisations are essentially what we act as if they are: people construct them socially and act as if they are 'real' even though 'the organisation' as an entity is more virtual than real in many respects.

As Morgan illustrates, there is no one simple way to think about organisations and organising: organisations are not necessarily rational and they are certainly not monolithic. Organisational structure is only one element of many sub-systems and subcultures, all of which somehow are negotiated into some form of order so that things get done (and that bad things do not happen).

Moreover, while a particular organisation has boundaries, no organisation exits in isolation from its societal environment. Organisations come into existence, grow or shrink, and may disappear or 'die' (sometimes painfully for those involved in the process, as organisational survival can come to be seen as more important than the purposes for which the organisation was originally established). The constant ebb and flow of resources into and out of organisations and the changing circumstances in which organisations manifest themselves mean that organisations need a capacity for change and adaptation if they are to continue to be part of their society. As noted in unit 2, one of the many striking features of at least some

universities has been their capacity to continue as identifiable entities over centuries of change.

This brings us to another feature of organisations, namely the fact that we give names to (or classify) many types of organisations according to their purposes or functions. Just a few examples are: universities, hospitals, schools, the armed forces, the church, charities, government departments, supermarkets, department stores, accounting firms, theatrical companies, museums, banks. Organisations that we recognise as belonging to these categories must be enough alike to be recognised as a member of the class, although as we see later, a particular organisation may also seek to differentiate itself, on the basis of quality, service, price, effectiveness or some other dimension.

One way in which types of organisations have been distinguished is on the basis of who benefits from the achievement of their purposes. Blau and Scott (1962) for example suggest a fourfold typology of organisations:

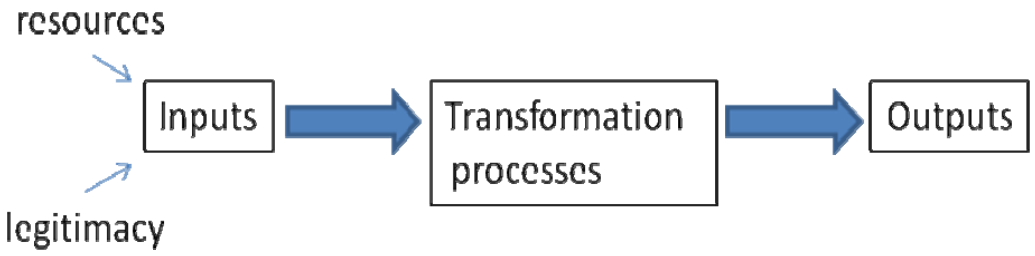
- Mutual benefit associations (the beneficiaries are members, e.g. golf clubs, professional bodies for doctors, accountants etc)
- Productive or business enterprises (typical private sector organisations, whose beneficiaries are their owners including shareholders)
- Service organisations (that may be funded by public or private means, and whose beneficiaries are clients who receive a particular service, such as libraries)
- Commonwealth organisations (the beneficiaries are the general public, who benefit from an ordered society and general reinforcement of the norms of getting along together, such as a police department).

It is interesting to consider where universities and other HEIs sit in this list. With the rapid growth in the nature of services and goods, and with shifting boundaries between ‘public’ and ‘private’ enterprises, however, such traditional distinctions are becoming ever more blurred. Consider higher education: while historically and even today, one of the beneficiaries of higher education has been considered to be the public at large, due to the broad benefits of an educated society. But now we see much greater emphasis on the benefits to individuals of higher education, such as enhanced career prospects and lifetime earnings.

Moreover, as we see from current discussions on environmental sustainability, not all organisational purposes and outputs necessarily contribute to the achievement of wider social purposes: a car manufacturer provides means of transport but the dynamics of competition may not provide any reason for the car manufacturer to make non-polluting or energy efficient cars. Because of this possibility, there is not universal agreement that organisations are necessarily benign: there is a long history of critical perspectives on organisations, from early Marxist views of organisations as devices for alienation of workers to postmodernist theories of the role of organisations in shaping (self-) regulatory regimes of control (Burchell

1996). We should not overlook these critical approaches to organisation, which often reflect the ambiguities and tensions experienced by people who work in organisations (see for example, Morgan's chapter 7 on Organizations as Psychic Prisons).

A characteristic of organisations, which as we note are set up to achieve some goal, is their use of transformation and production processes, whether their output is goods or services. A simple model of an organisational production process is shown in Box 1.



For organisations that provide services rather than tangible physical products, it can often be quite illuminating to unpack the 'production' process that occurs, as usually more than one process is involved. As an example, it might seem that the production process for a restaurant is pretty simple: you take raw food and turn it into finished meals. But then, there is the whole 'dining experience' to consider: the physical layout and ambience, the way the orders are taken and recorded, methods of food service, the rituals of payment, and so on. You might care to think how the model above applies to universities, as we will consider the academic 'production process' in more detail in the final section of this unit.

The term 'organisation theory' refers to ways of thinking about organisations in the abstract to better understand how they work, how they fit into larger theories of society, and find means to assist organisations to perform better and adapt to changes.

Organisations require resources to operate, so most of them (or their owners) look for ways to increase both efficiency and/or effectiveness. Efficiency refers to the relation between inputs and outputs and essentially is concerned with producing a particular level and quality of outputs for fewer inputs (e.g. by better production processes or lower input costs). Effectiveness is concerned with the overall achievement of purposes, and thus can relate inputs and production processes to the eventual outcomes that are achieved. For example, a university may produce graduates (outputs) but may not realise its goals of producing graduates who are lifelong learners.

Organisation theory provides insights on how to increase effectiveness and efficiency but there are no simple answers. Most theoretical frameworks offer abstract 'pure' models that are a long way from the messiness and complexity of managing 'in the real world'. For these reasons, theories of organisation are perhaps best regarded as a series of illuminating devices to suggest underlying principles or new approaches. In effect, they add to the richness and depth of the range of concepts that managers can bring to bear to 'get a handle on' persistent

problems. And it is also for this reason that many management courses use case studies and simulations to develop the abilities of managers.

The reading from Mintzberg, Mrs Raku's pottery, captures neatly some of the essential features of organising to achieve a goal when faced with increasing size and complexity of operations. As Mintzberg notes, the twin problems of organising are those of **division of labour** and **coordination of effort**. Once the **principal** (the person who wants something to happen) is separated from an **agent** (a person who is expected to make things happen but who may have their own views on what should happen, how this should happen and what benefits will accrue to them), we find that a whole range of techniques and devices are required to keep the two in synch. Attempts to address the problems of coordination through various means are at the heart of many of the sub-systems and processes that organisations establish to maintain and renew themselves.

To continue with our restaurant case, what ideas or concepts might you bring to bear to examine how activities are organised in a restaurant?

In the case of the restaurant you may for example identify:

- A sense of common purpose (providing good food to customers in a timely manner)
- Shared knowledge of what needs to happen (e.g. all the waiters know how to take orders)
- Differentiation and specialisation of functions and roles (e.g. the chef versus the waiters, or the person who prepares the vegetables versus the person who prepares the sauces)
- Relating to different types and groups of clients (e.g. the lunch trade versus the dinner crowd)
- Hierarchical structures that give some people authority over others or authority to take particular decisions (who is the boss?)
- Coordinating mechanisms, such as meetings (at the end of the day)
- Power struggles among different groups or people for control of resources or of priorities (e.g. is it more important that the food is presented 'just so' or that the food is served quickly?)
- Use of common rules or procedures (also a coordinating mechanism, e.g. fire safety rules posted on the wall)
- Use of formal rewards and incentives as well as sanctions for poor behaviour
- Communication (and occasional miscommunication)
- Ad hoc systems of responding when a crisis occurs.
- Informal relations, e.g. advice or 'helping out' by a friend to make sure dinners are ready on time.
- Borrowing ideas from similar organisations (e.g. for new dishes in a restaurant).

Organisational theorists frame these activities in many different ways and see these activities as examples of such concepts as:

- Formalisation (the amount of documentation that specifies what is to be done or how it is to be done)
- Specialisation and differentiation (the extent to which tasks or processes are subdivided into narrower sets of activities, or activities calling for specific skills at specific points)
- Standardisation (or the extent to which tasks have to be performed in the same way)
- Hierarchy and delegation of authority (including centralisation/decentralisation and the distribution of formal power)
- Symbolic or ritual gestures designed to make you, the diner, feel valued
- Organisational culture and sub-cultures
- Control, resistance, and negotiation.

Exercise 1:

Thinking about the activities in the restaurant listed above, can you think of others? You may be able to think of many more.

Now try this exercise thinking about your workplace or an organisation you are familiar with.

Can you relate the activities to the broader theoretical ideas of organisations?

There seems likely to be some relationship between a number of these concepts and the size of an organisation (and perhaps its age also). As organisations evolve, formalisation, specialisation and standardisation seem likely to multiply. But even in small organisations, processes and ways of doing things tend to become elaborated over time, as more and more problems or ambiguities need to be resolved or clarified, or as production processes change.

Mintzberg's view of the problem of coordination is to identify five basic mechanisms for coordinating work processes:

1. Mutual adjustment
2. Direct supervision
3. Standardisation of work
4. Standardisation of outputs
5. Standardisation of skills.

We can also see that some of these five forms of coordination subsume others we identified earlier. Not to labour (!) the point, formalisation, specialisation and the delegation of authority are examples of the standardisation of work processes, while many elements of

organisational culture may be traced back to the standardisation of skills. And, as Mintzberg notes, when all else fails, go back to mutual adjustment, through the use of liaison devices such as meetings, management of specific interfaces, or interpretation and mediation among groups that 'do not speak the same language' (at least organisationally).

Exercise 2:

Consider how Mintzberg's five systems of coordination are reflected in the organisation of universities (or your own workplace if you do not feel confident in writing about universities or HEIs). Can you find elements of all of them?

Exercise 3:

What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of ever increasing formalisation of policies, procedures and processes within organisations? What are some of the alternatives to greater formalisation?

1.2 Characteristics of higher education institutions

Readings:

Graham, Chapter 1

Kirp, Chapter 13 (the short pieces in Kirp's book are all readable and contemporary and you may wish to read more)

Marginson 2008

Watson

In this section, we consider features that unify and distinguish different HEIs, to consider the extent to which a diversity of purposes and outcomes among HEIs is desirable.

By a higher education institution we mean an organisation through which higher education is provided. While higher education has been defined in Unit 2, we might here note a particular feature of HEIs, namely that they educate but also warrant (or certify) the adequacy of the education that has been undertaken by their students. To use a sporting analogy, they perform both 'coaching' and 'umpiring' functions, where umpiring in this sense means defining the rules for credentialing and what counts as knowledge. That is, HEIs signal to the world that a graduate of the institution has been deemed to achieve a certain level of ability.

Let us first reprise the diversity we find in HEIs. To extend the discussions from unit 2, reflect on what physical image comes to mind when you hear the word ‘university’? And when you hear the phrase ‘higher education institution’?

For many people, the word ‘university’ conjures up the familiar marketing images of a collection of venerable old buildings (perhaps covered with ivy?) and striking new architecture, with groups of academics and students wending their way through manicured grounds, deep in thought or earnest discussion. There may be a sense of distancing, of the university as ‘a place apart’ from the ‘real’ world. But ‘higher education institution’? This is a much more abstract and vague idea. Perhaps the images that come to mind are more those of signs saying ‘campus here’ or signs hanging from the front of buildings, or other devices that more obviously and less symbolically indicate that this is a place where learning happens (or at least where instruction is given). And, some HEIs may have little obvious physical presence, as they offer their courses online. These diverse images indicate that we need to look for more than just physical manifestations to characterise the class of organisations that are known as HEIs.

We know from Unit 2 that higher education institutions take many diverse forms and delivery. Some are hundreds of years old, some are just being created. The number of students ranges from fewer than 10 to hundreds of thousands. Some universities have many campuses and teaching sites, others only one. The amount of resources available to HEIs similarly differs in scale.

Not only do HEIs differ by age and size they also differ by

- the number of disciplinary fields in which they teach (some colleges may only teach in one field),
- their form of ownership,
- by the nature of their inputs (students, qualified staff),
- the way they organise their production processes, and
- the specific nature of the outputs they produce (graduates at different levels as outlined in Unit 2).

HEIs also differ in their reputation and the extent to which they are widely known. A smallish group of universities are known internationally, such as Harvard, MIT and Oxford. Many others are recognised nationally while others simply have more local recognition. We should not forget either that many people do not have a strong sense of what higher education is or what goes on inside the ‘black box’ or ‘ivory tower’ of HEIs.

And of course, HEIs differ by the nature of what they are permitted and funded to achieve: in some countries, only HEIs that satisfy particular conditions are allowed to use the title ‘university’ and not all HEIs are ‘allowed’ to undertake research. Environment and purpose

are important mediating constructs that shape the diversity of HEIs. We have already noted there are differing balances between societal capacity development and private benefit in national statements about the purposes of higher education. Some HEIs (and universities in particular) may be given explicit responsibilities for regional development and support or for national goals of transformation and reconstruction, South Africa being just one case in point. We consider the relation of HEIs to their environment in Section 3.

One of the aims of organisation theory is to look for relationships among dimensions of the organisation. However, we need to be careful to look at correlations among the differing aspects that can be used to describe HEIs. Public ownership and number of students are not necessarily correlated with reputation: Harvard University is both a private corporation and has quite small student numbers compared to many other universities. On the other hand, age and the breadth of disciplines do often seem to be related to the extent to which an HEI is known, at least internationally or nationally, although this will also depend on other cultural and national factors.

Ownership of higher education institutions is an interesting element of this overview of the diversity of HEIs, not least because it can raise complex issues of governance and control. As discussed in Unit 2, many HEIs are established by the state (by government, under legislation), although they are likely to have their own separate statutory or corporate identity rather than being departments of state. An interesting feature of this form of establishment is the question of who owns the university. Arguably it is the members of the university or its governing body although the state might claim ownership assets in the event of disestablishment.

Some universities are established as part of a formal state-controlled network of universities, such as the University of California system in the USA. Others are established as companies (or corporate entities), for profit or not for profit. The HEI may be a stand-alone corporate entity or it may be a wholly owned subsidiary or controlled entity of another company, which can include another HEI. Still other HEIs, such as theological colleges, may be established under the authority of a specific association.

From the four readings listed at the beginning of this section we see there are strong and contested views about the purposes of higher education and thus which HEIs should be supported to fulfil these purposes.

Many traditional ideas about universities place universities squarely in the domain of ‘civil society’, i.e. among those institutions and organisations that, like the press and community groups, give voice to the free exchange of ideas, independent of government or the (self) interest of those holding other forms of power. Indeed, it is this feature of HEIs that generates debates about the protection of **academic freedom**, or the right of an individual academic to express an opinion without fear of reprisals or harm.

