The 1998 IMHE General Conference had lifelong learning as its main theme. The principal contributions on this subject are published in this issue. Other concerns facing universities are also addressed in articles published here: the consequences of financial pressures and expansion, as canvassed in the British Dearing Report; the impact of the environment and the role of universities in economic development; and the internal organisation of universities.

DEALING WITH FINANCIAL CRISIS AND EXPANSION
The British Dearing Report.

LIFELONG LEARNING
For the next century.
Tasks for future definition and research.
Implications from the OECD work programme.
Implications for public higher education.

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS
Role conflict and ambiguity.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
The role of universities.

AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION
The impact of the external environment.
Pursuant to Article 1 of the Convention signed in Paris on 14th December 1960, and which came into force on 30th September 1961, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shall promote policies designed:

- to achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and a rising standard of living in Member countries, while maintaining financial stability, and thus to contribute to the development of the world economy;
- to contribute to sound economic expansion in Member as well as non-member countries in the process of economic development; and
- to contribute to the expansion of world trade on a multilateral, non-discriminatory basis in accordance with international obligations.

The original Member countries of the OECD are Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. The following countries became Members subsequently through accession at the dates indicated hereafter: Japan (28th April 1964), Finland (28th January 1969), Australia (7th June 1971), New Zealand (29th May 1973), Mexico (18th May 1994), the Czech Republic (21st December 1995), Hungary (7th May 1996), Poland (22nd November 1996) and Korea (12th December 1996). The Commission of the European Communities takes part in the work of the OECD (Article 13 of the OECD Convention).

The Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) started in 1969 as an activity of the OECD’s newly established Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). In November 1972, the OECD Council decided that the Programme would operate as an independent decentralised project and authorised the Secretary-General to administer it. Responsibility for its supervision was assigned to a Directing Group of representatives of governments and institutions participating in the Programme. Since 1972, the Council has periodically extended this arrangement; the latest renewal now expires on 31st December 2001.

The main objectives of the Programme are as follows:

- to promote, through research, training and information exchange, greater professionalism in the management of institutions of higher education; and
- to facilitate a wider dissemination of practical management methods and approaches.

THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED AND ARGUMENTS EMPLOYED IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THOSE OF THE OECD OR OF THE NATIONAL OR LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONCERNED.

© OECD 1999
Permission to reproduce a portion of this work for non-commercial purposes or classroom use should be obtained through the Centre français d’exploitation du droit de copie (CFC), 20, rue des Grands-Augustins, 75006 Paris, France, Tel. (33-1) 44 07 47 70, Fax (33-1) 46 34 67 19, for every country except the United States. In the United States permission should be obtained through the Copyright Clearance Center, Customer Service, (508)750-8400, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923 USA, or CCC Online: http://www.copyright.com/. All other applications for permission to reproduce or translate all or part of this book should be made to OECD Publications, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France.
Higher Education Management

• A journal addressed to administrators and managers of institutions of higher education and researchers in the field of institutional management.
• Covering the field of institutional management through articles and reports on research projects.
• A source of information on activities and events organised by OECD’s Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education.
• Published under the title International Journal of Institutional Management in Higher Education between 1977 and 1988, it appears three times a year.
• Issued in English and French editions.

Information for authors wishing to submit articles for publication appears at the end of this issue. Articles and related correspondence should be sent directly to the Editor:

Prof. Maurice Kogan
48 Duncan Terrace
London N1 8AL
United Kingdom

To enter a subscription, send your order to:

OECD Publications Service
2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France

1999 subscription (3 issues):
FF 385 $70.00 DM 115 £45 Yen 9 000

Single issue price (1999):
FF 135 $25.00 DM 40 £15 Yen 2 900

For information on how to order past issues please write to:
OECD Publications Service
2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France.

OECD 1999
# Contents

The Impact of the Dearing Report on UK Higher Education  
Michael L. Shattock ................................................................. 7

Lifelong Learning: Implication for the University of the 21st Century  
Chris Duke ................................................................................. 19

Lifelong Learning as Challenge for Higher Education:  
the State of Knowledge and Future Research Tasks  
Ulrich Teichler ........................................................................ 37

Tertiary Education and Lifelong Learning:  
Perspectives, Findings and Issues from OECD Work  
Alan Wagner ............................................................................... 55

Taking Charge of Change:  
a Leadership Challenge for Public Higher Education  
John V. Byrne .......................................................................... 69

Role Conflict and Ambiguity at the Departmental Level  
Carin B. Eriksson ..................................................................... 81

The Engagement of Universities in Regional Economic  
Regeneration and Development: a Case Study of Perspectives  
Madeleine Atkins, John Dersley and Richard Tomlin ................. 97

The Changing Climate of Australian Higher Education:  
an International Perspective  
Peter Coaldrake ...................................................................... 117
The Impact of the Dearing Report on UK Higher Education

Michael L. Shattock
University of Warwick
United Kingdom

ABSTRACT
This article reviews the impact of the recommendations of the Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education a year after its publication. It argues that the Committee should have been established in 1988, before the rapid expansion of student numbers began rather than after the expansion had taken place. As it was, the establishment of the Committee was provoked by the funding crisis that resulted from the expansion and the Report’s impact must be judged on the extent to which its recommendations resolved the crisis. A secondary element of the Committee’s work was to offer a framework within which the enlarged higher education system could be run. While the Report provided an effective analysis of the financial needs of higher education, its recommendations have in fact been only partially implemented by the Government. The paper suggests that higher education must now adjust itself to this level of funding which reflects the transition from elite to mass higher education. The paper concludes that the Report’s vision of the Learning Society, however imprecisely expressed, may be its most lasting contribution.

It must be evident to most of you that I am not Baroness Blackstone, the UK Minister for Higher Education. I apologise for that. Nor am I, however, her alter ego, or a civil servant reading her intended speech. I did canvass to myself the opportunity this address offered of making the statement of UK policy towards higher education that she ought to have made, if she had not been inhibited by Treasury figures and Government policy. I could have announced additional funding, a well-planned expansion where capital provision kept pace with student numbers, and a bonfire of controls including the abolition of the Quality Assessment Agency, and...
we might all have enjoyed a celebration that higher education had at last achieved its just desserts in at least one of the advanced industrial economies. Discretion, I fear, intervened. One other possibility I gave thought to was to present an Alternative Prospectus for British higher education. In the United Kingdom it is increasingly common that groups of students, driven by a misplaced vision of themselves as truth-tellers, write and issue to incoming students, an Alternative Prospectus to the well presented, beautifully illustrated, winningly worded prospectus issued by the university itself. You can imagine the kind of approach: the official prospectus describes stimulating syllabuses taught in dazzling modern buildings by world class scholars, while the Alternative Prospectus warns you of over-large classes taught in down-at-heel buildings by a run down, impoverished professoriat hanging on for early retirement. Again a sense of the need for self preservation intervened: the British do not engage in public self criticism when abroad.

Baroness Blackstone was asked to talk about Lifelong Learning – I am not surprised she felt unable to do so when the concept has been so trumpeted in the United Kingdom but when the practicalities are so hard to pin down, and the actual policies involved so obscure. I shall not attempt to do so. It is rumoured that more than a thousand responses to the UK Government’s Consultative Paper on Lifelong Learning, itself a masterpiece of fine words without much substance, have been received but I fear that most of them will be stronger on rhetoric than on action. I shall return to the question of Lifelong Learning later.

Rather than devote my address to this I thought it might be helpful if I gave you some account of how, since the last IMHE General Conference two years ago, Britain has wrestled with the watershed in higher education – in Britain such a mixed metaphor is perfectly apt – which prompted the establishment of the Dearing Committee, or rather to give its official title, The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, whose much awaited Report was published last year (NCIHE, 1997). It seemed to me that it was time to reflect a little on the intense process of debate and the results achieved and what this has to say to us about the policy process in higher education at least in the United Kingdom. Perhaps it might offer some cautionary messages to colleagues from other countries.

In many ways this two year period has been immensely stimulating: we have seen a dramatic and welcome change of Government, and at least at one level, an equally dramatic change in Government priorities. The mood of the country is more upbeat and with a Government pledged to invest in education at all levels the morale of higher education should be high: that it is not, is one of the themes of this address.

The crisis that emerged something like three years ago and which led to the setting up of the National Inquiry had its roots in a sudden change of heart towards higher education in the Thatcher Government in the mid 1980s. This was
The Impact of the Dearing Report on UK Higher Education

prompted by two things: the first was the wish by Government to give a more positive profile to higher education than had been conveyed in the much criticised Green Paper The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s (DES, 1985). This resulted both in the 1988 Act which freed the polytechnics from local authority control and in the establishment of a climate and funding policies which favoured a market-orientated expansion. The second was the realisation that the industrial sector of the economy, then growing very rapidly encouraged by the Government’s financial policies, was liable to be held back unless the output of qualified manpower from higher education was expanded to keep pace with it. Students responded vigorously to the Government’s expansionist policies. The early years of the Thatcher Government, with its harsh economic reforms, had convinced school leavers that going on to higher education was a better long term career bet than leaving school early and entering the job market directly. So higher education grew almost unstoppably: between 1989 and 1994 student numbers increased by 50 per cent.

To anyone in business or to anyone not overcome by the excitement of applying the ideology of the market place to the public sector, the time to prepare a strategic plan was at the beginning of the expansion phase. In our own institutions we would have asked what infrastructure we needed, what were the site planning requirements, what were the staffing implications, but in the Funding Councils the instruction was that the only judgements that were to be applied were the level of marginal costs that the expansion of higher education could be funded at. Unfortunately, the Government’s economic boom soon ran out of steam and turned into a very serious recession. By the time the Treasury stepped in to stop the expansion of student numbers in 1994, the damage had been done: higher education had expanded too far and too fast to be remotely confinable within public expenditure limits. The fall in unit costs had been dramatic, unplanned and, from the point of view of teaching and institutional organisational reform, chaotic. It was this situation, with the Government planning deep cuts in higher education expenditure, which prompted the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) to threaten that they would charge fees to students to make up the funding they were losing from Government sources. Rather than allow fees to become an election issue, the main political parties agreed to the establishment of the Dearing Committee.

Had the Dearing Committee been set up in 1988, instead of 1996, the position might have been very different today, but as it was, it was like opening the strategic door after the horse had bolted. Without stopping to think through the implications, the United Kingdom had moved from elite to mass higher education: the age participation rate (APR) had increased from 18 to over 30 per cent with a figure of 45 per cent in Scotland. What the Dearing Committee in effect was asked to do, in addition to finding a solution as to how this was to be paid for, was to offer...
rational guidance on how the enlarged system should be run, and to present its report within a year. Unfortunately it was required to do this over the period of the most decisive change of Government since the 1964 General Election. To add to its difficulties the Dearing Committee was burdened with the inevitable comparisons that were made with its illustrious predecessor the Robbins Committee on Higher Education, whose Report in 1963 had charted the growth of higher education up to 1980 (Robbins Report 1963). I shall say a little more about the Robbins/Dearing parallels later, but the Dearing Committee was at an immediate disadvantage both because of the time scale in which it was required to report and because it was not given the kind of budget which had enabled Robbins to set up its own research team. Inevitably the Committee became too dependent on written submissions from interest groups and on investigative support offered from various self interested sources. In a year it simply did not have time to think through some of the issues: it would have taken a lot longer to write a shorter report. What the Committee did do, however, was to unleash an avalanche of written evidence from institutions, organisations, learned societies and individuals, most of which illustrated how difficult we found it to come to terms with the new system of higher education that rapid expansion had created. The Report, entitled Higher Education in the Learning Society was published, to time, on 17 July 1997 and comprised a Main Report of 466 pages and 14 supplementary Reports. In size it is monumental: it weighs 6.3 kg; it has 93 recommendations; it represents a remarkable achievement in the time available.

It is not the purpose of this address to summarise the 93 recommendations or what in any detail has happened about them, but to say something about the main themes and how they have been translated into action. A year or so after the Report’s publication the dust is beginning to settle and we can begin to see the Report and its impact in perspective. Ultimately, in my judgement, the Report must be judged on the success of its financial proposals, since it was the financial problems of higher education that it was initially set up to solve. However, it was encouraged both by the terms of reference it was given and by the submissions it received, to range much more widely. It endorsed the view that higher education numbers might be expected to grow at least to an age participation rate of 45 per cent across the United Kingdom but it expected to see a significant proportion of the extra numbers going into sub-degree work rather than into the traditional UK first degree. It urged a much greater investment in IT in university teaching and greater use of distance learning in various forms. It was very concerned about quality issues and it endorsed proposals that were then emerging that the two British quality exercises, the one run by the CVCP and the other by the Funding Councils should be brought together into a single agency, but it went on to recommend very significant powers for the new Agency including considering complaints against institutions by individual students. It was concerned about the standards of teach-
ing in higher education and recommended the creation of an Institute of Learning and Teaching which would move towards providing a licensing system for teachers in higher education. It wanted to see a national approach to the appointment of external examiners to ensure greater commonality of standards in British degrees and it wanted to benchmark threshold requirements. It endorsed the Research Assessment Exercise as a way of distributing funds for research but wanted non-research universities to receive funding for scholarship. It emphasised its support for institutional autonomy but proposed significant changes to and a reinforcement of the structure of university governing bodies. It proposed new definitions to control the elevation of further institutions to university status.

Most of these recommendations were aimed at providing solutions to real problems but were sometimes couched in too detailed and too prescriptive a mode so that implementation will tend to be looser and more flexible than the Committee might have liked. At a fundamental level the Report, while it gave many nods towards the enhancement of institutional diversity seemed to favour a more centralised and systematised approach to the management of higher education. It tended to emphasise control and bureaucratic tidiness over institutional vitality and creativity. This has particularly caused concern over matters to do with quality, where many universities are concerned that the quality process has become too onerous and bureaucratic, and the suggested national structuring of the external examiner system too invasive of institutional autonomy. The Institute of Learning and Teaching is taking shape but again in a rather less formalised mode than Dearing proposed. Many successful universities have been concerned that a common prescription on governance issues ignores the history and diversity of universities and some of the very factors that have made them successful. Had there not been a heavyweight Report to discuss, many of these ideas might have been brought forward in the normal way but would have been considered individually rather than as part of a co-ordinated set of proposals. Nevertheless, progress is being made in their implementation though the actual shape of the new structures is less prescriptive than Dearing seemed to intend.

