

The many faces of the university

Over the last year, Shakespeare Martineau and Wonkhe have held discussions about the changing roles universities play in relation to their students, from educator to employment consultant, policeman to parent. We decided this was something worth reflecting on further and the result is this collection of essays, produced by authors from across the higher education sector.

The collection explores the forces within and around universities that necessitate change, and, importantly, how the sector should respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by them.

Universities have many roles, and they play them simultaneously in a complex and interwoven existence with students, academics, communities and each other. This essay collection, produced by Wonkhe and Shakespeare Martineau, untangles strands from this web of connections to help understand better how these roles manifest.

This has been an enjoyable project, and one which has challenged our authors – all from the world of UK higher education - to think in different ways about the changing roles that universities play today. The results are impressive, showing both breadth and depth in expertise as well as insight into the questions at hand.

Given the number and range of activity that universities undertake, we have been necessarily selective in our choices about what to explore. We could have included the university as peacemaker or as employer. Our selection is, therefore, representative and not comprehensive. Our aim is to further explore the knotty question of ‘what is a university for?’. And this is a relevant and timely question: the massification of education, the transition - as has happened in other areas of the public, or quasi-public sector - to a market-driven system, and the challenges of global competition have all challenged individual institutions to reflect on their own positions.

In the midst of major policy change for the UK’s universities, through regulation, funding and the impact of external forces, it is important to take the opportunity to stand back and see higher education in a different way. The anxiety around current changes, not least the fundamental shift in the relationship between universities in England and the role of the government and its regulators, makes it even harder to ask the bigger questions. But we cannot allow the turbulent external environment to completely dominate our thinking; universities will outlast the current round of reforms by hundreds if not thousands of years and so we must always be thinking one step ahead of policy today.

Wonkhe is the home of people, politics and policy in higher education. This collection reflects these themes and the intersections between them. We attempt to identify and share themes which cut across individual institutions through our blogs, email briefings, social media, events, training and consultancy. We believe that in an increasingly divided HE system, there is more need than ever for champions to celebrate the creativity, diversity and sophistication of universities. As non-partisan enthusiasts for the success of UK universities, we have been delighted to work with Shakespeare Martineau who share our ambition to shape the HE debate. Shakespeare Martineau has been advising education clients for well over a century, and with a longstanding involvement and commitment to the sector is committed to creating a positive difference in higher education.

We are grateful to our contributors, and to the teams at Wonkhe and Shakespeare Martineau who have brought this essay collection to the point of publication.

Mark Leach, Wonkhe
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The University as a Teacher

By Ian Dunn

Ian Dunn is Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Coventry University where he has responsibility for teaching and learning and the student experience. He is passionate about university teaching being of the highest quality, engaging students in great learning experiences that broaden thinking and provide outstanding opportunities for progression.

Teaching is one of the core activities of the university. Education, teaching and learning are often spoke about interchangeably, but for the sake of clarity and simplicity it is suggested here that the institution (the university) is all about education: the development and sharing of knowledge.

The university's purpose is to help its students to become independent learners, capable of capturing and synthesising knowledge as they encounter new things throughout life. Teaching is the primary relationship between the university and the student. This essay explores this relationship from the academic's point of view, from the institutional perspective, from the student's viewpoint, and from society's perception, with society being the beneficiary and, to some extent, the funder of universities.

The engagement between tutor or lecturer and student is largely hidden from external view. Attempts to understand and enhance the interaction are largely based on some sort of meta-understanding, the combination of many stories that form a safely depersonalised view.

Is this good enough? A student will want to understand, a tutor will want to share their understanding and passion for their subject, and an institution will want to be confident that the experience and engagement is positive. Society more broadly will want to know that the skills and knowledge will add to a general sense of well-being.

This essay provides a simple view of how the university may be viewed as a teacher. It argues that university teaching is a relatively simple activity, but one that requires a number of key ingredients.

From the Beginning or The Arrival of the Freshers!

Each year, fresh faced and expectant, a new batch of students arrives. They are mostly 18 or 19 years of age. And full of life, free to explore and become themselves. Or are they?

With increasing numbers of students commuting, the cohort is certainly differently constructed to the traditional view of student life. With students financially dependent on home or on part-time work if not, they have a new set of constraints. They are not like the academic faculty because, unlike the age of the cohort at entry, which does not change, academics have aged yet another year. Most in the academic community are likely to have attended university when less than 10% of the age group did so. They were probably financially supported by the state. Technology meant knowing someone with a car, or electric guitar, and unlike for today's students, mental health was not a consideration.

This is not to say that academics cannot connect with their students, but more that the way in which academics engage needs rethinking. Students are partners in all that academics do, not because they are subject experts as academics are, but because for them to learn academics need to understand a little more about how students work and think.

Students as Partners

The idea of engaging students in the design, development and updating of their course of learning is one that is not uniformly accepted in the UK. The practice is at best nascent, but when it works it creates very elegant, engaged communities. Students entering a course aspire in some way to become a little like their tutors. If the course has a more vocational outcome, then at entry they are professionals in training being supported by professionals in practice. Why would one not want to harness students' enthusiasm for the subject and their different life experiences to design the programme so that they are best able to learn?

It is not acceptable simply to engage one part of a cohort or one segment of the student population. Our entire university community must be explored. A diversity of views is needed to help decide where the university should go. From that diversity will come the necessary tools.

Understanding Diversity

Diversity comes in many forms. Each difference is an opportunity for universities to learn and to develop. Each difference gives the institution a chance to improve the way in which the curriculum is developed, enhanced and delivered.

The diversity within universities is huge, from the diverse ethnic make-up of the UK-domiciled students to the range of international students who bring different concepts of teaching and learning, to the family background of all students that influences how they perceive those around them. This diversity is positive and an opportunity for us to develop.

But it is also very easy for the busy academic to see diversity as a challenge and to take the least complex path.

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Students Assessing Their Tutors

Some critics say that the National Student Survey (NSS) is just a beauty parade, rewarding tutors who make their content overly simple and award high grades, and is a snapshot of how an institution is ‘managing’ the current cohort. However, actually speaking to students can elicit different views, indeed it is deeply disrespectful that so much of what students say is dismissed with glib consistency. Many academics truly believe that the students and their responses are much more thoughtful than they are given credit for. Students are capable of reviewing and appraising how they have developed and how the university has helped them to develop. They are equally capable of clearly stating when things have not gone well.

There is a clear need to understand in detail what is working and what is not. Internal surveys and focus groups have their place, but need to be responded to carefully. For example, why are universities not changing things? Explaining the reasons for any lack of change is just as important as what is changed after comments from internal surveys and focus groups. Students must be treated as serious, responsible adults who are investing in their future, and not just a financial investment, but also their time and effort.

Even more important than surveys is the creation of direct channels of communication with students. By working with students’ unions academics can establish a much more open dialogue, similar to the one that was present two generations ago and with which contact has been lost.

The Institutional Role in Enhancing Learning: Innovation

Students believe that academics have a role enhancing their learning. They expect academics not just to consider, but to validate, their views and they expect academics to have their own views. They also expect innovation in the classroom.

The questions that need to be asked are about how the majority of students best receive information and how their learning can best be facilitated? Many questions need to be answered about assessment and the best ways to test that the student has taken their responsibility seriously and is able to demonstrate the relevant knowledge, skill or attribute.

To some, PowerPoint presentations are merely an insertion of now-dated technology between academics and students that do little, if anything, to stimulate learning. If that is the case, why is this the primary means of communication with students? They are used to more immediate forms of communication – Snapchat, Instagram and so on. We also still organise teaching around blocks of time that are organisationally convenient. For some students, instruction at 9am is of little use as they are not in ‘receive mode’, whereas for others, classes at 4pm are an anathema – they are falling asleep. Great content can be lost because of the mode of transmission.

The Busy Academic: Research, Teaching, Administration, Enterprise and Internationalisation

Priorities set by management and/or the defined career path can mean that an academic will focus on certain areas. For example, why would an academic not focus on publishing widely if that were the route to progress and enhance their career? Over the last two decades the most successful academic careers have been based on strong publication records. This is changing, and not with a swing in the opposite direction, because that would be equally inappropriate, but with recognition that as an academic career develops each individual has a range of skills. It is the role of the university, among many others, to recognise that as people specialise the institution needs each of those skill sets.

The rise of the professorial post as a reward for teaching and research excellence is a very positive move. Better line management of individuals and better organisational development are needed to help guide each academic down the most appropriate path so each person can reap the rewards of being outstanding in their field. The great teacher – who gave us our direction and led us forward – is one of those people that

we remember all our lives. The great researcher will change the lives of many through ground-breaking thinking and developments. The enterprising academic will help bring prosperity to many and the great internationally minded academic will create bridges and broader understanding enabling all of the other activities in the university to progress at an ever-faster pace.

A Campus Fit for Learning

The physical and online learning estate of the university is currently in sharp focus. It is reasonable for a student to expect to be accommodated in a space that supports their desire to learn and provides them with areas that are specifically adapted to enhance learning, foster group-based thinking and encourage them to spend time on campus.

A leading Australian university, realising that the 5km distance between the campus and town meant that if a student were to go home between classes they were unlikely to come back for the later class, recognised the needs of students and was thoughtful about the design of spaces. Spatial design can help facilitate learning, with teaching not being the sole focus.

Consumerism: The Relationship Between the University and the Students

The introduction of tuition fees changed the dynamic of the relationship between student and university. The increase in 2012 to a maximum of £9,000 again altered that dynamic, and the latest proposals for fees to rise with inflation linked to measures of teaching excellence move the debate even further. Are students customers of higher education? The relationship is a complex one, without doubt, but that at certain times and in certain circumstances there is definitely a customer and supplier relationship. This has not changed the teaching and learning relationship; students do expect to work hard and to be stretched. They also expect a certain passion from their tutors in sharing the knowledge and to feel that they are respected as a part of the university.

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) poses fresh questions. For example, will it narrow or widen the gap between the esteem for research and that for teaching? In many ways, the question is irrelevant. Both are essential parts of a university's activity, both define what a university is and therefore both must be excellent and both must be seen to be excellent. The work that universities do to make sure that the TEF is appropriately measuring excellence over the next few years will define, for a very long time, the value that placed on teaching.

The metrics proposed in the TEF have a number of weaknesses, but they also have many strengths. They are national and comparable. The NSS, as argued above, is a considered response to the teaching that the student has received over their time at university.

The progression between year 1 and year 2 is an important metric. Anyone who sees it as their task to 'cull' the first year needs to remember that they admitted the students, who largely arrived excited by the journey ahead, and we therefore must take our part of the responsibility if we inadvertently knock the enthusiasm out of them.

Positive measures of graduate destination give us at least a view of how well we are preparing graduates for the labour market, for further study or for research.

So while the TEF has weaknesses, until there are more robust datasets the chosen metrics do appear to cover many bases. Academics ought only to fear their own weakness in being able to influence and shape the provision of teaching. If academics actively understand the changing demographic, and focus on quality in the classroom and the provision of decent services, then students will respect them and deliver appropriate verdicts through such instruments as the NSS.

The work of the Competition and Markets Authority on consumer protection is definitely needed to ensure that claims made against universities are valid and appropriate. We know that the more often a student comes to Open Days, the better their feeling for the campus and for the course they are applying for. So the more evidence that we can provide, the better suited the students that we will recruit.

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Conclusion

We can summarise with a very simple equation: 60 to 70% of student outcome is based on the quality of the teaching and the remainder on the learning environment.

$$\textbf{Quality of teaching + creation of a strong learning environment} \\ = \textbf{positive outcomes}$$

The university has many centuries of history and a demonstrated ability to adapt and change. The biggest difference right now is that the student population is much greater than ever before, and students are a more diverse group than ever before and they are more empowered, principally by technology, than ever before.

Universities and academics have a responsibility – to each individual who is investing in being in the institutions – to develop and deliver the highest quality of teaching to support the best learning possible for the largest section of society. The economic prosperity of society depends on it, and even more importantly so does the professional pride of academics.

The current attempts to define teaching quality may be flawed, but they will be refined and will be used to drive quality even higher. It is essential that the sector plays its part.

Universities have a social responsibility to be wide in access, accepting all who can benefit from a higher education. Every process of admission needs to be challenges to remove any element of prejudice. Once students are admitted, universities must be open and fair. An accessible curriculum, fair and appropriate assessments and a system that does not discriminate in judging outcomes are essential.

Universities, as important agents of change in society, have a role to play in persuading industry, commerce and government to recognise that diversity is an attribute and not something to be afraid of. Every person, irrespective of background, ethnicity or sexuality, can use their skills and knowledge to enhance society.

Institutions must be more open, more inclusive and even more innovative. By working with students as partners, and bringing together all of the creative minds within the university, massive change can take place.

The University as a Researcher

By Jonathan Nicholls



Wilhelm von Humboldt is often credited with the template for the modern research university when he founded a new University in Berlin in 1810 that would provide a unity of teaching and research, and offer a complete humanist education to its students. What eventually became the Humboldt University later added sciences to its curriculum under the guidance of Wilhelm's gifted younger brother, the explorer and natural scientist, Alexander. The Humboldt model was highly influential both in Europe and in the United States where, for example, the founders of Johns Hopkins, Chicago, and Berkeley were deeply influenced by Humboldt's ideas. Indeed, his persuasive philosophy is essentially the origin of the US research university model which continues to dominate the global league tables.

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The conviction that research and teaching are mutually reinforcing remains a strong belief in those universities in the UK in which research is a significant part of their purpose and activities. The separation of the funding and governance models for research and teaching at a national level through the new arrangements to be established by the Higher Education and Research Act, and the trend towards the establishment of national research institutes independent of any one university (e.g. the Francis Crick Institute, the Alan Turing Institute, the Sir Henry Royce Institute) therefore causes disquiet for those who are the contemporary adherents of the Humboldt principle. The founding instruments of many older universities prescribe their objects as the prosecution of teaching and research and this dual purpose is also a common theme of many mission statements. The mission statement of the University of Cambridge “To contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest levels of international excellence” illustrates this point. (Cambridge’s transformation in the latter part of the nineteenth century as a major centre for research in the natural sciences was highly influenced by its election of Prince Albert, Queen Victoria’s Consort, as Chancellor in 1847. He brought with him from Germany enlightened ideas for educational reform.)

This idea of a university has, until recently, been reinforced by the dicta of the Robbins Report which in 1963 propounded four objectives for a balanced system of higher education. The first objective, was ‘instruction in skills’; the second, and a counterpoint to this practical purpose was the promotion of the ‘general powers of the mind’, to produce ‘not mere specialists but rather cultivated men and women’. The third objective, while allowing for a different balance in particular cases, was that teaching should not be separated from the advancement of learning and the search for truth, since ‘the process of education is itself most vital when it partakes of the nature of discovery’. The fourth objective was ‘the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship’.