This element of ‘publicness’ is important but there are other senses in which universities have been regarded as primarily established for public purposes, as Simon Marginson’s article in particular demonstrates.

One of these public purposes is the role of universities in preserving knowledge: as we know from history, knowledge that is not used or ‘re-created’ for each generation is likely to become lost. Another is the benefits that flow not only to the workforce but to the maintenance of well-functioning societies of an ‘educated citizenry’: that is, the idea that the benefits of higher education cannot be confined to benefits to the individual but lead to benefits in terms of overall ‘social capital’. (Another argument, from the era of elite higher education, assumes that those who receive education are especially likely – and even obliged - to go on to become the leaders and prime shapers of the societies of the future.) A final benefit to note is similar to the ‘educated citizenry’ argument in terms of research and increasing the stock of human knowledge: many of the benefits of research accrue to societies as a whole, and not to particular groups or organisations.

However, as governments around the world have increasingly recognised the tangible benefits for national development and people’s living standards of all levels of education, we have seen higher education ‘massified’ or made available to much large numbers of students than in the past. Indeed, it is a common view that higher education should be made available to everyone who can reasonably benefit from it.

Governments in most countries are also inclined to view higher education as a means for addressing systemic disadvantage, as the correlation between family wealth, social status and the likelihood of attending and graduating from university are well-established. The fact that most HEIs signally fail to achieve this goal is one of the other challenges for public policy-making and a potential counter to those that wish public HEIs to undertake missions of social reform or social justice.

As well, we see increasing elements of ‘for profit’ provision in most universities, whether this takes the form of research carried out under contract to particular sponsors, fee-paying short courses, not to mention the management of very large investment portfolios by universities with substantial endowments.

Some authors argue that for-profit HEIs are important providers of higher education, especially as they help to meet demands for higher education at an affordable price (with or without the involvement of HEIs from other countries). Being often small and with a contract workforce, they are likely to have flexibility to rapidly adjust to new fields of study and to changing demand.

Others claim, however, that many new for-profit HEIs could not succeed unless there were already a core of stable, comprehensive, publicly-funded universities and other HEIs. They charge these institutions with ‘cherry-picking’ (providing only courses that are popular and

require little infrastructure to deliver) and with being reliant on the rest of the national academic infrastructure for maintenance of standards, new ideas, a supply of trained academics and sometimes curricula. The owners of the current generation of HEIs, the claim runs, have scant regard for academic freedom or for the intrinsic benefits of learning. In effect, there are those who deny the legitimacy of these providers, or at least deny the extent to which their outputs and outcomes can be 'as good as' those from more comprehensive institutions. Kirp's piece on De Vry University presents some similar arguments. There is evidence that many new HEIs and universities struggle to be accepted in academic hierarchies of esteem.

A central (and particularly interesting) question in higher education is the extent to which different types of HEIs produce different 'outputs/outcomes' in terms of the capacities, knowledge, adaptability, creativity and performance (at work and in society) of graduates. Of course, to address this question, we would need to also consider differences in the inputs (students in particular) and the different mix of disciplines and qualifications offered by each institution and the precise nature of the outputs we are seeking (immediate ability to succeed in the workforce or longer term contributions to society). Given these variables, the fact that people and their futures differ widely in any case, and the current limitations of tests of graduate skills, some have argued that we will be unlikely to ever be able to fully answer this question (Banta 2008).

So, what do higher education institutions have in common? Well, apart from the rather obvious points that they deliver higher education (and usually have met the same set of minimum criteria in order to be allowed to do so) and that they have broadly similar production processes, we might consider whether they have values and conventions in common, notwithstanding the differences in their purposes. The answer is 'yes' they do although it would be reasonable to ask whether it is HEIs themselves that espouse these values or the academics and the academic professions that contribute so largely to the fabric of HEIs.

Regardless of their purposes, all HEIs are expected to demonstrate a respect for learning and the centrality of learning to their ways of going about their activities. They are expected to uphold professional norms of integrity and honesty, those ethical values that are so critical to academia in all its forms. That is, HEIs are expected to ensure that

- all students are taught to the best of the instructors' abilities and resources,
- academics have the qualifications and skills to help students to learn productively in their field of study,
- there is respect for divergent points of view,
- students are judged and graded fairly and impartially with academic integrity on the part of both students and academics
- the conventions of research and scholarship are respected, such as free and open inquiry, appropriate reference to the work of others, and honesty in reporting research findings.

We know that some academics and some HEIs sometimes fall short in these respects. But the outrage and condemnation that occurs when instances of corruption, fraud or scholarly dishonesty are publicly exposed points to the very strength of these conventions.

In summary, in rounding off this discussion we can accept that HEIs serve a diverse range of purposes but, regardless of these differences, society expects them to be operated largely in accordance with the core conventions of academia.

Exercise 4:

We see there are strong views about the differing purposes of higher education and whether some forms of HEI are more broadly beneficial than others. What are your views? What do you think are the advantages and possible disadvantages of each type of HEI in achieving the twin goals of benefiting society and individuals alike?

Exercise 5:

Graham in his extended essay is quite critical of external quality audit. What assumptions about higher education and what values lead him to voice these criticisms? To what extent do you think they are fair?

1.3 A structural perspective on higher education institutions

Readings:

Mintzberg Chapters 2 (Five Basic Parts of the Organization) and 3 (The Organization as a System of Flows)

Morgan, Chapter 2

Mintzberg 19 (The Professional Bureaucracy)

Woodfield and Kennie

One element of understanding universities and other higher education institutions is to consider their formal structure and the various roles and positions taken by those within the organisation. In this section, we consider both structures and typical roles. This approach involves considering an organisation to a large extent as a rational system, rather like considering the diagram of a machine. As Morgan notes, the machine metaphor has a long history in studies of organisations and tends to pervade much management thinking today.

Let's start by thinking of a fairly typical organisation structure for a medium-sized comprehensive university. The first thing one might notice is a divide, broadly speaking, between academic and administrative roles. In small universities, particularly emerging private universities the structure may not be very clear as numbers of staff especially full-time staff will be small and individuals may fill more than one role.

At the top of the university, there is likely to be a governing body or board of trustees. Then, there is a chief executive officer (president, rector, vice-chancellor or in smaller private universities a 'dean' who heads up the organisation), and there may be a smallish group of senior officers with academic or administrative titles (vice-presidents, principals, provosts) responsible for broad areas, e.g. a vice-president for research or for internationalisation and development or a dean of undergraduate students. Some of these senior managers may not have direct positional or 'line' authority: they may essentially be leaders for innovation and interpretation of strategic intent.

The academic structure is usually organised by discipline groupings (e.g. faculty of engineering, college of health sciences) with a dean or head of faculty or similarly titled person as the formal leader of the academic grouping. Within faculties, there is further division of academic groupings typically into departments or schools (e.g. department of electrical engineering, department of civil engineering). One of the more frequently debated questions in universities is how to best to sensibly combine groups of disciplines to promote coordination and innovation in teaching and research: for example, should one locate a school of psychology within the faculty of health sciences or the faculty of social sciences? There may also be some separate academic areas, such as research institutes and separate companies for specific purposes, for example, companies that offer foundation courses or short courses outside formal degree programs.

All these academic units usually provide for academic positions (with designations such as professor, assistant professor/lecturer, post-doctoral fellow, graduate assistant) and may have their own administrative support staff. The conditions of employment for academics can vary quite widely: some academics have **tenure**, i.e. ongoing or permanent incumbency in a position, others are employed on fixed-term contracts for several years, while adjunct faculty (also referred to as sessional or casual staff) are often employed for a semester to teach just one subject. HEIs also may offer conjoint or adjunct appointments to practising professionals or businesspeople to teach particular units involving workplace practice or to give guest lectures.

Academic titles recognise levels of achievement but to not imply there is direct reporting: an assistant professor of sociology is not accountable to the professor of sociology, although (for example) the assistant professor may have agreed responsibilities for a particular program coordinator in relation to subjects she/he teaches with the program.

Within our typical university there are also a wide range of administrative functions and units. Some of these may be located in schools or faculties, including administrative staff, laboratory technicians and managers, and student services. Other typical administrative units include:

- Student records and student administration
- Human resources
- Finance
- Information technology and services
- Library
- Facilities (capital, property, maintenance)
- Security
- Planning (and quality assurance)
- Compliance and audit and legal (contracts management)
- Governance units, e.g. committee servicing
- Student services, e.g. careers, counselling and health and welfare, financial and legal aid, sporting facilities (and maybe a whole infrastructure for sports), employment.

There may also be separate units to look after student residential accommodation and student services on campus, e.g. food, shops, bookshops, although provision of these services is often outsourced to other organisations.

In addition to the positional structure typically seen in organisation charts, there are nearly always formal committee structures for deliberation and decision-making. We consider these in the third section under governance systems.

Mintzberg describes five basic elements of organisational structure:

- Operating core (where the main work of production or performance occurs)
- The strategic apex (top management)
- Middle line (middle management)
- Technostructure (analysts, legal, auditors and others who provide data or check processes)
- Support staff (various administrative functions, including coordination, documentation, human resources, finance, IT).

Building on these elements, Mintzberg identifies five types of structural configurations for organisations:

- Simple structure
- Machine bureaucracy (or simple rather than complex operations)
- Divisionalised form
- Professional bureaucracy
- Adhocracy.

(Mintzberg added a couple of others later, such as the idealistic organisation and political systems. He also added a further form of coordinating mechanism based more completely on shared norms than was implied by the idea of standardisation of skills.)

Universities are a typical example of professional bureaucracy, where people with specialised skills and knowledge exert a high degree of control over the organization and the conduct of activities.

It is quite easy to see how Mintzberg's description fits with the actual positions we see and what we know about the organisation of higher education 'work'. Similarly, Weick's concept of 'loosely-coupled' organisations (Weick 1982) resonates with common sense views of universities: the diverse nature of academic discipline means that the professionals will have very different sets of skills and in their work will draw on widely varying arrays of concepts. For example, a professor of engineering and a professor of sociology may have very little knowledge of theories in each others' field and neither may have much knowledge of the models and conventions of business organisations.

However, we must remember that Mintzberg is describing a generalised abstract model, and one that is most obvious in larger universities and colleges. The organisation chart for smaller HEIs may show a smaller degree of specialisation or more generalised control, e.g. a stronger strategic apex and middle line.

Some writers have suggested that the structural description of HEIs as professional bureaucracy is not nearly as valid as we might suppose. They point out that this structure applies to organisations in stable, predictable environments, which are hardly the conditions in which many HEIs find themselves. They also point to the presence within HEIs of entrepreneurial units and forms of operation that seem more characteristic of adhocracies.

Moreover, here is some discussion in the literature over the nature of a profession and whether 'academia' remains a profession in the same way as, say, engineering or medicine, as it appears that the powers of self-regulation that characterise most professions have been eroded for academics in recent years. The massification of higher education, which calls for many more academics, and the increased emphasis in higher education on good teaching, mean that old understandings about the standardisation of skills no longer apply. It is generally agreed that a PhD degree does not necessarily equip a new lecturer to teach effectively. (For this reason, many universities now provide additional or re-training for academic staff in the form of a graduate qualification in teaching or extensive professional development activities.)

Certainly, the internal power of the professionals (academics) and of the professoriate in particular varies according to the influence of other elements. In contrast to universities in countries such as the UK and Australia (especially newer universities created from former institutes or polytechnics), where senior management has very considerable authority, universities in many other countries have had a history of administrative and planning decisions (and decisions on senior employment) being taken by the state. One effect of this has been to ensure that professors exercise a large measure of internal decision-making control. While these arrangements are changing, especially in Europe with the granting of greater autonomy to universities, it remains true that the balance between the professionals, the top management and administrators is somewhat different across cultures and among specific institutions. For these reason, some authors have suggested that HEIs in some countries seem now more like divisionalised corporations, where there is an expanded middle line for coordination and control. As Locke observes: 'Some senior academics have joined a growing cadre of 'academic managers'. Whereas there has been a tradition – especially in the older universities – of management tasks being assumed by senior academics on an elected, rotating, short-term and frequently part-time basis, this pattern is increasingly being replaced by appointment to full-time, 'permanent' management roles. These 'academic managers' quite quickly become separated from their previous colleagues, but few have received management training.' (Locke 2007. p18).

Structures are important, as they condition the way that information moves around an organisation (even where much information is carried via and intranet) and how action is taken. Once again, we need to remind ourselves that formal organisational structures and

roles are only one aspect of understanding HEIs. Mintzberg notes: ‘Only by focusing on these real flows – of authority, work materials, information, and decision processes – can we begin to see how the organization really functions’ (p 63). We consider aspects of these flows in the following sections.

Exercise 6:

How do you consider the balance of authority among professionals, administrators and senior management differs among different HEIs in your country? Refer to any relevant research that you can find to justify your answer.

Exercise 7:

Mintzberg states that in ‘losing control over their own work’ through the imposition of internal controls, ‘the professionals become passive’ (p. xx). He concludes that the only means for effective change is ‘by the slow process of changing the professionals’. Do you believe this is true for higher education in your country? What are the implications for external quality assurance?

Part 2: Acquiring and Using Resources

2.1 The external environment: authorising and financing higher education

Readings:

Morgan, Chapter 3

Fielden (for background and system-level roles)

All organisations go about their work in specific environments and depend on those environments for organisational survival. Not only do they acquire resources (inputs) from their external environment but they rely on the external environment to keep demanding the types of outputs and outcomes the organisations provide. Moreover, their conditions of operation are also governed – to a greater or lesser extent – by their external environment in the forms of regulations about health and safety, financial disclosure, fair trading, legal compliance, freedom of information, privacy, equal opportunity and others. HEIs also need to comply with these general regulations.

The operations of organisations are therefore conditioned both by wider economic and social forces (think of the flow-on effects of the world financial crisis) but also by national and local policies and rules and by the behaviour of other organisations that belong to the same type or class of institution.

HEIs sit rather uneasily between (or within?) the large environmental spheres of governments and markets, where markets for many HEIs are increasingly global. More proximally, the environment for any one HEI is populated by other HEIs, and other education providers, suppliers, graduates, employers of graduates, industry, regional communities and a range of other stakeholders, i.e. people or groups who have an interest (positive or negative) in the ongoing production process of a specific higher education institution. HEIs are also, of course, shaped by the demands and knowledge of their fields of study. Ouchi (1980) reflects the permeability between organizations and their environment – and foreshadows our discussion of the internal culture of HEIs – by suggesting that the internal environment is shaped by external pressures into ‘bureaucracies’, ‘markets’ and ‘clans’. This perspective is known as a **resource-dependency** view of organisations and, as Morgan observes, some organisations appear better adapted for certain environments than others.