In all these areas one can see for the most part the natural process of slow forward movement and change rather than radical shifts in policy. It is therefore in the area of financing higher education that we should judge whether the National Inquiry has produced radical change. The crisis which triggered the CVCP proposals for student fees is best described in Figure 1. This shows that the accompaniment to the rapid rise in student numbers was a very sharp fall in actual and planned unit costs. In UK terms, this manifested itself of course in a considerable worsening in the student/staff ratio with all the attendant problems and need for adjustments in teaching arrangements, and an inability to invest in the academic infrastructure - libraries, equipment and buildings, including teaching rooms - to match the increased numbers. More seriously for the longer term future of the
Dearing identified an immediate short-term crisis and a longer term financial need. For the short term the Committee recommended an injection of £350 million in 1998-99 and £565 million in 1999-2000. For the longer term it identified six requirements for additional support:

- “growth in student load;
- aspects of lifelong learning;
- refurbishment of the estate and replacement of obsolete equipment (particularly in the light of developments in the communications and information technology field);
- research, including infrastructure and regional development;
- improved maintenance support for students;
- increasing higher education pay in line with earnings elsewhere in the economy” (NCIHE, 1997, para. 17.30).

As part of the way to meet these requirements the Committee recommended that students should make a flat rate fee contribution of around 25 per cent of the average cost of tuition through an income contingent mechanism, with means testing to protect the position of students from economically disadvantaged back-
The arrival of a new Government in May 1997, before these recommendations were published, introduced a significant complication not least because in the period in which the Committee had been deliberating, the Labour Party, while in Opposition, had had to adopt some clear ideas on public expenditure before it entered the General Election. The most significant of these was to retain the Conservative Government's public expenditure figures for the first two years in office, and over that time, undertake a Comprehensive Spending Review to be completed in July 1998. A detailed response to Dearing's recommendations on finance was therefore effectively deferred for a year. The new Government, however, immediately endorsed the recommendation that first degree students should pay fees and legislation has now been passed to introduce a flat rate income contingent fee of £1 000 per year, effective from the present academic year 1998-99. As a consequence, as we speak, universities are facing up to all the
complexities of a new fee charging system. But in spite of considerable and vocal opposition the new Government has confirmed, against the Dearing recommendation, that the student maintenance grant system will come to an end with effect from 1999-2000 with the introduction, in substitution, of a more comprehensive loan system than has existed so far. The impact of this on some aspects of Lifelong Learning will be discussed in a moment.

When the broad outline of the Comprehensive Spending Review was made public in July it was immediately apparent that the Government's spending priorities were more orientated towards primary and secondary schooling and further education, and that while higher education was to receive an infusion of additional support for research, the immediate intention was to require a further 1 per cent efficiency gain for 1999-2000 with no promise of any reversion to the Dearing figures in later years. It has been suggested that the intention will be to expand higher education at the sub-degree level within further education rather than encourage a further major expansion within higher education itself although the Government has been careful not to unveil any long-term plans as yet. As regards academic salaries the Government declined to nominate a chairman to the independent review, thus ensuring that it was not committed to providing finance to support the reviews conclusions. The review itself is underway but its report is not expected until later this year and it is not clear how, bearing in mind the Government's attitude to public sector pay, it can be implemented. The Government has not so far provided the additional support for the investment in IT which Dearing recommended. Figure 1 shows the extent to which the National Inquiry has improved the financial position for higher education.

What conclusions are we to draw from all this? The cynic might argue that the Dearing Committee was merely an elaborate manoeuvre to make the introduction of student fees politically palatable. This would, however, be altogether too bleak a view. In particular, I think it underrates the value of the discussion that the creation of the National Inquiry provoked and the focus which the publication of the Report has provided for the consideration of issues which have arisen out of the creation of a mass higher education system. But the process suggests that we in higher education, perhaps like the National Inquiry itself, were a great deal too optimistic that the self-evident strength of our case for more resources would be given priority over all the other demands that the public sector, whether in education, health or the social services, is making on Government expenditure. As a tax payer or as a citizen I would myself put schools above higher education in my priority list for public expenditure on education. The moral I think we must draw is that so-called blue “ribbon reports”, however well conceived, cannot override the basic economic and social priorities of the modern state. Mass higher education is not going to attract the unit level of funding that was traditionally applied to elite higher education. The real watershed for UK higher education must be the recogni-
tion that we cannot turn the clock back and that we must adjust to the situation as it is.

The Dearing Report does not compare well with the Robbins Report either in its style or the depth of its thinking but it is of a different age and had a different job to do. We should not forget that many of the main structural Robbins recommendations were overturned or ignored within three years of their publication. However, the Dearing thinking on how to finance mass higher education in the United Kingdom represents a very significant intellectual effort and it is sad that it is unlikely now to be realised.

While the Report has produced some alleviation of the extraordinary cuts that were planned by the previous Government, it has not prevented at least for the time being a continuing downward pressure on university budgets. I do not see the situation changing. This must inevitably throw institutions back onto thinking through their own financial futures and deciding in what ways they can generate non-government moneys. Unfortunately I cannot see the post-Dearing funding framework providing stability. The decision to fix fees at a flat rate of £1,000 across all institutions conflicts with the diversity of the system. Much as my sympathies may lie with supporting the principle of an egalitarian approach to students contributing to the costs of higher education I fear that it is essentially not sustainable in the long run; my guess is that within a few years it will be difficult to withstand the pressures for greater fee differentiation to match the increasing differentiation of the higher education system itself.

It would now, I think, more than a year after its publication be possible to let the curtain fall on the Dearing Report but for one topic which the Committee has firmly put back on the higher education agenda: Lifelong Learning. In the opening chapter, entitled “A vision for 20 years: the learning society”, the Report says:

“The purpose of education is life-enhancing; it contributes to the whole quality of life. This recognition of the purpose of higher education in the development of our people, our society, and our economy is central to our vision. In the next century, the economically successful nations will be those which become learning societies: where all are committed, through effective education and training, to lifelong learning.” (NCIHE, para. 1.1)

In practice the Report did not make detailed recommendations about lifelong learning except in respect to the social inequalities of entry to higher education as described in Figure 3 and it made a series of recommendations to improve this situation. How far these recommendations will be implemented or will prove to be practicable when the Government has taken steps to abolish maintenance grants, thus seeming to undercut both the Dearing recommendations and the aim of widening access to higher education, we will know more about in a year’s time when we can assess the impact on the entry of disadvantaged or mature students.
On the other hand, the wider lifelong learning agenda has captured the imagination of the new Government which issued a consultative paper, The Learning Age in January, this year (DfEE, 1998). As I said at the beginning of this address, it has proved difficult for the Government to come up with specifics on Lifelong Learning especially in a situation where it is apparently not prepared to make major new funding available. But at a time when higher education has found that its best advocate, the Dearing Committee, appears to have failed to reverse the financial trends of the last 10 years the prospect of emphasising the utility of higher education to society needs to be grasped with both hands. I have argued previously to this Assembly that universities need to show themselves to be explicitly and directly useful to society as well as being academically successful. Lifelong learning represents an important element in this new emphasis on usefulness whether it is aimed at rectifying educational disadvantage or at improving the performance of well-qualified professionals. The Dearing vision of the Learning Society may be the element of the Report which will be remembered when questions of funding and system-wide organisation are long forgotten, perhaps because it represents if not a new idea, a reinvented mission for higher education to aim at. If addressed with conviction it might yet restore to higher education the funding priority we all think it deserves.
REFERENCES

Higher Education in the Learning Society (1997),
The National Committee of Inquiry, HMSO.

Robbins Report (1963),
Report of the Committee on Higher Education, Cmnd 2154, HMSO.

The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s (1985),
DES, Cmnd 9524, HMSO.

The Learning Age (1998),
DfEE, CM 3790, The Stationery Office.
Lifelong Learning: Implication for the University of the 21st Century

Chris Duke
University of Western Sydney
Australia

ABSTRACT

The emergence of lifelong learning and its revival after a period of disuse as an idea and a social need represent a challenge and an opportunity for universities. This and other new terms and concepts require clarification. There is a place for new metaphors. Universities need to become more effective learning organisations and to embrace and nurture their learning regions in order to flourish. Some new functions are added onto established ones which will continue, some, like research and socialisation, in modified form. Organisational learning as well as staff development is increasingly important. Higher education will diversify further and a rising proportion of higher education in the emerging universal system will take place outside universities, but their role as cathedrals, repositories and nurturers of wisdom can be enhanced, as they remain valued places for people to meet and learn together.

PERSPECTIVE AND ORIENTATION

This title and paper imply the survival of the university through the 21st century and beyond. We have already lived through a generation of writings about the crisis of the university (see for example Scott, 1984; Coaldrake and Stedman, 1998). The sense of fin de siécle catharsis is amplified by others who find in the expansion of higher education a collapse of standards, the death of high culture, the onset of a new barbarism, the betrayal of the intellect, the dumbing down of societies. For some the survival of the university rather than its precise configuration appears to be at stake.

I retain a belief in improvability though not perfectibility. I practise organisational and community consultation as a basis for participatory change. I adhere
tenaciously to the “enlightenment project”. I am fascinated by the waves of post-modernism but not capsized by them. I am a pragmatic optimiser. I also believe in eternal vigilance, in defence of the idea of a university. The survival of a more than utilitarian identity for the university demands this. Like democracy, it needs reinventing daily if it is to stay in good health.

The beliefs and values of institutional leaders and managers are centrally important to the university of the 21st century. The greater the uncertainty about the present and the future, the greater the need to be explicit about vision, mission and direction, world-weary scepticism about such matters notwithstanding. The idea of “mission” was widely mocked and satirised when first adopted in the seventies. More recently vision has become “the vision thing”. It too suffers trivialisation. Worse, it may also get tied in with overly mechanistic and unrealistically ambitious forms of “strategic planning”. These try, with transparent futility, to convert vision into fully prescribed and predetermined actions which ignore the uncertain confusion and mess of modern management, the realities of human idiosyncrasy and the actualities of organisational behaviour (compare Stacey, 1998). University leaders of the coming century need the confidence to accept that they can guide but not determine or control.

Let me turn more directly to the implications of lifelong learning for the university of the future. These observations are intendedly general and honour the diversity of national cultures, traditions and higher education systems (Turbin, 1995). They tend however to reflect most strongly the UK situation in which I have worked for many years and the Australian where I am currently employed.

KEYWORDS, MEANINGS AND METAPHORS

Two old and four more recent English language terms are important to this discussion. These are the university and higher education; lifelong learning and the learning society; the learning organisation and the learning region. (Some key terms in other languages do not always translate easily, such as the French éducation permanente, and formation.) Also there are different connotations of a term like university in different kinds of societies, although there is quite high coincidence of understanding across OECD Member Countries.

The terms university and higher education are not interchangeable, though often treated as if they were. OECD has reintroduced the term tertiary, and some prefer post-secondary (OECD, 1997). There is a persuasive case to think of post-school education as the term for all provision following secondary schooling, matching the earlier phase of pre-school education. Another approach distinguishes post-initial education from all initial (usually “full-time”) education; this is unhelpful here. The reality is that the university will for the foreseeable future continue to cater for both initial and post-experience higher education, albeit in
different and changing mixes. It does not and will not encompass all of higher education. “The university” will become more diverse in character, structure and function; while “higher education” will take place in more and more different places, beyond as well within the diversified universities of the 21st century.

More important and value-infused is the question behind this. Is there something which is felt still to be at the heart of, to be the essence of, the university? - a “real university”, contrasted unfavourably with something such as a training centre or (used pejoratively) a teaching-only community college. I assert and argue for the continuation of the university as something valued and distinctive, though different from the institution remembered by us as students: a cathedral as well as a service station. I return to this later, after turning to the changing society which the university inhabits and of which higher education is a permeative feature.

THE LEARNING SOCIETY AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong learning has become quite suddenly and remarkably fashionable in the societies I know best. It is in wide daily use in policy statements, politicians’ and managers’ discourse, school as well as post-school mission statements, learning objectives and outcome indicators, and in press advertisements and brochures for graduate programmes, professional short courses as well adult education programmes. The expression “learning society” has also gained wide and popular acceptance, if not as freely as has lifelong learning.

In Europe 1996, the European Year of Lifelong Learning, was wrapped around by new organisations, networks and initiatives feeding into and off the Year. In Britain a major national funded research initiative (ESRC) has had as its theme the learning society (Coffield, 1997). There followed Taiwan’s year of lifelong learning (ROC, 1998). The Delors Report, a quarter century after the Faure Report, may be taken to symbolise a second and more substantial coming for these and related concepts (Faure 1972; Delors, 1996).

What differs is the world into which these concepts have been reintroduced with new life. Along with recurrent education and éducation permanente the terms grew out of OECD, UNESCO and similar European-based inter-governmental agencies at the end of the sixties, in a time of social and economic optimism. Since then we have exchanged the Cold War for economic uncertainty now signified by crisis in East and South East Asia and beyond throughout the world. This is added onto economic rationalism, possibly now on the wane, and systemic unemployment. Social and existential uncertainty are partly addressed through the European community’s new concern with social exclusion, and more broadly experienced as post-modernism.

The early seventies’ language of Bengtsson (OECD, 1973) and Faure is revisited in a new and changing socio-economic context. Popularisation and trivialisa-
tion are no reason to abandon these key terms and concepts, or to ignore the truths and challenges which they express. Lifelong learning and the learning society challenge notions that learning belongs only in the classroom; and the idea that learning is essentially a pre-experience formative process controlled purposefully by society if not the State. They represent the end of educators’ monopoly (“imprisoned in the global classroom” in the words of Illich and Verne, 1976); but also a requirement to rethink the functions of educational institutions and the nature of learning in a knowledge-based society fuelled by knowledge industries.

A debate also rages about what underlying values lifelong learning represents: a debate in terms of civic and economic requirements, liberatory education (the old adult education value system) and functionalist training for employment (in the context of the discourse of economic rationalism, human resource management, downsizing, business process re-engineering and so forth).

There are thus several levels of discourse within the use of these new terms, some trivial some deep. They represent contested ideological space which university (and other) leaders must work their way through. On the one hand they provide directions for a continuous reinterpretation of role, and rejuvenation, of universities and higher education more broadly, as essential to the fabric of 21st century societies – a way of understanding, and naming, a fundamental paradigm shift. On the other they are very vulnerable to reductionism. Fragmented, individualised and thus reduced in scale, they cease to be of significant service.

LEARNING ORGANISATIONS AND LEARNING REGIONS

Another key term also prone to reductionism is the learning organisation, around which a substantial and increasingly rich and insightful literature has assembled itself (see for example Starkey, 1997). It is another site of ideological contest. Some see the management of employees in workforce commodity terms: human resource material needs maintaining and updating along with the buildings and IT infrastructure, or replacing when fully depreciated and obsolete. Within this approach the learning organisation is one which invests in updating its individual workers so as to be able to perform accurately and efficiently. Replacement, including replacement costs, or investment in renewal, the cost of training, is a business calculation. The successful learning organisation is one that secures regular update training of its employees to sustain high levels of productivity. Learning is understood only at the individual level.