The acceptance of the Report and its subsequent catalytic effect on the founding of new universities in the 1960s and the general expansion of higher education opportunity to a wider group of young people meant that these objectives were highly influential in the purposes and adopted culture of those new universities, many of which are now celebrating middle age. In setting out his ideas about the purposes of a university, Robbins was dialectically engaged with other thinkers and commentators about the purposes of a university. Chief amongst these perhaps was Cardinal John Henry Newman. Newman was not a disciple of Humboldt. Newman certainly believed that knowledge should be pursued for its own sake and that searching after truth was a duty of the individual. But, perhaps influenced by his experience as a tutor in Oxford at the time when he wrote his famous lectures and subsequent book on the Idea of a University in 1850, he also believed that research (or “discovery” as he termed it) would prosper best when pursued outside the university.

Current government policy and legislation is trying to accommodate and regulate a much more diverse system than that known by Robbins. The universities newly founded in the 1960s were endowed from the outset with the money and expectation that they would both undertake research and teaching. No such largesse has been possible with later foundations or creations and the range of universities and the intensity of their commitment to research now vary greatly. So much is it perceived that success in research dominates the value and status attributed to universities that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (to stand alongside the Research Excellence Framework [REF]) has been introduced to provide measurements of esteem to complement or contrast with those deriving from the REF, whose history as a tool for measuring excellence stretches back to 1986.

Whether the TEF as currently devised really measures the quality of teaching per se is debatable. It is not the purpose of this essay to examine the TEF or the arguments about its methodology in detail. The important point in this context is that its existence and the link which the government wishes to make between the achievement of certain outcomes and the ability to charge inflation on undergraduate fees in England signals a determination to rebalance the benefits of pursuing high quality research to an institution, both financially and in esteem, in favour of the benefits and importance

of providing a high quality education (of which teaching is arguably only one aspect) to the student and to the institution. Correcting the imbalance however does not, at present, lead to equipoise. The results of the REF drive the annual distribution of £1.6bn in Quality-Related Research funding. The Government has indicated that if its proposed link between inflationary increases in fees in England and outcomes from the TEF is not approved, the sector as a whole will lose £16bn over the next ten years. However, this calculation is not additional funding in real terms, but the retention of the same purchasing power for the original fee.

Research continues to dominate the landscape when it comes to international esteem. The UK is ranked only behind the USA in absolute terms for the quality and impact of its research. It can claim 78 Nobel Prize winners, including 12 since 2004. An impressive 92 Laureates from all nations have had a meaningful affiliation with Cambridge University, the most for any university in the world (just ahead of Chicago). Based on analysis undertaken by Elsevier, published in 2013, the UK has 0.9% of the world's population, 4.1% of the world's researchers, 3.2% of global research and development investment, and yet accounts for 15.9% of the world's most cited scientific research articles. The same report from Elsevier demonstrates that when the UK's outputs across a cluster of research and innovation indicators are expressed as world share divided by world share of Gross Expenditure on Research (GER), it outperforms the USA, China, Japan, and Germany. As expert commentators point out, however, competition is growing both from the USA and from Asia in particular and the pressure to compete at current levels of efficiency is intense. In that context, the relative position of the UK when research and development is measured as a percentage of gross domestic spending is possibly a concern. In 2015, for example, UK spend was 1.7% compared with 2.78% for the USA, 2.4% for all OECD nations and 1.95% for the EU28.

By far the greater part of the UK's research and innovation takes place in or with universities. The economic value of this effort is hugely significant and has justified the continued investment, and relative protection of that investment, by recent governments, notwithstanding the growing competition that has been referred to and which can brook no complacency. Public sources of research investment are in fact the minority of GER, but the new UK Research and Innovation organisation will still control £6bn of funding for research and innovation annually and be hugely influential on the future direction of research strategy. The links between this and the new national Industrial Strategy are also explicit.

It would seem from the foregoing that pursuing research has significant financial value to universities alongside the esteem it brings. In fact, for most universities, research is a loss-making business. The Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC), a methodology developed and stewarded by the HEFCE, has been a required return for English universities for more than a decade (and has an earlier history in different forms). At the aggregate level, the TRAC data for 2014/15 (the most recent year) shows that the percentage of income received compared with the costs incurred in undertaking project research was 72.9% for the sector – a significant under-recovery. Broken down by sponsor type, this figure varies from 59.7% for charities, 65.3% for the EU, and at the top end, 72.3% from industry. Put simply, as measured by this methodology, the more research a university does, the less it makes sense financially. It is also questionable whether it is appropriate for any university to subsidise the costs of private industry, where the recovery rate should at least equal the cost of the work undertaken. The current funding model for research is unsustainable without subsidy from other resources, be those historic endowments, philanthropy, other earned income, or, dare one say it, cross-subsidy from teaching income.

So why do universities undertake research? There is no pat answer. Intellectual ambition, curiosity about the world and what it is to be human would be high on the list of reasons given by many academics. Most also believe strongly that they have the privilege and duty of serving the needs of society and improving the state of the world through their work. Eventually, many would argue, all research has purpose and application, however abstruse and specialist, and whatever its origins from curiosity and exploration. And most again would be deeply committed to how their research

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and the environment in which it is conducted provides a richness to the educational experience of their students which both inspires and enlightens. In this last respect it seems that the Humboldt ideal lives on.

Yet, the tectonic shifts taking place in higher education today may also suggest that Newman's view should not be ignored. There is already success for those universities that do not include research as a principal objective. Newman's contention that the university is "a place of teaching universal knowledge [which implies] that its object is, on the one hand, intellectual, not moral; and, on the other ... the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement" could be a new inspiration for some university leaders. Universities will need to think anew about their mission and purposes in the blurring of the old certainties about the higher education sector. Some will want to test whether research can or need be part of those purposes. And some may well decide that the essence of Newman's principle can be turned to their advantage as they seek to distinguish themselves as among the very best at extending knowledge through scholarship and teaching of the highest quality.

The Entrepreneurial University

By Nick Petford



Is it possible for a public university ever to be entrepreneurial in the purest sense of the word: that is the taking of financial risk in pursuit of profit? We all know the rhetoric. Universities need to be financially more self-sustaining, less reliant on single (dominant) income streams and take more risk. Indeed the mantra has become tedious, not because entrepreneurship in some form is not needed but because pundits have been saying the same thing repeatedly for nearly two decades.

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Much has been written about the role of the entrepreneurial university, and most powerfully by Burton Clark. The opening words to his book *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways to Transformation* (Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 1998) could have been written yesterday: ‘The universities of the world have entered a time of disquieting turmoil that has no end in sight.’

What, if anything, have universities done to reshape themselves in order to thrive in uncertainty or, as Clark put it, transform into a lasting entrepreneurial posture? Frankly, not much. Life goes on, students come and go, academics and management argue about the merits of developing and maintaining a successful entrepreneurial culture/neoliberal conspiracy in organisations still defined to a large degree as role bureaucracies. Extensive research by university business schools points to the fact that once companies reach a certain size they generally stop innovating at the rate they did when they were smaller.

Processes and procedures creep in and become dominant, blocking and closing down reaction times. This is referred to as organisational viscosity, which if left alone appears always to increase with time. For example, look at General Motors, IBM, Microsoft, even Apple. These companies maintain competitive advantage and make a profit, which is after all a desirable outcome of entrepreneurial activity, by buying in start-ups and absorbing their intellectual capital. Ironically, some of these start-ups and spins-offs begin life in a university through the entrepreneurial activity of staff and students. This indicates two ways by which universities can foster a more entrepreneurial mindset – get better at turning their intellectual capital into financial capital, and cultivate creative thinking and risk-taking in their students. Neither idea is new.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Around the turn of the millennium, the UK’s then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Peter Mandelson, set up a new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), which signalled a revolutionary idea: that universities are places of innovation and skills development. Some might say that, more appropriately, it should have been called Skills, Universities, Entrepreneurship and Training, but apparently SUET is not to everyone’s taste, even if it is easier to pronounce. The link between innovation and entrepreneurship is tackled by Clark, who notes that ‘innovation’ lacks the negative overtones of money-grabbing and rent-seeking used to deride entrepreneurs by those who don’t like them or the idea more generally. Many agree with Clark who also says that entrepreneurship, and its bedfellow intrapreneurship, is more explicitly focused on achieving desired outcomes through a process of deep cultural change: the need is to think and do things differently in *all areas* of university activity. Innovation is a supporting, but limited, facet of this bigger picture.

Innovation is an important enabler for entrepreneurial action that can, and should, link with academic values. But to succeed as a transformational force innovation needs to be collective across the organisation. In order to grow new income streams, DIUS, in collaboration with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), set about funding business-facing activities in universities: Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) was launched in 2001. To date, HEIF has pumped close to £1.5 billion into university coffers, supporting what has variously been called third-stream/arm/leg activity. Has it made universities more innovative? Quite possibly.

The income to universities from intellectual property (IP) stood at £155k in 2014–15, and according to the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey (2015) there are around 2,000 patent applications annually. These are pretty small numbers. Has HEIF made universities more entrepreneurial? Probably not. Like all funding streams where money is allocated on a formula basis, it tends over time to erode the pioneer spirit. Bureaucracies develop around the guaranteed income stream, jobs are created, and expectancy rules the day. That is not to say HEIF and other funding mechanisms are not welcome – they are. The danger lies in becoming too reliant on them.

Bonds: The New Frontier in Entrepreneurship?

One thing is for sure: if you live your life in a public sector bubble then you will have the overwhelming sense that there is no money and the only way forward is to manage year-on-year cuts. But this is a blinkered view. In fact, the corporate world is awash with cash. Indeed, high-tech companies, including Apple, Microsoft and Amazon, have hundreds of billions of dollars in cash. What are universities doing to get some of it? What innovative research or teaching and learning are universities developing that can be sold to the corporate world? In short, are universities thinking entrepreneurially?

Since the credit crunch of 2008, the cost of borrowing money globally has fallen to its lowest-ever-sustained levels. Low interest rates combined with a phased decrease of capital funding (money to build or maintain existing and new estate for example) to universities in the UK since 2010 has opened up new routes to universities for raising capital. One such route is the bond market. Bonds are a form of debt (technically, fixed income securities) where an investor loans money at a fixed rate over a fixed period of time. The rate at which money will be lent depends on factors that include bond length and the credit rating of the borrower.

Credit rating of UK universities is a new phenomenon. So far, only a handful of UK universities have submitted to the processes; for example, Manchester, Cardiff, Cambridge and Northampton. The rating agencies are US companies (Moody's, Fitch, Standard and Poor) and it is fair to say this is a genuinely new aspect of the higher education landscape. Large amounts have been borrowed (£1.9 billion to date), but the financial markets see the sector as a safe bet. Tellingly, this positive view of UK universities by companies that spend their lives assessing risk and uncertainty is not always shared by universities themselves. One problem with universities in the UK is a residual culture of expectancy; that is, the complacent idea that it is still 2004 and the unit of resource will increase annually without having to do anything. This idea is long dead: the coalition government and the Student Loans Company put an end to it but culturally, deep down, it lurks within the sector to a greater or lesser degree. The problem with residual complacency is that it works against the entrepreneurial spirit.

Is the issuing of a bond by a university entrepreneurial? Yes, in the sense that it is a good example of taking advantage of an adverse change in the external environment by trying something new that is not without risk. It also sends a signal, internally and externally, that the executive and governing body, working with the regulator as appropriate, have responded collectively to changing demands by recognising the most prudent course of action is to be out in front.

Opportunity and Risk

Two contributory facts work together to define the ability of a university to think and act with an entrepreneurial edge. The first is corporate appetite for risk. Opportunity and risk are different sides of the same coin but universities and their governance structures and regulators focus almost exclusively on risk. All universities have a risk register, scrutinised at Audit Committee. But how many of universities have an opportunities register? Focusing exclusively on risk is not confined to universities. A Boston Consulting Group survey from 2015 found that 31% of respondents across a range of industries quoted risk-averse culture as a barrier to innovation (Birkenshaw and Hass, 'Increase Your Return on Failure', *Harvard Business Review*, May 2016). Another aspect of culture relates to the management of universities.

It is self-evident that most academics get where they are by not failing exams of various kinds over many years. But here then lies a tension within the academy. Are those who got where they are through success capable of developing a culture where failure is seen as a positive outcome? This matters because, despite some hype, most entrepreneurs have been through periods of failure that nurtured in them levels of resilience and acceptance of risk they might otherwise not have. The proliferation of training courses and seminars on entrepreneurship aimed at university managers is evidence that this mindset does not come naturally.

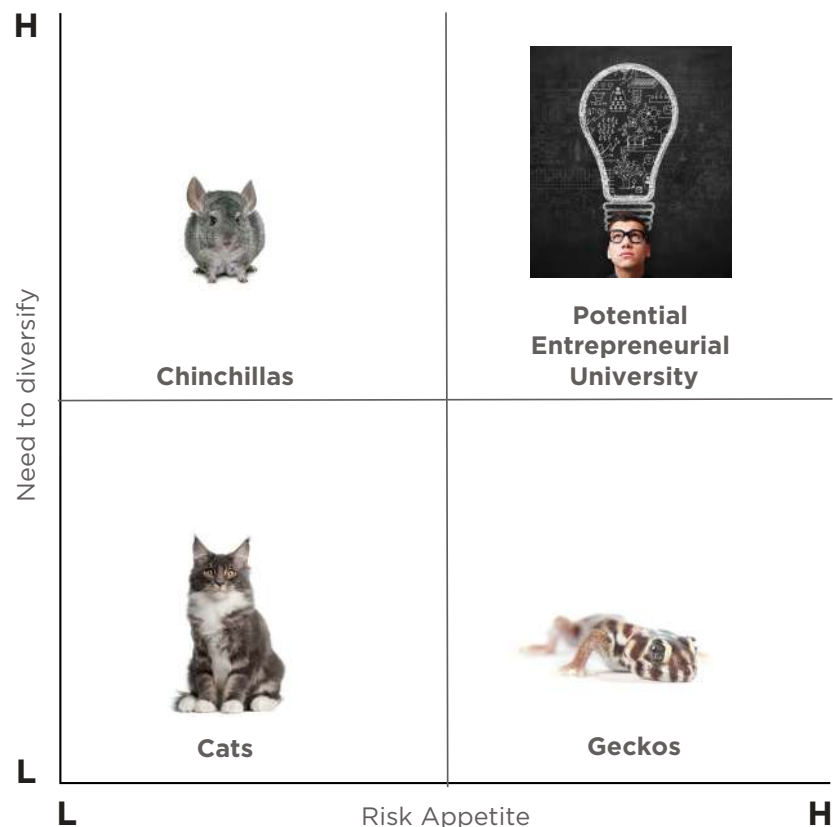
“One problem with universities in the UK is a residual culture of expectancy.”

“Bias for action is a sure-fire signal of entrepreneurial purpose.”

The second ability is not just to recognise the need to diversify sources of income away from undergraduate tuition fees but actually do something about it. Bias for action is a sure-fire signal of entrepreneurial purpose. Simply recruiting more overseas students to the UK is neither entrepreneurial nor sustainable. This need to diversify is of course a strategic decision about which much has been written (M Porter, *Competitive Strategy* (Free Press, 1980). But as many of the glossy documents that pass for strategy in universities are really long-term plans, basking in the dim afterglow of residual complacency, progress is often slow. The road to entrepreneurship is a rocky one almost always under repair.