HEIs exist (and are allowed to exist) in differing environments from market-led to state-controlled and various degrees in-between. Across the breadth of all types of HEIs, we can see that some seem more closely-attuned to a pure market form of operation, because they can command the resources they need from a market-based system, while others are more heavily reliant on government assistance. A high degree of prestige or comparatively low costs of operation assist HEIs to manage in a market-based system, whereas institutions that

have a mandate to serve particular groups in society often rely on government funding to fulfil their missions.

As well, we should always remember that specific cultural forces exert an important influence on any organisation but especially in higher education where cultural attitudes to knowledge and learning are fundamental to the societies for which HEIs exist (see for example the thought-provoking article by Shah 2006, which is included as a reading for a later section).

Looking at the relations between HEIs and the government sphere, we can observe that national higher education policy plays a major role (if not the major role) in shaping the environment for most HEIs.

Consider some of the many aspects of government policy that control higher education in your country. What are some of the main elements? A list would include:

- Control over which organisations can become HEIs (and which cannot, e.g. it is illegal in some countries to operate a 'diploma mill'), including control over the entry and operations of HEIs from other countries, such as whether qualifications from overseas HEIs will be recognised for government employment
- Control over the corporate form that HEIs can take and their form of governing body
- Control over the number of students who can attend a higher education institution and the qualifications they must reach to enter a particular type of HEI or the ways in which students may progress from one level of higher education to another
- Control over the conditions under which foreign students can attend an HEI in the country
- Control over the level of fees that students may be charged
- Control over the amount of funding to be given to particular types of HEIs and the conditions of use of that funding, e.g. for operations, for capital works, for specific research projects, for support of low-income students
- Control over the amount of government financial assistance available to students (e.g. loans, scholarships)
- Control over who can be employed in an HEI and their conditions of employment
- Control over the disciplines or fields of study that an HEI can offer and the amount of student places in each field
- Control over the level of qualifications that an HEI may offer and the requirements for each level of qualifications
- Control over Control over the conditions under which HEIs may accept funding from non-government sources.

We see there is an extremely wide range of potential 'levers' available to governments to shape HEIs and their operating environment. The differences in higher education structures

and cultures across countries are highly influenced by the diverse ways in which these elements are combined, e.g. there may be controls on the number of funded places for students in some HEIs in some disciplines. Government policy can take the form of explicit legislation or regulation, or it can be exerted through the power of funding, as when HEIs must meet certain conditions (such as agreeing to external audit or accreditation) if their students are to qualify for government loans or aid or when the government provides targeted research funding.

Policies may permit a degree of self-regulation by HEIs although this is often tied to specific conditions, e.g. as when accreditation by a third-party organisation is required in order to access certain types of funding. We might note here there are really only a few major sources of funding for HEIs, usually described as:

- Government grants, which are usually made subject to condition, including general purpose operating grants and grants for specific projects or purposes (there may be more than one level of government in the country, so different levels of government may provide different types and amounts of funding assistance)
- Student fees (which may be assisted by governments that make low-interest loans available to students or which do not require immediate repayment of loans)
- Charges to students for particular services over and above tuition fees
- Contract funding from business or industry, which can include funding for courses or for research projects and may include 'in kind' support, e.g. equipment, materials, staff time
- Philanthropic support, including capacity-development funding or in kind assistance
- Donations and gifts, including for example bequests from alumni
- Earned income from investments
- Earned income from other fee-for-service activities, e.g. a bookshop or university press.

While research has often been funded from both public and private sources, some countries have had a tradition of 'free' higher education for students. This is largely being replaced by the imposition of fees, even though this is often at a low level that does not reflect the full costs of providing a course of study. More broadly, former rather rigid distinctions between 'public' and 'private' funding have now given way in many countries to more blended models of financing aspects of higher education provision, and even the exploration of 'public-private partnership' arrangements. If you think back to Sir David Watson's article, you'll note that he points out that universities in the UK rely heavily on public contracts but rejects the notion that they are 'owned' by government, notwithstanding the large amount of regulation and oversight of the higher education sector by UK governments.

The level of government support received by a particular HEI will often influence the attractiveness of the HEI to students or potential other funders and sponsors where this funding is able to be taken as an indicator of good quality or high performance. Examples are the amount of government research funding received by a particular HEI (given the prestige

attaching to research) and or the level of government scholarships for international students to attend particular institutions.

Another set of 'regulating' stakeholders for many HEIs are the professional associations that control entry to professions such as medicine and engineering. They can exert a major influence over decisions about curriculum and facilities within universities and other HEIs, as they will only accredit a course of study if certain conditions can be met: accredited courses are those for which graduates have the right to apply for professional registration after graduation. In a global environment, one challenge is to harmonise these requirements so that a graduate engineer, for example, can practice across many countries without requiring a new professional registration for each country. One of the interesting developments in international higher education is the growth in 'private' or non-professional accreditors, which we note below in regard to marketing.

In the next section we continue our consideration of collaborative and competitive forces in higher education drawing on the organisation theory literature and some basic ideas about marketing.

2.2 External collaboration and competition

Readings:

DiMaggio and Powell

Marginson 2006

Kirp, Chapter 1

Stensaker and D'Andrea

As well as depending on their environments for resources and authority, organisations learn from their external environments which can be a potent source of new ideas and ways of operating more efficiently or in exploring new markets. This learning relies on organisations being permeable or having particular people responsible for 'boundary-spanning', to make sure that new ideas or better ways of working are identified for adoption. One of the consequences of learning from the environment (and of government policy) is that many HEIs in a similar environment come to operate in very similar ways with similar goals.

The article by DiMaggio and Powell (another classic) provides a generalised account of how different forms of external influence shape internal organisational structures and operations, i.e. lead to isomorphism. We can see in various forms of government control examples of coercive forces, while normative forces are exerted not only through academic conventions but also through ideas about what is good practice in well-developed (professionalised) areas of operations, for example human resources management and IT within HEIs. Mimetic force can be seen as HEIs attempt to react to uncertainty by, for example, marketing that promotes the quality of their education as at least as good as that offered by other HEIs. Compare this

analysis with that of Ouchi, which considers similar dimensions. In some countries and regions, there are only a very few HEIs (and one university), which means that external points of reference may be hard to find so competitive pressures may be weak.

Collaborative arrangements are highly developed in many HEIs, especially in relation to academic research. Most active researchers in a university will have personal networks of colleagues across the globe – indeed the 'networked' organisation is one feature of a globalised world, especially with the availability of global telecommunications. These researchers may also have close collaborations with particular companies or industries or with particular communities or groups in society.

As well as access to ideas, collaboration may provide valuable access to and the potential for sharing of scarce and expensive resources (especially in the sciences). But there are also other reasons to collaborate (or share some power) cross-institutionally. The sharing of information can provide valuable **benchmarking** data on an institution's comparative performance (e.g. on costs per activity or amount of resources available to students) and thus help to identify potential threats to organisational survival from competitors. Many administrative units within universities have a long history of collaborating to share information on particular elements of organisational functioning, although more recently some units are turning to other industry sectors to provide examples of best practice and learning, recognising that management of human resources or IT (to give two examples mentioned earlier) has similar elements across industry sectors. (An emerging feature of globalised higher education is the growth in companies that provide international comparisons of HEI performance or student satisfaction, one example being the International Student Barometer™ surveys.)

On some dimensions, collaboration between organisations as a whole is likely to be facilitated if the institutions share similar characteristics, so collaboration provides a way of advocating with a common voice as well as sharing information among 'like' providers. Alternatively, collaboration can work well if each partner supplies something that the other cannot, such as local knowledge. Forms of international collaboration in higher education are discussed in more detail in the next unit of this module.

An interesting feature of HEIs is that research findings travel incredibly rapidly around many parts of the globe across networks of academics, whereas most HEIs are slower to identify and implement improvements to teaching practices. This is possibly because of concerns over the robustness of evidence for these improvements but also possibly because of the difficulty of changing behaviour.

Of course, competition is also most fierce among organisations offering like services or operating in similar markets. As Simon Marginson's article explains, there is now global competition among many HEIs for resources, particularly students.

Ideas about marketing help us to understand why and how HEIs compete for students in the way they do. The first point to note is the 'product' which in the case of higher education is,

in fact, technically a service and services have some characteristics that we don't normally associate with the purchase of a product. (We might note here that much organisational output these days consists of services, or combinations of products and services. A restaurant for example is a combination of products and services, generally bundled as a 'service'.) With a service like education, what is being offered is **intangible** and can even be difficult to describe, given the varying purposes of higher education: is a student buying a 'passport' to future earnings, an expanded capacity for lifelong learning or some other form of personal enrichment?

Some of the features of higher education most relevant to its marketing are:

- Size of the purchase (an investment in higher education in some countries is one of the largest purchases people will ever make and refunds are difficult!)
- No real opportunity to try before you buy, so prospective students have unclear expectations
- Limited consumer information, i.e. it is difficult to compare quality across institutions. How does a prospective student know which is the best engineering department across a range of universities, let along the accounting department that they will enjoy studying at?
- High switching costs (it can be time-consuming, expensive and difficult to switch study programs)
- No guarantee of admission (even very good marks in school may not guarantee entry)
- No success (even diligent students may not pass their exams)
- The possibility of a 'reputational dividend' on graduation, i.e. graduates from prestigious universities may have an easier time finding well-paid employment.

Standard accounts of the basic concepts in services marketing often make use of the '7 Ps' of the services marketing mix (Kotler and Keller 2006) or a similar account:

- Product/service: what is the expected product or outcome for customers/students, e.g. a degree or a rich learning experience (or both)
- Price: what is exchanged in return for the 'product', including time as well as money
- Placement: how the product or service reaches the consumer
- Promotion: the strategies used to market the product or service
- People: any person within an organisation can affect the perception of the quality of the product and, as services usually involve people, the importance of all interactions is high for providers of services
- Process: how the process of experiencing the service affects the consumer
- Physical evidence: the branding and other 'tangible' signifiers of the service and what it stands for.

As you will note, these concepts overlap somewhat but collectively they seek to describe the overall 'image' the organisation providing the product or service wishes to convey, or its 'positioning' in an overall market. Consider our restaurant example: the corner café and an expensive restaurant cater for different markets and have a different marketing mix. Or, you might care to think about how an emphasis on environmentally responsible behaviour would change the marketing mix for a particular product or service, if the organisation wishes to tap into 'green consciousness' among particular groups of consumers.

One influential model for evaluating the quality of services across organisations is the SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman et al (1998), which seeks to identify gaps between customer expectations and the service received. While this model has value for HEIs it has been noted that student expectations prior to study are often weakly defined, so restricting its use for tertiary education (Ng and Forbes 2008).

Organisations compete on the basis of the seven attributes outlined by Kotler and Keller and in many cases seek to cater for only a particular segment of the market. We can see this in market-oriented higher education systems where some institutions compete on the basis of offering a prestige service while others may compete on price or convenience (e.g. online study).

Similarly, organisations use networks of 'like' providers to collaborate not only on improving service quality but to reinforce the image of their services in the market, as with the Russell Group of universities in the UK or Ivy League institutions in the USA. (see unit 2 for more information on these networks).

The trend to reduce regulation and subsidies and to allow the market to drive development (often called 'marketisation') of higher education reinforces other changes occurring in the external environment for HEIs in many countries. This is particularly evident in the worldwide attention being given to finding information on comparative academic standards and student learning outcomes.

In addition, the increasing influence of global markets in higher education has led to changes in the internal organisation of HEIs. Not only is there greater sensitivity to prices but also we see more intensive promotional and marketing efforts, offices established to better understand and cater for different market segments (different types of students) and other changes in internal dynamics. Some HEIs struggle to balance a tension between academic entry standards and the need for more enrolments to improve their financial viability.

As noted above, one of the main difficulties for students in choosing where to study is imperfect information on the quality and distinctive features of particular academic departments and academic institutions. For this reason, 'word of mouth' recommendations from family or friends are an important part of the 'promotion' element in the marketing mix of many HEIs. The search for reliable information has also led to the growth of a range of secondary 'industries' that aim to fill this gap. Some of these are:

- quality badges, such as the various private schemes for accreditation of business schools, e.g. EQUIS, ACSB
- information guides with ratings, e.g. the Australian Good Universities Guide
- worldwide rankings of universities (often largely on the basis of their research performance or reputation).

From one perspective, we might be inclined to criticise the marketing and promotional efforts of many universities which consistently make claims about excellence and a rewarding student experience without providing hard evidence or information to support these statements.

On a related issue, there is much writing on higher education on the supposedly mistaken description of students as 'customers'. This writing has a point, as the learning relationship is special: students are 'co-producers' in this relationship: they 're-create' knowledge as they learn and in so doing contribute to its advancement. (Also in their work they help HEIs identify potential 'talent' who will be the next generation of academics.) Of course, just because a student pays fees does not mean she or he is somehow 'guaranteed' to get a degree, any more than signing up for a health club means that you are guaranteed to get fit (Deech 2008). At the same time there are 'customer' dimensions to this relationship: students are as entitled to except helpful and efficient administrative support within an HEI as they are in any other service organisation. However, more market-based approaches to higher education do appear likely to have influenced the responsiveness of HEIs to student needs.

We see this with increased attention to 'the student experience' including social life and campus amenities, and even rankings of universities on how good their 'party culture' is. However, we should keep in mind that most students value the quality of teaching and instruction they receive (and the amount they learn) more highly than just about any other aspect of student life Also, traditional images of students as young, campus-based and studying full-time often do not reflect the reality of many of today's higher education students as you will have learnt in unit 2. Campus sports facilities are not important for a student studying online, but good internet access is. More market-savvy HEIs are developing market segmentation strategies that address the particular features of the learning environment that are most salient for different groups of students.

Exercise 8:

Consider examples of collaboration and competition among HEIs in your country. What particular factors in the external environment, including cultural and social factors, do you believe are most significant in influencing whether there is strong competition and/or collaboration?

2.3 *Strategic planning*

Readings:

HEFCE

Lerner (1999) (Strategic planning primer)

Mintzberg 1994

One of the ways in which organisations seek to respond to the uncertainties of their external environment (and thus to survive) is through setting internal goals and plans to achieve their aims. Strategic planning has been defined as 'a conscious process by which an institution assesses its current state and likely future conditions of its environment, identifies possible future strategies for itself, and then develops organizational strategies, policies and procedures for selecting and getting to one or more of them' (Peterson, 1989, 12).