A larger and richer concept of the learning organisation locates it naturally between the larger understandings of the learning society and of the individual lifelong learner. The individual learner normally has the inclination and capacity to continue learning; an inquiring mind as well as the intellectual skills; a critical and self-critical, reflective capability to be open to new learning rather than fear the
unknown and unrecognised. These are the capabilities and characteristics of a whole society when it, similarly, learns from and reflects on experience, adapting its own arrangements, processes and purposes so as to grow, whether in wealth of estate, GNP and GDP, or according to some wider set of social and ecological indicators. It is not just a society with a lot of education and training. Seen thus, creating the learning society is unavoidably a political enterprise.

Using these richer understandings, the learning organisation is also a richer and more complex ambition than that of the training or even the educative organisation. It embraces a sense of developing the potential of all its members through staff development and self-development support; but also the notions of learning on the job, in and through the workplace, so that the organisation itself acquires the capacity for self-renewal and for adaptation to survive and become stronger. The collectivity of learning endeavours flowing into a shared institutional identity and purpose (a sense of mission and direction) enables the whole organisation to adapt and change, reading and interacting more effectively and creatively with its environment, to mutual benefit.

The university's environment brings us to the sixth key term, the learning region. Socio-ecological literature as well as recent organisation and some management theory bring to attention the significance of strategic alliances, partnerships and networks of collaboration through which especially the more successful knowledge-based industry sectors and corporations interact within their regions, to mutual advantage (Goddard, 1998). Open systems theory has long made us mindful of the importance of interactions across the boundaries of the organisation and with its environment (Emery, 1969). Networking has become essential to modern corporations as they co-invest effort and resources for common purposes. Paradoxically, the geographical region has become a new focus of business, political and economic planning at the same time as internationalisation and globalisation have thrust themselves onto the agenda of almost every institution, business and community group, educational enterprises included.

To be a regional institution of higher education has been (and remains in 1998) a source of stigma. It connotes humble status, merely local service – community college versus Harvard and Oxbridge, regional university contrasted with the sandstones in Australia. Prosperity in the globalised environment within which we exit the twentieth century will however depend for most universities on their capacity to be regionally integrated and networked through multistranded interacting partnerships within their respective regions (Alter and Hage, 1993). Acting globally as well as thinking globally will increasingly depend for most of us on acting effectively locally, despite the capacity for information, ideas, money and the many of the products of labour to move around the world in micro-seconds.
For more than 90 per cent of universities, one key to prosperity will be effective networking into local regional partnerships, hence the paradox. For success as a “real”, “research” or “international” university, being effectively regional will provide a route to being more international. For universities, the learning region may be the best kept secret of the dying days of this century. In practical terms this implies blending and combining competition in the “new enterprise” environment with collaboration: nurturing and supporting “boundary spanners” who can work across the borders of the university in effective discourse with other organisations and their different cultures; fostering cultural change to enable universities to speak and work with partners of many traditions and persuasions, as more learning organisations emerge and together enrich their various overlapping learning zones or regions. There are evidently big challenges for the management of higher education in this.

THE 21ST CENTURY – WHAT KIND OF GLOBAL SOCIETY?

I have implied some vital characteristics of 21st century society, including the reaffirmation and new importance of local regions in an information-rich global economy. A flood wealth of literature celebrating and analysing the accelerating rate and complexity of change, advising and cautioning how to survive within it, dates from the time that lifelong education and learning first began attracting serious interest (Toffler, 1970). There is a loss of confidence in progress and in the management of economies. The nature and availability of jobs have become problematic. Whole sectors of employment have disappeared. New characterisations of employment sectors and of the related social structure of society have been formulated – the 30:40:30 society for example (Latham, 1998). Prominent social concerns include the widening gulf between very rich and very poor; at individual and national levels; the emergence of the very long-term unemployed and of a social underclass in the advanced economies; as well as rapid obsolescence of knowledge and skills and the bleak employment prospects of the minimally educated. Demographic change towards an older and ageing population interacts with these trends. It puts great pressure on public social security, health and welfare budgets, effectively to dismantle post-war welfare state systems.

The societies we now experience have thus moved beyond the welfare state, beyond full employment and in some cases also beyond social harmony and the politics of consensus. Economic rationalism remains a dominant perspective. The role of the nation state is in transition. Capital and employment migrate beyond effective public and political control, even at the level of IMF, World Bank and the US Treasury. Capacity to manipulate the environment has run ahead of our capability to plan intelligently and for the long-term, as the series of moderate and major catastrophes coming to light reveals. Unsurprisingly there is much appre-
hension about the future. Nor is it surprising that terms like learning society, knowledge and knowledge-based industries have become normal discourse. The ideas not just of lifelong learning but also of universal tertiary or higher education are at the heart of almost all futures scenarios. Uncertain as the exact nature and future of "the university" may be, higher education and lifelong learning in one form or another permeate virtually all models for the future.

CHANGING FUNCTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The nature of the university and the functions of higher education are already changing in significant ways. Different characterisations attempt to capture the nature of the change by means of metaphor and analogy, witness my own book titles, The Learning University and The Adult University (Duke 1992; Bourgeois et al., 1998). They also try to capture the future by directing and so directing it. The making and remaking of higher education are territory contested not just by politicians and educational planners, by students, parents and employers, but also by politicians and theorists in the academy. They battle over the past and future of the university, often claiming care of its well-being and soul. They fall into two camps. Reformers (innovators, radicals) in the main see a more central role for the university engaged with society in the creation and especially the transmission and application of new skills and knowledge. They may adopt the language and tools of management consultancy, economic rationalism and business enterprise; or an older discourse to do with society and community, equity and access. They share an orientation to the connectedness of higher education to its society or economy, and an assumption of utilitarianism or instrumentality in teaching and research. In a political sense they may be found, depending on the direction of instrumentality, on the old and new left and the new right.

The other crudely oversimplified orientation tends to be labelled traditionalist, conservative, or simply academic. (These are all in principle neutral terms which have each acquired pejorative association.) The loose groupings reflect different aspects of the traditional functions of higher education. The shift from mid-century elite higher education through massification of higher education systems by the end of the century and rapidly onwards into "universal higher education" as we enter the new century is also a change in the mix and balance of the core functions of the system. The lifelong learning paradigm likewise signals and echoes this shift.

Established functions of higher education include the selection and preparation of new entrants to different social classes and occupations. It has served to sort, segregate, train and socialise, initially into very privileged and special roles, latterly more broadly into participation in a broadening middle class and dominant culture. For the individual this meant access to the relative comforts of almost
assured, well paid and socially prestigious employment. University was a finishing school, a maturational phase and a coming of age. One learned the ways and acquired the friendships that served well in adult life as a member of the professional, managerial or governing classes. For many this was both a right, a natural progression, and a means of acquiring the skills and knowledge, as well as the graces and friendships, to occupy social position.

In some societies and for some periods this was almost predetermined by birth and then by prior schooling. More recently, the professions and other knowledge-based forms of employment have expanded. Selection into and through higher education became more open to competitive talent with “the rise of the meritocracy”. Not only this but also the substantive content of the curriculum became increasingly important. Even though getting a “good degree” from a “good university” is still almost a passport to relatively sure and rewarding employment, emphasis on nature, quality and capacity to use knowledge has greatly altered. Whole disciplines have fallen away; others are at risk. There is greater transparency in curriculum matters and more attention to quality and standards on the part of governments and the broader community. Universities are more like glass-houses than ivory towers.

Yet universities remain custodians and curators of knowledge, disciplinary understanding, even of some wisdom. These are the conserving functions which relate to the preservation and transmission of libraries along with values, beliefs and taught knowledge. The conservatism of and conservation by the university remains a part of its mission and function, although it has become problematic. Authority over wisdom and judgement is claimed in other quarters, not least, in the realm of morals as well as popular taste and culture, by the mass media. Universities cannot afford to keep up their library journal acquisitions. Information is stored on chips and transmitted via fibres of astounding and incomprehensible capacity. Universities are no more necessary than medieval monasteries to keep information stored and passed on. If the need for monastic repositories is passing, however, the need for cathedral-like qualities remains.

Wisdom, the ability to understand, interpret, synthesise, connect, apply and then communicate, sits closer to the deeper secret heat of “the idea of a university”. It is closer to the cultural conservation and transmission which grand ideas of the academy try to protect. The case for wisdom is seldom put with great force these days: partly from loss of confidence and credibility suffered by universities in the eyes of the “establishment” and of the broad community from the seventies in various societies; also because of continuing hostility to academic pretensions on the part of some governments in modern times.

The case for making knowledge, or doing research, is unapologetic by contrast. Creation, perhaps utilisation, and certainly dissemination through teaching
of knowledge has become lodged at the heart of the function of the university. Good research performance is the jewel in the crown, though given the crisis of credibility of the modern university as a high quality teaching and learning institution it might be better to call it the great temptation. Research is more central and salient now than at other times in the history of universities, as knowledge production and obsolescence continue to accelerate, and individual prestige and reward continue to adhere to research rather than to teaching.

This too is contested space, but not in the main for reasons of legitimacy. Research is an agreed core function of universities. Yet much more is done, in most societies, in other places, both public sector (governmental) and private. The contest is more over costs, about who should pay, and about who within the university system has the right to win and to lose in prestigious research competitions. The larger question in terms of function is not about research per se but about its nature, utility and utilisation. Most universities of the lifelong learning 21st century society will move increasingly from "mode one" towards "mode two" forms of knowledge production (Gibbons et al., 1994). The (post-) modern research university will with few exceptions be committed to the co-creation, co-ownership and co-use of research knowledge. Its partners will mostly cohabit its learning region.

In summary, the turbulent, uncertain, increasingly knowledge-based and information-rich society of the century of lifelong learning will inherit a university, and systems of higher education, the functions of which are in fast transformation. Selection, socialisation and induction, the rite of passage of the privileged, remain recognisable but of less significance. Control of and preparation for entry to key professions remains. Exclusivity has become socially dysfunctional in the face of the demands of the knowledge society and its members for access to employment prospects in a changing job market, as well as, increasingly, to social and cultural capital. This means the right and capacity to participate in civic society, its economy and its diversified mainstream culture.

Universities are more incidentally than previously finishing schools, rites of passage for an increasingly uncertain coming of age. They do not monopolise the conservation and transmission of knowledge or its creation, but are compelled to take more seriously its shared ownership and application. They are also, increasingly, renewal sites, service stations, centres for lifelong learning, where people of all ages who are past the normal age of initial full-time education expect to have their broad learning needs met. The clientele of the university of the 21st century will become unrecognisable to those who took to the Paris streets in 1968 and the streets of Jakarta is 1998. These young people were however undoubtedly of political and social relevance, engaged with their society and its future. So too but in different ways will be the growing universities, emerging activities and new curricula of the 21st century.
THE 21ST CENTURY UNIVERSITY AS A LEARNING ORGANISATION

As a class of institutions to which there will always be exceptions today's universities need to accelerate the rate at which they reduce a significant credibility gap. This is the gap between being societies' premier knowledge-based industries, dedicated as their core business to the creation and transmission of knowledge, and their ability to manage themselves as reflective, self-renewing, proactive and adaptive organisations.

Universities do not distinguish themselves by critical self-reflection, despite or because of the collegial tradition. This tradition legitimates and rewards academic disputation within established rules and parameters, yet fences off issues to do with the nature and behaviour of the organisation itself. These may be taboo - culturally defined no-go zones. This is not to deny the energy and venom of academic disputes, nor the capacity to transfer such dialogue to fights about other kinds of territory - car parking and room allocations. The primary identification with and loyalty of most of the professional core of the university, the faculty, not to the institution which employs them but to their tribal discipline (Becher, 1989) may explain the lack of interest in applying significant energy and undeniable intelligence to the organisation's capacity to learn and change.

The social structure of universities in different systems and traditions shares widely a division between administration and faculty. One side (the lower status servicing administration) is inhibited about fostering the changes required to become a learning organisation even if the need is recognised. The other, largely individualistic often prima donna faculty with their reputations to make and their teaching load to bear, are neither well informed nor very interested in such matters. Far from enthusing about monitoring, evaluating, benchmarking and quality assuring, the collection and analysis of feedback data and the examination of taken-for-granted assumptions and assertions about “the ways things are done here”, they tend, again as a generalisation from which exceptions occur, to be uninterested, maybe disdainful, in respect of such apparently managerialist matters.

The domination of research with its distinctive memberships and measures – the professional conference circuits, national and international subject associations and public academic honours, buttressed by research income in and refereed publications out – over teaching reinforces this tendency to resist self-questioning. At a university of my previous employment almost the only popular development courses for academic staff were on writing research applications and winning research grants.

Trivial as this may seem, the fact remains that universities are rather poor at practising, certainly in any deliberate and systematic way, what they depend upon to exist at client level: openness and capacity to learn, including learning about oneself and putting such learning to practical effect. As they move into the
twenty-first century, and into an environment that will be more challenging and fast changing, enhanced capacity for this kind of learning will be essential.

This means compiling and critically using more and better management information. It means ensuring that most of the university community, staff, then also students, and even community stakeholders outside the university, have access to it, and do use it routinely. It will mean quite significant continuing investment in valuable and costly “human resources”, the most expensive asset the university has. This encompasses induction, mentoring, probation and performance appraisal, initially and throughout each person’s career with the institution, but also periodically more formal learning opportunities based on institutional and individual knowledge and judgement about needs, potential and deficiency. More than this, it means fostering a culture of openness, critical self- and mutual acceptance, and a willingness to engage with issues of institutional direction and purpose, reciprocated by receptiveness and transparency on the part of “management”.

In a well-functioning learning organisation members understand and own the purposes, strategies and organisational behaviours. They experience continuing learning through and on the job, as roles and tasks change and develop. In such a culture, the expertise and knowledge which resides locally throughout the institution is energised, mobilised and used. The organisation as a whole becomes infused with self-critical yet optimistic positive energy. Its capacity to compete successfully, but more importantly to collaborate, to form networks of partnerships, and to provide a high level of what is now called client service, is considerable. Tomorrow’s universities, in the century of lifelong learning, need to be prominent model learning organisations at the heart of networked learning regions.

THE 21ST CENTURY UNIVERSITY
WHAT SHOULD SURVIVE AND BE SPECIAL?

I have deliberately focused on universities rather than higher education. A word now about higher education as a “system” approaching its new stature as “tertiary-universal”: the university as something distinctive and special among the institutions of a culturally rich complex society is required to sustain its identity and place. In most societies, especially with globalisation which crosses all borders, it will not for long retain a monopoly of higher education awards. Anyway, degrees as we know them may soon become less significant, as accredited lifelong learning portfolios take their place.