Figure 1 shows how these ideas can be generalised in a 2 x 2 matrix. Different regions of the matrix are identified that correspond to the proposed dominant culture in universities as a function of risk appetite and recognised need (or willingness) to diversify. Cats occupy a privileged place where patronage still rules the day, while the less fortunate and more numerous chinchillas, timid and reluctant to take action, struggle to come to terms with the changing world around them. Their fear of the need to diversify, combined with a higher risk appetite, will drive the university in a direction that is uncomfortable, troubling even. Geckos (free climbers) are organisations that may go out of their way to defy gravity and embrace risk even when the situation does not require it. Only those that understand the need to diversify, within acceptable bounds of risk tolerance and appetite, are potential entrepreneurial universities. Universities without clear strategic direction and the 'strengthened core' of Clark drift around the matrix over time, making decisions on past precedent or by following the loudest voices.

Figure 1. Classification of university types based on risk appetite and need to diversify



Challenge-Driven Universities

According to a poll of 27,000 students by the research firm Zogby ('College Students Want Straight Line to Entrepreneurial Success', *Entrepreneur*, 3 June 2015), 96% said they wanted universities to promote an entrepreneurial environment. So how is student entrepreneurship manifest across the sector, both in terms of inputs (how it is prompted, taught or learnt in the academy) and outputs (graduate start-ups, spin outs)? It is done with differing degrees of success in the UK using the standard model of taught classes, case studies and written assessments. One standout example is the University of Buckingham's Business Enterprise Venture Creation Programme. But why do it this way at all? Arguably the most entrepreneurial universities are those that reject outright the traditional model of learning based on textbooks, libraries and exams. Instead, students learn in teams by doing real-life projects, sponsored by companies. This isn't possible when students are crammed into a 300-seat lecture theatre.

The entrepreneurial universities have strange names: Zeppelin in Germany, 42 (named after the computer Deep Thought in *Hitchhikers Guide*) and the New Model in Technology and Engineering (NMITE) coming to the UK in 2017. The National Endowment of Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) ('The Challenge-Driven University', 2016) calls this the rise of the challenge-driven university. If student attitudes follow those of the broader consumer market, and there is no reason to suspect they will not, then customer experience will overtake price and product as the most important differentiator. The use of digital technology to create social communities of like-minded students interested in entrepreneurship linked to employability could be a lucrative endeavour. This could include use of bitcoins on campus or integrated use of burgeoning Blockchain technology. Evidence of early take-up will provide a weathervane for the direction of entrepreneurial travel within the sector.

Social Entrepreneurship

How often are innovation and technology conflated? True, technological innovation is a key driver of all advanced economies, and universities play a fundamental role in developing the next generation of wealth-generating products across a wide spectrum of industries, from biosciences to engineering and creative arts. But innovation also has a social dimension. Those universities that are not science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-oriented, yet foster entrepreneurial ambition, have significant opportunities to develop new income-generating innovations in the service industries.

One area explored extensively at the University of Northampton is social enterprise. As the global economy turns to a social economy model, as is happening now in Asia and in particular South Korea, significant opportunities will open up for universities majoring in social entrepreneurship and social impact. The social economy works on face value like the capitalist economy with the law of supply and demand paramount. On the demand side are social entrepreneurs – individuals with a desire and passion to apply a business solution to fix a social ill. Healthcare and education are attractive examples where current inequalities can be reduced using enterprising approaches. The supply side comprises money and resources. In the UK, and increasingly elsewhere, specialist access to capital via social impact investing is gaining traction. The UK is a world leader in this area. Bridging the gap are intermediaries, that is, entrepreneurial organisations that bring supply and demand together. Universities have a vital role to play here.

A recent survey by the British Council ('Social Enterprise in a Global Context – the Role of Higher Education Institutions', 2016) of 200 universities in 12 countries found 75% were working with social enterprises. Universities produce the next generation of social entrepreneurs (supply side), can invest in social impact funds (demand side) and can act as intermediaries or as anchor institutions in local communities. No other organisations with this simultaneous ability come to mind. It is a tremendous opportunity for socially enterprising universities to make interventions that fulfil their missions as appropriate and also make money, to be reinvested back into the host organisation and recycled again to do more 'good stuff'. The See Change Programme, run by UnLtd and HEFCE, where 89 universities and 30 further education colleges

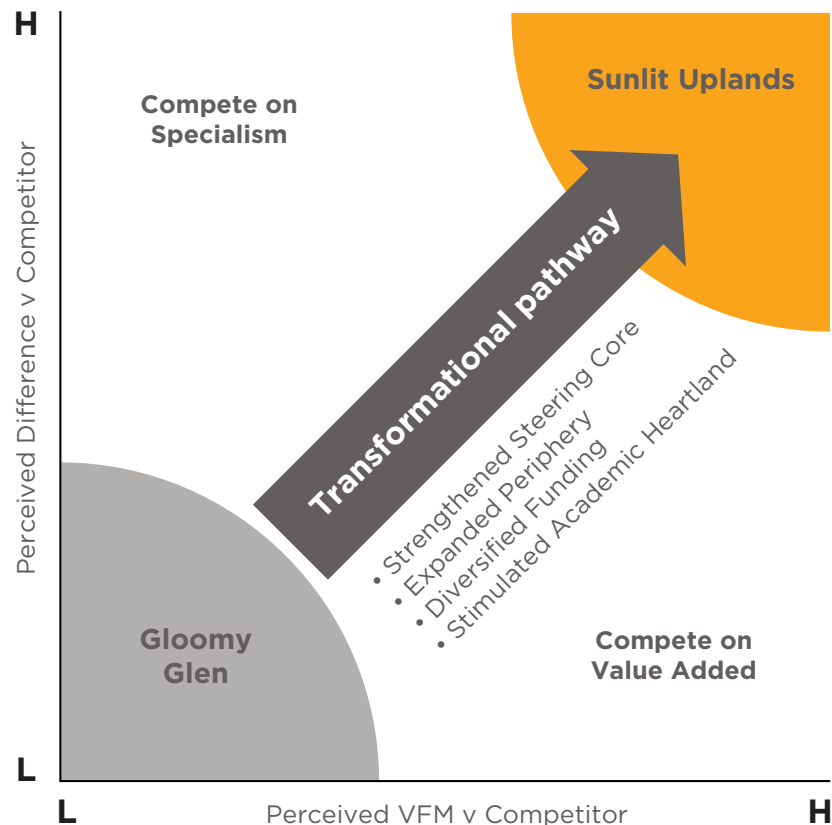
have come together to help social entrepreneurs thrive in higher education, is a good example. Another, from the University of Northampton, is Goodwill Solutions, an award-winning social enterprise in which the university has a 20% stake. Students are placed in the social enterprise and develop creative problem solving skills in ways not dissimilar to the challenge-driven model described above.

Entrepreneurship and the Market

How can a university, should it wish, pull these strands together – income generation, diversification, student experience and value for money – under the banner of entrepreneurship? One overriding characteristic of UK universities in terms of their ability to market themselves is the price-fixing regime they are run under. This is cash price in terms of fees charged, not the proxy price of tariff points. In the purely commercial world, price is generally the single most important determinant governing consumer decisions and one that marketers naturally focus on. However, in a single-price market, underpinned by income-contingent loans, universities need to appeal to intangible benefits around value for money and nature of the student experience, all else being equal. Again, for the savvy university wishing to compete, entrepreneurship is not far away. This is because in a tightly regulated market where quality is (for the most part) universally high, notions of value and difference are dictated more by perception than reality.

Research shows that millennials are more receptive to notions of purpose and meaning in work than previous generations. The opportunity here is to link social entrepreneurship in the curriculum with graduate employability to create a student experience that provides an emotional benefit (value added) in addition to traditional subject specialism (a common route to differentiation). Figure 2 shows the relationship between perceived value for money and general perceived difference (e.g. subject offer, focus, research) for competing institutions. Viewed this way, there are several standout areas that provide niche markets. But the big win is in the top right quadrant where both difference and value are maximised at a fixed price. Moving into the sunlit uplands must be a priority for any university unfortunate enough to be trapped in the gloomy glen, and one route out, as identified by Clark, is entrepreneurial transformation.

Figure 2. Summary map of perceived qualities of different universities: transformational pathway Source: Clark (1998)



Conclusion

Universities can, and should, be more entrepreneurial. Third parties like Cambridge Technology Innovations, which work with university incubators and science parks to commercialise products and raise venture capital internationally, provide an important service, especially post-Brexit. But this activity is confined to specialist areas in a few universities. Upscaling will require a significant shift in behaviour for both academic staff and management. In his classic text on corporate strategy, Ansoff (*Corporate Strategy*, McGraw-Hill, 1965) makes clear the shift from competitive behaviour (where most universities are now) to entrepreneurial behaviour more in keeping with the discontinuous nature of the external environment is not easy to achieve. Table 1 lists some of the changes in attributes needed in organisations that will enable them to make the switch.

Table 1. Summary of attributes needed to shift organisational behaviours from a competitive to entrepreneurial mindset

Attribute	Competitive	Entrepreneurial
Objective	Optimise profitability	Optimise potential
Goals	Extrapolation of past success	Novel interactions & capabilities
Rewards	Stability, past performance, compliance	Creativity & initiative, deviance
Operating System	Stable/expanding, activities grouped around resource allocation models	Highly fluid/agile, activities grouped according to value added
Planning	Long range	Strategic
Management	Goal oriented, relying on past precedent	Search for new opportunities/creative alternatives
Leadership	Skill to inspire greater effort	Skill to inspire/persuade acceptance of change

Source: Ansoff, 1988

Other new areas of organisational design, such as Holacracy and Teal, may help (Laloux, *Reinventing Organizations* (Nelson Parker, 2014). Entrepreneurial universities may wish to experiment with these new management models fostering team work and partnership, push down responsibility and accountability to the coal face and remove hierarchy and as much bureaucracy as possible. Intrapreneurship programmes where employees are encouraged to act like entrepreneurs within organisations and given freedom to develop projects without interference from layers of management should be encouraged. This is the real hallmark of an entrepreneurial university; not the number of patents or disclosures published, or licences granted, although these help, but the ability to change the operating model wholesale to hedge against uncertainty and create an environment based on a kind of planned opportunism, comfortable with ambiguity, resilient and confident in itself.



The University as a Civic Participant

By Jaki Booth

Jaki Booth has worked in Chief Executive roles for nearly 30 years, in six Higher Education Students' Unions, and also as General Manager at mac, one of the Midlands' leading arts centres. She is now Chief Executive at the UK's number 1 Students' Union at the University of Sheffield, a post she has held since June 2014.

"Working in Students' Unions is incredibly rewarding and very varied. What I love about my role includes working with and for elected student officers, creating change and developing talent."

Moving around the country has given Jaki an insight into different institutions and their engagement with their city and community.

Students are treated, and so are behaving, more like consumers and customers than ever before. The demand for a high-quality experience is on the rise, the number of complaints has escalated and universities are investing greater resources in student recruitment. At the same time, it is easier to access information and learning materials online.

The university experience has to be about more than attending a few lectures and a bit of lab time for science students. It should allow students to develop a broad skill set and develop personal qualities to equip them for the future of their choice; for example, qualities such as independent critical thinking, self-organisation, community service, and knowledge of national and international processes and developments. etc. (Jones et al., Open Letter to HEFCE and UUK in response to government proposals for the new Teaching Excellence Framework (October 2015)). It is more important than ever to develop universities' role in giving students opportunities outside of the classroom and campus.

Introduction

It is not unusual for those under university age not to really know where universities are or how to get past the tall walls surrounding them. For many, it isn't until they apply to study at a university (even a university in their own town or city) that they learn how to get onto campus. Students in my own city discover a whole other place – a housing-rental sector, fabulous sporting facilities, an incredible library and of course a wonderful 'members' club' in the form of a students union, providing activities, support, facilities, resources and a social life, all at massively reduced prices.

It is striking those even universities that don't build a tall wall around their campus often find other ways to keep people out. Many working in higher education have a determination to do what they can to break down the walls.

Since the 1970s, polytechnics have become universities, 'massification' has changed the landscape, universities have evolved into highly managed complex institutions, and students have become an important widget in the marketisation factory. With these developments, institutions are more actively conscious of the impact that they can have on the communities they live alongside.

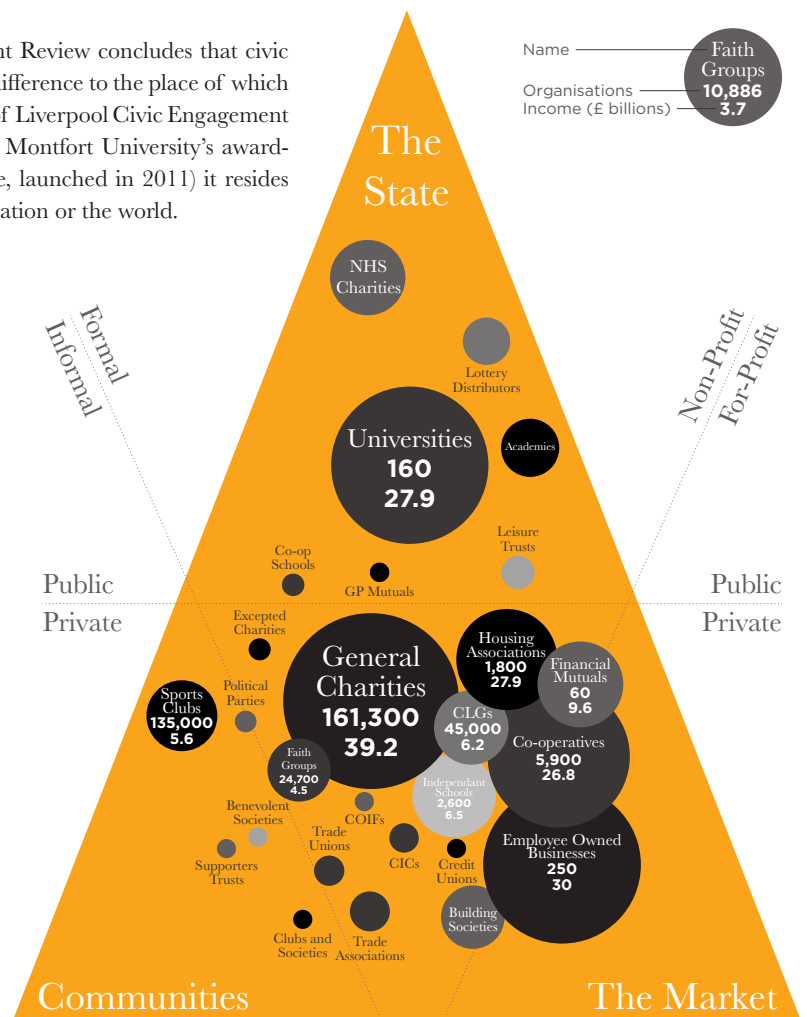
What Do We Mean by Civic Engagement and Civil Society?

'Civic engagement' carries a number of different meanings; and is derived in part from the notion of civil society. There are conflicting views of the term (Edwards, 'Civil society', *The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education*, 2005). For some, it is a means of sidestepping politics 'by expanding free markets and individual liberty' (Cato). Contrast that with the idea civil society is 'the single most viable alternative to the authoritarian state and the tyrannical market' (World Social Forum). To the extent that civil society has a coherent definition, it is collectivism and prioritising issues of shared concern over those of the individual.