Strategic planning often begins with a review or development of the institution's mission or vision, a brief statement of organisational purpose that is frequently intended to be inspirational and is usually aspirational. The next steps usually comprise an environmental scan and a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of the institution's current position. From there, the strategic plan identifies ways in which to move the institution closer to its goals, although of course it needs to take account of a range of constraints, such as limited funding or, as an example for HEIs, limited capacity to increase research output.

As part of the strategic planning process, a critical boundary-spanning role in organisations is gathering information and ideas about trends and likely changes in inputs and outputs. (For HEIs, the predicted demand for higher education may record both expected inputs and demand for graduates.) Check the references above for more detail on the planning process.

Exercise 9:

If you were in charge of an HEI, what information would you want to know about prospective students in order to plan the institution's future over the next 10 years? Make a list. From which people within the institution would you seek this information? What other items of information would you seek to help you assess the number and type of prospective students at your HEI?

Some of the items on the list from the Exercise above will probably include

- Demographics of current students at the HEI (where they come from, what socio-economic background, how well-prepared they are to attend university, preference for studying part-time)
- Expected numbers of qualified school-leavers, locally and regionally, and information on their desire to obtain higher education qualifications in the short and medium-term

- Expected numbers of mature-age students who plan to or could be encouraged to take HE qualifications (may depend on the state of the economy)
- Expected numbers of international students and source countries (you would also want to know something about trends in those countries including changes in higher education policy)
- Expected proportion of undergraduate students who will need to work part-time to support their studies
- Demand for graduates by discipline (national and worldwide)
- Demand for postgraduate qualifications and skills upgrading in particular industries
- Expected numbers of students who are looking to study online
- Expected student interest in various fields of study, including new or emerging fields of study and areas of employment (also employment demand and graduate salaries in those fields)
- Current share of students compared to competitor or similar institutions, and how comparatively well-qualified your institution's entrants are
- Plans for expansion or contraction of particular disciplines among competitors
- Government subsidies for fields where employment demand does not meet supply.

This information is often not available and in addition because strategic planning is predictive, it is based on assumptions about what will happen. The list above is just one element of a range of information that needs to be considered in strategic planning: the expected availability of qualified academics to teach students and conduct research is, of course, another.

There is much discussion within universities and other larger HEIs around whether strategic planning should be a 'top-down' process, primarily undertaken by senior management, or a 'bottom-up' process, involving ideas and proposals from academics and staff at all levels, or a mixture of both. Gaining commitment to the goals within the plan is important, so most HEIs seek some sense of 'ownership' of the plan by their employees, as well as by important stakeholders. This is often achieved by blending the top-down and bottom-up approaches.

Strategic plans are often fairly brief documents, so the strategies they outline tend to be rather general. To give effect to the broad plan, it is common to develop a series of operational plans for major areas, e.g. learning and teaching, and then more detailed plans, e.g. a faculty or administrative unit plan. One of the more difficult aspects of this 'cascading' process in many HEIs is to ensure a good alignment between the strategic plan and operational plans. And, ideally, the institution's budget model should provide funding or incentives for action that support, rather than undercut, the strategic plan.

Another important feature in effective strategic planning is the setting of targets or ways in which the institution can assess whether or not it is moving closer to (or away from) achievement of its goals. Setting targets also provides a good 'reality check' as there is little

point in having strategic plans that are patently unlikely ever to be achieved. For similar reasons, operational plans that sit below an overall strategic plan should show which positions or groups within the organisation are responsible and accountable for implementing elements of the plan. Strategic planning is usually an ongoing cyclical process but too often in HEI there is a failure to 'close the loop', i.e. review what was achieved and what not from the previous plan before moving on to develop the next iteration.

Strategic planning is often viewed as a critical element in institutions' charting of their own course, rather than having others (such as governments) do this for them, and it is certainly useful for quality assurance purposes to know what the institution is trying to achieve. However, as Mintzberg observes, there is often a tendency for planning and the amassing of information to dominate the process, to the detriment of genuinely creative synthesising and the imagining of alternative futures. There is nothing wrong with incremental change as long as an organisation's purposes and processes remain in step with changes in the external environment. At the same time, it is easy for those within universities and other HEIs to overlook some of the large global changes, for example, increasingly open access to information, that may change the way in which higher education is conceptualised and conducted. To set a more fruitful climate for planning some institutions use scenario planning or 'futures' thinking' to imagine alternative environments and options for themselves.

You can understand that the isomorphic pressures identified by DiMaggio and Powell explain why many universities' strategic plans within one country (and across many countries) look much the same. Government policy may encourage uniformity rather than diversity of provision of higher education, academic standards (desired and actual levels of student achievement) are expected to be broadly equivalent for each type of degree, and market forces encourage HEIs to promote their commitment to 'excellence' in both research and teaching. Given the confluence of these forces, one might ask whether there is room for much diversity at all in the strategies adopted by HEIs of common age and size, and therefore whether strategic planning makes a great deal of difference to organisational success. On the other hand, strategic plans make explicit to both internal and external audiences goals that might otherwise be implicit. Moreover, it is certainly useful for quality assurance purposes to know what the institution is trying to achieve.

3. Governance in higher education institutions

3.1 Internal Governance Systems

Readings:

Morgan, Chapter 4

Duderstadt

Keller

The Managers' Handbook, University of Sydney (look through this but there is no need to read every single entry in what is an online reference guide to the University's policies).

'Governance' has different meanings across the globe. It can refer to:

- national systems designed to give effect to the orderly functioning of society and provide the conditions for markets to operate with confidence
- internal organisational systems of control and accountability
- the control and direction of organisations by a governing board.

It is these latter two understandings that we explore in this section, as we continue to expand our ideas about HEIs as 'rational' entities, i.e. about the logic of how organizations should work.

Turning firstly to internal organisational systems of control and accountability in HEIs, we can identify quite a lot of systems or sub-systems that all contribute to controlling the flow of activities and processes in an organisation. The overarching similarity between the various systems is in their aim to impose some regularity and predictability on organisational activities that if left to themselves would lack coordination and be subject to unexpected effects.

Internal governance of an organisation can be thought of as a system of internal laws which combined with the manifestations of these laws in the form of procedures, rules and guidelines, set out boundaries for what can happen (and what should not happen) and how. Some of the most visible elements of internal governance are:

- Internal laws, in the form of policies, by-laws, regulations, rules, guidelines (see the list of policies in the Manager's Handbook as an example)
- Formal authority vested in particular positions and the delegation of authority to those positions
- Formal powers to take decisions, make policy, make recommendations or provide advice, e.g. powers that are delegated to academic committees (the core component of academic governance)

- Plans, such as a strategic plan, that set out desired goals and actions to achieve these
- Negotiated agreements, such as an agreement between the organisation and its collective employees
- Risk management strategies that create hierarchies of response for escalation of problems as necessary and planned redundancy in systems, so there are options available in the event of failure (such as disaster recovery plans and maintenance of copies of records).

These elements in turn lead to the creation of other systems that determine, for example, systems to allocate rewards designed to positively influence behaviour (such as internal research grants or teaching awards within HEIs). They are also complemented by a whole range of operational mechanisms that give effect to policies and ensure appropriate consultation and coordination.

Another important element of governance systems is designed to ensure there are adequate 'checks and balances', to ensure that individuals (students, staff) are treated fairly and with regard to principles of natural justice, and to ensure that the potential for misconduct or poor decision-making is minimised. It is for these reasons, for example, that moderation of students' assessment is regarded as good practice. One of the more interesting questions about governance systems is how to ensure enough (but not too much) organisational capacity for backup and safeguards in the likely event that there is a failure of process at one stage, i.e. planned redundancy.

One of the traditional distinctions in higher education governance is between **academic** governance and **managerial or administrative** governance. With the blurring of academic and management roles at various levels within HEIs, this distinction is less noticeable in positional terms, although it is certainly visible in academic committee structures. 'Academic governance' also refers to those elements of HEI operations where decisions are made on the basis of expert academic judgment, rather than, for example, on grounds of operational necessity or management preference. This separation aims to ensure the integrity of academic processes, to ensure that decisions on student grades, for example, are not influenced by other factors such as the fact the students are paying large fees).

Most universities and many other HEIs have an 'academic board' or 'senate' that is the senior academic decision-making authority, usually under delegated authority from the institution's governing body. Academic boards usually have both executive and deliberative roles, i.e. they make recommendations for approval of new courses or structures and are responsible for academic quality assurance but they also have a remit to comment on broader matters of policy through general collegial discussion. In recent times, this latter role has tended to be confined more narrowly to academic matters, on which board members can rightly claim some expertise.

One of the clearest examples of academic governance is seen in the typical series of academic committee structures for the approval (or change or discontinuation) of teaching programs. It

is common for programs to be developed by academics within academic departments, and then recommended (or not) at departmental and faculty level before being sent to the senior academic decision-making body or one of its committees for a final recommendation to the board or governing body. This process aims to allow a range of academic perspectives to be brought to bear on proposals, although of course it is difficult for an academic outside the discipline area to comment on the merits of the specific content within a program.

Many writers on higher education mention decentralised decision-making as a feature of HEIs (and universities in particular), given the influence that is exerted by the various disciplinary clusters (faculties) and individual academic units. As Mintzberg implies, professional bureaucracies exhibit comparatively high degrees of both horizontal and vertical decentralisation. We can see this feature in HEIs, as responsibilities for many decisions about teaching and research often reside within discipline groups (1979, p. 184 ff).

Size is also another factor: many universities are so large (and sometimes so 'multicampus') that they need to operate in a devolved manner, with more decisions being able to be taken by the devolved unit (faculty or department) than in smaller institutions. In addition to coordinating mechanisms described by Mintzberg extra bodies or processes may be needed within devolved HEIs to ensure that all units are pursuing agreed strategies and policies consistently and efficiently. You may be familiar from your own experience with the ways devolved units tend to accrete, adding more and more 'separate' functions, e.g. a faculty developing its own marketing or institutional research units. One of the more common ways of periodically checking whether units are in step is to conduct a review (internal or external) of the effectiveness of a policy, structure or function within the HEI. Many people working with universities have experienced a 'pendulum effect', where decision-making swings between more and less devolution every few years.

Within the **limits of discretion** provided by academic and administrative policies and rules, the **limits of agreement** negotiated with their heads of department and colleagues (e.g. about a particular academic course) and the professional **conventions, ethics and expectations** of their discipline, academics have considerable latitude to organise and deliver their work in ways that are creative, innovative and experimental. We should remember that these limits are not fixed forever but in fact are constantly evolving in response to challenges and fresh interpretations.

Inevitably, governance processes raise issues of representation and participation in policy formulation and decision-making. As we see from the readings for this section, discussions about governance in HEIs often centre on competing 'claims to participate' in governance processes and decisions that affect people (Mortimer and Sathre 2007 p38). It is not only faculty and students who make such claims, however: administrative managers and external stakeholders also wish to have a role in allocating responsibility and in making decisions.

Some of the criteria for judging whether a governance system is well-designed are:

- openness (e.g., clearly understood procedures, access to information)
- the inclusion of external stakeholders (e.g., industry, local communities) as relevant
- accountability (e.g., monitoring and reporting systems)
- significant participation from staff and students
- effectiveness (e.g. in meeting important institutional objectives)
- coherence (e.g., policies are integrated across different policy areas, and across faculties/schools.

(drawn from European Commission 2007)

Despite the plethora of rules to guide conduct within universities, effective governance in complex organisations (and a productive organisational culture) relies on a fairly high degree of trust in individuals. Norm-based ideas about ethical conduct and integrity, and the extension of trust, may or may not be expressed in rules and policies (increasingly they are in HEIs) but there is no denying their importance. When the climate of trust breaks down, institutions may revert to implementing a coordination mechanism of direct supervision or greater centralisation of authority. The same phenomenon may also occur at times of organisational crisis: if there is a shortage of funds, some organisations may decide that even simple expenditures on stationery or travel must be approved personally by the CEO.

As Morgan demonstrates, we need to consider how organizations build in the capacity to learn: indeed, the capacity for learning is one of the key premises of continuous quality improvement in HEIs. Governance systems, like any other systems, tend to decay if not carefully maintained. Policies become out of date or fail to address emerging issues, committees become 'rubber-stamps'. For this reason, internal quality assurance for higher education institutions is likely to include processes for regular reviews of policies, including their implementation or the reasons they are bypassed or ignored, and of the effectiveness in practice of committees.

Exercise 10:

What methods might be used to assess the effectiveness of the governance system in a particular higher education institution? Refer to the criteria mentioned above and any others that you can think of and identify some means of gathering evidence.

3.2 The Board of Trustees

Readings:

Cornforth, Chapter 13

CHEMS

Mortimer and Sathre, Chapter 3

Bastedo 2009

The governing body of an HEI or university system can be labelled as a council, or a board or a senate – there are many terms used internationally to denote the highest authority in a HEI. This body fulfils a crucial role at the boundary between the internal organisation and its external environment. It provides accountability to external constituencies (which may include owners) for the strategic direction and performance of the institution. On the other, the board of an HEI can also serve to protect institutional autonomy and hence the independence of academics, as well as ensuring that the president (rector, vice-chancellor) has enough authority to bring about necessary changes.

There are similarities between governing boards of all types (corporate boards, non-profit boards and typical university or HEI governing boards) although the particular conventions of higher education in the country and the so-called 'shared governance' model within universities introduce some specific dynamics. Of course, many HEI governing bodies are not directly responsible to a group of shareholders as owners – as we noted earlier, the question of who owns a public university cannot always be answered easily. Also, many university boards regard themselves as stewards or guardians of institutional resources and reputation, with the prime responsibility of ensuring the good name and assets of the institution are passed on for the benefit of future generations (alumni do not want to see their university disappear).

While the board is ultimately responsible for everything that happens within an organisation, specific key functions of governing boards include:

Oversight of the finances (and other assets) of the institution, to ensure it continues to be able to operate as a going concern, including audit and risk management functions

- Ensuring compliance with external legal, ethical and social obligations
- Oversight and monitoring of the mission and strategic plan, including taking responsibility for institutional performance
- Ensuring the effective management of the organisation, including appointing the chief executive and reviewing her/his performance
- Supporting the chief executive

- Ensuring the effective functioning of the board, including appropriate balance of members and skills
- In some instances, attracting philanthropic and other donations for the institution

(see also: Houchin and Widmer 2000; AGB; Leadership Foundation (Governance site)).