The university has already lost any claim to monopoly over the provision of higher education. There have been attempts to resolve the unresolvable, to decide just what constitutes “higher education” and sets it apart from that which is
not higher, whether called technical, further, vocational training, or differentiated in some other way. Partly this is informed by a desire to maintain some kind of binary divide between university and non-university higher (or tertiary) education. The usually pragmatic British have attempted this, trying to define what makes higher education higher (NIACE, 1993). The Higher Education Quality Council sought to identify distinctive qualities of the graduate – “graduateness”. The more vocationally focused attempts to create national qualifications frameworks in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom approach the quest from a different direction. This has led to the promotion of more degree-level (non-degree) qualifications awarded within and outside universities, and of “vocational degrees” awarded outside universities in competition with them.

While curricula are reviewed and revised, and competences, transferable skills and learning outcomes continue to engage pedagogic and political attention, higher education will diffuse and diversify increasingly. More and more of it will take place in diverse places and ways throughout more and more of lifelong learning societies. These places will include colleges of varied designation, private and public, employer workplace learning sites, some called universities, community settings and private homes. Universities will be seen to be providing only a minor part of all higher education, just as in most countries they undertake only a minor part of the totality of the nation’s research. This in no way implies the demise of the university. It may indicate, rather, a potential rise in stature and importance.

There is nothing new about higher education taking place in the home. University of London external degrees have been taken by private study since early last century. Open universities have multiplied world-wide in recent decades. There is much talk of virtual universities, and some panic that global alliances of the broadcasting and entertainment industries holding monopoly of new information technologies and carriers will create mega-monopolies and put “real universities” out of business.

I take a more relaxed view. The coming century will see overwhelming rising demand for higher education. Lifelong learning implies approaching universal participation in post-school education with recurrency throughout life – not just working life but for much of the third age cycle which may match the length of many working lives. Higher education will continue to be a growth industry. There is likely to be plenty of business to go round. There will no doubt be more “virtual universities”, and disputes as to when it is legitimate, and legal, to use the name university and the term degree. Cases will come to court from time to time.

In the main this may prove to be of marginal significance. The needs which can be met in this mode will remain a small part of the total. I doubt whether established universities will be destabilised by the explosion of higher education into all corners of society. They will remain the cathedrals, and will be well
advised, like cathedrals, to retain a distinctive sense of place. For many young people, going to university next century will still be an important developmental stage in their lives. Unless we do a better job of the upper level years of secondary schooling, university (and its surrogate colleges in binary systems) will provide the passage into full adult membership of the society for the majority of young people.

Universities may expect and plan to be special places for the society, and especially for its mature age population, more generally. They are among (western) societies’ most durable institutions, as those who celebrated Bologna’s famous 900th birthday are especially aware. Most offer somewhat special learning environments: temporary social communities with an infrastructure of facilities conducive to individual and shared learning. There is a propensity to congregate, to meet and to talk, in short courses, seminars, workshops and forums. Nothing in the clever-technology world of the virtual university is likely to displace that. But it will offer a strong set of alternative learning opportunities to meet more of the diverse needs of different client groups to learn at their own time, place and pace. Most universities have far to go in terms of flexibility of learning opportunity to meet the full range of needs (Davies, 1995). Most never will. On the other hand, so long as conferences on virtual universities continue to bring people together to meet and talk face to face, we may be reassured that “virtuality” does not mark the end of the university, or of convivial academic social life as we know it.

Among universities as well as within larger higher education, however, there will be far more diversity. It is important that the hierarchies into which institutions are placed and place themselves – groups and clubs, league tables and rank-orderings, now international as well as national – do not impose uniformity of style and purpose. Knowledge-based post-modern society needs more variety as well as capacity of universities. We may expect the criteria and even the league tables to diversify. This will neither displace nor threaten the reputation and leading position of the Harvards and Oxfords, nor dissuade others in and across national systems from competing for pride of place among the leaders in international research. The international club, Universitas 21, is just one such league or alliance which will emerge, cross-hatching the regional anchorage and membership which will be more important for more universities.

There is a more problematic, and important, question. How special, and “socially responsible”, will these “cathedrals of the learning society” be? Economic rationalism may prove to be a spent force in the early years of next century. There are pointers in this direction – see for example Latham 1998 in Australia. Intellectuals have been seen as combining (in different measure and at different times) arrogance with cowardice and betrayal of social responsibility – for example in “failing to confront the obscenity of economic rationalism” as one professor put it in a recent seminar.
Such accusations go back to at least 1848. Academics as the main stock of intellectuals in many, though not all, societies have of late kept their heads down and avoided confronting public ideologies which engage with the larger issues of the society and its social and physical environment. This may be ill-advised. Universities at their best are not ivory towers. Nor are they invisibly submerged within their supporting and surrounding societies - hence the metaphor of the cathedral which is used by but stands out from its city. They are desirably a part of but also somewhat apart from, their world: places to which people come to be energised and recharged, to see things differently, with more breadth and detachment. They are a place for critiquing as well as supporting society.

Survival and revival of a university for the 21st century are not incompatible with being part of the texture and fabric of society. Universities and their work of teaching and research are unavoidably contextualised and context-specific. They should reflect, reinterpret and reinforce the good in their learning society and region. A few may become global corporations and conglomerates, on the ever-diversifying spectrum of next century's universities. In the end these may not prove to be the culturally richest and the best.

SOME CLOSING SUMMARY PROPOSITIONS
The IT revolution and Rupert Murdoch do not mark the imminent demise of the (real) university.
Flexibility and responsiveness in time, place, mode and pace of educational delivery still have a long way to go.
Higher education will be dispersed society-wide, through many organisational forms and will be recognised, validated and accredited as such.
There will remain hierarchies of institutions and qualifications within increasingly diversified higher education systems which are none the less conceived and planned more as total systems.
Universities will lose their monopoly of degree accreditation.
It will not prove possible tightly to police the use of the term university.
Higher education will remain relatively labour intensive, though internal diversification will increase in this and in other ways.
With the universalisation of higher education, professors’ status will continue to fall and faculty will be relatively still less well remunerated, unless they become much less labour intensive.
“Big science” will migrate further away from individual universities and beyond the reach and budget of any one institution.
Lifelong Learning: Implications for the University of the 21st Century

No significant town in OECD Member Countries will be without a university institution by the year 2020.
Partnership will become a way of life for all universities although what might be called the “partner sets” will vary.
Most universities will become increasingly embedded in and interdependent with their respective learning regions.
Some universities will create entirely new global/multinational forms.
Degrees will give way to lifelong learning portfolios in which institutional status will still prove a powerful market force.
“Going to university” will still be a significant formative face-to-face experience for increasing numbers of young people, as well as for most people from time to time in later life.
The “idea of the university” will be reborn and reinvigorated as a prominent knowledge and culture “cathedral” sustaining the development of learning societies.
REFERENCES

ALTER, C. and HAGE, J. (1993),

BECHER, T. (1989),
Academic Tribes and Territories, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

BOURJEOIS, E., DUKE, C., GUYOT, J.L., MERRILL, B. (1998),
The Adult University, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

COALDRAKE, P. and STEDMAN, L. (1998),
Australia's Universities Confronting Their Future, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane.

COFFIELD, F. (1997),
"Introduction and overview: attempts to reclaim the concept of the learning society" [and the whole volume], Journal of Educational Policy, 12 (6), December.

Adults in Higher Education - International perspectives on access and participation, Jessica Kingsley, London.

DELORS, J. (Chairman) (1996),

DUKE, C. (1992),
The Learning University, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

EMERY, F.E. (ed.) (1969),
Systems Thinking, Penguin, Middlesex.

FAURE, E. (Chairman) et al. (1972),

The New Production of Knowledge, Sage, London.

GODDARD, J. (1998),
"The role of universities in regional development" (paper for CRE-Columbus), University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

ILLICH I. and VERNE, J. (1976),
Imprisoned in the Global Classroom, Writers and Readers, London.

LATHAM, M. (1998),
Lifelong Learning: Implications for the University of the 21st Century

MCNAIR, S. (1993),
An Adult Higher Education. A vision, NIACE, Leicester.
OECD (1973),
OECD (1997),
ROC (Republic of China) (1998),
The Year of Lifelong Learning, ROC, International Conference on Lifelong Learning, 1988
Ministry of Education, Taipei.
SCOTT, P. (1984),
The Crisis of the University, Croom Helm, London.
STACEY, R. (1998),
"Creativity in organisations: the importance of mess", Complexity management Centre
Working Paper, University of Hertfordshire.
STARK EY, K. (1996),
Transferability of Training and Learning, Tavistock Institute, London.
TOFFLER, A. (1970),
Future Shock, Bodley Head, London.
YOUNG, M. (1961),
The Rise of the Meritocracy, Penguin, Middlesex.
Lifelong Learning as Challenge for Higher Education: the State of Knowledge and Future Research Tasks

Ulrich Teichler
University of Kassel
Germany

ABSTRACT
The role higher education plays in the framework of lifelong learning according to the available research literature can be classified according to its function in comparison to initial degree study, the categories of adult learners addressed as well as the patterns of programmes and modes of teaching and learning. Special attention in the literature tends to be placed on continuing professional education whereas the question is hardly addressed how the sequence and character of initial and continuing education changes in a society that deserves the name lifelong learning society. Future research should address issues of changing demands for lifelong learning, the causes for different national policies and actual developments of the role higher education plays in the framework of lifelong learning as well as the impacts of varied lifelong learning provisions on participation, change of competences as well as their consequences for the world of work.

INTRODUCTION
We can summarise most descriptions of the higher education systems for the last few decades as follows, as far as its references to lifelong education are concerned: The nobler the sector of higher education, the more it is youth-centred. This holds true in spite of the continuous debates about the need for re-orientation.

According to this view, higher education still adheres to the belief that most talents will be identified early and that the acquisition of a substantial stock of
theories, methods and knowledge in the area of expertise should be built up in an early stage of life and prior to the transition from education to work. This view also takes for granted that pre-career education plays a substantial role of socio-economic status distribution in a society in which systematic knowledge is a core element of professional competence.

Supplementary routes for those able and willing to seek a second chance, professional continuing education delivered by higher education and special institutional settings for various types of adult learners have spread in the last few decades. All these activities look impressive if we observe the respective sectors and activities themselves (see for example Cervero and Young, 1987; Gessner, 1987; OECD/CERI, 1987; Abrahamson et al., 1988; Teichler, 1990; Jarvis, 1992; OECD, 1995). However, they might not really have called into question the basic understanding of the higher education system as being youth-centred in its heart and playing an important role of pre-career social selection.

We can, however, take the opposite view that higher education is the educational sector most genuinely embedded in lifelong learning. Whereas persons heading for cognitively less demanding occupations might be equipped with rules and tools learned and trained prior to or during the early stages of their professionally active life which suffice for a considerable period of their career, higher education fosters questioning, critical and reflective thinking, and provides primarily the foundations of knowledge for future professional tasks. According to this view, higher education seems to take for granted that professional work always comprises concurrent processes of learning and productive work and that all graduates have to be lifelong self-learners. Accordingly, higher education is fairly well prepared in some respects to a lifelong education society, even though it might have to improve as far as continuing training of former graduates are concerned.

These two contrasting observations show that we cannot confine ourselves with sweeping statements about the relationships between higher education and lifelong learning. We have to be more precise in exploring how we could and should define the tasks and functions of higher education in respect to lifelong learning and also what we know about the actual role higher education plays in this respect. Finally, I suggest to discuss in this context our state of knowledge about the issues addressed and the need for improvement of our knowledge.

It should be noted at this point that the following thoughts owe very much to the communication with colleagues versatile in various sectors of education who co-operated under the auspices of the International Academy of Education in suggesting a research agenda for lifelong learning. Some of these thoughts were presented at a conference held in March 1998 at the Wenner-Gren Centre in Stockholm on “The Agenda for Lifelong Learning”.

OECD 1999
CLASSIFICATIONS OF THE ROLE HIGHER EDUCATION PLAYS
FOR ADULT LEARNERS AND IN THE FRAMEWORK
OF LIFELONG EDUCATION

In categorising the role higher education currently plays for adult learners, first, we could try to sort the various programmes and activities currently existing and to describe them in terms which are close to their self-descriptions. Such a pragmatic classification might comprise eight categories (cf. Teichler, 1993, p. 28):

- advanced academic study;
- advanced professional programmes;
- short professional training courses;
- public lectures and other forms of general knowledge transmission;
- regular degree programmes for adults (for example evening programmes, distance programmes, etc.);
- remedial and second-chance provisions;
- short study programmes;
- in-service training for university staff.

It is obvious, though, that such a pragmatic list switches back and forth in the dimensions employed for characterising the various programmes. Therefore, second, it is helpful to identify dimensions often seen as relevant for describing higher education provisions for adult learners or for learning beyond the initial programmes for the “regular” students:

- The programme stage is often pointed out in reference to the regular initial higher education programme: for example preparatory, advanced, refresher or continuing programmes.
- Programmes addressing adult learners or otherwise playing a specific role for lifelong learning might be classified in their volume and completeness relative to regular degree programmes: for example degree programme, non-degree programmes, individual lectures, short courses, or certified advanced programmes.
- Provisions in higher education serving lifelong learning are often defined, according to the learners or the function of learning they address: for example the adult, the mature, the “deferrer”, the “second chance” or the “remedial” learners.
- Finally, lifelong learning provisions might be classified according to the “modes of delivery”: for example distance education, open university, evening programmes, part-time programmes, or modular programmes.

Third, we might take the term “lifelong learning” seriously and classify the major possible educational functions higher education might serve for a life-learning learning society. In this respect I suggest to establish three groups of tasks:

OECD 1999
- providing study opportunities for adults (notably for former graduates);
- preparing young students (cognitively and affectively) for lifelong learning;
- redressing the traditional mode of dispersion of learning over the life-course, i.e. reducing the current bulk of pre-career education in favour of shorter initial higher education and repeated continuing education over the years as, since the 1960s, notably suggested by advocates “recurrent education” (Tuijnman and Bengtsson, 1994).

In order to deepen the understanding of the current situation of the relationship between higher education and lifelong education and to discuss eventual future changes, it might be worth looking at the various categories of learners as well as the various educational provisions for them in the framework of higher education.

THE ADULT LEARNERS

Categories and quantities

In analyses of the role higher education plays for life-learning, the learners addressed are often called “adults”. This term tends to be chosen because it covers all students other than the relatively young and “regular” students. It is misleading, though, because, first, most “young” students are officially “adult” students, for example, in terms of voting and other civil rights. Second, most experts prefer a definition of learners according to the aims and conditions of their study in contrast to the “regular” young students rather than according to age.