The University of Liverpool Civic Engagement Review concludes that civic engagement is 'about the University making a difference to the place of which it forms a part' (Cliff and Reynolds, 'University of Liverpool Civic Engagement Review'). That may be the one *square mile* (De Montfort University's award-winning engagement programme, Square Mile, launched in 2011) it resides in, the whole town or city, the city region, the nation or the world.

Figure 1 (right) is based on work by Adalbert Evers and Jean-Louis Lavelle. It positions groups of organisations according to their distance from the state, the market and communities (*UK Civil Society Almanac* (NCVO, 2014)). Following the 2010 higher education funding reforms, there is a case to move universities further down the triangle towards the bottom right corner. It is hard to argue that universities are public bodies when such a significant proportion of income now comes directly from students (46% in 2014–15).

If civil society is about shared concerns and collectivism, what does civic engagement look like for universities? Any activity that allows partnerships to develop between the university, the student and external communities fits the description. It would be easy to hide it away from core business in a corporate social responsibility function, but it is much more strategically significant than that.



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You should support the University because:

1. The UNIVERSITY will be for the people.
2. The UNIVERSITY will bring the highest education within the reach of the child of the working man.
3. The UNIVERSITY will help the local industries.
4. The UNIVERSITY will be the centre where the treatment of accidents and diseases will be studied.
5. SHEFFIELD is the only large City in England without a University. Sheffield cannot afford to remain in this position.
6. The UNIVERSITY will not only benefit this district, it will assist the nation in its trade competition with other nations.

Ask at your works or shop for a copy of the Pamphlet on the University Movement.

How Do Universities Play Their Part?

That universities should have an impact on the wider world is central to many institutions' strategies and founding charters. Local factory workers established the University of Sheffield, using penny donations. Six aims secured support across the city and they remain at the forefront of the university's culture (Figure 2). To quote the most recent university strategy (Our University. Our Future. Our Plan (University of Sheffield, 2015): 'Our university was envisioned as a place where knowledge would transform lives for the better... Our strategy is therefore more than simply ours as an academic community – it serves our wider world.'

Universities routinely have an impact on the world through their research, knowledge exchange, events and more. They are blessed with fabulous facilities. The financial benefits of welcoming outsiders to use the facilities have led to greater partnership and a clearer understanding that the excellent facilities add significant value to the local community.

What Do Students Do?

Universities also have a large and growing impact on the world through their students, particularly those student activities outside the formal curriculum. Students probably participate in a greater volume of charity work, volunteering, political and social action than any other segment of the population; the highest rate of monthly volunteering is of 16 to 25 year olds (32%) (UK Civil Society Almanac (NCVO, 2014)). In recent post-Brexit research by the Charities Aid Foundation *A Stronger Britain, How can Charities build post-Brexit Britain* (Charities Aid Foundation, 2016), 30% of respondents said they are more active in a social or political cause compared to at the start 2016, with 37% of respondents aged 16 to 24 saying that they are more active.

Charity fundraising has always been a mainstay of student activity. RAG organisations raise hundreds of thousands of pounds every year; larger groups can raise more than £1 million in a year. At Sheffield, the commitment to the local community means that 85% of the university's funds are given to local charities. Through fundraising and volunteering, strong links are built between the students raising the money and the charities benefitting.

Student philanthropy and volunteering has a long history. Victorian students were housed in slum areas of cities as part of the growth of settlements (Brewls, 'A Social History of Student Volunteering, Britain and Beyond, 1880–1980; University of Life', *The Guardian* (11 April 2001)). It was the interaction between the students and those in need that led to social improvement and a lifetime commitment to social reform for many of the student participants. Students today rarely live quite so close to those they seek to help, and the variety of offer is considerably broader. The Higher Education Active Community Fund in the early 2000s injected resources into student community volunteering, creating over 10,000 additional volunteering opportunities (*Higher Education Active Community Fund, March 2002 to August 2006 (HEFCE)*). Today's students can participate in projects that complement their degree programme, match their interests and allow them to develop skills.

Civic engagement in these terms is core to the mission for students' unions. University members and leaders have been at the forefront of social justice campaigns for decades, in particular in relation to issues of equality and liberation, the anti-apartheid movement, anti-racism and anti-fascism, and campaigns for peace and disarmament. They have also actively represented students' own interests within universities. In the late 1960s, a swathe of sit-ins secured seats at university senates and councils throughout the UK.

Currently, few incoming students appear to be politically active. Some may have voted in a general election – or in a national referendum. Some may have joined a political party or campaigning group. Many have been exposed to a school council – more likely raising their cynicism than enthusing them to get involved. At university though, students can learn what it means to influence a community they are part of.

Students' unions are essentially hyper-local civic organisations, membership based, and owned by students. In most universities, the governing trustee board has a majority student membership, usually voted into position by their peers in cross-campus ballots. This is not about a playful flit through student politics. For example, at the University of Sheffield Students' Union, 13 of the 17 trustees are students; they are responsible for an £11 million turnover and an independent registered charity employing over 600 people.

This exposure to democratic processes and the ability to make a mark on the community on is part of is a crucial piece in the civic engagement agenda. Student politics is as lively as ever, and the issues confronting students nationally remain highly charged. Student leaders are sophisticated politicians, working out their campaigning objectives, key influencers and allies. They plan, organise and take action to affect high-level decisions.

Most students will arrive at university as consumers – absorbing the services provided, whether at the shop, joining a club/society, visiting the advice centre or passing time in the social space. The relationship is broadly transactional – rather like the council's bins services. Opportunities quickly open up for students to get more involved. They might join their society's committee, get elected on to a students' union council or represent students at the university's governing bodies and management committees. Through online polls and decision-making, students can also influence key decisions at the click of a button, any time of day or night. Thousands of students are in leadership positions in clubs, societies, sports and community groups. At the University of Sheffield, eight students work full-time for a year to run their students' union. The current president, a 21-year-old, chairs the trustee board.

“Students probably participate in a greater volume of charity work, volunteering, political and social action than any other segment of the population.”

Figure 3:



Like other universities located in or near city centres, the Sheffield Students' Union is able to take advantage of the closeness to the city to campaign jointly with local people and groups. Recent examples in Sheffield include the now annual Reclaim the Night march and #WeAreInternational. Both take a concern shared by students and the city and ensure that both city residents and students work together for the greatest positive impact. The students' union works also in partnership with local groups to support Pride, supports the university's Festival of the Mind, and is a venue for the inner-city music festival, Tramlines.

“Times may sometimes seem tough in universities, but the challenges are nowhere close to those in the other public and voluntary sectors.”

Impact of Social Action by Students

There is significant research and data about the impact of students' volunteering and social action activity. Research carried out by V Inspired Students (Brewis, Russell and Holdsworth, *Bursting the Bubble* (NCCPE) (2010)) found that 77% of student volunteers believe that their understanding of other people had increased as a result of volunteering.

National Union of Students' research has identified that over 725,000 students (31%) volunteer, on average, for 44 hours a year, which represents £175m per year to the UK economy. Furthermore, 40% said that linking volunteering to their course or qualification would encourage them to do more (Ellison and Kerr, *The Student Volunteering Landscape* (NUS, 2014)).

The route from student politics into professional political life is well known. Many local councils in university towns and cities have students or recent graduates as councillors, and many MPs were heavily involved in student politics.

The National Citizen Service (NCS) is a government-funded engagement scheme aimed at 16–17 year-olds and is heavily subsidised. For £50, participants receive four weeks of hands-on challenging activity, culminating in delivering a social action piece. The NCS *Impact Report* (2014) shows that around 75% of participants came away more confident about finding work, with 80% feeling more capable than they had realised they were. Participants report an increase in likelihood to vote, in intent to take up volunteering and in improvements to health and well-being. This level of positive impact from a four-week time investment is heartening. Students' unions are beginning conversations about how they can partner with NCS to continue and expand the benefits to students in higher education.

What Stops Universities Doing More?

It is a turbulent time for universities. Uncertainty over the Higher Education and Research Bill, Brexit, and immigration regulations for international students are all significant risks to the sector. Most universities are feeling the pinch of no fee increase for three years. It's hard to argue for increased funding for community projects when research grants are vulnerable, recruitment more competitive and income uncertain, even when it is 'on mission'. These challenges can lean the sector towards being less altruistic and more self-preserving, focusing on the sustainability of individual institutions before that of the wider community.

In addition, students have changed too. The introduction of £9,000 fee has profoundly changed students' behaviour and ambitions. Academic life and graduate employment are now students' dominant concerns, with perhaps even greater pressure to perform and succeed than felt by previous generations. It is no surprise that by the time students reach university they are more focused on getting the best degree possible: they have invested time and money to get here. Volunteering and civic engagement activity is thus increasingly driven by the need to be 'employable'. Students' unions are adjusting what they offer, and how it is offered, but they do fear that civic engagement may be devalued if it is simply a means to fill-up blank space on CVs.

Students are also transient – usually at university for only three or four years at a time. They often want instant gratification, so are attracted to short-term activities that give immediate reward. Often the projects they run will change in line with society's needs – the recent growth in food-related sustainability projects is a good example – but since projects are decided by students' interests, they are not always directed where the help is most needed.

Community Engagement

The third party in any civic engagement activity has to be the communities universities seek to engage with. Times may sometimes seem tough in universities, but the challenges are nowhere close to those in the other public and voluntary sectors. Austerity has led to unprecedented cuts in funding for services provided by local authorities: libraries, public spaces, transport, arts organisations are all low on the list of priorities. Local authorities have suffered budget cuts of 42% between 2010–11 and 2014–15.

When university personnel attend events with charities from outside the higher education and students' union sectors they are often struck by the relative privilege of universities.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) annual almanac in 2014 reported a £1.3bn cut in income to charities from government from 2010–11 to 2011–12 having grown for the previous ten years (*UK Civil Society Almanac* (NCVO, 2014)). Over half of the voluntary sector's income goes to 620 charities that have annual incomes over £10 million, but 80,000 charities have an income under £10,000. Income only grew during the period in the organisations with income over £100m.

The relative privilege universities enjoy creates a stronger moral argument for them to play their part in their wider external communities. Universities and students' unions can be invaluable partners for the smaller charitable and community organisations that provide services to local communities. These organisations have suffered the most from recent cuts. Women's Aid reports, in their SOS Campaign, the loss of 17% of specialist refuges in England since 2010. In February 2016, cuts were made to local authority funding in the arts of up to £56m since 2009, with many venues losing all their funding. Since April 2011, local authorities have cut over 300 local libraries. Volunteers or social enterprises now run some, while others have closed completely. Visitor numbers have dropped by 40 million in five years (*The Independent*, 'Number of library visitors falls by 40 million in four years as austerity measures force closures' (7 February 2015)). These are all areas where students and universities can make a difference.

Student groups are designed to exclude non-students. The traditional approach is that universities create student-only spaces. A glance through most university constitutions shows that there is a limit placed on the number of non-student member in recognised university societies. This of course ensures the democratic leadership comes from students and allows societies to focus on activities when students are available. However, it also creates an immediate barrier to deep partnership. Using Morris dancing to illustrate the point: if there are not quite enough students to create a society and not quite enough local people to sustain one, then the activity doesn't happen. If we make the connection and allow the non-students to join with the students, then Morris dancing can thrive.

There are 36 Nightlines affiliated to the National Nightline Association, providing 2,100 trained volunteers to provide overnight support to students in distress. Volunteers often receive free accommodation from the university or students' union to operate from, resources to cover costs and training that is developed nationally. Most university towns and cities have other helpline services, but many are struggling to find the resources to survive. It would be dreadful to think these helplines could be forced into closure while university resources have capacity. Furthermore, with the rise in mental health issues among school children and the rest of society, there is a compelling argument to extend helpline services out to local schools. In these ways, students can assume the responsibility they have to participate in their new community.

Thousands of students take part in performing and other arts as performers, crew, producers, directors and audience members. Universities have rehearsal space, costumes, lights, and some universities boast top-class theatres and art galleries. There are opportunities universities can create to work with local theatre groups to save money and time for both university groups and local groups. University technical teams are often volunteers with great skills that many local amateur groups could benefit from. There may be work opportunities in the professional venues. There could be joint promotions to encourage students to attend others' shows and vice versa.

Students love their libraries and access to learning space is of course crucial to them succeeding in their courses. Students regularly demand 24-hour opening of library facilities and universities are beginning to make round-the-clock services available. At the same time, public libraries are closing. University libraries provide a highly targeted service to researchers and students and so look very different from the local libraries – but only because they can. Universities could help run local libraries. Where the location works, these smaller facilities may be far cheaper options overnight opening. Sharing resources and expertise and reducing overall costs would allow the continuation of these vital services.

All of these examples share the same idea that if a win-win-win between the university, the student and the local community can be found, then there is much to gain.

Conclusion

Universities have been bequeathed a generation of students under significant pressure to perform and fearful of an uncertain and difficult economic future. But it is also a socially conscious generation that cares deeply about the world around it. Students want to know how they can influence their world – what better way than by playing an active role while a student?

The sector needs confident, clear and bold leadership to ensure that the benefits of working with local communities are maximised in new ways. University leadership working with student leaders can achieve a shift in thinking. Universities need to look for new partnerships that allow us to share our privilege and not hide behind a tall wall, be that wall real or figurative. Students' unions need to continue to lead the way in democratic engagement and make it easier for students to have their say. The sector must continue to showcase the personal and collective benefits of civic engagement in all its forms.

The higher education sector needs to seek out the win-win-win opportunities and help the rest of the world find its way through the tall walls.

The University as a Politician

By Ant Bagshaw and David Morris

Universities are political spaces, and are riven with the petty politics common to many large and complex bureaucratic institutions. Universities' fiercely defended autonomous status also places them in a deeply politicised context as their funding – whether from grants or state-backed student loans – comes from the government. The state may not have quite the same levers over universities that it does over schools or hospitals, but there is still plenty of room for political games to be played both inside and outside the campus walls.



Ant Bagshaw is Deputy Director at Wonkhe. He joined in May 2016 after roles as a policy wonk at LSE and the University of Kent. He has also worked for University College London, the National Union of Students and as a reviewer for the Quality Assurance Agency.



David Morris is Deputy Editor of Wonkhe. Until May 2016, David worked in the policy department at the National Union of Students, and undertook policy work on further and higher education issues. David is the 2016 winner of the CIPR's 'Most Promising Newcomer to Education Journalism' award.

“Universities have traditionally aspired to be self-governing communities.”

Politics in the University World

Democracy doesn't have the best of reputations these days. Angry, populist movements are cropping up across the Western world with relative ease, as evidenced by the success of Donald Trump, France's Front National, the Danish People's Party, and Alternative für Deutschland. Here in the UK, the vote to leave the EU was driven by anger and frustration at the status quo, primarily against the well-educated by those less privileged. British universities, which overwhelmingly back Remain, are prone to despair at the false consciousness of the uneducated.