The main requirement of the governing body of an HEI is to exercise its functions with care and diligence in the interests of the institution, avoiding self-interest (see the Bastedo article for a discussion of this subject) and not functioning as a 'rubber stamp' (Lorsch and McIver 1989) but equally not trying to manage the institution by committee. One important convention around governing boards is that trustees 'govern' an institution but do not practice 'management' or intrude on decisions that management is authorised to take. In HEIs, another element of this convention is that trustees do not impinge on academic decision-making authority. Of course, from time to time there are likely to be tensions within an HEI over whether or not a matter is properly an 'academic' issue.

It can be seen that the board's role is not an easy one to exercise: boards must be sufficiently involved to be aware of what is happening within an institution and the institution's environment, but must also be sufficiently independent to exercise a degree of scrutiny ' from the outside'. Cornforth (2005) identifies three 'paradoxes of governance' that mean an inevitable degree of tension for all boards, as follows:

- The tension between representative and professional governance: representative governance suggests that board members should be drawn from key stakeholder groups, while professional governance suggests members should be appointed for the relevance of the skills they bring to the board, e.g. financial or legal skills, or specific expertise in the relevant sector.
- The tension between conformance and performance: conformance emphasises acting in the interests of 'owners' and safeguarding resources, while performance emphasises moving forward even if this involves greater risk-taking or a break from the past. This issue is also related to the time horizon for performance. Many corporate disasters are the result of a focus on short-term results over long-term sustainability, so an important concern for boards is to ensure that the chief executive and the executive do not have excessive incentive to focus on the short-term, even if their performance has to be assessed over a comparatively brief time.
- The tension between controlling and partnering with management: the board is responsible for monitoring the performance of the institution's chief executive (and sometimes senior management), which at times may involve not approving proposed actions or even seeking the dismissal of the chief executive. However, the board also has a role as a 'sounding board' for the chief executive to improve overall decision-making, and needs to show its support for the chief executive to maintain internal confidence in her or his authority. The tension often arises when a board is not certain how far to trust or support their senior manager(s) in a proposed course of action, especially one that may be unpopular within the institution.

These tensions are very often evident in higher education governance, especially in regard to board membership. Some university governing bodies have elected academic and student members, which can create significant concerns for university presidents, for example when the president needs to advise the board of impending major internal change or to seek board approval for the change. Academic and student members of boards can find themselves with a dilemma – to reveal the change to the people who elected them and seek their views, or to respect the confidentiality of board discussions and vote as board members. In practice, this dilemma should be resolved by recognising that a board member's duty is to the institution as a whole, and not to any particular interest group. This of course is easier said than done.

Exercise 11:

Using media article or other reports, analyse a problem or challenge encountered by the governing board of a higher education institution in your country. Consider how this problem exemplifies the 'paradoxes' identified by Cornforth and what strategies could be adopted to overcome the problem.

Part 4: The Academic 'Production Process'

In this fourth section, we take a brief look at some of the important concepts and current challenges in the 'production' of graduates, research and contribution to the life of the communities that surround higher education. Another way of looking at these elements of academic work is provided by Boyer's (1990) 'four scholarships' approach, through which he argues for the linking of the following types of scholarly activity: discovery, teaching and learning, integration and application.

4.1 Learning and Teaching

Readings:

Fry and Marshall

Zemsky et al, Chapter 8

Dill 2002

Arguably the core academic process is that of learning, and not only learning by students: faculty members themselves are expected to be engaged in continuous learning, whether through interactions with their colleagues and students, or through their research and personal reflection. For the purposes of understanding how higher education institutions work, we now focus on the organisation and conduct of learning by students. There is increasing recognition that 'learning' rather than 'teaching' is a productive way of thinking about the effectiveness of the academic production process, although of course good teaching that engages students plays a crucial role.

In thinking about student learning, an obvious starting point is the degree program or course of study. Development and review of programs and units or subjects within those programs is usually devolved to individuals or teams within an academic discipline. (Some non-university HEIs may develop curricula from a central unit.) These teams can be quite large and varied, as for example in an undergraduate Bachelor of Science degree, which includes subjects from many disciplines, e.g. chemistry, physics, mathematics. There is usually a coordinator for the overall degree program, and almost certainly one to coordinate teaching on the program.

Designing a degree program is quite a complex process, given the many factors that need to be taken into account. Firstly, there is the question of whether there is a need or demand for the program, i.e. the business case for offering the program. As well, there may be a question of whether the planned program fits an institution's desired profile or would duplicate existing programs or units.

Then, there is a question of comparability of the standard sought: does the program require advanced enough thinking and sufficient content to meet national qualifications frameworks or professional accreditation guidelines? This in turn will lead to questions about each of the units or subjects: is each roughly the same in terms of requirements, if the institution has a

policy requiring uniform credit points for most subjects? There will also be some issues to discuss about ways external stakeholders might be involved to ensure that the needs of employers in terms both of content knowledge and skills are fully addressed. And, academics should be aware of the latest thinking and research in their fields, for course content, i.e. the scholarship of the discipline. One of the inevitable tensions for program coordinators is to ensure that academics focus on the overall program, even if it means their own special topic does not receive as much time or attention as they academic would wish.

A third series of questions relates to the overall learning outcomes and sequencing for the program. Exploring the desired learning outcomes raises questions about how generic skills, e.g. communication skills, teamwork, are to be developed through the program. Other desirable features, for example, an internationalised curriculum, need to be considered. As well, how are the various learning outcomes to be developed through individual units so there is coherence in the overall degree program? Does it matter if students take units in any order? Are there any sequences of units that build on each other? Similarly, is it intended to incorporate any periods of work-based learning or practical experience in the program?

Consideration of individual units also brings in questions about how best to engage students in learning. One problem in many countries is a fairly high drop-out or attrition rate, which may indicate a failure of the program to engage students in the learning activities, 'student engagement' being regarded as to some extent a predictor of attrition. More and more attention is being paid in most countries to 'student-centred' approaches that give students meaningful opportunities to exercise and expand the skills and knowledge that the program seeks to develop. Such approaches acknowledge that the term 'student' is not reducible to other terms, such as 'customer' or client, as it signifies a distinctive relationship with the production process. As we noted earlier, this relation is one of co-production, where students are both actors and participants in the learning process.

So, in addition to the scholarship of the discipline, the scholarship of teaching and learning, or how to design programs for more effective learning, should be considered. Many academics have not received any formal training in this area and, for new academics, a PhD is not necessarily a good preparation for curriculum design and teaching. As a consequence, a 're-standardisation' of skills is now common in higher education, through the provision of graduate programs in learning and teaching in higher education.

For a number of decades, teaching has certainly not had as high a profile as research in some comprehensive universities, and academics generally see a strong research profile as the way to advancement, as Dill's analysis shows. There is now a greater appreciation by governments, and by many HEIs, of the importance of teaching. Supported by the work of Boyer and others on various forms of scholarship and knowledge production, there have been intensive efforts in some countries, such as the UK and Australia, to improve the profile of teaching and learning, through awards and the introduction of competitive grants and performance-based funding. These grants are playing an increasing role in the generation and dissemination of knowledge about effective teaching practices, as are specialist learning

support or academic development units within HEIs, whose brief is to advise academics and, sometimes, to assist students to develop particular enabling skills.

Returning to other elements that must be considered in course design, we come to the profile of students who will be taking the course, which is important for more than reasons of timetabling and the setting of entry criteria. The content and pacing of units, especially early units, may need to be adjusted for students who have little idea what is expected of them at university and whose schooling may not have prepared them for university studies as well as many academics would hope. There may need to be specific units or developmental programs for students whose first language is not the medium of instruction.

Technology and the mode and place of delivery are other factors that need to be 'designed in'. More and more, academics programs in many countries are making use of flexible learning opportunities. The program, even if designed for mostly face to face learning, is likely to involve the use of at least some online component, such as quizzes, or technologically-mediated instruction, such as podcasts. The expectations and ways of learning of Gen Y and Gen Z students may be rather different to those of the academics who are teaching them. Wholly online or distance education courses bring in a series of other questions about documenting the curriculum in ways that make it accessible and attractive online, ensuring student interaction and participation, support of students from a distance and the timing of assessment and feedback.

Then there is the matter of design of assessment for each unit to ensure that is valid, reliable, fair and helpful. One of the most important elements in curriculum design is to ensure that the assessment (exams, assignments, projects) measures whether the desired learning outcomes for the unit are being achieved by students. This simple proposition is captured in the phrase 'constructive alignment' (Biggs 1999), an influential but comparatively recent way of thinking about student learning in higher education.

Designing the assessment for a unit or program inevitably raises some wider policy and quality assurance issues for universities. For example:

- Does the institution use norm-referenced or criterion-referenced assessment (comparing students' work to that of others in the class or assessing students' work against pre-established criteria)?
- is there are process for moderation of assessment or review of marks?
- are external examiners involved?
- how much feedback should be given on assignments and when?
- how will cheating, plagiarism or other breaches of academic integrity be detected and handled?
- is the assessment designed to minimise the temptation to cheat?

Other steps in the curriculum design process include negotiation of the university's review and approval processes, in time for inclusion in the following year's handbook. There may also be a process of negotiation with external professional accreditation bodies.

We can see why many academics give a great deal of care and attention to the design of their curricula. On the other hand, curricula for many undergraduate and even some postgraduate programs look very similar, which might lead one to ask where the value-adding resides. Clearly it is not always in the task of identifying a series of tasks and topics: some institutions such as MIT have in fact made the general details curricula freely available online. The answer must be that the value lies in the reflection and preparation of academics to engage students in the learning process, which is where the real creativity is found.

Having designed a program who teaches the students? The author of each unit may not teach each class or there may be team teaching, which involves its own processes for coordination and feedback. We know that in many countries there has been for some years an increasing use of casual and adjunct staff and graduate assistants to teach units which they have not themselves designed. That is, curriculum design has been disaggregated from actual teaching. One issue for higher education is whether this 'integrated' model produces better teaching and learning than a distributed model. It seems difficult to make a definite call on this one way or another and opinions vary. But if such disaggregation does not matter in many cases, then we might ask whether there is scope for further efficiency in curriculum design, for example a group of institutions night share curricula rather than have individual academics develop their own similar programs and units.

As Zemsky and his colleagues note, with the increasing attention to learning and teaching in higher education, combined with the disaggregation of curricula and actual teaching practice, questions of property rights become important, just as they are for research.

There are various outcome or performance measures for teaching and learning. Many universities use internal student evaluations of units and of teaching, and many use wider surveys of the student experience or student satisfaction with a range of activities and services. Surveys of student engagement, which originated in the USA, are being adopted in some other Western countries. Also, some academics invite peer review of their teaching from colleagues. External reviews of academic schools or programs, including professional accreditation reviews, often provide feedback on the quality, relevance and coherence on the quality of curricula and student learning.

Following graduation, students may be asked to comment on their overall satisfaction with their program and on whether they believe they experienced good teaching or how well they believe their program equipped them with generic skills. Data on the employment of graduates and their salaries may also provide an indication of how the market views graduates from a particular discipline and institution, although of course labour markets factors play a role in this. There are also tests that more directly aim to assess graduates' capacities, e.g. tests for entry into graduate schools or 'field' tests of disciplinary proficiency. Although these tests have their limitations, their use and refinement seems likely to grow. As

more and more students receive bachelor degrees, for example, employers may seek other means of filtering in choosing which people to hire. Proposals for a diploma supplement or similarly expanded graduate statement are designed in part to provide employers with better comparative information on what a person has achieved as a student.

And, there are now many informal evaluations of academics' teaching and of courses through the internet. Some of these 'ratings' sites are established through social networking although more commonly they are managed by private companies.

The worldwide interest in the measurement of comparative student learning outcomes is indicated by the OECD AHELO project, which is conducting feasibility studies on the development of international measures.

4.2 Research

Readings 12:

Hazelkorn

Bok, Chapter 11

Slaughter and Leslie, Chapters 5 and 6

Research is a feature of many, but by no means all, higher education institutions, but is also carried out by a range of other institutions and organisations, ranging from government agencies to private companies (pharmaceutical companies being an obvious example). By 'research' we mean the process of making an original contribution to knowledge that can include solving a problem, identifying new problems, providing fresh insights, codifying existing knowledge in new ways or creating new artistic works.

As Gordon Graham indicates in his essay, research can be classified in a number of ways, along a spectrum from 'pure' or 'discovery' research through 'applied' research, where known methods are applied to specific problems, sometimes in new ways or in new fields, to 'development' or 'commercialisation', where discoveries are refined for use outside the university, to 'technology transfer', where research findings are actually used outside the university. Of course, there are no absolute distinctions between these phases: applied research may suggest new ways of addressing problems in pure research, as one discovery leads to another.

Typical research methods vary quite widely across disciplines and even within disciplines, although the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research remains a useful organising principle. In philosophy, for example, research may essentially involve an individual thinking about concepts and arguments, whereas in neuroscience research may involve batteries or multiple experiments using sophisticated (and expensive) technologies

and carefully controlled sampling, using a team under the direction of a chief researcher. In this regard, we should not forget that much university research is undertaken by graduate research students pursing higher degrees (typically a PhD). Ensuring good supervision and support for these students is a particular focus of research management in many institutions

There is increasing recognition also that many pressing societal problems require a multidisciplinary approach, drawing together academics and professionals from a range of disciplines. Despite the different disciplinary subcultures in academia (which we note in the next section), multidisciplinary teams can often work quite smoothly where there is a focus on a common issue that has to be tackled from a range of perspectives.

Even before 'internationalisation' of universities became a major theme in higher education, there were multiple national and international collaborations among researchers. The conduct of research often involves conversations on extremely specialised subjects, where there may only a few experts worldwide. (The tension between specialised knowledge and multidisciplinary applications is in fact one of the particular features of high-impact research.) With many countries seeking access to new knowledge or the prestige that accompanies its generation, researchers on many topics are widely dispersed internationally.

Moreover, two of the premises on which university research are based are (1) the free transmission of new knowledge, with sufficient information about the way that knowledge was produced to enable others to reproduce (and thus validate) it and (2) judgements made on the worth of the research through a process of peer review. The obligation to conduct and report research findings both ethically and honestly is one of the strongest conventions in higher education. Reports of new knowledge travel across the globe ever more quickly, which in turn facilitates the exchange of ideas and practices. We should note here that limiting factors may be the language in which the research is reported and access to relevant sources of information, such as journals and the internet.

As the chapters by Bok and by Slaughter and Leslie demonstrate, the ideal of free and open access is increasingly less likely to be realised in areas of research that have commercial or security implications. Much research of significance is expensive to undertake and has to be funded from outside a university's resources, whether in the form of government-funded competitive grants or contracts with industry or government. In fact, government policy in many countries seeks greater linkages between industry and universities, with the twin aims of having more research supported by industry and more research undertaken that leads to direct economic or social advantages or impacts.