Simple statistics on the age distribution of students help to identify the “adult” students according to a functional definition. On the one hand, some “second-chance” students and students studying and working part-time might be among the “young” students. On the other hand, the relatively old initial students substantially prolonging their study (“eternal students”) might be among the “adult” students.

In a most simple classification, we identify two groups of learners relevant in this context:
- students not continuously progressing from primary, secondary and tertiary education – all on full-time basis – to work; and
- students having already graduated from an initial degree programme.

A recent study on “adult students” opted for three categories (Davis, 1995, p. 287):
- “deferrers”: students qualifying for higher education when they were young but not transferring to higher education shortly after completion of secondary education;
Lifelong Learning - The State of Knowledge and Future Research Tasks

- “second chancers”: students initially not qualifying for entry to higher education but turning after some period to higher education (possibly after making use of second-chance provisions for the acquisition of entry qualification or through special admission arrangements for adult students);

- “returners”: persons having graduated from higher education and enrolling again after some period (i.e. for professional refresher courses, advanced academic or professional programmes).

If higher education moved toward a model of recurrent education, the third type might be divided into two types: The “recurrent learners”, on the one hand, who initially postpone specialisation within higher education and are more or less expected to return within the logic of recurrent education, and the “returners”, on the other hand, for whom such a return is one of various career options.

It should be noted that the typology named above is not universally applied. For example, Hore (1992) calls “returners” those students “who discontinued a previous higher education course and have now decided to return”, while he calls “recyclers” those “who had previously completed a postsecondary school qualification” and now return to upgrade their qualification in the field or to enter a new field.

Though available statistics are far from perfect in identifying properly the species of learners whom we are interested in this context, two sets of data might serve an approximation for estimating the current magnitude.

First, statistics (Table 1) on the age distribution of first-time new entrant students provide some information about the proportion of “second chancers” and “deferrers” among all new entrant students. The proportion of students older than 25 years of all first-time new entrant students at universities varied in 1995 among select OECD countries from less than 5 per cent to about 30 per cent. In the non-university sector, the proportion ranges from less than 5 per cent up to about half of the new entrant students (OECD/CERI, 1997, p. 116).

Second, according to a comparative survey undertaken in select countries (Table 2), between more than 50 per cent and less than 70 per cent of higher education-trained persons in Western industrial countries participate annually in adult education (Houtkoop and Oosterbeek, 1997, p. 25). The comparative survey does not reveal, however, the proportion of those attending programmes at higher education institutions.
### Table 1. Percentage distribution of first time new entrants into public and private tertiary education institutions, first stage, by age group, 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Non-university</th>
<th>University</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ages 25 and under</td>
<td>Ages 26-34</td>
<td>Ages 35 and other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of above</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Missing or negligible value, or data included in another category.
1. Hungary: University-level education, first stage includes advanced degrees.
2. Ireland: Full-time students only.
3. Sweden: University-level education, first stage includes non-university tertiary education.
4. Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Switzerland and United States: ages 26-34 category includes students aged 35 and over.

Source: OECD Education Database.

### Table 2. Percentage of participants in adult education by level of educational attainment (ISCED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED level</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/7</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>70.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average participation</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N =4,471</td>
<td>N =2,420</td>
<td>N =2,760</td>
<td>N =2,594</td>
<td>N =2,762</td>
<td>N =2,064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “second chancers”

When a highly selective school system gradually lost its legitimacy as the only meritocratically appropriate mechanism, social and education opportunities for “second chancers” were established or extended in many industrialised countries during the 1960s and 1970s (see OECD, 1987). They were based both on economic rationales of exhausting the pool of talents and social rationales of reducing inequalities of opportunity.

In the meantime, the political concern for “second chancers” has lost momentum in many countries. This can be attributed in part to a change of political goals and of the socio-political climate. Equality and welfare-orientation have lost political support. More important, though, is an almost “natural” decline in the public interest in the issues of “second chance” higher education. There is no strong need felt anymore for counteracting inequality between the generations preceding the massification of higher education and those participating in the massification trend. In addition, the proportion of young persons acquiring entry qualifications for higher education has risen to such a level in many countries that hardly any talented and motivated persons are remaining who are not entitled to enrol. However, notably supra-national agencies warned recently that the remaining inequality of opportunity for a minority might even be more grave because it reinforces “social exclusion” (see European Commission, 1996, pp. 61-64; UNESCO, 1995).

The “deferrers”

In contrast, the number of “deferrers” seem to be on the rise in many countries. In some countries, bottlenecks between successful completion of secondary education and enrolment in higher education institutions eroded in the process of further “massification” of higher education, and adult persons initially not entering higher education seek a late chance. Growing labour market problems encouraged adult persons in some countries to improve their chances through a return to education. Finally, in the wake of spreading “post-industrial” values, an increasing number of young persons preferred periods of search, educational and occupational mobility, leisure and entertainment rather than a straight, rapid and targeted life course. This is also reflected in extended and less clear processes of transition from education to work in general.

Higher education often reacts in an ambivalent way to the growing trend towards a decrease of straight courses of learning and work. On the one hand, increasing financial pressures call upon higher education to be more efficient, and in this climate, any “irregular” phenomenon of study, e.g. late entry, discontinuous study, prolongation and incomplete study, tends to be viewed as “wastage” and sign of inefficiency. On the other hand, institutions of higher education become...
more and more aware of the diversified needs of the learners and thus possibly also more responsive to the “deferrers”.

The “returners”

The “returners” are obviously the favourites of the prevailing debate in higher education about the move towards a lifelong education society. Hope is widespread that initial higher education will not change fundamentally and that the institutions of higher education will extend their functions in the process of obsolescence of knowledge, new demands for new knowledge as well as needs for re-training or reaching higher levels of knowledge for the purpose of career promotion.

However, those hoping for such an uncomplicated extension of higher education are likely to face a disappointing reality for various reasons:
- first, the trend towards a growing demand for continuing professional education is less speedy than many advocates expect and less similar across countries than the universalist jargon employed suggests;
- second, it does not turn out to be easy for the institutions of higher education to secure a big share among continuing professional education activities because many providers successfully claim that they are superior in reflecting the needs of the labour market in their training provisions;
- third, such a position overlooks the claim of many advocates of lifelong learning that initial training has to change its character fundamentally, if lifelong learning approach is seriously approached.

Some of these issues will be discussed below.

PATTERNS OF PROGRAMMES AND MODES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The dominance of specific provisions

Adult students often are synonymously viewed with special-mode learners. Lifelong learning often is associated to:
- distance learning;
- part-time study;
- evening study;
- sandwich study;
- single/short course study;
- discontinuous learning;

thereby, in reverse, characterising the young regular students as predominantly continuous, full-time, present in teacher-learner interaction and striving for a com-
plete qualification. Thus, altogether, adult learners are kept predominantly in separate and segmented study provisions serving them almost exclusively.

There are, however, striking differences between countries. In various Anglo-Saxon countries, the Nordic countries and, until about 1990, in the Socialist countries, we noted a strong emphasis on the adult learners and a clear domination of segmented provisions, either in institutions specifically addressing the adult learners as well as in specific administrative and educational settings at the periphery of the higher education institutions. In countries where less attention has been paid to the adult learners, adult learners, in contrast, often co-study coincidentally with the young students.

Advantages and disadvantages of segmentation

Based on these observations, one might be inclined to draw the conclusion that specific provisions for the adult learners are more beneficial:

- for the adult learners: the management and resource utilisation might serve the target group in a better way, and the specific programmes and modes of teaching and learning might be more conducive to the adult students (Knapper and Cropley, 1991);
- for the higher education system or the prevailing higher education policies in general, for example in providing low-cost, second-class education for the non-regular learners alongside quality education for the regular students, by accommodating different educational rationales, for example a more applied approach for the adult learners than for young learners or by just avoiding conflicts with the resistance of the mainstream of the university against a strong emphasis on adult education.

One could argue against the view, that non-segmentalist approaches have had their benefits as well in the past. Teaching and learning in heterogeneous learning groups in terms of age, motivation and experience are not necessarily a burden only, but also might provide ample opportunities of synergy and enrichment. Also, there is less danger that adult education becomes a second-class category, as far as the quality of the institution, the teaching staff and the reputation of the credentials are concerned. Moreover, educational measures initially established primarily for the adult learners because they were considered conducive to them might be spread and serve all students.

Future teaching and learning provisions

This raises the question about the future of the teaching and learning settings in higher education aimed to serve lifelong learning. There are many indications that resistance within the university against a stronger role in lifelong learning,
notably in continuing professional education, is fading (Becher, s.t.; Collardin, 1990), though a further need for “motivating Academia” in this direction is widely felt (cf. Soeiro, 1994). On the one hand, many specific needs of continuing professional education, as discussed below, might, at least partially, reinforce segmented approaches or might reinforce a broad diversity of options without any “systematic approach” (Cochinaux and de Woot, 1995, pp. 155-158). On the other hand, the fuzzier borderlines between the young and the adult learner might reinforce the value of joint studying for heterogeneous groups of learners; and similarly possible impact of the new technologies and media on learning for both the young and adult learner (OECD, 1996).

The latter view is taken, for example, by Duke (1992) who argues that higher education in general will:

- tend to reduce, not reinforce social divisions;
- address all age groups (“all institutions will be all-age”);
- opt against separation of training from education; and
- foster critical thinking and a link between emphasis on understanding and insight with good vocational training.

Joint educational provisions for learners of all ages and various motivations, talents and perspectives pose a tremendous challenge to higher education, if they are not merely kept together coincidentally, but served more or less equally well.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The increased demand for continuing professional education offers opportunities for the institutions of higher education. However, they have to identify and pursue a viable role amidst a broad range of providers.

An OECD study on continuing profession (OECD, 1995, pp. 51-54) noted three types of providers:

- the “formal sector”, i.e. university and non-university higher education institutions;
- the “informal sector”, i.e. enterprises, professional associations, unions and non-profit-making associations, “whose primary mission is not (higher or other) education, but the production or the defence of professional interests”;
- the “commercial sector”: “the sale of education as a profit-making business activity is a fundamental distinction between this sector and the others.”

In another typology by US authors (Cervero and Young, 1987), four types are named: higher education institutions, professional associations, employing
agencies and independent providers. The providers and programmes differ notably according to the following key features (OECD, 1995, p. 51):

- definition of an educational strategy;
- scientific and technological potential;
- clientele;
- source of finance;
- nature of training; and
- type of certificate.

One might ask, though, whether the character of continuing professional education is most strongly shaped by the providing institution or by their teachers. A survey conducted in the Federal Republic of Germany in the late 1970s, for example, noted that less than 1 per cent of continuing professional education was provided by higher education institutions, but about 40 per cent of the courses were taught by higher education staff (Allesch et al., 1981). This state of affairs might even be turned into a targeted strategy on the part of the university, as Otala (1998, p. 89) suggests: “University are recommended to adopt the role of resource rather than facility. Learning takes place everywhere...”.

A study undertaken in the European Community in the early 1990s came to the conclusion that the universities’ involvement in continuing education of its graduates is “promising but patchy” (Becher, s.t., p. 48). Higher education institutions are mostly involved in continuing education of graduates from economic and business fields as well as engineering, at a lesser extent in continuing education of the traditional professions, and marginally in occupational areas hardly professionalized. One might say that they fill a gap where a strong professional need for continuing education is felt, substantial money is available but professionals are not sufficiently independent to serve for themselves.

All this suggests that higher education, as a rule, does not necessarily play a clear strategic and pro-active role for continuing professional education of their graduates. In most countries, we observe no consistent political approach regarding the role higher education should play in the framework of lifelong learning (Fries, 1997). And the expectation that continuing professional education will be a lucrative source of income for the institutions of higher education might make the institutions of higher education even more reactive. A new stage of development might be reached, if the institutions of higher education themselves put forward concepts about types and periods of knowledge becoming outdated, professional demands and related stages and programmes of continuing professional education (Becher, s.t., p. 50, observes a few exceptional examples of that kind).

Obviously, institutions of higher education turned out to be more eager in the 1990s than ever before to play a significant role in continuing professional education (Cochinaux and de Woot, 1995; Dillemans, 1996). The question is often raised...
whether in this context the universities are becoming a “bazaar university” (Parjanen, 1992, p. 4) aiming to take over any kind of continuing education for graduates the market allow them to seize or whether they should serve specific functions within professional higher education.

Those debates also address the issue of legitimate utilisation of public funds (Tight, 1994, p. 56). The prime focus of debate, however, is that of the compatibility between the task of higher education and the demands for continuing professional education. Should higher education base the continuing education it provides on its principal self-understandings as research-oriented teaching and learning, critical thinking and integration of academic and professional learning, or should its widest possible immersion into the demands of professional education in turn lead to a revision of its traditional self-understanding?

FROM THE INITIAL-CONTINUING EDUCATION SEQUENCE TOWARD LIFELONG LEARNING?

The available literature clearly suggests that higher education is not on the move toward “lifelong learning” or a “recurrent education” model in the sense that initial education is shortened. It may well be that the substance of higher education has changed in some areas away from professional preparation towards laying the foundation of knowledge which might be supplemented by more specific knowledge to be acquired in the subsequent life course.

Altogether, we observe a wide gap between the rhetoric about our rapid move towards a lifelong learning society and the persistent traditions of higher education. Do we just move towards an expansion of continuing education with a minority of population opting for mixed life-courses considered by the majority as inefficient irregular phenomena, or are there signs of a growing pattern to enlarge “lifelong education” in terms of a relatively open sequence of learning, working and other life phases?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Many issues raised in this presentation do not rest on a firm ground of systematic knowledge. Undoubtedly, it would be helpful if policies in this domain could be based on an improved knowledge base, although we know, that, notably at times of rapid transformation, systematic knowledge can cover only part of the issues at stake for major policy decisions. I believe that research on the following themes would be most valuable.

A first major theme on the research agenda undoubtedly is to scrutinise the trends of demands, learning options and eventual supply. To what extent does continuing professional education really take place over many life stages? Is con-
continuing education losing its (too?) close link to prior selection and top careers? How does interest change in deferring study, taking second chances, interrupt studies, return to advanced study or participate in continuing professional education?

Close to this theme, a second group of research questions might centre on the adult and continuing learners: What are the potentially different types of “clientele”, and to what extent and in what respect do they differ? How do motivations, capabilities and future life prospects change over time? Are they sufficiently mobilised and motivated, or are additional measures of incentives or support necessary?

A third theme is certainly the failures of predictions according to which we are fastly moving towards a lifelong learning society or a system of recurrent education. Do the models rest on wrong assumptions, or are there crucial resistances which could be overcome? Are the obsolescence of knowledge and the demand for knowledge overestimated? Is continuous learning a substitute for continuing education?