Plato was famously democracy's first great critic, furious at how superstition and mob manipulation had led to the execution of Socrates. Plato's antidote to democracy was rule by the educated: philosophers, he argued, should be the guardians of the state and safeguard the common good. Such guardians would be trained especially for the task and taught the necessary virtues of wisdom, intellect and debate in order best to govern.

If Plato were alive today he might be surprised by Western democracy's surprising longevity and stability, in spite of our current travails. Yet if he were desperate to seek out an example of governance by the educated, he might look to today's successors to his great Academy. If he immersed himself in the internal politics of the modern university, Plato's faith in the philosopher kings might be shaken somewhat.

Universities have traditionally aspired to be self-governing communities, set up almost as 'states-within-states', with their own laws (statutes and ordinances), executives (vice chancellors), legislatures (academic boards) and judiciaries (academic panels of various kinds, ranging from peer review to appeals processes). Those who live and work within the university – teachers, researchers, leaders, administrators, trade unionists, and students – will often have to be political animals to successfully lead, manage or influence the business of an institution.

Day-to-day, politics infects the university workplace, perhaps even more so than most companies, charities or organisations, as the purpose and direction of institutions is continually debated and contested. In recent years, some such debates have made headlines. A review of governance at Durham University in 2013–14 (*Times Higher Education Supplement*, 'Durham scholars working in "culture of fear"' (20 March 2014)) reported a 'climate of fear' among staff, and resultant debates about how the organisation would be managed led to the departure of the vice chancellor. Events took place the other way around at Plymouth University in 2014–15, when the departure of the vice chancellor led to a report into governance (Good Governance Institute, 'Review of Governance for Plymouth University', March 2015) that revealed a breakdown in trust and communication between the executive, board of governors and academic staff. At Aberystwyth University, the vice chancellor recently stepped down after several hundred staff and students signed a petition in protest at her management.

Such governance crises are by no means confined to the UK, as recent examples at the University of Virginia and Mount St Mary's University show. Far from being shining examples of enlightened self-governing communities of the educated, universities have a remarkable failure rate for well-tempered and considered governance. Plato would indeed be disappointed.

The internal politics of universities is closely intertwined with matters of governance and procedure. Yet the above examples also demonstrate how much it can be about personalities and characters which, when in conflict, can seriously harm a university's performance and reputation. Max Weber wrote of three justifications for political power and influence that framed the 'vocation of politics': the authority of the 'eternal yesterday', the gift of grace (charisma) and the virtue of 'legality' (Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (University of California Press, 1978)). All three have their relevance in the political life of UK universities today.

Prestige and Privilege – The Eternal Yesterday

It is perhaps no surprise that the university's thoroughly political environment, with its social norms, customs and habits, has been difficult to break down and penetrate for those previously excluded from it. Prestige is a universally acknowledged characteristic of life in higher education, for both institutions and individuals. Marketisation and competition, which has been actively encouraged in the sector by successive governments in a bid to improve performance, has made prestige an even more valuable commodity.

As Paul Blackmore outlined, in a recent Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) pamphlet ('Why research trumps teaching and what can be done about it', *Tackling Wicked Issues: Prestige and Employment Outcomes in the Teaching Excellent Framework*, Occasional Paper 14, 2016), prestige is a notoriously wicked concept to break down and to transcend. By definition, prestige is 'relatively scarce; hard to measure; slow to gain or lose; and often decided on by insiders'. Whether a student applicant, individual researcher, academic department, or university vice chancellor, higher education trades in this precious gold, and by extension, prestige is a characteristic of power and seniority within a university. Prestige is 'core to institutional behaviour', particularly in pre-1992 universities, and is particularly tied to performance in research and the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

It is no surprise then that prestige tends to drift towards the already privileged. Female academics may feel that men acquire prestige more easily and more easily adjust to the demands of the modern academy, which often requires long hours, aggressive self-promotion and extensive networks. No surprise then that while over half of academics are women, only 23% of professors are. Women hold only a fifth of senior leadership roles in UK universities.

Meanwhile, universities' record on race equality is little short of disastrous, and not just in the UK. In South Africa, over two decades since the end of apartheid, only 14% of professors are black. In the UK, there are still fewer than 100 black professors.

Evidently, the 'eternal yesterday' is still a big factor in power and political relationships in UK universities. Though a great deal of work has been done in UK higher education to try to reduce these inequalities, particularly from University and College Union (UCU) and the Equality Challenge Unit, there is still a great deal to do. Equality is often treated as a human resources problem in the sector (as it is in other sectors), but one suspects they are fundamentally political problems for the academy as well, given the labyrinthine nature of institutions' governance and the importance of ancient prestige to success in higher education.

Internal Communications – Charisma

Effective internal relationships in universities can unblock the inertia sometimes caused by the needs of prestige in legalistic governance. Internal communications and stakeholder relationships are now vital for any executive team considering significant changes, and emerging market pressures have only accelerated the pace of such change. The above-mentioned failures in governance all had internal communications as a key theme, and vice chancellors typically go to great lengths to be 'charismatic' in the broadest sense.

Such communications can often be a source of cynicism and derision, as satirised by *Times Higher Education's* 'Poppletonian'. This may be because of the sheer challenge of communicating across what can be quite disparate organisational cultures within academic and support departments: 'a series of fiefdoms connected by a central heating system.' Within a university's governing bodies, there is also a substantial culture gap, with boards (or councils/courts) rarely in contact with academic committees and senates and consisting of very different people; the most common occupation of a university governor is accountant.

Many staff members and students are completely unaware of the power and influence of a university's board and the oversight they provide for the executive, and many students are completely unaware of the role of the executive and vice chancellor.

Uproar from students over fees, costs and facilities can often be put down to a lack of communication, and the wide range of recent work by student unions and universities on improving institutions' student engagement often concerns communication and transparency as much as it does representation on committees.

Committees and Paperwork – Legality

University governing documents are often long and seemingly impenetrable and presume relations of power and decision-making based on legality and rules. This necessarily implies the need to balance competing interests, knowledge and expertise in ensuring a university is well and properly run. Academia is fundamentally self-aware of the contrasting interests and cultures between different disciplines, particularly between the 'soft' arts and the 'hard' sciences, and also between academia and 'the management'.

As a result, securing change and assent within a university often requires navigation of a whole subset of committees and stakeholders from the board and senate downwards: the education committee; research committee; quality and standards committee; student experience committee; faculty boards and sub-boards; examining boards; and more. Paperwork is produced and reproduced, amended and corrected, and decision-making can be notoriously slow.

The political architecture of universities (and also many associated research institutes, learned societies and higher education quangos) means that the most successful scholars master not only the vocation of their field of study, and not only (in most cases) the vocation of teaching, but also the vocation of politics. Though academia has sometimes had a reputation for looking down on politics and politicians, in some senses university environments share much in common with the rough and tumble of national and local politics.

The trend to marketisation has perhaps only made this more intense, with funding for teaching and research becoming more hotly contested and the pace of change increasing, in turn triggering challenges for effective decision-making. It is thus perhaps little surprise to see some new UK vice chancellors come from outside the academy and from the world of politics. Sir David Bell at the University of Reading was previously Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education, while Bill Rammell at the University of Bedfordshire was once a Labour MP and universities minister. Former Education Secretary Ruth Kelly is now a pro-vice chancellor at St Mary's University, Twickenham. Each, no doubt, is well prepared for the internal politics of university life.

Marketisation, along with the skyrocketing salaries of senior leaders and the inevitably controversy that comes with difficult decisions both wise and foolish, has led to many managers being resented by the rank and file of the academy. Vice chancellors are sometimes criticised for cynicism and a hard-headed philistinism that runs contrary to the idealistic principles of the academy when closing down a classics department or outlining expectations of staff for the next REF or National Student Survey (NSS).

The challenge of balancing the ethic of responsibility (pragmatism) with the ethic of the ultimate end (idealism) is a real one for modern university leaders, and the challenge is essentially political. Leaders of universities must feel responsible for them, safeguard their short- and medium-term future, be accountable to the outside the world, and deal with the shortcomings of government policymaking and public perceptions of higher education. Yet this can be such a disappointment for many in the academy who seek a 'purer' engagement with the truth from their leaders.

There is an inherent conflict between the high idealism of the academic search for truth and knowledge and the murky world of academic politics, with all its necessary compromises, conflicts and confusions. As Weber put it, 'politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards. It takes both passion and perspective' ('Politics as a Vocation', *The Vocation Lectures*, tr R Livingstone (Hackett Publishing, 2004 [1921])). As it is within universities, so it is also outside in the wider political world.

Universities in the World of Politics

The medieval universities did best when their patrons, be they monarchs, bishops or the aristocracy, endowed their foundations. With capital behind them, the fragile existence of the early monkish scholar was replaced by the protection of the curtain wall and sustained by the food of the college kitchens, supplied by the college farms.

Closely entwined with both church and non-church politics, England's two medieval foundations played active parts in the Reformation, and in the Civil War: Cromwell was a Cambridge man and Charles I made Christ Church Oxford his citadel. There would have been more medieval universities had the duopoly not exerted their political influence to suppress the nascent foundations at Northampton and elsewhere.

Despite the Royal Charter foundations, universities have been subject to the power of Parliament, through direct legislation, and the agencies established to sit between government and universities. The University Grants Committee played that role from 1919 to 1989, and thereafter the funding councils. It is precisely because there were grants or funds to give to the 'autonomous' universities that they came to exist in a political space, tussling between control and independence.

The political trend continues. The proposed powers of the Office for Students in the Higher Education and Research Bill include the power to bestow, but also to take away, the title of university. For universities established for decades or centuries, this seems like a significant reach for the state but that overlooks that, effectively, this power has always sat with one part of government or another.

The leaders in high politics have almost always been graduates, and usually from the pool of two institutions. While there have been exceptions like John Major, most prime ministers have had a university education, with Oxford dominant in the PM league table. There have also been parliamentarians with academic career histories, for example, Gordon Brown and Vince Cable. If further evidence were wanted of the impact of the alma mater, even our fictional political leaders went to university: the West Wing's Josiah Bartlet and Yes Minister's Jim Hacker were both said to have attended the London School of Economics. Universities have usually been pleased to find their alumni around the cabinet table, and have done their best to ensure that the university 'line' has been dripped into the ear of power.

While the influence on politicians had been over dinner at the Athenaeum or at a college's high table in the past, political influence these days is more likely to be the product of an established political affairs function. Universities have progressed in this capacity at different rates, with some very clear about their 'asks' and have regular networkers at the party conferences. Others have more embryonic operations, with staff in communications, the vice chancellor's office or external partnerships adding the function to their portfolios.

The nature of the political question varies widely, from getting to know the local councillors to help smooth town-gown relations and planning applications to lobbying Westminster or Brussels. The devolved administrations, with devolved policy and funding for higher education, have their own political machinery, meaning multiple focuses for universities seeking influence in their nation as well as UK-wide. As these functions develop in universities, the consultants follow to help universities along their way.

Like it or not, the university is a politician: it must understand its political context, take positions and seek to find the point of influence. This is more than a nice-to-have. Universities, from their earliest inceptions, have been an integral part of national culture and society, but they have existed at the whim of the state. That was once a fickle monarch and his advisers, and will soon be the decision of an arm's-length-uber-regulator. As would be expected, universities have responded to the environment by developing their own political nous.

Don't be fooled by any feigned 'we're above all this murky politics'. Universities are, and have to be, more prepared than ever to play the game in all its forms.

“Like it or not, the university is a politician: it must understand its political context, take positions and seek to find the point of influence.”



The University as a Police Force

By Louise Nadal

Louise Nadal has worked in eight universities of varying character in a career in higher education which spans more than 20 years.

With experience in a range of professional service areas, including Registry functions, academic quality assurance,

HR and strategic planning, she now works as the University Secretary and member of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive at the University of Greenwich, with particular responsibilities in the areas of corporate governance, legal and compliance matters.

If the primary definition of a university is a community that works together with a shared goal of learning and expanding the horizons of human knowledge, acting as a police officer may not be an obvious role.

Twenty-first-century universities are expected to contribute to national economic vitality and scientific prowess, and to support the development of global competitiveness and social change as a result of innovation and research, but are not typically thought of as taking on the role of law enforcement.

The idea of a university as a law enforcer obviously has a negative connotation and appears antithetical to the ethos of a university. Universities are autonomous, self-governing institutions with the authority and experience to manage their own affairs. Arrangements to govern the behaviour of individuals and ensure the security of the campus operate through a system of regulations and disciplinary procedures, based generally on core principles of mutual tolerance, respect and natural justice. Robert Peel's revolutionary Principles of Law Enforcement 1829 in many respects complement this approach. They defined a system of policing by consent where police officers were regarded as citizens in uniform with authority derived from public approval and the willing cooperation of the public in observing laws ('Definition of policing by consent' (gov.UK, December 2012)). A university is a community of people reflecting a microcosm of society and is governed by regulations and rules, and relies on that same principle of community cooperation. Every institution is also subject to the rule of law.

The Prevent Dilemma

A recent development affecting the higher education sector is the growth in statutory obligations that extend beyond the broad and well-understood requirements of areas such as equality, health and safety, and data protection, which have a clear and well-defined relevance to the work of higher education. The obligations of universities under the 2015 Prevent Duty are less clear and have been perceived by some as tantamount to law enforcement.

The Prevent Duty requires institutions, in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which arguably establishes a specific role for universities in protecting the security of the nation. The same obligations fall on a range of public-sector-based entities, including local authorities, healthcare providers, schools and prisons. The duty is controversial for both staff and students, and it has also cast universities in the role of both detector and fixer of radicalisation.

The precise responsibility of universities in preventing people from being drawn into terrorism is unclear. There are moral and legal tensions between the fundamental purpose of universities, as laid down in statute, and the requirements of Prevent. It is apparent, from academic research, that there are a multitude of reasons why people become drawn into terrorism (e.g. Githens-Mazer and Lambert, 'Why conventional wisdom on radicalization fails: the persistence of a failed discourse', 86(4) *International Affairs* 889; Klausen, Campion, Needle and Librett, 'Toward a behavioral model of "homegrown" radicalization trajectories', 39(1) *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 67). The radicalisation process can be rapid and unpredictable. What exactly universities (or other public bodies) are supposed to do to demonstrate how they are preventing people from being drawn into terrorism has caused consternation and uncertainty across the sector. In some respects, the idea of preventing people from becoming involved in terrorism sounds more like a theoretical academic hypothesis to be tested than a set of guidelines to be followed. The approach seemed heavy handed and the government has acted in a way that was always likely to raise the hackles of the sector.

The requirements of the duty are at odds with the fundamental role and status of universities as independent, self-regulatory bodies whose activities are underpinned by the dual concepts of academic freedom and freedom of speech. The right to free debate of viewpoints and opinions likely to offend some was a particularly controversial element of the initial version of the guidance (Prevent Duty Guidance: for Higher Education Institutions in England and Wales (Gov.UK, 2015)). New regulations on whether certain external speakers should be allowed to speak at universities appeared to strike at the heart of the concept of a university and to compromise essential academic values, which caused genuine alarm and a real tension between the sector and the state. In response to the sector's concerns, the Home Office produced additional guidance, but this has not entirely resolved the issue for those who regard compliance with Prevent to be an unacceptable compromise and an attack on free speech.