The need for resources from the external environment gives a particular dynamic to much university research, as researchers are often required (implicitly or explicitly) to 'bring in' funding. As a consequence, they spend considerable time developing research proposals and negotiating with potential sponsors. Where private for-profit sponsors believe there is an opportunity for commercial advantage, they will usually seek to own or at least protect the intellectual property generated from the research, which may mean that findings cannot be openly reported. The reverse of this growth of ownership rights in research is seen when

universities aim to benefit from intellectual property that is created using the institution's resources, through patents or other (potential) commercialisation of research findings.

Because research is expensive, even though it may eventually produce opportunities for future income generation, many universities have defined strategies for the 'management' of research, recognising that not all academics can be supported to undertake all the research projects they would wish to owing to a scarcity of funds. In some universities, especially newer universities in countries such as the UK and Australia, broad areas of research specialisation are identified as specific niches, and resources applied to these areas, often through the creation of research centres or institutes, in order to ensure a 'critical mass' of researchers within the institution and thus to gain some external recognition. Critics would argue that the downside of this approach has been a proliferation of small centres working on similar problems (e.g. nanotechnology, climate change and water research). Some countries are considering policies that would give greater encouragement to 'hub and spokes' models, where researchers on a topic are distributed widely among universities but are expected to work more collectively on problems of national importance.

As we noted at the start of this section, not all higher education institutions are active in research, and certainly not all academics, engage in research, although many of the conversations in higher education suppose that this is the case. You will see frequent references to the 'teaching-research nexus' in writing on higher education but the studies and meta-analyses that have been conducted to date suggest that the effects of research on the quality of learning and teaching are difficult to demonstrate. One of the unresolved questions for universities is thus whether it is more efficient to keep research and teaching largely integrated with academic disciplines, or within separate areas, e.g. teaching departments and research institutes. We should not forget that many academics say their research is advanced by ideas from students, especially graduate students.

Research management not only involves the development of institutional strategy but also the implementation of policies governing the ethical and safe conduct of research, in terms of the treatment and role of research subjects, and of those within the institution, and also the integrity of the research process. It also involves the development and implementation of policies governing ownership rights in research outputs and processes for the management of research grants and contracts, both of which have external accountability requirements.

The most prestigious universities in the world are, by and large, those with the greatest reputations for research. Measurement of research outputs for both researchers and for universities is well-established, if still rather crude. Among the measures most commonly used are:

- total publications in refereed journals, i.e. those publications that have been through a peer review process;
- citation rates for those publications, i.e. the number of times a work has been cited by others, a measurement of its impact;

- competitive research grants awarded (on the basis of the researcher's proposal and track record);
- prizes and awards, such as Nobel prizes and other indicators of esteem;
- numbers of PhD graduates supervised (and the quality of their theses); and
- the number of patents.

The aggregation of these indicators in various ways is a major component of the burgeoning worldwide rankings of universities.

Measurement of broader research outcomes, such as the impact of a research finding or application on local and national communities is less well-developed although work on this is underway.

4.3 Service and Community Engagement

Readings:

Ramaley

The third element in the academic production process is that of 'service' to the community or, as it is more often described now, 'engagement' or 'community engagement'. One definition of engagement is: 'Engaged scholarship, or engagement, refers to teaching and research activities that link academic institutions with external communities in mutually beneficial knowledge exchange relationships (Holland 2005). The author goes on to argue that engagement presents a new way to think about how university research is undertaken and 'a reinterpretation of the role of higher education in creating 'public good' in a globalised age. (ibid. p.11).

A traditional third role of academics is that of 'service' to their professional discipline and to the wider community. The first is manifest in activities such as editing journals, being a reviewer, and taking part in activities to generally advance the profession, such as drawing up guidelines for professional registration. The second of these activities is typically shown in the provision of public lectures or public comment on issues of the day. And, of course some academics such as those in medicine, routinely combine academic and professional (clinical) activities. Service learning, where students gain professional experience from working in community or work settings, is another example of 'service' activities, as when members of a law faculty provide legal assistance to people for no fee.

Many universities also provide 'public good' services for their community at large, such as public lectures, art galleries or theatre companies, access to libraries, sporting facilities and meeting rooms, community radio and other means through which anyone can have access to the 'life of the mind' and new research.

These service activities have been seen as a third element of academic work, one in which there is a spillover from universities to their communities. In Holland's conception however,

engagement or serving the community is not primarily a separate or additional activity, but one that is deeply embedded in teaching and learning and in research. One general aim of such engagement is to more overtly benefit a university's communities, for example by undertaking research that addresses existing community and business problems or by stronger links between university teaching and real situations and issues.

Engagement with local industry and business, through research or through work-based learning (or professional practice) is also a form of community engagement. The link between communities (and local industries) and university research reflects a growing desire on the part of governments for university research to produce demonstrable impacts for development (of communities and of business), as mentioned in the discussion above. In teaching, students may be asked to assist in solving community problems or providing services that small businesses are unable to provide for themselves.

Not surprisingly, a philosophy of engagement is often embraced by those universities that are located in the middle of urban areas deeply in need of renewal or in regional or rural centres, where the institution can make an obvious contribution to the ongoing development of particular communities, as a good corporate citizen. The service and engagement roles of non-university providers vary widely, from very few to almost complete integration, as exemplified by some theological colleges, where scholarship is a natural part of pastoral care and guidance.

Whatever the activity, one aim of those who promote a new approach to engagement is the empowerment of communities, so that the engagement is viewed as a genuine partnership in which both parties win. Some communities are tired of having research 'done on them' without any say in the issues to be explored or the methods of doing so, so in future we can expect to see some research moving away from negotiating 'access' to informants towards negotiating matters of design, authorship and ownership of findings. Other communities would wish to play a role in shaping the foci of teaching and learning to increase its relevance to local needs.

The extent to which engagement provides a powerful new way of conceptualising the relations between universities and their communities across the board is not yet clear, especially given a countervailing trend of more secrecy and less openness about funded research with commercial implications. Performance measures for community engagement have been trialled for some universities but are not yet as well-established as other measures

Exercise 12:

From your own thinking about quality assurance, identify and discuss a number of internal quality assurance mechanisms that might be used by HEIs in the 'academic production process' for teaching and learning; research and engagement.

Part 5: Organisational Culture in Higher Education

5.1: What is culture?

Readings:

Morgan, Chapter 5

Dopson and McNay

Becher and Trowler, chapters 3 and 5

Dill 1982

Shah

Culture may be defined as 'the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another' (Hofstede 2001 p.9). Hofstede goes on to suggest that culture manifests itself at different levels of depth: deeply held values are at the core of this model, but only become evident through practices and behaviours. At a slightly less deep level come rituals, which may be 'technically unnecessary' but which are socially important for maintaining the collectivity of a group, and heroes, people who embody characteristics that are highly prized within the group. More superficially, culture is manifested in symbols that can include words or documents, pictures or objects. Such symbols may reflect deeply-held values but they are more mutable than others, readily changed or copied. Cultural 'artefacts' can be recognised in the use of insider terms, the presence of unwritten norms and ideas about what is 'really' valued and what is 'taboo' (Hofstede 2001 Chapter 8).

Hofstede and Morgan's writings remind us that groups, societies and nations have different cultures. Organisational and occupational cultures can be regarded as subsets of these wider cultures, although with acknowledgement of the impact of globalisation on the internationalising of these specific cultures. This reminder has implications for HEIs, which increasingly have multicultural student bodies and staff and which may be operating in a range of countries. In particular, the implications for governance and value systems of the substantial cross-national operations of some HEIs are only now starting to emerge. Shah's article challenges us to reflect on ways in which cultural diversity may or may not be reflected in the values and production of higher education, and to think about how universities might respond to mitigate the downsides of 'cultural imperialism' in academic activities.

Having considered the structural and governance arrangements of higher education, it should come as no surprise to find that most writers on the culture of higher education identify at least two distinct organisational cultures at work in universities, which may be summarised as 'corporate bureaucracy' and 'collegial'. Echoing Hofstede, the authors Dopson and McNay point out that culture is a combination of 'values, structures and power' (1995, p21), where values include symbols and stories that guide behaviour as well as rituals of identity and

integration (a prime example of such rituals being graduation ceremonies in HEIs). They go on to develop a 'quadrant' model of different forms of university culture, suggesting universities can be classified using the broad headings of: collegiums, bureaucracy, corporation and enterprise. The manifestations of different cultures will be reflected in governance arrangements and other features of organisational life in higher education, such as a propensity to innovate and seek new ways of doing things as well as the distribution of power.

This schema brings to mind Mintzberg and also the commentary of Quinn et al. (2006) in their 'competing values' approach to management and leadership (see next section). So perhaps, higher education institutions may not be as unique in their overall culture as many writers suppose.

Moreover, we should remember that many administrative staff work in universities and other HEIs precisely because they share and respect many of the norms and values of academia, so a simple 'collegial/administrative' divide may not give great insights to the culture within a particular HEI. It is also worth considering whether students form a wholly separate cultural grouping or whether they sit somewhere between corporate and collegial cultures, inhabiting both cultures as well as specific sub-cultures of their own. Overall, given this ambiguity it is probably safe to expect that within an HEI, we could expect to find overlapping elements of all of Dopson and McNay's organisational culture models.

Of course, differing occupational cultures within HEIs may be as significant as the organisational culture, causing some writers to question whether there is any recognisable overall culture for a university. Becher and Trowler's book highlights the extent to which different academic disciplines have their own cultures, and more generally we observe that loyalty to an occupational or professional culture may override organisational loyalty in many ways.

What are some of the implications for HEIs of the presence of these varying cultures or subcultures? Well, firstly, it may be difficult to cross from one unit to another or from one form of authority structure to another, which may inhibit organisational sharing and multidisciplinary activities.

Secondly, leaders and managers in HEIs require particular skills in communication and 'translation', and in crafting broadly-based systems of value. Often, so-called 'cultural change' goes no further than changing symbols or slogans, without really changing behaviours which lead to serious reflection about values, or a consideration of how differing occupational (disciplinary cultures) will understand these symbols.

Thirdly, there may be deeply held differences of value over ethics and 'right' ways to behave. These may intersect unpredictably or even collide, a case in point being the right that academics assert in speaking critically in public about the institutions that employ them. As another example, critical theory points to the role of universities in the success and growth of

global capitalism, an issue that is disquieting for some academics. As Gould states (2003, p.134): 'we must not forget that the culture of academe is contradictory at heart largely because faculty and intellectuals have not only an unstable alliance with the growing corporate power of the university, but also an uneasy alliance with the knowledge they produce'.

As way to understand internal cultures, consider how 'quality' might be interpreted differently across varying higher educational sub-cultures. Houston, Robertson and Prebble (2008) are among those authors who suggest that effective quality assurance requires a means of firstly identifying and critically reflecting on different understandings of a specific issue, before intervention strategies can be designed.

Consider also the resistance often shown by academics to the phrase 'quality assurance'. Although they may be thoroughly engaged in practising quality assurance in their own teaching and research, the phrase is often treated as a symbol of increasing 'managerialism' (another symbolic word) in higher education.

Culture is subtle and many aspects of it are invisible (especially to outsiders), yet it is critically important for preserving the quality of higher education. As quality assurance practitioners we can attempt to go some way towards understanding the cultures within a particular higher education institution while recognising that our understanding is often likely to be superficial.

Exercise 13:

What are some examples of values, rituals, heroes and symbols in higher education in your country?

Exercise 14:

What similarities and differences in organisational culture might you expect to find between a long-established, large, research-intensive university in a higher education sector that is heavily controlled by the national government, and a young for–profit HEI offering business degrees in a highly competitive market?

5.2 Power and politics

Readings:

Morgan, chapters 6 and 7

Pfeffer and Salancik 1974

Mintzberg 1985

Power and politics are inevitable and pervasive features of organisational life: they are the consequences of organisation, they represent ways in which organisational culture is manifested, and they are the means by which things get done. The negative views held by many about the use of power and political strategies probably reflect a combination of the tensions that accompany having to accommodate people who have competing ideas and values and who apply different reward systems. Also, unfortunately, many people have experienced the abuse of power in organisational life or situations where organisational politics have turned 'toxic'.

There are often power and political conflicts in higher education institutions. Some of these may be over the degree of organisational autonomy that is allowed, as when, say, the dean of a business school wishes to set up a new offshore teaching program but is opposed by a vice-president for international relations. Some may be over the degree of personal autonomy that is allowed, for example, the desire of many academics to teach subjects that are of particular interest to them and to spend more time on research than on teaching. Some conflicts may involve a challenge to established authority, as when a vice-president for research wishes to introduce a new method of rewarding 'star' researchers in the face of negative views from the deans. Others may simply reflect a desire to attract as many resources as possible to their own immediate area, as when an engineering faculty, for example, uses the external professional accreditation process to argue that it needs priority in the construction of new laboratories.

Power, in a general sense in organisations, refers to influence, often the influence ascribed to an individual by others. Some authors make a distinction between 'power' and 'authority', where the latter refers to the power that accompanies a formal organizational position and is widely accepted as legitimate (other forms of power have to be earned in different ways). This idea goes back to Weber's writings on bureaucracy. Other sources of individual power within organisations that are commonly mentioned include:

- The power of being an expert and having specialised knowledge in an area
- The power of personal charm, admired characteristics (such as fairness or honesty) or an ability to get along with others
- The power to give rewards or favours
- The power to punish or impose sanctions (or to force people to act in particular ways)
- The power to control access to information or to particular people ('gatekeeping').

One of the more sophisticated and dynamic accounts of power in organisations is provided by Stewart Clegg (1989), who views power not merely as a property held by an individual but one that is continually constructed and reconstructed by the relations between people and other elements of organisational life. This relates to policies and other elements of governance we considered in Part 3 above. He identifies three 'circuits of power' through with power, like electricity, moves, coalescing at certain times in individuals or organisational requirements and practices. This model is able to demonstrate the ways in which power within organisations is not inherent in the role of any one person, but rather a multilayered, systemic creation whose overall effects set boundaries on possibilities for future action. This approach has some similarities with studies of gender and minority relations and the subtle ways in which disempowerment is manifested in society.

Organisational politics, in contrast, can be seen as the use of a series of tools to achieve people's desired outcomes. Typical political techniques, often used in concert and also with the use of formal positional authority, are:

- Rational argument (e.g. setting out 'the facts')
- Persuasion, which may include the use of personal power or the selective presentation of information, but can also include appeals to 'higher' values
- Re-framing or redefining a problem
- Deferring a decision until a more favourable time or new opportunity
- Forming coalitions (identifying people with common or congruent interests or views)
- Negotiating, with the possibility of compromise
- Bargaining, with trade-offs
- Incentives, e.g. the promise of resources for a project in return for support for a new policy
- Appealing to a higher authority
- Orchestrating events to precipitate a crisis
- Threatening.