A fourth thematic area of research on the relationships between higher education and lifelong learning could be the socio-political context of these relationships. Notably, internationally comparative research might help to explain why quotas of adult students differ so dramatically between countries, why higher education targets certain possible clienteles more than others, why certain modes of “delivery” are preferred in some countries and disliked in others, etc. One might also examine within countries and across countries how the general socio-political climate encourages (or discourages) certain aspects of the role higher education plays for lifelong learning.

A fifth set of research questions might focus on higher education institutions themselves: What makes some of them conducive to lifelong learning and others alien? What explains the controversies about the role of lifelong learning in higher education in some institutions and the widespread consensus in others? How does institutional setting influence learning behaviour?

A sixth group of systematic questions certainly has to address the substance of teaching and learning: What is expected to be learned, what is taught, what is actually learned, and what knowledge is eventually utilised in subsequent life stages? What are the underlying rationales and what the actual modes of “delivery” and learning?

Seventh, the questions raised in the previous paragraph might be turned to various cases in each of two distinct traditional educational settings of initial study for adults: What and how do they learn in educational settings specifically provided for them, and what and how in joint educational settings for the regular and the non-regular adult students?
Eighth, similarly one might analyse, how do teaching and learning in higher education change when long pre-career study programmes are substituted by shorter ones which aim to lay the foundation for lifelong learning? If moves are seriously undertaken in this direction, research might observe these processes of change and their impact on the competencies of students.

Ninth, the substance and the processes of continuing education and learning of graduates deserve attention as well. What is the impact of the various ways of institutionalisation, the diverse curricular concepts, the varying modes of teaching and learning on the readiness to learn, the participation, and the competencies eventually acquired?

Tenth, the above questions can be analysed from a comprehensive view: what are the impacts of relatively segmented and what of relatively integrated approaches of teaching and learning of adults in higher education, as far as the various types of adult and young students are concerned, the curricular approaches, the settings of teaching and learning processes?

Eleventh, research might compare different approaches of higher education as regards their role in continuing professional education. What are the consequences of cautious involvement, collaborative settings or very expansionist policies of higher education in this domain both for the character and the quality of continuing professional education and for other functions of higher education institutions?

Twelfth, one might analyse what the impact of innovative approaches to lifelong learning in higher education is on the interaction between work and learning in the subsequent life-course? What unexpected consequences call for a reconsideration of the educational concepts, and what potential does lifelong education expose in shaping the world of work?
REFERENCES

Bestandsaufnahme berufsbezogener wissenschaftlicher Weiterbildung, BMBW, Bonn.

ABRAHAMSON, K., RUBENSON, K. and SLOWEY, M. (eds.) (1988),

BECHER, T. (s.t., 1992?),
Meeting the Contract: The Role of European Universities in Continuing Education and Training, European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities, Brussels.

CERVERO, R.N. and YOUNG, W.H. (1987),

COCHINAUX, P. and DE WOOT, P. (1995),

COLLARDIN, D. (1990),

DAVIS, P. (1995),

DELORS, J. (1996),

DILLEMANS, R. (1996),

DUKE, C. (1992),

OECD 1999


Lifelong Learning - The State of Knowledge and Future Research Tasks

TEICHLER, U. (1990),
“The Challenge of Lifelong Learning for the University,” CRE-action, No. 90, pp. 53-68.

TEICHLER, U. (1993),

TIGHT, M. (1994),

TUINMANN, A.C. and BENGTSSON, J. (1994),

UNESCO (1995),
Tertiary Education and Lifelong Learning: Perspectives, Findings and Issues from OECD Work

Alan Wagner
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
France

ABSTRACT

In their call for the progressive implementation of lifelong learning for all, OECD Education ministers adopted a “cradle to grave” perspective and emphasized continuity and transition, learning and learners of all ages. This broad view of lifelong learning finds parallels in an equally broad vision for tertiary education: inclusive; diverse in form and content of provision as well as in the backgrounds and interests of those who participate; and spanning sectors or boundaries. A broad lifelong learning perspective implies new responsibilities and roles for tertiary education to bridge the divide between secondary and tertiary education; facilitate the transition to work; deepen the engagement and partnership with employers; and widen the sharing of costs. In these fields among others, a broader concept of lifelong learning opens up new ways of thinking about responses to new challenges and constraints for tertiary education.

The OECDs education work programme is now just over two years into its current mandate, Making a Reality of Lifelong Learning for All (OECD, 1996). My task here is to situate that work, and to draw from it a number of implications for tertiary education and tertiary institutions. The findings, ideas and results of some of the work are now available in publications released since 1996. I will be drawing most heavily on the Education Committee’s thematic review of the first years of tertiary education, which up until now has involved a set of complementary reviews in twelve OECD countries, and has generated a comparative report, Redefining Tertiary Education (OECD, 1998d). While my remarks refer to that report, they certainly do not fully cover the analysis of developments and issues and the directions advanced in it.
I have organised my remarks in three parts: first, a few words about the lifelong learning concept; second, a short summary of some salient trends in tertiary education in OECD countries; and third, four issue areas or fields where a lifelong learning approach frames questions or issues for tertiary education policy and practice.

WHY LIFELONG LEARNING? WHY NOW?

The issues and challenges giving rise to a renewed interest in education and training are familiar, and not necessarily new:

- Restructuring in national economies, sometimes undertaken in anticipation of opportunities afforded by growing interdependence in all economic and social fields as well as wider penetration of technological advances or sometimes in reaction to those developments, but always giving greater weight to the skills, attitudes and dispositions embodied in individuals.

- Social aspirations, as levels of education, income and wealth continue to rise throughout the OECD area, and equally important the great value being attached to knowledge in all countries. It is useful to note that this is not seen narrowly in the OECD: at last June’s meeting of OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Ministers on social policy, attention was drawn to the need for an “active ageing strategy” which would have as its aims to expand and encourage the capacities of people, as they grow older, to lead productive lives in the society and economy. Ministers singled out the need to reduce constraints on the way people spend time over the course of their life – in learning, in work, in leisure, in care-giving – and to promote a wider range of opportunities for people as they age. Education figures prominently in this vision.

- Perhaps paradoxically in the light of these strong derived demands for education, much greater competition on the seemingly constrained public budget and private finance.

What seems to be new is that these factors are now combining to create a new context for education. With respect to this new context, lifelong learning may provide a framework for policies and provision which can usefully serve as means to address emerging expectations and constraints.

As used by OECD Education Ministers, lifelong learning emphasises a lifelong, “cradle to grave” perspective, and stresses continuity and transition, learning and learners of all ages, not sectors or boundaries – whether with respect to contents, methods and contexts of teaching and learning. Lifelong learning is broader than recurrent adult and non-formal education, because it embraces all learning from that of young people in pre-primary schooling through to adults of troisième âge.
This broader view of lifelong learning accords well with OECD's use of the term “tertiary education”, in preference to more conventional terms “higher education” or “post-secondary” education. “Higher education” in many countries is often taken to mean the university, and indeed, to focus on the institution and its programmes. “Post-secondary” seems to imply that the reference is secondary level education, at a time when growing shares of an age cohort are pursuing studies and learning beyond that level. By tertiary education, the OECD refers to a level or stage of studies beyond secondary education, undertaken in formal tertiary education institutions but also in a wide variety of other settings including in secondary schools, at work sites, via free-standing, information-technology-based offerings and a host of private and public entities.

PATTERNS AND TRENDS

This is a much broader reach than most conventional coverage of programmes and learning beyond secondary education; however, diversity and expansion in participation stand as two of the key developments at this level of studies over the past twenty years.

If volume growth in participation at the tertiary level has slowed, the storyline seems to read ever increasing rates of participation. France and Portugal have both experienced dramatic rates of expansion in participation to the mid-1990s. The rates of growth have slowed, partly because the size of the relevant age cohorts apparently has stabilised. But, there appears to be some edging up in participation rates, even as the volume has levelled. In the United Kingdom, the participation rate of school leavers was maintained at slightly above 30 per cent through policy measures; what this figure fails to take into account is the participation of part-time and mature age students. According to some estimates, the probability of participation in any form of tertiary education over a lifetime is above 60 per cent. Australian Minister David Kemp, in a recent policy statement, said that the “probability of a current teenager entering some form of post-secondary education or training at some point in life is nearing 90 per cent”. Kemp’s estimates incorporate both the lifecycle perspective and a very broad definition of post-secondary education. When the OECD undertook its examination of higher education in Finland, examiners expressed some doubt about whether the target of a participation rate of 65 per cent could be realised. The target has been reached and current Minister Olli-Pekka Heinonen anticipates further increases.

This is a scale of participation neither recognised nor envisaged as recently as 1993 when the OECD convened its conference on higher education and employment, when the reference was to “half of a generation”. An implication of such rates of participation is that studies at this level are no longer reserved for the minority; to the contrary, these figures suggest movement toward near universal participation.
The second tendency is diversity, which takes several forms. One form is the new types of providers and new forms of self-learning (e.g. via Internet). But, a broadening, blending and blurring of more traditional tertiary education also may be seen in a number of OECD countries, and policy strategies are to some extent encouraging such development. The report of the West Committee in Australia, Learning for Life (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998), advanced the idea of "continuity" for learners, a certain seamlessness. The term seamlessness has been used in New Zealand as well, where tertiary education policies - whether for public funding or through the further application of the Qualifications Framework - work in this direction. Similar phrasing can be found in Virginia, the US state examined in the tertiary thematic review, where the state legislature called for a "continuum" in education. What is not driven by policy may occur as a result of "strategic" decisions by institutions to enter into new relationships, a key theme for this conference.

But, students are not passive: they also are "blurring" the boundaries partly in order to better situate themselves with respect to employment prospects and adult life. As expressed in Education Policy Analysis 1997 (OECD, 1997b), "many new pathways and combinations [of qualifications and learning options] are being created, not so much by deliberate policies pursued by education authorities or institutions, but rather by choices made by the students themselves." It will suffice to point to a few examples: further education students and/or completers continuing studies in universities in the United Kingdom; partly a reverse pattern in Australia and the United States, where university graduates add a module or qualification from a TAFE -- Technical and Further Education -- or community college; in Japan, some special training colleges develop joint programmes with private universities, leading to two qualifications; graduates from short-cycle IUTs (Instituts universitaires de technologie) and STSs (Sections de techniciens supérieurs) in France, continuing on in second cycle university studies. While policies and institutions did not in all cases envisage such pathways, students are following them.

And, the argument can be taken even further: the examination of college transcripts of young people in the United States, undertaken in the US Department of Education’s Office for Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), suggests that we need to go beyond even programme enrolments or qualifications earned to the combinations of actual coursework. The OERI work reveals the choices made by students within and outside of their study programmes and implies, for example, that science and information technology students combine core and related courses in such a way as to “define” new fields.

From yet another perspective, in a number of countries or institutions, categories of students cannot be so easily distinguished according to programme enrolment: full- and part-time students are not easy to identify clearly, with...
respect to their backgrounds, study programmes or employment status; young and mature age, “working” and “inactive”, degree-seeking or personal interest, fee-paying and publicly-supported students now are more likely to be sitting next to each other in classrooms, laboratories, libraries and computing centres (…) as well as at learning opportunities organised at work sites and by employers.

These patterns correspond to a broadly-conceived vision of lifelong learning. The challenge may well be to find ways to build on and extend them, through those policies and practices already in place which can strengthen the scope of systems and institutions to respond.

FOUR LIFELONG LEARNING FIELDS

There is not space to enter fully into details, but I note here four fields where a lifelong learning perspective might imply new responsibilities and roles for tertiary education.

Bridging the divide between secondary and tertiary education

To make participation in tertiary education an attainable option for the greatest number, all who aspire to study at this level should be encouraged and supported in these aspirations. It could be most useful to think about developing a shared responsibility for the student and, in this regard, an effort by tertiary education programmes to even “blur” the divide between the levels. This could imply greater cross-level sharing of teaching; and deeper, more varied contexts for learning at the tertiary level.

Such a direction is challenging, but not new, in many OECD countries. To indicate a few examples of initiatives: the French reforms aim to re-direct young people, starting in secondary schools, with substantial and highly accessible information about study opportunities and career options and, in the course of the first year of tertiary education, through a curriculum which permits some “sampling” of subjects (with as yet uncertain results); the Ministry of the Flemish Community of Belgium introduced a 10-point plan which calls for improvements in preparation, counselling and information to students and teachers at the secondary level, and to encourage adaptations in tertiary-level programmes, teaching and learning (a weakness is that the initiative does not bridge the divide between the sectors, but rather encourages efforts in each); in Virginia (a US state examined in the course of the OECD tertiary thematic review) reviewers noted that the distinction between “remedial” and introductory “general” courses was increasingly blurred.

Note that high rates of participation imply that learners at this level are no longer homogeneous with respect to background characteristics and envisaged
career paths. What is at issue is not whether students are well prepared for tertiary education; regardless of their preparation, the interests and learning styles in this larger pool of students will be more varied than in the past. The new challenge is to think more about how to adapt programmes, teaching and learning to student needs and interests rather than to require students to adapt to the programmes. This will require further thinking about the concept of “standard”; it will be more realistic and responsive to think in terms of standards applying to a wide range or mixes of learning opportunities at the tertiary level, and about what will be needed to develop standards and qualifications which are meaningful and useful. The former Higher Education Quality Council’s work on “graduateness” in the United Kingdom and ongoing interest in the reform of general education elements of bachelor’s degree programmes in Japanese and US tertiary education institutions are instructive in the ways a balance is being sought among choice and diversity, coherence and transparency.

Facilitating the transition to work

A feature of rising rates of secondary school completion and increased participation in tertiary education is that a key transition to work in OECD countries now takes place after completion of tertiary, not secondary, education. Tertiary education must thus assume greater responsibility for those who aspire for tertiary education but are unable to enter or complete programmes of this level: the consequences for the individuals concerned are now much greater in terms of employment, careers, private earnings and possible social costs of unemployment owing to skills and abilities insufficiently developed for the dynamic, demanding economy now emerging.

A key implication is that failure can no longer be accepted and, indeed, provision at the tertiary level needs to be expanded and diversified to ensure that all talent is developed. From this perspective, failure is not only to be seen as a waste of resources, but also as demotivating at a time when what is needed is the embodiment in all young people and adults of a capacity for and interest in learning and re-learning throughout life. It is a responsibility of tertiary education - its institutions, programmes and staff - to ensure that those who undertake studies have the best chance to succeed.