A more user-friendly translation of the guidance is that the duty requires an extension of the welfare support provision and an awareness of what might constitute changes in

“There are moral and legal tensions between the fundamental purpose of universities, as laid down in statute, and the requirements of Prevent.”

behaviour that are indicative of potential involvement in terrorism. This is an area of pastoral activity that universities have generally done well for years. Nonetheless, the political context of Prevent and the emotive response of the media to every instance of terrorism to which a university could be linked left little room for a focus on the welfare of vulnerable individuals (*Daily Mail*, '40 UK universities are now breeding grounds for terror as hardline groups peddle hate on campus' (6 June 2011). *Daily Express*, 'Students slam University of Westminster with claim it has been "infiltrated by extremists"' (27 February 2015).

The overt linking of terrorist-related activity to study at an UK university often infers that universities are 'part of the problem' (PM's Extremism Taskforce: tackling extremism in universities and colleges top of the agenda (Gov.UK, September 2015). As most of the individuals concerned were young people, the fact that they had attended university was not exactly surprising. However, an assumption appeared to develop that this must be more than coincidental and universities must somehow be the cause of this behaviour. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there was a list of universities and colleges that caused the greatest concern to the Home Office. David Cameron's September 2015 speech launching the Prevent Duty for universities named four universities that had amongst them hosted six speakers who, based on the analysis undertaken by the government's Extremism Analysis Unit, 'promoted rhetoric that aimed to undermine core British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs'.

As a logical consequence of this agenda, the government decided that universities needed to be monitored for compliance. The Higher Education Funding Council for England was required to establish a new department especially for this purpose. Ironically, at the same time as the monitoring arrangements were being developed, various government agencies were also looking to universities to provide, through research and scholarship, an explanation for the fast-moving political and social developments surrounding heightened terrorist activity.

Universities seemed to be seen as contributing to the problem of terrorism and yet, simultaneously, were expected to provide answers and solutions to it. This paradox caused concern across the sector as staff expressed reluctance to act as an arm of the security forces to comply with the duty – a role that created anxiety on the basis of both appropriateness and capability. Many staff felt this to be spying, a view echoed by student groups (Motion 62, UCU Congress 2015; Motion 517, NUS Conference 2015). It is arguable that the Home Office's development of the duty was rather clumsy, although it did make concessions to the sector in the final version of the guidelines, thanks to the lobbying of vice chancellors and universities.

While the idea that the sector is 'special' and requires specific arrangements not granted to other public sector bodies doubtlessly caused much gnashing of teeth in Whitehall, Prevent can only be effective if implemented cooperatively. A further shortcoming, which demonstrated an apparent lack of understanding of the nature of the sector, was the Home Office-developed and approved training materials. Higher education institutions were encouraged to make use of the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent training package, which had the unfortunate effect of further tarnishing the image of the duty across the sector as the training package was a product focused on the needs of schools and further education institutions rather than universities.

Both the National Union of Students and the University and College Union have opposed the implementation of the duty by institutions. Recent sector interactions with both the regulatory body and the Home Office suggest that there has been a relative softening of attitude towards the sector following the first phase of monitoring and, consequently, universities are seen more to be offering a solution to – rather than creating – the problem.

However, a less positive consequence has been the private admission of academic staff, particularly those with expertise in the field of terrorist-related activity or geopolitics, that they have modified the content of their teaching for fear of falling foul of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act and have amended the nature of the research they undertake. This is alarming and politically counterproductive: how can universities

solve global problems through research if they are not permitted to undertake the research, or enable freedom of speech and discourse on difficult subjects if the speech/discourse could potentially result in a breach of the law? This difficult issue is likely to become ever more complex with a new Security Bill in the pipeline.

Dealing with Sexual Violence

Another area where there are tensions for universities as law enforcers is sexual violence, a serious public health issue that is causing concern on campuses around the world. In the United States, a White House Task Force has set out universities' obligations to address sexual violence, but the UK has lagged behind, tending to rely on the provisions of the 1994 Zellick Report, which provides a framework for the management of student disciplinary procedures, including cases where the disciplinary breach may also be a criminal offence. The Report was produced as a consequence of a high-profile case that highlighted universities' difficulties when responding to cases of sexual harassment and violence.

The Zellick Report aimed to provide clear advice to universities on how to manage cases of sexual violence so as to protect themselves from legal challenges and reputational damage and is still widely used today. In recognition of the fact that updated guidance is long overdue, Universities UK has, in consultation with the sector, conducted a review of the Report, focusing on harassment and hate crime as well as sexual violence (Changing the culture: Report of the Universities UK Taskforce examining violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting university students, (Universities UK, 2016).

All cases of sexual violence are challenging for universities to manage. It is clear that universities should not replicate criminal processes – they are no more courts of law than they are law enforcers – but the complex nature of the casework and the sensitivity of the matter at hand make these situations extremely challenging. An example is the case of Elizabeth Ramey, who brought an unsuccessful judicial review against the University of Oxford's policy on investigating complaints of rape and sexual assault (*The Guardian*, 'Former student fails in legal challenge over Oxford's handling of rape claims' (8 May 2015). The complaint was based on an allegation that the university's approach – refusing to conduct an enquiry except in very limited circumstances – was not lawful.

The university's policy, at the time the allegation was made in 2011, was based on the Zellick Report. The Report included guidance that if the police did not pursue prosecution, no further action should be taken except in exceptional circumstances where the police decision was made on the basis of special factors rather than evidence quality. This was the approach followed in the Ramey case as the police had decided not to pursue a prosecution.

Ms Ramey took her complaint through the university's harassment procedure (the university made a decision of no further action) and then to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (which recommended that the University of Oxford clarify and amend its policies). The revised 2014 policy was still unsatisfactory to the claimant as it allowed the university to decide not to take further action in relation to serious sexual assault. The subsequent judicial review challenge was based on the policy being in breach of the statutory duty of a public authority under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. However, the real scope of the claim was the application of the Zellick Report to a particular case.

Conversely, the nature of disciplinary action taken against students where no police action has been taken is often a cause of confusion and anger. Many students struggle to understand why the university is pursuing a disciplinary case against them when the police have found no case to answer or the possibility of a prosecution has broken down because of difficulties with evidence. The university's actions are often perceived to be unfair and unreasonable as the potential consequences for a student are severe, especially in matters of sexual or other physical assault. UUK's updated guidance for cases of alleged student misconduct that may also constitute a criminal offence is intended to address such problems and to fix some of the short comings of the Zellick

“Universities should not be put in a position where they are required to act as surrogate law enforcement agencies.”

Report (Guidance for higher education institutions: how to handle alleged student misconduct (Universities UK, 2016)).

Some of the most difficult situations occur when the person reporting the assault prefers not to inform the police or other authorities, but wishes to pursue it through the university disciplinary process. This is most common in instances of alleged sexual harassment and violence. Some complainants regard the university's internal process as quasi-legal, incorporating the collection of a range of evidence, and have consequent expectations of receiving 'justice'.

Notwithstanding the potential for the complainant to be dissatisfied with the outcome of the processes because the processes require a lower burden of proof than incriminal cases, there are further complexities around the issue of the disclosure of sensitive material to staff and student representatives who sit on disciplinary panels and around enabling contradictory versions of events to be examined meaningfully in situations where it would not be appropriate for the parties to be in close proximity.

In a significant number of sexual assault cases there are two conflicting versions of events and no independent witnesses. The innocence of the alleged assailant has to be presumed until proven otherwise. Police investigations of sexual offences require careful handling of witnesses, expert forensic analysis and examination of the relevant scenes. By any reasonable expectations, such procedures are outside the competence of universities, in terms of both staffing and process, even when a lower burden of proof is required. It is a core tenet of universities that they are self-regulating communities, but they cannot operate outside the sphere of the criminal law.

Universities should not be put in a position where they are required to act as surrogate law enforcement agencies, conducting investigations into very serious allegations that are technically challenging criminal offences. It is logical for cases of this type to be referred to the police who possess the necessary skills and expertise to manage serious sexual offences. However, if the complainant does not wish this to happen, there is currently no alternative but to follow existing internal disciplinary processes, with the risk of an outcome unsatisfactory for all parties.

Universities provide a range of welfare and support services accessible to all students, and it is unlikely that students would state that they see their institution fulfilling the role of the police – although they would doubtlessly expect their institution to keep them safe and to be able to take action against others where necessary. Nonetheless, it is apparent that students do believe that their university should operate legalistic procedures. Like all other services, substandard provision is no longer acceptable.

The origin of such a belief is unclear. It might be the result of a generally raised level of expectation, or the consequence of a greater level of helicopter parenting whereby students are accustomed to relying on others to resolve their problems to their absolute satisfaction. It seems possible that students, as consumers, with very high expectations of a perfect experience, are (potentially unwittingly) driving the agenda to make universities behave more like the police, both in terms of the operation of internal processes and in meeting their regulatory obligations. The combined pressures of competition, consumerism and a more litigiously minded culture all seem to be contributing to an increased requirement for universities to act as the police.

In some respects, these difficult issues strike at the heart of the purpose of a university and test, yet again, the ability of the sector to adapt and respond to a new range of expectations. Equally, the international challenge of terrorism puts universities at the forefront of finding solutions to the problem, while still supporting and protecting the young people in their care. In Peel's Principles of 1829, which established an ethical police force, the focus was on creating a system of authority that was transparent in its operation, had integrity and was accountable. Universities must aim to adopt these principles in all their dealings, including in issues relating to disciplinary matters. If that is the definition of policing by consent, then universities have been doing this successfully for a very long time. As highly adaptive organisations, universities tend to be able to find a way to meet new obligations, whether statutory or not, in ways that remain compatible with Peel's Principles and their own values and *raison d'être*.

The University as a Carer, Counsellor and Parent

By Ben Bailey



This essay is a perspective on the current context of institutions meeting their duty of care for students. It draws on the experience of leaders in student services and highlights some of the current challenges in the UK and some of the decisions that face student services leaders and their teams.

The Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE) Winter Conference 2016, 'Finding the Balance: Student Services and Duty of Care to Students', and the AMOSSHE Futures policy forum discussion (in May 2015), 'Where's the line? How far should universities go in providing duty of care for their students?', inform this essay.

Ben Bailey is Director of Student Services at the University of Birmingham where he has been since 2015. Prior to this Ben was at the University of Derby for 12 years latterly their Head of Student Services. Ben has also served as a member of the AMOSSHE (The Student Services Organisation) Executive Board for 5 and a half years and is currently Chair following his election for a 2016-18 term of office.

“Understanding the parameters of a higher education institution’s duty of care in a legal context is difficult.”

Discussion about ‘duty of care’ has been ongoing for at least the past 14 years in UK higher education. Student services leaders, managers and practitioners routinely discuss and explore the relationship that they and their institutions have with their students and colleagues. At the heart of those discussions is often what duty of care an institution has, particularly for its students, in a variety of different contexts.

Providers of student services must regularly find the right balance between an appropriate and proportionate intervention, response or level of service provision and whether intrusion into independent adult lives is justified, all within the wider legal framework of higher education. Part of this balance relates to an institution’s range of duties as distinct from and complementary to the duties of a range of other statutory organisations, including the NHS, police and social services.

Students in higher education are being asked to do a lot – academically, socially and emotionally – within a cycle that also produces periods of intense stress and pressure. Higher education is a process of development and growth. Universities understand that they need to provide a range of responses to common challenges in order to help students navigate towards successful outcomes. The question is, how far does that responsibility go?

Those who argue for limits on universities’ role as a parent, carer, or counsellor reason that universities are not therapeutic communities, and that their primary purpose is as an academic community. Yet that distinction seems less clear for others, including many students themselves (and their parents). Expectations of the help and support services that will be available from universities are constantly increasing. Recent commentary (e.g. *The Guardian*, ‘University health services face strain as demand rises 50%’ (23 September 2016)) on mental health and the level of counselling available in universities, coupled with the waiting time, sets the tone and is fairly typical.

In the past fourteen years, the duty of care has been, at least in part, a significant feature of the annual AMOSSHE conference formal programme. The title of the May 2015 AMOSSHE Futures discussion, referred to above, summed up the challenge.

Although this Futures discussion highlighted that,

[i]n essence, a university has a general duty of care in common law: to deliver its educational and pastoral services to the standard of the ordinarily competent institution, and, in carrying out its services and functions, to act reasonably to protect the health, safety and welfare of its students. ... The group agreed that there is a balance between what the university should do as a legal minimum and what they could do based on a university’s perceived moral obligation to look after and support its students. These days reputation more often plays a part in university decisions regarding recruitment and retention of students, and the potential negative publicity associated with high profile student incidents – where it could be alleged that a university should have provided greater support – may influence the services a university chooses to provide.

Understanding the parameters of a higher education institution’s duty of care in a legal context is difficult, especially where the law relating to students is still evolving and many aspects still remain untested in the courts. The law relating to reasonable adjustments for disabled students under the Equality Act 2010 or the Competition and Markets Authority guidance to the sector about consumer protection law are instructive. Beyond the legal baseline of a standard duty of care, the extent to which a university adopts the role of parent, counsellor or carer can therefore vary significantly in line with institutional appetite and culture.

The evolution of the law relating to students is intertwined with the direction and pace of change. The introduction of fees and marketisation of the higher education sector means that these issues are more relevant than ever.

The 2011 *White Paper Students at the Heart of the System* (Department for Business Innovation & Skills (London, 2011, Cm 8122) signified a change in expectations after the introduction of higher fees. It was clear then that students would seek an increased level of service and support and take a greater degree of interest in what their fees paid for, and that their parents and other supporters would have similar questions.

The expectations of students and parents have risen, with fees and ‘paying’ for university often mentioned in the context of airing other concerns. The availability of information, guidance and support services has changed and quite probably

grown and needs to be provided in ways that feel relevant and accessible to the whole student body. Better-targeted support increasingly needs to find the student rather than students having to find the support on offer. The degree of public accountability about how institutions use their resources and any increased fee income to address the needs of their students has also grown. Despite the most aggressive market-led reforms primarily taking place in England, the impact has also been felt in the devolved nations.

Since the introduction of £9,000 fees for September 2012, the pace of change in higher education (HE) policy has continued to accelerate. A range of legal, regulatory and policy developments (which include the Competition and Markets Authority guidance and the Consumer Rights Act 2015, the changes to Disabled Student Allowance, the 2016 Higher Education and Research Bill bringing with it the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and Office for Students (OFS), the revised Office for Fair Access guidance) have led to questions about an institution's duty of care and the extent and nature of support services for students in higher education institutions (HEIs).

Feedback that AMOSSHE receives through its annual benchmarking survey about the issues members say are presenting challenges for them indicates that along with reporting growing expectations and accountabilities, those in student services have also reported other trends affecting the student body and service provision since 2012. There has been a significant growth in the number of students seeking mental health support, an increase in complexity of need for some students and increasing involvement sought by parents.

Given the diversity of institutions in the sector, there is a very local context to each trend. In fact it is often the complexity of a combination of issues that features when navigating case discussions, making decisions and setting precedents relating to an institution's duty of care.