Academics are trained to be highly analytical and critical and are often extremely skilled at generating arguments for or against a proposed change. To avoid institutional gridlock, it is sometimes necessary to use formal authority. However, we know that the imposition of an unpopular change is likely to see that change resisted, undermined or ignored. Also, any change that is presented as a 'winner takes all' outcome (i.e. a zero sum game, with clear losers) is likely to be resisted. It is for these reasons that skilled leaders and managers in organisations often try to build support for change through the establishment of broad coalitions, using the devices of negotiation, compromise and persuasion. On the question of persuasion, it is interesting to note that appeals to 'higher values' often follow familiar lines of argument, using highly naturalised concepts, such as the family, the market, efficiency in production, the community, or democracy (Boltanski and Thévenot 1991; Friedland and Alford 1991).

Good leaders and managers in higher education thus need skills in reading people and understanding the values, principles and needs that may lead to them expressing a particular position, coupled with a sense of how best to use the political ‘tools’ that they know others will be using as well.

6. Leadership and Management in Higher Education Institutions

Readings:

Bolden et al

Quinn et al, Chapter 1

Clegg and McAuley

Wolverton et al

Cummings et al

In this final section, we consider some specific issues for leading and managing in organisations. You should have a good sense from the previous sections of the specific challenges of leading and managing in higher education and of some of the ways in which culture, politics and power can be used to ensure wise leadership.

People often say they recognise leadership when they experience it but describing and analysing leadership is not at all easy, despite the presence of a large volume of literature on the subject. Another question that many people argue over is whether there is always a distinction between management and leadership.

Exercise 15:

How would you describe the characteristics of leadership or the process of leading? Name some people who you regard as leaders?

In completing the exercise above, you might have used some of these words:

- Providing a vision or a goal
- Inspiring others to embrace a cause
- Causing others to 'think big' or look for something beyond the ordinary
- Influence (and exerting an influence greater than might be expected from the person's situation or position)
- Somebody people look to for wisdom or advice
- Finding a way to reconcile different points of view so progress may be made
- Strong personal values and integrity
- Making things happen that others thought too difficult
- The person in charge, the 'head' of the group
- The defender from threats

- Someone who maintains authority and power (and survives or overcomes challenges to these).

These ideas somehow seem to revolve around concepts idea of ‘advancing’, ‘influencing’ and making meanings that others can agree to. There are many theoretical approaches to the study of leadership, from the historical ‘great man’ model to more contingent accounts that view leadership as a relational concept: without followers there would not be leaders. Leadership also involves the leader being attributed with personal credibility, so followers can identify with the leader as a symbol of their ‘struggle’ or their own legitimacy. One of the manifestations of this in universities is the frequent discussion of whether the president needs to be a distinguished academic or have other expertise and qualifications that send messages about what the HEI stands for.

Recent studies of leadership point to the complex ways in which leadership is ascribed to people, often on the basis of what people expect or hope to see and what they recognise as relevant leadership behaviour for the particular situation,. This topic that has been researched as part of studies on what psychologists call social identity theory; see for example Turner and Haslam 2001. One view sees leadership for times of organisational or social crisis as demanding different attributes to leadership for less turbulent times. While, following Hofstede, we might ask whether leadership behaviour varies according to the national culture, there is some evidence that there are common elements of ascribed leadership that transcend cultures, such as the use of a strong values base by leaders (House et al 2004). Other elements, such as the extent to which leaders demonstrate participative behaviours do seem to vary by culture.

Now, consider the words you would use to describe a manager (as opposed to a leader) or the process of managing in an organisation. Some words you might think to use are:

- planning
- organising and coordinating
- managing people
- implementing (and implementing change)
- delegating
- communicating
- innovating
- learning
- negotiating
- coaching or empowering people
- providing accountability (for example, by reviewing the performance of others or by reporting on performance of the unit being managed)
- controlling

- the boss.

Can we point to any important differences between our two lists? The idea of leadership sounds attractive as a personal attribute but this is not necessarily the case with managing which seems concerned with the more mundane. Another difference is that our words about leadership seem to relate more to personal attributes which is consistent with the idea that leadership is a series of capabilities ascribed to an individual. The words about management are more about the attribute of a position, rather than a person. The leadership words also suggest painting a bigger picture and inspiring people to share a view, whereas the management list is about specific 'doing' words, mostly with the sense that a manager is someone with discretionary authority to direct the work of others.

One way of looking at the leadership/management question might be to say that managers have to consider the 'how' in more detail and less about the 'what' (Zaleznik 1977; Bennis 1989). However, as noted in the report by Bolden et al, the distinction between management and leadership is becoming more blurred than ever, as we recognise that leadership is needed for roles of people at many levels of the organisation. Perhaps the most productive way to consider this question is to recognise that many of the skills of management are required to be recognised as a good leader for the specific situation but that leadership is more than just the exercise of skills – it is a measure of the group's confidence in the person, a confidence that can be reinforced or diminished over time and in different roles. Managers can aspire to be leaders but leaders need to use the skills of management to retain their status as leaders. Having looked at the potential for distinction between leadership and management we will, for the rest of this discussion, refer to the terms together, as many authors do.

Quin et al. suggest an approach to leadership and management that draws on the four major value systems (cultures) that we are already familiar with in universities but also in many other types of organization. Their Collaborate, Create, Control, Compete model aims to provide a guide to choice and behaviour as managers simultaneously undertake many tasks in many different ways. Another way of highlighting the choices faced by managers is provided by Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) situational leadership model, which combines task and relationship behaviour to suggest four operating styles for managers of particular types of people: telling, selling, participating and delegating.

Many people in organisations aim to achieve recognition for 'leadership' and this is especially so in academia with its many professional and collegial elements. Most academics aspire to a leadership role in their discipline and many assert their professional leadership role in ways that can make life extremely difficult for the head of department who has corporate responsibilities for performance appraisal and implementing change as well as discipline-based roles. While there are understandable reasons why this situation exists, managing in an environment where colleagues may not accept positional authority (although they might recognise professional or personal authority) requires a wide range of strategies. Clearly, just 'telling' academic colleagues what they must do is not likely to work well.

The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (2009) study attempts to reconcile the differing cultures within higher education by suggesting ways in which 'distributed leadership' might operate within HEIs. How realistic a view is this, do you think?

The readings by Clegg and McAuley (2005) and Wolverton et al. (2005) present two rather different views of academics who take on roles as managers and/or leaders within HEIs. The former sophisticated in its conceptualisation, while the latter points to the need for development of particular skills and knowledge and, despite its title, seems closer to the picture of a manager than a leader. On the other hand, the latter article draws attention to the role that managers play in working with academic and administrative staff who are accountable to them in various ways.

An important role of management is that of managing people. Morgan's chapter (Organizations as Psychic Prisons) and his earlier references to theories of motivation point to some of the complex ways in which people relate to their workplace. Although in this unit we do not have space examine small group dynamics and some of the techniques for coordinating teams and empowering staff, we may note in passing a few points. Herzberg's work on employee motivation, in which he identified differences between 'hygiene' (maintenance) and 'motivating' factors in employment (Hertzberg et al. 1993), is probably as relevant for HEIs as for other organisations.

Many academics and managers in HEIs will find themselves in the position of leading or managing teams, whether these are a teaching team for an academic program, a research group, or a service unit. For teams, managers need to consider the mix of skills and interests (not only expertise) that will best contribute to the achievement of objectives, recognising that often a combination of skills and ways of working makes for a stronger team performance. Two of the better-known methods for exploring the differences among people who will be working in teams are the Belbin Role Model Inventory (2008) and Myers-Briggs Type Indicators (Myers 1980).

Two other concepts that managers and leaders in higher education may find useful are those of *knowledge management* and of *change management*, each of which has a considerable academic literature.

Knowledge management is one of those management terms the utility of which has still to be fully tested but which in its various definitions highlights significant issues for organisations, for example:

- acknowledging that organisational processes produce knowledge and there is a risk that the departure of key people will result this knowledge being lost to the organisation
- ensuring that new knowledge to improve performance is absorbed and used by the organisation, not 'hidden' in the knowledge of individual employees or, worse still, not recognised as relevant and thus never considered

- ensuring that the inevitable overload of information about an organisation, its operations and its environment is transformed into salient, summarised, accessible form for faster comprehension.

Knowledge management is closely aligned to the enormous increase in the capacity of information systems to obtain, analyse and present data. We are just starting to come to terms with how best to utilise knowledge, even in such as knowledge-rich environment as a university.

In contrast, managing change is an acknowledged constant in organisational life, and both leaders and managers need to communicate effectively across a wide range of groups and cultures to implement change throughout an organisation.

Some of the dynamics of effective change management are well-understood, including:

- the ability to convince others of the need for, and importance or urgency of, the change (a leadership activity if ever there was one)
- a clear rationale for the change and what the change will involve
- a project management approach to ensure that the change is thoroughly implemented, not just started and left hanging, or declared completed when it is only half-begun
- identifying potential barriers in advance and developing strategies to circumvent them
- crafting a change strategy to appeal to widely-held values and aspirations
- consistent and pervasive infusion of the change throughout organisational processes and communication, so that the change is incorporated into routine ways of operating
- demonstrated commitment from all senior managers and some other 'opinion leaders' within the organisation
- identifying and supporting champions and early adopters of the change, and ensuring there are early small 'wins'
- strategies for helping resisters across the bridge into a changed environment

(see Kotter 1996).

We can readily observe that change management requires the exercise of most of the elements of management and leadership identified above.

Finally, let us return to the beginning, with a quote from Morgan to illustrate that management and leadership cannot just be learnt – they must be experienced and refined through practice: 'Skilled managers and leaders develop the knack of reading situations with various scenarios in mind and of forging actions that seem appropriate to the understandings thus obtained' (2006, p.1). As quality assurance practitioners, we would do well to remember

this observation when assessing the rich and endlessly fascinating operations of higher education institutions.

Exercise 16:

Think about a situation in your workplace where a major change was being introduced such as a new way of 'branding' the image, or implementing the vision of a new CEO recruited from outside the workplace. What techniques were used to bring everyone on board to support the changes? Were these successful? Why? How might the authority of the leaders have been more effectively used to effect changes?

Part 7: Networks of Higher Education Institutions

In a globalised environment where competition to attract students is high, especially international students, many institutions of higher learning have opted to form collaborations. In recent years, there has been an exponential rise in higher education institution (HEI) networks and not all of them can be mentioned here. The purpose of this section is to highlight the objectives of higher education institutions network and cite some examples of these. References are made to the particular websites of these networks and the varying types of collaborations formed.

Some of the objectives of these networks of higher education institutions, as compiled from the various aims and objectives of the organisations are summarised below and in no particular order:

- Affiliate with international associations and bodies involved in both public and private higher education in order to strengthen it international mission.
- Become a driving force in the creation and further development of higher education areas and promote the academic expertise of its members.
- Contribute to the debate on quality in higher education and promote the adoption of quality assurance mechanisms within its member universities.
- Encourage co-operation in cultural, social and sporting activities between its members.
- Encourage and promote the practice of professionalism and ethics among members.
- Enhance the quality and delivery of courses and programs conducted by its members.
- Facilitate knowledge transfer between constituent universities by means of staff and student interchange so that they can benefit from the added value whilst respecting the cultural and national identities of individual universities and their individual freedom in learning and research.
- Identify and disseminate best practices in higher education.
- Identify ways to co-operate in order to exploit the universities' collaborative advantage.
- Identify and study problems arising in the industry and implement solutions in cooperation with relevant government agencies and professional bodies.
- Create a forum in which the universities can discuss issues of common concern and identify ways to work together.
- Maximise income for its member institutions.
- Promote member universities and organisations worldwide as a source of academic excellence.
- Promote and co-ordinate the development of the higher education industry.
- Protect and represent the legitimate interests of members in matters of legislation, policies and procedures.

- Seek representation on committees, councils and boards set up by government or non-government organisations concerning the industry.
- Assist institutions in raising all aspects of their professional competency in the administration and operation of their institutions.
- Be a national body of liaison with the government and statutory bodies.
- Be the unifying representative body for education and education-related organisations in the country at the national and international levels.
- Enhance and maintain the quality of education.
- Maintain a register of all member institutions.
- Provide educational information to the members, other interested organisations and individuals.
- Provide research facilities, and training, management and development programs for members of the association.
- Work in economic cooperation with bodies (e.g. European Union (EU) and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)) so as to participate in or organise higher education and research projects to the benefit of members.

To facilitate discussion, these networks are categorised as national, regional, international and thematic networks, all of which work towards enabling and improving teaching and learning in higher education institutions.

Exercise 17:

In recent times, a vast majority of academic debates and discussion are on student mobility and employability. In your opinion, how will these forms of higher education network advance or assist in achieving both these needs?

National Networks

These are networks that show collaboration between institutions of higher learning within national boundaries. Generally, these types of associations may be separated by sectors, e.g. public and private higher education providers or universities and polytechnics.