But, the responsibility may extend even farther: Who is to be responsible for those who do not undertake studies at the tertiary level? With ever higher rates of participation at the tertiary level of education, this group will be left even further behind. A positive strategy would be to adopt an inclusive orientation, one which seeks to find a place for everyone in tertiary education, with responsibilities shared - not divided - across levels and with the various external stakeholders.
From a different angle, tertiary-level programmes and teaching will need to take into account the evolution of new qualifications “profiles” presented on the labour market by the learners themselves (i.e., the mixes of abilities, knowledge, dispositions and experience). In this respect, transition and qualifications profiles are no longer to be seen in terms of a “one-way, one-time” activity for young adults: not only are mature age adults encompassed in this vision of lifelong learning, but for young adults learning at the tertiary level should enable them to prepare and continuously re-equip themselves for careers over their lifetime.

These observations refer to the learning possibilities available to all. Individual tertiary education institutions may play a greater or lesser role in the wider development of these possibilities; all institutions would need to take account of the results of that development – in terms of the qualification profiles of their own potential students and new interfaces with other tertiary and secondary institutions and programmes – in the design and delivery of programmes and teaching.

Engagement and partnership with employers

A strategy for fostering closer co-operation with the business sector in programmes, teaching and learning – via stages, student projects, part-time teachers from business and industry, learning organised at work sites, for all learners – could enrich study programmes, while making them even more responsive to the needs and backgrounds of young people and adults who now choose not to pursue tertiary-level studies but could benefit from them.

Progress in this direction would call for allowing even greater options for students to decide when, where, how and what to study.

The picture is mixed with respect to the timing of studies: Data provided in Education at a Glance – OECD Indicators 1997 (OECD, 1997a) show, for example, that countries vary on age at first entry into university: France and Ireland may be characterised as “youth-oriented”, with entry at a young age; Germany and Austria are countries with first entry typically for students in their early 20s, following prolonged upper secondary study and other learning and work experiences; the United Kingdom and New Zealand may be identified as evidencing a lifelong learning model for university studies, with some entering before age 20, some entering in their late 20s; and Denmark and Sweden exhibit a “mature age” pattern of first university entry where students’ initial enrolment takes place in their early to late 20s.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that students are choosing what and how to study as indicated, for example, through combining qualifications in France, Germany, Australia and Japan and working while studying in almost every country.
Higher Education Management

There are new initiatives with credit transfer, recognition of learning outside of education, and qualifications frameworks that may be found in such countries as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (among others). These initiatives implicitly foster moves toward a more flexible, learner-centred lifelong approach to learning; as important, they mark out an area which is likely to attract even greater policy interest and so introduce new expectations for institutions and programmes.

Sharing the costs

Growth in participation at the tertiary level and the new imperative for learning across a lifetime imply substantial volume demand. Certainly, one target for action to help meet the resource requirements is efficiency improvement: adaptations in programmes, teaching and learning which reduce failure (and costs), introduce new methods and contexts of learning (information technology-based or work site-based approaches), and new types of qualifications which could permit entry and exit over a lifetime (e.g., bachelor’s degree). Beyond this, however, larger volume costs will need to be financed, with participation from all stakeholders including the learners.

Human Capital Investment - An International Comparison (OECD, 1998c), a recent analysis of human capital investment undertaken on behalf of the Council of the OECD, has yielded some interesting findings. While tertiary education constitutes a relatively high cost to the taxpayer (on a per student basis), it appears to generate relatively high benefits to those who participate. But, the analysis suggests that the returns on investment in tertiary education are – in very broad terms – competitive with returns on physical assets. An implication is that education spending – whether public or private – should not be seen in isolation, as a zero sum game: investment may be warranted at all levels. But, while there may be an argument for increasing the investment in education – again, both public and private – at all levels, competing demands on resources require that the investment in the learning enterprise is undertaken with greater attention to its type, method and content.

The human capital indicators may help to explain, even in summary form, rising rates of participation in tertiary education. However, the ways in which a range of new financing approaches play out for individual students and families will require more study. Fees or deferred charges are being introduced or increased in a wide range of OECD countries, coupled with a wide range of student support schemes to minimise adverse consequences. The variety of policy approaches in this area, as examined in Education Policy Analysis 1998 (OECD, 1998b), imply an unsettled field.
Analyses from several countries seem to indicate that expansion has not increased the representation of students from low income or low social class families. The ways in which different financing approaches, as one area of policy intervention, can or do help to overcome the existing patterns is not clear.

Further, the introduction of deferred payment or repayment schemes as means to secure contributions from participants leads us into new territory, where the effects of different programme design features and the greatly increased scale of borrowing will call for close monitoring. While new income contingent repayment provisions seem to reduce the strong incentives introduced by earnings differentials among fields, there are questions about adverse selection, wider impact on lifecycle consumption and investment decisions (including investment in learning throughout adulthood, and in the learning of other family members), and the actual public budget costs of the subsidies associated with such repayment arrangements. Although experience with loans is extensive in such countries as Japan and the United States, that experience does not tell us enough about their impact when large shares of an age cohort carry payment or repayment obligations in their adult years. This is not to suggest that such approaches are inappropriate; only that from a lifelong, life-cycle perspective, there are new issues and new questions to address.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

What I have tried to do in my remarks is to suggest how the broader concept of lifelong learning opens up new ways of thinking about responses to new challenges and constraints for tertiary education.

Lifelong learning as a term, if not a concept, has currency. International and national reports confirm policy interest, and there seems to be no objection to the idea: lifelong learning is a good thing. A review of a number of policy statements and reports in Education Policy Analysis 1998 (OECD, 1998b) leads to an important conclusion of some relevance to this meeting: lifelong learning strategies as envisaged or in implementation in countries cut across sectors and levels of education and training and involve a wide range of partners. In this respect, perhaps one of the more unusual features of a lifelong approach to learning is that such a policy orientation seems to address a wide range of demands, challenges and concerns — and, indeed, to introduce an orientation and direction in which the complementarity of interests can be developed and exploited.

More generally, the OECD Education Committee was correct to see the present moment as an important turning point, where a shift in the balance from programmes and supply to learning and demand is gathering momentum “on the ground” and, increasingly, at policy levels. This puts great pressure on all parties, but that pressure reflects the growing value of education as well as the new cha-
lenges and uncertainties. This assessment applies no less to tertiary education. It was put simply in the Danish background report for the tertiary education thematic review team: for students, both “opportunities and risks are greater than they used to be”. Redefining Tertiary Education (OECD, 1998d) makes the same point more generally: “while the new contexts are often disturbing and perplexing, they are also rich in opportunities, providing scope for innovation and creativity. Those countries, systems and institutions that accept the challenges and seize the opportunities in a quest for new solutions seem likely to do best.”

NOTES

1. Participating countries are Australia, Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States (Virginia). See Annex for further details on the thematic review of the first years of tertiary education.
3. For a view of both the distinctive mission and the relevance of interfaces for the research university, see The Glion Colloquium (1998).
5. Several of these aspects have been examined, among others, by US analysts D. Bruce Johnstone, Michael S. McPherson and Morton Owen Schapiro.
ANNEX

The OECD Thematic Review of the First Years of Tertiary Education

The thematic review of the first years of tertiary education was undertaken by the OECD Education Committee, firstly, to provide an account of significant trends and issues in a sector that is experiencing remarkable growth in many Member countries and, in others, developing further in response to large volume participation; and, secondly, to develop new perspectives and concepts to inform and strengthen analysis of the key policy issues under review. For the purposes of the review, “tertiary education” refers to a level of broadly defined studies, usually requiring the completion of secondary education and provided through established forms of higher education but also in other ways through new kinds of institutions, by enterprises, in other non-formal settings or other arrangements. “First years” refer to the three, four, five (sometimes more) years of study normally undertaken prior to the award of an initial qualification that is recognised on the labour market. An element of imprecision is inevitable, given the different structural arrangements in Member countries and the choices students themselves make.

The choice of terms is deliberate. The field of inquiry is intended to go beyond universities or even “higher education institutions”. Nonetheless, it is mainly through institutions - universities, polytechnics, colleges, whether public or private - that tertiary education is provided. Thus, “tertiary education” encompasses a range of programmes, teaching and learning at this level and a range of institutions.

Thus far, the thematic review of the first years of tertiary education has involved twelve countries: Australia, Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States (Virginia). For each country, a review team examined responses from the country authority to a common set of background questions (providing additional, supplementary material as appropriate); undertook an 8-10 day “site visit” comprised of meetings with government officials, institutional administrators and staff, students, employers and other interested parties; and prepared a “country note” setting out the specific context and issues, policy approaches and experience and identifying key growth points and possible weaknesses in provision and responsiveness in the country concerned. The “country notes” are not published formally by the OECD, but most have been (or will be) published by the participating countries and they are (or will be) available on the OECD web site.

Each review team was led by the Secretariat, which also had the responsibility for the preparation of a comparative report (with the advice of an Advisory Group of Country Representatives and the OECD Education Committee). The comparative report from the first
stage of the thematic review, under the title Redefining Tertiary Education, has been published in 1998 by the OECD. Work is continuing in the form of targeted in-depth activities on selected issues and directions advanced in the report and include the possibility for one or two countries per year undergoing review within the thematic review framework.
REFERENCES

Commonwealth of Australia (1998),
The Glion Colloquium (1998),
The Glion Declaration: The University at the Millenium, Los Angeles and Geneva.
OECD (1996),
Lifelong Learning for All, Paris.
OECD (1997a),
OECD (1997b),
OECD (1998a),
OECD (1998b),
OECD (1998c),
OECD (1998d),
OECD and Statistics Canada (1995),
Literacy, Economy and Society, Paris and Ottawa.
OECD and Statistics Canada (1997),
Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society: Further Results from the International Adult Literacy Survey, Paris and Ottawa.

OECD 1999
Taking Charge of Change:  
a Leadership Challenge  
for Public Higher Education

John V. Byrne  
Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and  
Land-Grant Universities  
United States

ABSTRACT

We live during a time of extremes. Throughout the world change has never been more rapid, the need for learning by citizens and collectively by society never more critical, nor the challenges to higher education more demanding. In 1995, recognition of these extreme conditions led to the creation of the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities. The presidents and chancellors of twenty-four major public universities in the United States came together to collectively stimulate reform in American public higher education. The Commission addresses five fundamental issue areas: the student experience; access; the engaged institution; a learning society; and campus culture.

Constrained by the limited resources and faced with daunting challenges, our institutions of higher education must re-evaluate their programs, structures, and internal cultures and reform them as required. Coping with change in a world characterised by change, finding the opportunities associated with it while maintaining values will require new ways of thinking and acting. For higher education the responsibilities are daunting; the opportunities, unique; and the future, exciting.

The Commission has concluded that to provide the best student experience possible, our institutions must be genuine learning communities that are student centred and that maintain a healthy learning environment. Access to opportunities must be provided to all who are qualified, and once students are admitted,
our institutions should do everything possible to ensure their success in preparing themselves for a successful role in society. Our institutions themselves should be engaged with the societies they serve, sharing goals, objectives, efforts, and the expertise necessary to improve society. Providing learning experiences to students at any place and at any time throughout life becomes a part of the mission of the university. Lifelong learning thus will become a significant tool in developing the “learning society” of tomorrow. As universities become engaged members of the learning society they must protect their fundamental values and share them for the benefit of society.

It has been estimated that the sum total of the world’s knowledge has doubled every five years since 1960, and that by the year 2020 it will double every 73 days. Further, it is estimated that the world’s population, now about six billion people, will double to twelve billion people in the next fifty years, and that most of that increase will come in non-industrialised nations, that the population will be an ageing one and will shift in location away from rural areas toward cities. Rapid global changes of social structure, governmental design, economics, politics, environmental awareness, and information technology accompany the growth in population and knowledge. While these incredibly rapid changes are taking place, many of our governments, states, and institutions of education are faced with limited, and in some cases, declining resources. Every educator must be cognisant and concerned about these trends, and their implications for higher education and for society.

It should be obvious that the total learning experience provided by higher education has never been more important than it is today and that it will become increasingly important. It has been noted that “universities are about human enhancement” and that higher education is key to a civilised society, that it is “about nation-building”. Clearly the future of our global society will be affected by how we handle these challenges.

Question: Can higher education throughout the world keep pace of the rapid global changes occurring in demography, social structure, economics, politics, environment, and technology? We all know the challenges to higher education: the unprecedented problems on our campuses, the shifts in public attitude about the effectiveness of how we provide higher education, the increasing demands for accountability by students, parents, communities, and taxpayers. As public financing of higher education has fallen behind these changes, new practitioners have entered the field: community colleges, corporate universities, for-profit universities, and networked institutions such as the Western Governors University in the United States. It becomes increasingly obvious that a crisis is at hand and that to be successful in meeting the needs of all learners, public higher education must change drastically – and more quickly than ever before. We must be innovative.
and quickly responsive, while at the same time protecting fundamental values. We must review and probably change our curricula, our pedagogy, our means of serving our public, our management structures, and our attitudes.

THE KELLOGG COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF STATE AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

Recognition of the seriousness and the complex interaction of these challenging forces led in late 1995 to the creation of the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities. With financing from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and with the strong endorsement of that foundation, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) established the Kellogg Commission to address the increasing needs of higher education in the United States today, and the need for educational reform. The Commission consists of the Presidents and Chancellors of 24 public state, land-grant, urban, and tribal colleges and universities, plus the President of NASULGC, the Executive Director, and three emeritus commissioners. As a public “reality check”, the Commission is advised by seven non-academic community leaders of national reputation. The Commission meets four times per year, issues letter-reports, holds regional meetings in order to reach non-commissioners, and maintains a web-site on the Internet (www.nasulgc.org).

Recognising that strength in numbers can be helpful when advocating fundamental reform, it was felt by the leadership of NASULGC that collectively, twenty-four institution presidents and the universities they represent could be effective in initiating fundamental change in higher education. The Commission knew from the outset that it did not have authority to do more than stimulate thought and discussion, and that real change must take place on individual campuses.

The Commission elected to address five major issues—all related: The Student Experience; Access; The Engaged Institution; A Learning Society; and Campus Culture. Letter-reports concerning the first two issues have been published, sent to other presidents, and made available to others interested in higher education. Similar letter-reports on the remaining issues will be distributed as they are completed during the coming year. Each letter-report provides principles, guidelines, and recommendations, and offers specific examples of innovative solutions to relevant problems.