Key areas of decision-making that need to be considered when it comes to an institution's duty of care are:

- What level of duty of care is owed to a student, group of students, student body, staff, wider university community or external parties?
- How should the university resolve conflicting duties of care?
- What is the difference between duty of care and any additional layer of moral responsibility to go further?
- How does a duty of care interact with other legal or policy duties and responsibilities, such as data protection, confidentiality and health and safety?
- How is a duty of care exercised by balancing precedents versus exceptions?
- How does an institution's duty of care relate to its reputation and brand identity?

The case study overleaf illustrates the coincidence of some of the issues identified above, and their relationship to practical decision-making. The scenario is based on experience and is one that those in student services will likely recognise and is a backdrop to the further consideration of the issues when considering 'duty of care'.

Case study

Student A lives in a shared house, let from a private landlord, and is experiencing low mood and anxiety. They have begun to use self-harm as a strategy to manage their mood. Initially, this happens in their room and is a small amount of cutting. Their housemates know a little about what is happening and are supportive of student A, often checking that they are OK. Student A's level of self-harm increases in frequency and intensity and begins to take place in the communal areas of the house, which is more than the housemates can cope with.

One housemate, student B, visits Student Services. They ask if student A can be made to leave the shared house as they no longer want to live with student A. As all the people living in the house are students, student B sees it as the university's responsibility resolve the problem. Student B does not want it to be known that they have raised a concern and has not discussed the concern with student A as they fear either reprisal or a worsening of the self-harm and further risk to student A's life.

Meanwhile, a parent of another of the housemates, student C, contacts the Vice Chancellor's Office. They want to speak to the vice chancellor to demand that student A is removed from the shared house as their child has begun to feel anxious and depressed, is not able to sleep, is performing poorly academically and is now thinking about leaving university. They directly allege that the university is failing to meet its duty of care to their child and the other housemates and state that they will write to their local MP if the issue is not resolved promptly.

A third housemate, student D, begins to tweet about the situation and is critical of what they see as an inadequate response from the university to student B's request as student A is still living in the house.

A member of staff from student B's programme feels a strong sense of responsibility for student A and contacts Student Services to express their concern that student B is struggling. Student B is reporting being permanently distracted wondering if student A might kill themselves as they have begun to express suicidal thoughts.

Student A is known to Student Services who arrange to see them as part of their regular contact. Student Services arrange for assessment from the Community Mental Health Crisis Team. The assessment deems student A fit to return home to the shared house as their level of risk is not felt to be high enough to trigger hospital admission. In addition, student A discloses that they feel they need the attention and care that the self-harm brings from the housemates and do not see the need to stop as they feel they can manage the self-harm with minimal risk to themselves.

Mental Health

More and more students are reporting mental health difficulties to their universities. In addition is the reported trend that there is also an increase in the complexity of the needs of some students who present with multiple issues or the need multiple responses.

A recent report for the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) ('Understanding provision for students with mental health problems and intensive support needs' (Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and Researching Equity, Access and Participation (REAP), 2015)) noted that the number of students declaring a mental health condition rose 129 per cent between 2008–09 and 2012–13 in England (excluding the Open University). The report observed that:

There was an overwhelming consensus that demand for mental health provision was rising; there were increasing numbers disclosing pre-arrival; increasing needs emerging while students were at university; and increasing complexity of problems and comorbidity of mental health problems alongside other impairments.

Continued pressures on counselling services and mental health and wellbeing teams are reported. The increasing complexity of many students' mental health needs pushes at the boundaries of what it feels appropriate for a higher education institution to provide beyond statutory services. As AMOSSHE's Futures discussion group commented in its May 2015 discussion, 'Where's the line? How far should universities go in providing duty of care for their students?':

The phrase 'complex cases' is being used more often within student services, so what exactly do we mean? Students who access a variety of support from a range of services across the university; Students who involve a number of staff and services to try and get their desired result, causing it to become more complex due to the people involved; Universities themselves making simple issues into 'complex' ones by virtue of how they are dealt with internally; the focus of the issue changing during the process of dealing with it as more details emerge; the case is hard to resolve to the satisfaction of the student and university.

This increase in numbers with a growth in complexity brings both a challenge when developing policy and operational responses as well opportunities to further innovate. In student services there has been an increasing shift towards a wider well-being approach, recognising the need to be more proactive and adopting preventive approaches. ‘Well-being’ now features as a service in-and-of-itself in the reported responsibilities of 97% of student services leaders responding to AMOSSHE’s 2016 benchmarking survey. This trend is not exclusive to the HE sector and it complements efforts in other sectors and businesses and government leadership.

“More and more students are reporting mental health difficulties to their universities.”

While counselling remains a vital part of higher education institutions’ responses to students’ mental health needs, service models are changing to develop multidisciplinary teams and partnerships with internal colleagues and organisations, such as halls, security and students’ unions, and as externally with NHS and third sector organisations. Student services teams have also looked to develop more robust mechanisms for assessing and managing risk for those giving most concern.

There is also a growing focus on broadening students’ access to lower-level early intervention. The development of self-help resources, peer-to-peer models of support, increased partnership with students’ unions and their services, provision of mental health first aid training for a wider range staff outside student services, workshops, facilitated peer-support groups and increased engagement with external agencies are all examples of relatively low-cost and easily accessible forms of support that can ease the pressure on more cost-intensive services.

However, while this feels positive and in line with institutions seeking to meet their duty of care, whether legal or moral, there is continued concern that the mental health needs of some students would be most effectively met by local NHS services, in line with their statutory duties. This tension between universities’ services and local NHS services about who should be providing support is a growing challenge across the UK. Tackling this issue at the strategic level of clinical commissioning is increasingly important and is an area where universities are having varying degrees of success.

Over the past decade the financial pressure on statutory sources of possible support, such as the NHS and social care, has continued. The range and timeliness of responses has become more problematic, with tighter criteria and greater control of access to public service delivery coupled with the long-standing issues about the needs of students being appropriately prioritised within local delivery plans. Student services personnel say that in many cases they feel universities are increasingly expected to meet some of the needs of students that public services cannot. This forces institutions to hold and manage often complex and risky situations and pushes at the boundaries of what a university considers its duty of care to be. This can be particularly acute in the area of mental health.

Resilience

Student services also face a greater need to support students with a range of everyday life events, and many in student services perceive a decline in students’ overall levels of resilience. There are many hypotheses for this trend: a generally lower level of life skills that students come to university with, an increased reliance on parents and technology, and a reduced level of emotional independence, perhaps as a result of growing up with social media.

There are emerging concerns in the student services community that universities are being asked or expected to take the role of a quasi-parent. New student services initiatives focus on supporting students in their transition to university life and helping students to identify the skills and abilities with which they need to equip themselves for daily life tasks and emotionally dealing with life events and incidents. The student services sector has been looking at ways to address the development of emotional and practical coping strategies, from well-being workshops to managing anxiety, all the way through to domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning and doing laundry.

It is reported that the extent to which some students look to those adults in positions of responsibility around them, not just to listen but intervene in what seem minor social

and domestic matters, has increased. According to Jeremy Arnett, (*Emerging Adulthood* (American Psychologist, 2000)), the notion of emerging adulthood with a defined period of development and exploration, particularly of identity, between 18 and 25 years old, as opposed to the immediate adult status afforded in law at age 18, certainly has some relevance in this section of the demographic of the student body.

Parents

Parents are taking an increasing role in their children's university life, dealing directly with their children's university on the student's behalf. Parents, guardians and carers are more regularly requesting services or raising concerns, often without their son or daughter's knowledge or consent. Ironically, increased parental expectations of universities leads some parents to demand that universities become an alternative parent for their child.

It has never been unusual for a parent or guardian to be concerned about their children at university and their progress. Yet parental interest seems to have grown substantially since 2012 and the introduction of £9,000 fee. Alongside having an interest in the happiness and achievement of their child and concerns about value for money, parents' seem increasingly to judge the quality of teaching, facilities and services. Where parents are financing a student, they more readily, perhaps understandably, refer to the investment they feel they are making. This increased interest as a stakeholder can also on occasions mean expectations of an increased duty of care, in line with that of a parent.

There are new tensions and challenges concerning information sharing and accepting parents as part of the continuing support network for students during their university experience, particularly when a student is living in university-provided accommodation. Parents seeking contact with residential staff to check on their son or daughter's well-being, requesting staff to provide a range of additional services that parents feel their children would be used to, or calling to ask staff to pass on messages to their child, are not uncommon experiences for residential staff teams. Distinguishing between the duty of care owed to someone living in university-provided accommodation as opposed to privately rented accommodation is a topic in its own right.

Disabled Students Allowance

The recent changes to Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) seek to address the balance of duties and responsibilities between government and institutions and shift that balance further towards universities in line with the Equality Act 2010. This is right as the approach seeks an active meeting of the duty to make reasonable adjustments in an anticipatory way.

The changes have also created challenges as to the extent of an institution's duty of care and decisions about the provision of services. For example, in England, institutions may feel an increased duty to intervene should things go wrong for a student with a DSA-funded private provider of non-medical help (NMH). This is despite the financial relationship being between the student, the provider and Student Finance England. There is also the issue and extent of an institution's duty to consider appropriate oversight of those arrangements in order to safeguard both the student and academic standards.

Perhaps most importantly, there is emerging evidence to suggest that some institutions may be prepared to accept a greater financial burden, and therefore duty, than the current changes require. The acceptance of the greater than necessary financial burden allows the institution to maintain control of the availability and quality of provision of some of the more specialist forms of NMH support. The intention of the institution is that by rejecting the offered public funding it can more readily guarantee meeting the learning needs of its students and maintain standards without relying on a variety of providers who are assessed and audited against an emerging quality framework.

Opportunities

All the signs are that the aforementioned trends will continue for the foreseeable future and that their root causes are as much societal as created by the higher education policy context in isolation. While they obviously present a challenge for managers of student services, they provide opportunities for institutions to be more innovative in the practice and delivery of student support.

One opportunity is the increasing development of the student centre and one-stop-shop approach to services, thereby increasing visibility and ease of access to a wider range of inputs. The growth in self-help and peer-to-peer mechanisms for development and support is an opportunity to build the breadth, immediacy and relevance of response for students, particularly as participation in higher education continues to grow and the reported numbers of those seeking input grows too. Aligned with this is the need to embrace the role that technology can play in providing access to information, guidance and online support communities to assist in building knowledge, skills and resilience, as well as the gateway to more specialist inputs.

Universities are also addressing more proactively the development of student skills and strategies for maintaining positive mental well-being while studying in HE, which requires increasing partnership between the student services and academic communities. Proactively supporting mental well-being is often best done alongside the everyday experience rather than as a separate intervention only when the student's life appears to have begun to go wrong. The academic community often best understands their cohorts of students, what may work at a local level and anything that may be a cause for concern.

Finally, the development of learning and learner analytics is a significant opportunity to use the data that is generated with and about students, both prior to coming to university and while studying, to better target resources and build the evidence base about what works well. A number of universities are pursuing initiatives to better use student data to help make informed decisions that can lead to improved student satisfaction, retention and attainment. Jisc is heavily involved in supporting the HE sector to use student data and seeks to develop a learning analytics solution for the UK HE sector and to support resources to help implement solutions and understand the challenges. Jisc's most recent publication on this, 'Learning Analytics in Higher Education: A review of UK and international practice' (Jisc, 2016), provides both UK and international case studies.

Being proactive in understanding what students do and think, what duty might be owed as a result of what is learnt and addressing it early with the appropriate boundaries, can only likely assist.

The debate about the level to which a HEI does or should act as a parent, counsellor or carer will continue. The evolution of the legal framework, development of case law and sector practice will see to that. The student services community's desire to seek the right balance at the individual institutional level will continue with skill and dedication. That desire will be matched by the community's commitment to innovate in service delivery and to enhance the support on offer while maximising student independence and the opportunity each student to succeed.

The University as a Neighbour

By Jonathan Grant, Deborah Bull and Maxine Vining

Universities' responsibilities do not at end at the campus boundary. Where once they could be content to focus on their core duties of teaching and curiosity-driven research, they must now consider the wider role they are playing – and want to play – in society at large.



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As the world has become more interconnected, universities – particularly those in major British cities – have assumed local, national and international responsibilities that have fundamentally altered what it means to be such an institution. This has implications for how universities relate to the communities of which they are a part: as the global has become the local, universities are not so much neighbours to the communities that they inhabit, but components of an integrated neighbourhood – a broader ecosystem of ideas that thrives through collaboration and interaction.

Universities can and have vastly improved both their awareness of and presence within local communities, strengthening symbiotic relationships with stakeholders from businesses to residents, policymakers to charities (Kitson, Howells, Braham, and Westlake, ‘The Connected University’ (Nesta, 2009). Although many universities have reached out and pursued successful engagement strategies in recent years, much work remains to be done to emphasise the importance of mutual engagement between universities and local end-users in order to co-produce solutions to the most pressing issues facing society. Mutual engagement between stakeholders is a key to solving social issues, and academic institutions have the unique ability to harness resources to advance learning and drive innovation both within their local neighbourhoods and on the international stage.

Three models of university engagement are useful for thinking about the role of the university as a neighbour to communities and other stakeholders:

1. anchor institutions, a concept first developed in the context of US urban planning policy (Adams, ‘The Meds and Eds in Urban Economic Development’, 25(5) *Journal of Urban Affairs* 571) and subsequently applied to British universities in a number of studies (Birch, Perry and Taylor, ‘Universities as anchor institutions’, *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 17(3) 7; Parham, Green and Lloyd, ‘Living heritage: universities as anchor institutions in sustainable communities’, 3(1) *International Journal of Heritage and Sustainable Development* 7; Goddard, Coombes, Kempton and Vallance, ‘Universities as anchor institutions in cities in a turbulent funding environment: vulnerable institutions and vulnerable places in England’, 7 *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 307);
2. the triple helix model, which comes from the work of Lowe (1982), Sabato and Mackenzie (1982), Etzkowitz (1993) and Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1995), and research continues through the Triple Helix Research Group, Stanford University; and,
3. most recently, the civic university (Allan, ‘Universities as Anchor Institutions’ (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2015); Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, ‘The Triple Helix University-industry-government relations’, 14(1) *EASST Review* 14; Goddard, ‘Reinventing the Civic University’ (Nesta, 2009)).

Each model is very different, and has relative strengths and weaknesses for guiding universities’ engagement strategies.

Table 1:

Comparing models of engagement	Key characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Anchor institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on place-based impact • Coordinate and support local stakeholders and the economy • Large in size and purchasing power • Has a clear social role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a sense of permanence during periods of political and economic instability • Act as a leader in the local ecology of information and idea sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential inflexibility in an interconnected society • Facilitating and enforcing hierarchical structures
Triple helix models (Ranga & Etzkowitz, 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triadic relationship between industry, government and universities • Entrepreneurial universities collaborating with external stakeholders to encourage regional innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage interactions and knowledge transfers between different industries and sectors • Regional-level benefits derived from cooperation between sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow in scope, only focusing on three institutional settings and excluding other important stakeholders, such as residents of local communities, NGOs and not-for-profit organisations
The civic university (Ostrander, 2004; Dubin, 2007; Ponjuan et al., 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture relationships between universities, local communities and regions • Promote democratic values • Holistic approach to engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote civic responsibility within the community • Provide a strong sense of place and purpose to local stakeholders • Engagement activities focus on furthering innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambiguous definition of engagement, which differs from institution to institution • Continuing challenges to improving civic mindedness among students

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local communities.”