Examples of such national network of higher education providers are indicated below.

a. Group of Eight (Australian Universities)

The Group of Eight, founded in 1999, is a group of eight Australian tertiary institutions which are mostly the oldest universities in Australia. It was established informally as a network of vice-chancellors in 1994 and was formally incorporated in 1999. The group is seen as Australia's version of the Ivy League of the United States or the Russell Group of the

United Kingdom. All members of the group, except the Australian National University (ANU), University of New South Wales (UNSW) and Monash are known as ‘sandstone universities’ and all of their primary campuses are based in the six largest Australian capital http://www.go8.edu.au/

b. Group of Thirteen (Canadian Universities)

The Group of Thirteen, more commonly referred to as the G13, is a group of leading research-intensive universities in Canada formed in the late 1990s. The G13's primary activity is in joint research programs. The chairmanship of the G13 rotates among the executive heads of the thirteen universities. G13 institutions receive about two thirds of all government research funding in Canada. More information is available at http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia.

c. Malaysian Association of Private Colleges and Universities

The Malaysian Association of Private Colleges and Universities (MAPCU) was registered on 18 March 1997 and is made up of major and well established private colleges and universities in Malaysia. MAPCU has 45 ordinary members, 14 associate members and 10 branch members comprising of private colleges and institutes from all over the country. The main objective of MAPCU is to promote smart partnership with the Malaysian government to harness the full potential of the private higher education industry. All of MAPCU's members have a common goal to promote Malaysia as a regional centre for excellence in education. More details are at http://www.mapcu.com.my/council

d. Management of Small Higher Education Institutions Network (MASHEIN)

Established in 2000, MASHEIN is a network of approximately 35 small institutions in the U.K. providing development and training events at a national level, specifically focused on the needs of small higher education institutions. 'Small' is defined as institutions with fewer than 3,000 students. The MASHEIN program supports institutions in the areas of succession planning, change management, and responding to sector developments. More details can be obtained at http://www.lfhe.ac.uk.

e. Russell Group

The purpose of The Russell Group is to provide thought leadership and strategic direction for the 20 major research intensive universities of the UK. Founded in 1994, It is sometimes referred to as the British equivalent of the Ivy League of the United States. This group of twenty leading UK universities receive two-thirds of universities' research grants and contract funding in the UK Russell Group universities are seen in the UK as being some of the best in the English- speaking world for academic achievement and so receive more undergraduate applications than most others. The importance of Russell Group universities can be seen in the importance given to its decisions, for example in relation to its support of tuition fees and student unions of member universities forming the Aldwych Group as a parallel organisation to represent the common interests of all students. http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/

f. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) is the voice of Canadian universities. Formed in 1911, AUCC represents Canadian universities and colleges nationally and internationally. It represents 90 Canadian public and private not-for-profit universities and university degree- level colleges. Details are at http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia.

g. The Ivy League

The Ivy League, established in 1954, began as an athletic conference comprising eight private institutions of higher education in North-eastern United States. Today, the use of this term no longer points toward athletics but rather represents an educational philosophy inherent in the oldest higher education institutions in the United States. The term is most commonly used to refer to eight schools considered as a group and connotes academic excellence, selectivity in admissions, and a reputation for social elitism. The Ivies, as these institutions are usually known, are largely privately owned and controlled, although many of them receive funding in the form of research grants from federal and state governments. Only Cornell has state-supported academic units, termed 'statutory or contract colleges', that are a part of the institution. More details are available at http://www.ivyleaguesports.com/.

h. Irish Universities Association

The Irish Universities' Association (IUA) (Irish: *Cummann Ollscoileanna Éireann*) is the representative body of the heads of the seven Irish universities and is based at the National University of Ireland (NUI) office at Merrion Square, Dublin. The IUA is a non-profit making body, established in 1972 with five Heads of Irish Universities to provide a forum for joint action on matters of common concern to the universities. In 1997, IUA was formally incorporated with charitable status and adopted its current name in 2005. The mission of the IUA is to collectively formulate and pursue policies which advance education and research in the universities of the Republic of Ireland. The work includes developing strategies and associated actions to advance tertiary education and research, and maximise the universities' contribution to Ireland's social, cultural and economic well being. More details at www.iua.ie/.

Regional Networks

a. ASEAN University Network

The ASEAN University Network is an extension of the collaborative activities of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations or ASEAN, established in 1967. At the Fourth ASEAN Summit, held in Singapore in January 1992, co-operation in the fields of higher education and human resource development became a focus of attention of the ASEAN leaders. This idea was carried through and materialised in the formation of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) in 1995 with the signing of its Charter by the Ministers responsible for Higher Education from ASEAN countries. The main objective of the AUN is

to strengthen the existing network of co-operation among leading universities in ASEAN by promoting co-operation and solidarity among ASEAN scholars and academicians, developing academic and professional human resource, and promoting information dissemination among ASEAN academic community. More details are given at http://www.aun-sec.org/.

b. The Association of Pacific Rim Universities

Formed in 1997, the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) is a consortium of 42 leading research universities in the Pacific Rim. APRU aims to foster education, research and enterprise, thereby contributing to the economic, scientific and cultural advancement in the Pacific Rim. APRU was formed in Los Angeles by a group of university leaders who aspired to help member universities become effective contributors to the development of a prosperous and progressive Pacific Rim community. Among its objectives is to promote scientific, educational and cultural collaboration among Pacific Rim economies. More details are available at http://www.apru.org.

c. African University Network

The African University Network (AFUNET) is a practical response to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Plan of Action. It is designed to enhance the capabilities of African universities to take advantage of the opportunities associated with the emergence of the global information society.

The idea of an 'Africa University Network' (AUN) was presented at the World Summit on the Information Society in December 2003. It is proposed that a step-by-step approach be adopted so that by 2015, all African universities would be connected. More information can be obtained from http://www.gvu.unu.edu/afunet.cfm.

d. The Coimbra Group (CG)

This is a network of 38 European Universities, some of which are among the oldest and most prestigious in Europe. The group took its name from the city of Coimbra, Portugal, and the university located there, itself one of the oldest in Europe. CG was established in 1985, formally constituted by charter in 1987, and has its head office in Brussels, Belgium. The objectives of CG are to create special academic and cultural ties in order to promote, for the benefit of its members, internationalisation, academic collaboration, excellence in learning and research, service to society and to influence European educational policy, and to develop best practices through mutual exchange of experience. More details can be obtained from it webpage: http://www.coimbra-group.eu.

International Networks

a. Association of Commonwealth Universities

The Association of Commonwealth Universities, known as the Universities Bureau of the British Empire prior to 1963 represents over 480 universities from the Commonwealth countries. The aim of this association is to serve the member institutions by advancing international co-operation and understanding in higher education, and by providing a broad range of services and facilities. It was established at the University of London in 1912 with the Congress of Universities of the Empire which has 53 participating universities. More information at *www.acu.ac.uk*

b. International Association of Universities

The International Association of Universities (IAU), founded in 1950, is the UNESCO-based worldwide association of higher education institutions. It brings together 609 (August 2008) institutions and organisations from some 150 countries for reflection and action on common concerns and collaborates with various international, regional and national bodies active in higher education. Its services are available on the priority basis not only to members but also to organisations, institutions and authorities concerned with higher education, as well as to individual policy and decision-makers, specialists, administrators, teachers, researchers and students.

The Association aims at giving expression to the obligation of universities and other higher education institutions as social institutions to promote, through teaching, research and services, the principles of freedom and justice, of human dignity and solidarity, and contributes, through international cooperation, to the development of material and moral assistance for the strengthening of higher education generally. Institutional members are universities or degree-conferring higher education institutions whose main objective is teaching and research, irrespective of whether or not they carry the name of university. Benefiting from IAU's complete range of services and able to become active participants in all IAU working groups and activities, they also attend the General Conference and participate in the election of the President and the Administrative Board.

The breakdown of membership is as follows:

Africa: 10%
Asia and Pacific: 23%
Europe: 41%
Latin America and Caribbean: 8%
Middle East: 12%
North America: 6%

More information is found at http://www.unesco.org/iau/

c. Network International Research Universities Network

International Research Universities Network (IRUN) is an international network of broad-based research universities which was initiated by Radboud University Nijmegan. The aim of the network is to further improve the quality of research and teaching at the universities involved, as well as students/researchers exchange, joint conferences, symposiums and seminars. The future plans include joint degree programs. More details at www.unesco.org/iau

Thematic Network

a. IDEA League

The IDEA League, established in 1999, is a strategic alliance of five of Europe's leading universities of technology. In 1999, the IDEA league was formed by the signing of a memorandum of understanding between four European universities: Imperial College London, Delft University of Technology, ETH Zurich and RWTH Aachen University. Each had a research-oriented profile and each was the largest producer of engineering and science graduates in their own countries. In 2006, Paris Tech joined the collaboration. The term IDEA comes from the first letter of each of the founding institutions. One of the IDEA League's main ambition is to re-establish Europe as a technological and scientific leader by bundling academic resources and knowledge. Currently, three schools of the members of the alliance offer a Joint Master's in Applied Geophysics where students spend one semester at each university (Delft University of Technology, ETH Zurich and RWTH Aachen University), then spend the fourth semester writing a thesis at one of the schools or in industry. The program builds on the strengths and the complementary expertise in Earth Science at the three universities. It offers a combination of study and research. During the program students can specialize in either hydrocarbon exploration and management or environmental and engineering investigations, including geothermal energy exploration and management, and will also receive a solid background in the other specialty. More information at www.idealeague.org

a. International Association of University Presidents

The International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), founded in 1964 in Oxford, England, is an association of university chief executives from higher education institutions around the world. The primary purpose is to strengthen the international mission and quality of education of these institutions in an increasingly interdependent world, and to promote global awareness and competence as well as peace and international understanding through education. The IAUP is an association of around 600 members who are/were leaders on institutions of higher education, i.e. rectors, presidents, chancellors and vice-chancellors. The efforts of the IAUP is supported through cooperation with international organizations, such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the World Bank and other international organizations such as the European Commission and the International Association of Universities (IAU). At regional levels, the IAUP cooperates with NGOs in Africa, Europe, Latin America, North America, the Arab Countries, Asia and the Pacific. More details are given at http://www.iaups.org/.

c. League of European Research Universities (LERU)

Founded in 2002, as a partnership among 12 of Europe's top research universities, LERU expanded its membership in 2006 to include 8 new universities. It is headquartered in Leuven, Belgium. According to its mission statement, the League of European Research Universities (LERU) is 'a group of European research-intensive universities committed to the values of high quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research'. Eight of the LERU member universities are collaboratively responsible for the 'e-LERU virtual campus', which was funded by the European Commission as part of its 'eLearning program'. This allows students to study and acquire credit for online courses called 'e-modules'. The e-LERU site also hosts video lectures by scientists in what is known as its 'Top Science' program. Some of the members may also belong to another network of higher education institutions such as the Coimbra Group, the Europaeum and the Utrecht Network. More details can be sought at www.leru.org

d. Space Network

SPACE was founded in Lille, France, in 1989. It has the status of a non-profit international association according to Belgian law. Its Head Office is located at Hogeschool Gent (University College Gent) in Gent BE, and its aims and objectives are laid down in its Constitution. The network has been growing to reach a membership of more than 80 HEI in 30 countries from both the 'old' and emerging new Europe, resulting in a modified profile of the SPACE Network and a strong mission statement. SPACE is also committed to building bridges with the business community in order to enable SPACE members to provide to their students an effective and industry-relevant education. Many cooperation initiatives contribute to bridging the gap that currently exists between schools and enterprises. More details are available at http://www.space-eu.info/

e. The Higher Education Academy

The Higher Education Academy was established with the vision to provide UK students with the highest quality learning experience. Its mission is to support the higher education sector in providing the best possible learning experience for all students. The strategic aims of the organisation are to identify, develop and disseminate evidence-informed approaches, broker and encourage the sharing of effective practices, support universities and colleges in bringing about strategic change, inform, influence and interpret policy and raise the status of teaching. More details can be obtained at http://www.heacademy.ac.

f. Top Industrial Managers for Europe

Top Industrial Managers for Europe (TIME – Technologies d'Ingénieurs et Mobilité Etudiante) is a network of more than fifty engineering schools and faculties and technical

universities. It promotes graduate student exchanges and double degrees throughout Europe. Students achieve a broader high-level scientific engineering education with inter-cultural experience by attending curricula at two or more leading engineering institutes. Several hundreds of European students participate in TIME mobility activities and earn double degrees each year. Double degrees require the participating graduate student to spend two years in a partner university and two years in his home university (or reverse order) so as to be granted both degrees. Double degrees are assumed to be Master's degrees. TIME network primarily involves graduate engineering schools and technical universities throughout Europe but has some overseas extensions. TIME members in Europe have associated the following overseas partners, through student mobility, academic and research cooperation. More details are at https://www.time-association.org

g. U21

Universitas 21 is an international network of 21 research-intensive universities in thirteen countries. Collectively, its members enrol over 650,000 students, employ over 130,000 staff and have over 2 million alumni. The network's purpose is to facilitate collaboration and cooperation between the member universities and to create opportunities for them on a scale that none of them would be able to achieve operating independently or through traditional bilateral alliances. More information can be obtained at www.universitas21.com.

Exercise 18**:**

Articles 1, 2, 6 and 7 of the ASEAN Universities Network are reproduced below for your reference. Read and comment on these articles with particular emphasis on how issues pertaining to quality and graduate mobility can be emphasised.

Article 1: Organisation of the AUN

There shall be established the ASEAN University Network (AUN) to be composed of the leading universities and colleges in ASEAN Member Countries, which shall be known as the Participating Universities.

Article 2: Objective

The general objective of the AUN is to strengthen the existing network of cooperation among universities in ASEAN by promoting collaborative study and research programs on the priority areas identified by ASEAN. The specific objectives are to promote cooperation and solidarity among scientists and scholars in the ASEAN Member Countries; to develop academic and professional human resources in the region; and to produce and transmit scientific and scholarly knowledge and information to achieve ASEAN goals.

Article 6: Role of Participating Universities

The Participating Universities shall implement the programs and activities of the AUN.

Article 7: Functions of the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall have the following functions:
(1) Plan and organize programs, projects and activities of the AUN.
(2) Coordinate, monitor and evaluate programs, projects and activities of the AUN.
(3) Propose and develop ideas, innovations or mechanisms for sourcing and generating funds for the operationalisation of a self-reliant and self-sustaining AUN.
(4) Assess and review periodically the accomplishments of the AUN.

Source: http://www.aun-sec.org/

Part 6: Issues Facing Universities in a Changing Environment

In meeting the changing needs of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies, institutions providing tertiary education have diversified considerably in their visions and missions, governance, curriculum, teaching approaches and research orientation. This diversification has increased pressures on scarce resources, both human and financial, in the administration of colleges and universities. It remains, in this section, to highlight some of the issues faced by colleges and universities in the process of diversification to meet the expectations of their clientele as we move through the first decade of the 21st century. These are the trends that are expected to intensify in the coming years.

(a) Increasing demand for tertiary education and accessibility will continue to intensify pressure on governments to allocate their resources in providing places for all segments of the population.

(b) Bureaucratisation of institutions of higher learning will be replaced by a high degree of professional administration which reflects a desire for accountability and good governance. There will a need for trained personnel of a higher calibre to ensure that institutional goals are met.

(c) Intellectual property will remain an issue in relation to research, both pure and applied, and the dissemination of knowledge through electronic as well as non-electronic media.

(d) Academic staff will continue to be challenged on the need to keep pace with their areas of specialisation, be attuned to the various modes of delivery as a result of IT, and cope with students of different abilities and backgrounds – all in an environment that experiences fiscal constraints.

(e) As education in the private sector expands to complement the efforts of the government, the need to make surpluses will have to be balanced with the normal expectation of what colleges and universities can do effectively and efficiently in relation to their vision and mission statements.

These challenges will be further compounded by the financial crisis of 2008 and its impact both in the West and in the East but nonetheless we can expect to see the move away from traditional universities models to more institutions of higher learning where education is highly responsive to national needs and the demands of the market place.

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