The anchor institutions model has flourished in its application to academic analyses of university engagement. Though this model lacks a precise or consistent definition (according to Goddard), anchor institutions are characterised by their creation of place-based impact through the coordination and support of local community development. Since 2009, the US-based Anchor Institutions Task Force, coordinated by the University of Pennsylvania, has researched and promoted the advancement of university-community partnerships among a network of 600 stakeholders. As Birch et al. say, anchor institutions are universities that possess ‘institution-defining leadership’ and benefit from stable funding to support engagement programmes and expand sites of creative knowledge within their local communities.

In a comprehensive review of how universities impact their surrounding areas (Markusen, ‘Sticky places in slippery space: a typology of industrial districts’, 72 *Economic Geography* 293), the responsibilities of anchor institutions have been defined as employers, magnets for attracting talented staff and students, and a nucleus of what have been termed ‘state-anchored industrial districts’, which draw in the business of science- and technology-oriented firms towards the university campus (a view supported by Goddard et al.). It has been shown that universities, as anchor institutions, can effectively preside over the creation of regional innovation networks formed of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Huggins and Johnston, ‘Knowledge networks in an uncompetitive region: SME innovation and growth’, 40(2) *Growth and Change* 227). This approach has sparked the interest of policymakers within the higher education sector. In 2013, the Witty Review (‘Encouraging a British Invention Revolution: Sir Andrew Witty’s Review of Universities and Growth’ (NCUB, 2013)) encouraged universities to emphasise the characteristics of anchor institutions and ‘facilitate economic engagement as an explicit goal’. Professor Edward Byrne, in his Commemoration Oration as President and Principal of King’s College London, called for higher education institutions to be seen as ‘co-producers of a thriving learning community’, in which universities attract the interest of local businesses and organisations that can form clusters of innovation.

However, the benefits of stability and being based in a fixed location can also be interpreted as characteristics of inflexibility in an increasingly interconnected society. The stable social role of universities as neighbours may serve to reinforce an excellent reputation and attract the best and brightest students and staff, yet anchor institutions need to do more than simply settle in the sea of their local communities. The model also risks being misinterpreted as encouraging a sense of hierarchy between large institutions and smaller local organisations. By emphasising the role of the university as a neighbour, on which local businesses, organisations and residents depend, the anchor institution model risks defining universities as the primary actors on the social stage, which draw stakeholders in through engagement. Instead, universities must take responsibility, reach out and create opportunities for others within the neighbourhood.

Triple helix models have sought to expand understandings of university engagement from an industry-government relationship to an industry-government-university one. These models reflect the growing knowledge economy in which technology and creativity has intersected to generate new opportunities for the production, transfer and application of knowledge in multiple different sectors. A rich literature on the applications of this model to real-life engagement has since emerged, led by the work of the Triple Helix Research Group at Stanford University. For example, some researchers (Ranga and Etzkowitz) have focused triple helix models on the creation, diffusion and use of knowledge and innovation. This shift, from research and innovation confined to a single institutional setting to the increasing interaction between different sectors, was identified by the various authors as particularly beneficial at the regional level.

The Centre for London has outlined the benefits of this conceptual shift, by emphasising how university engagement can contribute to the creation and maintenance of so-called innovation districts in London (Hanna, ‘Spaces to Think: Innovation Districts and the Changing Geography of London’s Knowledge Economy’, (Centre for London, 2016)). These districts, defined by Katz and Wagner (‘The rise of innovation districts: A new geography of innovation in America’ (2014)) of the Brookings Institution as ‘geographic areas where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and

connect with start-ups, business incubators, and accelerators', fuse the concepts of anchor institutions and triple helixes to provide a more holistic model of university engagement. Against this holistic approach, the triple helix model may appear narrow in scope.

Moreover, the model of the civic university describes how mutually beneficial relationships can be nurtured between local communities, regional areas and universities. This model emerged from a long tradition of educational principles, first established by John Dewey in *Democracy and Education* (1916). More recently, it has been developed through the work of the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy, which launched the Universities as Sites of Citizenship project in 1999, in collaboration with the Council of Europe.

However, subsequent research has suggested that universities have a long way to go in successfully fostering civic ties. A comparative study of civic engagement at five US university campuses found that local communities can both facilitate and present barriers to successful engagement (Ostrander, 'Democracy, civic participation, and the university: a comparative study of civic engagement on five campuses', 31(1) *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 75). The 2006 Penn Democracy Project surveyed US undergraduate students over four years, and found that the 'college experience' actually caused students to be 'less civically minded' (Dubin, 'Educating undergraduates for democracy and efficacy and the 2006 Penn Democracy Project', 48 *College Undergraduate Research Electronic Journal*).

Given the continuing challenges to successful civic engagement, the civic university model has been reconsidered. For example, in *Redefining Civic Engagement* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), Ponjuan, Alcantar and Soria present a multidimensional model of civic engagement that encompasses democratic outcomes and political beliefs. In Nesta's 'Reinventing the Civic University', John Goddard considered engagement to be more than a 'third mission' of universities, but instead a central responsibility for the industry that transcends teaching, research and recruitment. Goddard also pointed out that civic engagement must become a 'guiding principle for [the] organisation and practice of universities'. This understanding of engagement as a central characteristic of the university as a neighbour is exemplified in Newcastle University's engagement strategy, which has spanned the Science City initiative, collaborations between the university and Newcastle City Council, and the formation of relationships with local schools, particularly to encourage interest in studying foreign languages.

Newcastle University has shown how universities, by actively assuming a role of civic responsibility, can create mutual benefits through engagement and innovation. Nevertheless, debate continues over the specific aims that civic engagement strategies should pursue. Is civic engagement a regional or international responsibility? Should civic responsibility be channelled through economic or philanthropic channels, or both? A broader approach to understanding the role of the university in its neighbourhood should account for the importance of and differing approaches to civic responsibility, which will inevitably vary from institution to institution.

The contemporary relevance of these models must, however, be tested against three important developments that have shaped the world in which universities operate today: changes in how the concept of the community is understood, the influential rise of social networks, and the narrowing gap between locally led and internationally informed university teaching and research.

When considering how the three models hold up against each respective development in society, the effectiveness of existing approaches to understanding the role of the university as a neighbour is questioned. As universities conduct research, educate the next generation of innovators and co-create knowledge and solutions that return value to their surrounding communities, should their fixed and static nature as anchor institutions be celebrated? Should tertiary relationships between universities, industry and government, as encouraged by the triple helix framework, be prioritised as an engagement strategy? There is an imperative need for a shift from models of engagement that view the university as a neighbour, to those that understand universities to be components of a broader ecology of information and ideas sharing, or as part of an integrated neighbourhood.

Rethinking the Community

Rapidly shifting towards characteristics of dynamic development and interconnected citizens, contemporary conceptions of the community have important implications for the role of the university in its neighbourhood. From the provision of meaningful opportunities for local residents, to the allocation of research and resources towards creating solutions to social issues, universities balance competing demands that are informed by the communities in which they are situated. In particular, London universities, which in 2014–15 enrolled 359,990 international students (19% of all international students then currently in the UK (Higher Education Statistics Agency (2014–15))), are in local areas where residents and workers span cultures, traditions and outlooks. Consequently, the make-up of communities, especially those of universities embedded within British cities, is now more fluid than ever before.

Given these changing concepts of the community, universities are now faced with ample opportunities to act as influential place-makers. However, this does not imply that universities must assume they are the exclusive providers of knowledge, opportunities or resources within their respective communities. The local ecology of information and idea sharing must support universities in conducting research and developing relationships with key stakeholders. One such approach is for universities to train and employ ‘boundary-spanners’ (Kitson et al., ‘The Connected University’ (Nesta, 2009)) or individuals who are aware of different professional territories and are able to lead broader multi-stakeholder projects. This ties in with a broader understanding of universities that are able to contribute to their neighbourhood, and not simply act as a neighbour.

By implication, the concept of anchor institutions cannot be solely applied to guiding the engagement strategies of universities embedded within ever-changing communities such as London, given the clustering of financial institutions, non-governmental organisations, private businesses and charities in these communities. Triple helix approaches are similarly limited, appearing rigid in the face of dynamic and evolving communities that include institutional structures and organisations that do not fall neatly within the categories of a university-government-industry triad. Instead, as outlined by Nesta’s ‘The Connected University’, university engagement should be guided by the desire to ‘match the needs and opportunities of each part of the country’.

A 2005 study of how businesses have located in Cambridge reflects this approach, finding that the formation of a mini-cluster of Cambridge entrepreneurs has had a key influence on the successful development of links between SMEs, research institutes and the university (Myint, Vyakarnam and New, ‘The effect of social capital in new venture creation: the Cambridge high-technology cluster’, 14(3) *Strategic Change* 165). These approaches reveal how universities can contribute to the development, transfer and application of social capital between entrepreneurs in a way similar to that of online entrepreneurs who famously clustered around Stanford University and formed Silicon Valley. Hence, by tapping into the different skill sets of individuals within the surrounding community and connecting with relevant stakeholders, universities can drive change and innovation in dynamic and fluid neighbourhoods.

Social Media Influence and the Growing Gulf in Trust

The growth in the influence of social networks has provided a further dimension for universities to engage with. Social media has been shown to create ‘echo chambers’ and ‘filter bubbles’ within which ideas and information are transmitted and reinforced by users (Moore, ‘Tech giants and civic power’ (Centre for the Study of Media, Communication & Power, The Policy Institute at King’s, 2016)). Of American Facebook and Twitter users, 63% consider the social media platforms as key sources of news (Mitchell and Page, ‘The evolving role of news on Twitter and Facebook’ (Pew Research Center, 2016)). With 62% of those surveyed stating that they receive most of their news on social media, it is imperative that universities expand their presence and engagement on internet-based platforms.

As institutions that have traditionally led on the generation of knowledge, universities have a responsibility to engage with ever-expanding online networks, particularly in

the communication of research and solutions. University engagement must permeate boundaries between the physical and the online. This is of even greater importance in the context of a growing gulf in trust between mass populations and ‘expert’ institutions, defined as government, media, NGOs and business (Edelman Trust Barometer (2016)). The British public are among the least likely to trust institutions when it comes to forming opinions on policy matters, a pattern most recently reflected in the European referendum result. Within this information environment characterised by opinion-reinforcement and diminishing trust, social networks represent extremely important tools for universities to use to be effective neighbours.

Traditionally conceived anchor institutions, resting on laurels of permanence and spatial immobility, may risk appearing out of touch with current attitudes in the absence of extensive engagement with social networks. However, it must be recognised that universities are valued for their impartial role, which allows them to maintain stability during political and economic turbulence. The Edelman Barometer study identified an opportunity in the current climate for businesses leaders to step up to challenges created by this deficit in public trust. Universities must also seek to fill this gap. As credible experts supported by research excellence and valuable resources, universities have the scope to work effectively with industry and government, as suggested by triple helix model, to bridge the gulf in public trust.

Given the recent explosion of online entrepreneurship in regional hubs from Silicon Valley to London’s own Silicon Roundabout, British universities are uniquely placed to lead in the co-production of research and solutions, and possess the necessary resources and reputation to engage entrepreneurs and end-users. In a changing and polarising information environment characterised by a growing deficit in public trust, universities must be prepared to imagine ways of connecting beyond traditional modes of anchors and triple helixes, to engage with ever-evolving social networks, to take responsibility for ameliorating patterns of public trust, and above all to act as part of an integrated neighbourhood.

From the Local to the Global: Bridging the Gap

University engagement, research and teaching often bridges the gap between locally led and internationally informed approaches. This gap has never been narrower for universities. Many universities face the challenge of balancing local connections, such as the responsibilities outlined in the civic university model, while maintaining a global vision for engagement, research and reputation. Successful engagement that feeds into the local and the global should be celebrated. By engaging in research and outreach programmes in communities and on the international stage, universities can provide opportunities to a wider range of stakeholders. For example, researchers examined how synergy between national and EU policies in Ukraine has influenced the successful development of triple helix systems, and recommended that cooperation with the EU be scaled up in the future (Yegorov and Ranga, ‘Innovation, politics and tanks: the emergence of a triple helix system in Ukraine and the influence of EU cooperation on its development’, 3(3) *International Journal of Transitions and Innovation Systems* 189). For London-based universities, the local-global balance of engagement is facilitated by the location of international businesses, non-governmental institutions and non-profit organisations on their local doorstep, which has provided ample opportunities for collaborations. One example is MedCity, an inter-university collaboration with the Mayor of London, which aims to promote a growing life-sciences cluster in and around London.

Professor Frank Kelly of King’s College London, in his research into how pollutants can damage the lungs, has pursued local-level research in London and collaborations with international partners such as the University of Umea in Sweden. This epitomises the balance between locally led and internationally informed approaches that should be mapped on to engagement strategies. For example, the international connections and relationships fostered by universities can be drawn down to benefit the communities in which they are situated. Local-level research and engagement can have a significant impact on the international stage.

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neighbourhood.”

The development of such relationships between the local and the global applies to the concept of anchor institutions, which have the ability to attract clusters of businesses and organisations spanning regions and nationalities. In turn, models of the civic university, which emphasise the responsibility of universities to engage directly with their surrounding communities, support the locally led approach to research and engagement, but must also take account of the benefits that can be derived from the maintenance of a global vision. This narrowing gap between the local and the global also extends the triadic relationships emphasised by triple helix models, to consider how universities, governments and industries can collaborate in neighbourhoods on the local, national or international level.

Conclusion

This reconceptualisation of the university as a neighbour seeks to broaden approaches to higher education engagement by viewing the university as a central, yet by no means singular, component in the evolving ecology of information and ideas. Changes in the concept of the community, a rise in the influence of social networks and the growing gulf in public trust, and the narrowing gap between locally led and internationally informed approaches, represent key societal developments with important implications for how the role of the university as a neighbour should be understood.

Traditional models of university engagement, from concepts of anchor institutions and triple helixes to the civic university, each contribute a valuable perspective yet possess fundamental limitations when considered against cross-cutting developments in society. In the context of London universities, an anchor embodying stability and prevalence cannot be represented by just one institution, or even a handful. In turn, locally targeted civic engagement may not be a directly transferrable strategy from one university to another, since different universities are embedded within different localities.

Consequently, conceptions of effective engagement must shift from the safe harbour of ‘inclusive’ strategies, which invite communities in to the work of universities, towards more outgoing approaches, which focus on what universities can do for communities and what communities can contribute in return. From this analysis, it can be concluded that understandings of university engagement must shift towards a broader, more holistic framework. With the appropriate investment, time, skills, resources and relationship management, universities have the potential to make a distinct and valuable contribution to the ecology of information and ideas, and to reposition themselves not merely as neighbours to their local communities, but as integrated components of a vibrant neighbourhood.