“The Student Experience” addresses the types of learning opportunities that must be provided to the students of today and tomorrow, where, whenever, and however they may be needed. “Access” includes access to the full benefits of society that a college or university education can provide. It involves admission to, retention in, and graduation from our institutions. “The Engaged Institution”
pertains to the many ways a university can be engaged with the societies it serves, engagement being more than extension or outreach and including the mutual development of goals and the two-way sharing of expertise with elements of society. “A Learning Society” is one in which life-long learning occurs and society develops means of stimulating new knowledge and of using that knowledge in organised ways to benefit society. “The Campus Culture” pertains to the culture within our colleges and universities, the changes in institutional culture that normally occur over time, and the changes that must take place if our institutions of higher education are to be fully effective in serving society in the future.

The Commission issued its first open letter to the presidents and chancellors of public universities early in 1997. The letter, “Returning to Our Roots: the Student Experience”, addresses the most fundamental issue in higher education: creating learning opportunities for all students. In May 1998, the Commission released its second challenge to presidents and chancellors: “Returning to Our Roots: Student Access”. In the foreseeable future, similar letters will be distributed on “The Engaged Institution”, “A Learning Society”, and “Campus Culture”.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Student Experience is basic to the purpose of American universities and colleges. Consequently, the Commission addressed that issue first. To be successful in providing the best student experience possible our institutions must adopt three fundamental ideals:

- “our institutions must become genuine learning communities, supporting and inspiring faculty, staff and learners of all kinds;
- our learning community should be student centred, committed to excellence in teaching and to meeting legitimate needs of learners wherever they are, whatever they need, whenever they need it;
- our learning community should emphasise the importance of a healthy learning environment that provides students, faculty and staff with the facilities, support and resources they need to make this vision a reality”.3

In support of these ideals the Commission offered “A Statement of Principles to Guide Academic Reform”, consisting of seven principles focused on:4

- a learning community, oriented around learners’ needs in a first-rate environment for learning;
- access and opportunities for all who are qualified;
- an education of value that will provide students with skills, attitudes and values required for success in life, citizenship and work or further education;
- dedication to cost containment;
- accountability to the many publics that higher education serves, including assessment of the outcomes of the student experience;
Taking Charge of Change: A Leadership Challenge for Public Higher Education

- meeting new needs of students everywhere and at all times;
- flexibility and responsiveness in order to meet more effectively the new needs of stakeholders and to be more responsible to the changes and emerging needs of society.

A new approach to the learning needs of individuals is in order. The student experience in the learning community of tomorrow's college or university will stress learning as opposed to teaching. Teaching and research will both be valued and, in fact, will be linked as part of the student's learning experience. Emphasis will be on results and competency rather than on seat time or accumulated student credit hours. Collaborative learning, learning in teams, and hands-on, interdisciplinary problem solving will be the norm. Co-curricular experiences will be integrated to the extent possible in the student's total learning experience. Information technology will enhance the learning experience for all - and for some it will enable freedom from time and space constraints. For some institutions, achieving these goals will require changes of attitudes, approaches, and management. Some colleges and universities are well along in making these changes.

New approaches and structures for enhancing the student experience include innovative partnerships with teachers in elementary and secondary schools, advanced placement in college courses for accomplished high school students, articulation agreements between community colleges and universities, integration of academic and extra-curricular activities (including transcripts for skills learned outside the normal academic environment). Emphasis is placed on learning; competency-based systems of assessment are being substituted for course-by-course assessments. Involvement of undergraduate students in the research and outreach activities of a university is becoming requirements for graduation. Information technology (IT) is being used to offer learning opportunities of an asynchronous nature for all students and as a means of reaching students at off-campus sites, including their own homes. IT has also made it possible for institutions to share courses for the benefit of each others' students. New partnerships between community colleges, corporate universities (e.g. Motorola University) and public universities are becoming a common model. All these changes require new approaches in authority, management, and accountability.

ACCESS

If universities are in fact in the business of nation building, then access by students to those universities becomes one of the defining domestic policy issues of our time. The Commission members appreciated that from the outset, and saw that access was more than admission to our universities, and must include success within our universities. Access in their minds was “access to success” and to the full promise of life in America. In simple terms, “Access” is a matter of admission,
retention, and graduation – graduation with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be a successful contributor to a learning society during the “information age”.5

As we look to the future, the traditional concepts of access to public universities need to be reconsidered. The growing diversity of our expanding population, the opportunities provided by information technology, and the limitation of public funding for higher education create complex challenges. We will know we have met these challenges when our student bodies, and particularly our graduating classes, reflect the ethnic and gender distribution of our societies.

In public higher education, access to educational success is complicated by three challenging issues: affordability, diversity and modern technology. The cost of education in a public university seems affordable for most students. However, costs which may be affordable to some can serve as obstacles or impediments to learning opportunities for others. Achieving and maintaining diversity on our campuses is a matter of extraordinary practical importance. In an increasingly diverse world, the decisions we make on our campuses will be better decisions if they are made with the full diversity of opinions, talents, and backgrounds around our tables. Moreover, our students leave us to make their way in this more diverse world and its job markets. We will serve them best if their experience with us prepares them for that world. We should broaden access because it is the right thing to do. But when all is said and done, we also need to broaden it because the practical need for diversity on our campuses is too compelling to ignore.

The third challenge is one offering new opportunities to reach students anywhere, anytime. It is a challenge involving access to learning for those who are constrained by space and time. The revolution in information technology offers new tools and new techniques for learning. While many may argue that there is no substitute for personal interaction, computers and other technologies offer chances to learn for some students where no other chances exist. Finding the full opportunity and taking advantage of the learning opportunity provided by information technology is a positive type of challenge. Affording and managing these rapidly developing technological opportunities will add to the affordability challenge mentioned earlier, and will certainly create management challenges.

To fully achieve access for all who have the innate ability to benefit from higher education, improvement of the academic preparation of students in elementary and secondary schools is essential; university admission policies must be re-examined and probably revised; everything possible must be done to see that those who are admitted to our institutions are successful in their efforts to learn and to achieve their educational goals; our institutions must be sufficiently flexible to recognise the need for new programs demanded by societal changes; and learning opportunities must be tailored to individual students and institutional impediments to learning removed.
ENGAGEMENT IN A LEARNING SOCIETY

Education itself constitutes a form of engagement with society. In the United States, the addition of research as well as extending the results of research to potential users became added forms of societal engagement during the latter 19th century. Today every university in America is deeply engaged with the publics it serves through a variety of forms of direct outreach (e.g. public institutes, centres, clinics, etc.). Outreach has become a significant element of the mission of all American public universities.

Outreach is a good word. It states exactly what is involved: a reaching out from the university to the people and organisations a university serves. Outreach involves transferring knowledge and technology from the university to its constituents; the flow is basically in one direction. Outreach today includes traditional extension and public service - but today it is not enough.

Engagement is more. Engagement involves transfers in two directions: a partnership of exchange between the university and its constituents. Engagement is beneficial to the university and to society and frequently involves shared goals, agenda, and measures of success. It includes working together and sharing expertise to solve problems. Engagement is both outreach and “in reach” into the university. Engagement is a way universities enhance society, by providing scholarly creativity and research; it also includes community participation in the functions of the university. Although engagement, as here defined, is not new to public universities – especially to Land-Grant universities – carried to new levels it will involve cultural changes inside and outside the university. Engagement is frequently a learning experience for those directly involved and as such should present a learning opportunity for students enrolled in our institutions. If community engagement is a meaningful learning experience, should it be regarded as a form of scholarly creativity? If so, an attitudinal shift for many within the university, and all that accompanies such a shift, will be required. To be successful such engagement and the associated change of culture must respect the values, academic and otherwise, of all involved. Attendant issues of accountability and assessment will need to be addressed. Significant and new forms of management will be required.

Today, the knowledge level of our citizens is higher than ever and is rising. Lifelong learning is a reality for many citizens, and as a result, society itself is assuming many of the characteristics of a learning organisation. “Learning societies” are beginning to develop. A learning society is one in which lifelong learning of individuals is a reality and society itself has developed organised ways of raising its collective educational level, of gaining new knowledge, and of applying that new knowledge for the benefit of all. Society itself becomes a learning entity which continually develops its ability to create new tools for collective improvement. In a
learning society, the techniques for the intellectual development of workers at all levels developed by organisations for their own advantage are, at the same time, beneficial to the larger community. Learning becomes one of the common practices and sources of motivation of individuals. New participants in the learning business, such as community colleges, corporate universities, and for-profit educators all contribute to expanding the opportunity for citizens to improve their knowledge and skill levels. New partnerships of education, business, and government are developed for both instruction and for the creation of knowledge. Shared goals, values, and purposes of society become part of the educational ethic of the society. Through competition as well as co-operation and collaboration the educational and learning level of society constantly improves.

Public universities must be key elements in the development of such learning societies. Their opportunities for outreach and engagement are limited only by their imagination and by an inflexibility to alter attitudes and their own culture. Universities must be prepared to assist in helping society capitalise on a higher level of knowledge and to disseminate, apply, and manage such knowledge. The role of the research university in the creation of knowledge seems fairly clear. But how that role is carried out may be altered by societal needs and by new partnerships. In a community in which there are many providers of learning opportunities, where partnerships are the norm, and where information technology is providing new opportunities for education, many new issues are created. Public universities will be involved in questions of regulation/deregulation of higher education, of the freedom of knowledge in an information age, and of the leadership implicit in the development of such a society. The evolution of a learning society has been underway for some time. The full potential of such a society will require changes in attitudes, and in accepted cultural practices both on and off campus. Higher education should assume the primary responsibility for bringing about these changes.

Both our institutions of higher education and our society must become genuine learning communities where access to learning opportunities in a healthy learning environment is available to all. Our citizens must continually learn at the highest levels possible. The challenge is a great one, an important one. Meeting it successfully will require fundamental changes in higher education.

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Are our institutions prepared for the future? Will we be able to serve our society as it needs to be served? Will we truly prepare each individual student for the uncertain world he or she will face?

It is certainly impossible to predict all the kinds of changes society and higher education will be facing, but it is possible to talk about change in general, and particularly to consider the ever-increasing speed of change. It becomes
obvious that in many areas the past was marked by stability, and change was an anomaly. But as we look to the future, change will become the norm and stability, the anomaly. Success, by almost any measure, will depend on our ability to adapt to rapid change and to work our way through the transitions that go with change. The impact of incredible change on learning by the individual is almost unimaginable. But as educators we cannot allow it to be unimaginable, because it is our charge, our role in society, to constantly prepare the individual to cope with change. In order to do this our institutions must be capable of rapid innovation. We must ask ourselves whether the management structure of higher education is capable of timely response to rapidly changing conditions within our global society, and whether we are as flexible as we should be.

In the future, as greater and greater emphasis is placed on learning by the individual, traditional methods, structures, and institutional processes will be replaced, the calendar changed, and the delivery of instruction focused on “anytime, anywhere” delivery. The traditions of the academic calendar, the curricular program, the classroom lecture, the credit hour structure will all be reviewed and most likely changed. Tomorrow’s college education will focus on outcomes and assessment will be on a competency basis. It will include the living environment as part of a better controlled learning environment. It will include learning by doing, learning in teams, interdisciplinary problem solving. It will include courses in lengths varying from a day or two to several years, “just in time” courses taught on an unscheduled basis as demand dictates. It will include a global and an international focus and will stress quality, critical thinking, communication skills and practice in confronting change. It will make use of advanced technologies as an extension of the human capability and will emphasise systems thinking. We can hope that it will prepare the student for an unpredictable future. The student experience in the future will be a learning adventure in an academic culture significantly different from that of today, every bit as exciting, and possibly more so.

Much of what I have just mentioned is already with us. Many of our institutions are experimenting with or initiating these innovations to the traditional approaches of yesterday – and today. We need only observe some of the relatively new participants in higher education – the corporate universities, the for-profit universities, or the new networks of so-called “virtual” universities – to see alternative ways of managing education. Organisations such as Motorola University, the University of Phoenix, the Western Governors University, and the Internet are providing what individual learners require. Greater focus is being placed on the basics of what is required for an individual to learn anywhere, anytime. What can we learn from Motorola University, an institution that works with a truly international “student body”? What can we learn from the University of Phoenix, a commercial enterprise with more than sixty campuses throughout the western hemisphere, focusing on the needs of adult learners? What can we learn from the
Western Governors University in terms of outcomes assessment, of programs designed for individual students, and of distant delivery of learning opportunities?

The future is here and we must look at our own institutions and our own opportunities for staying with that future. Do our mission statements, our general education requirements, our promotion and tenure guidelines truly serve the learning opportunities inherent in our institutions? Throughout history universities have responded as society has changed. But never before have we been faced with the velocity of change we face today. Coping with change, finding the opportunities associated with it, while maintaining our values will require new ways of thinking. We must recognise that change will be the norm. We have unique opportunities and daunting responsibilities to prepare learners for a world characterised by change.

NOTES

1. This paper is based on the discussions of the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, on the published letter-reports of the Commission, and on presentations and papers in press by this author.
2. Jim Appleberry, President, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, personal communication.
4. Ibid.
REFERENCES

Letter-reports of the Kellogg Commission:

Presentations and publications of John V. Byrne
“Changing the World – One Learner At a Time”,

“Outreach, Engagement, and the Changing Culture of the University”,
  The Journal of Public Service and Outreach (1998), University of Georgia.

“The Student Experience: Access to Success”,
Role Conflict and Ambiguity at the Departmental Level

Carin B. Eriksson,
Uppsala University
Sweden

ABSTRACT
This study describes ambiguity and role conflict at the departmental level. Using a cultural perspective, attention was focused on the situation of department chairs and how they and other individuals perceived the demands and expectations facing the department chair. Four different departments at Uppsala University, Sweden, and their department chairs, were studied using interviews and diaries. The study showed that numerous demands are placed on department chairs. Demands are at times contradictory and ambiguous, and department chairs use different approaches to handle conflicting demands. Their workdays are often long and fragmented, and they all believe that role conflict and ambiguity characterise the position.

INTRODUCTION
Current discussions about leadership in the academic setting are often concerned with formal leadership on higher levels of the university. Less attention has been paid to leadership in the various academic departments. Some very interesting studies have been undertaken about academic leadership at the departmental level (Tucker, 1984; Moses and Roe, 1990) but further research is needed. In many countries a number of changes have taken place in universities and departments in recent years. Sweden is no exception. The change programmes instituted have often been revolutionary and have involved new methods of departmental management, and decentralisation of administrative responsibility to departments (RUT, 1993). It is not always easy to implement change. Research on organisational change shows that people persist in holding on to their old habits and values (Pettigrew, 1985). In times of change, there can be conflicting ways of viewing

OECD 1999
reality, which can cause role conflict and ambiguity. The changes that have been made in recent years within the universities in Sweden have meant that increased authority has been delegated to the departments, resulting in greater demands on the department chair as the head of that department; as a manager and a leader (RUT, 1993). These new expectations and demands may cause role conflict and ambiguity. Furthermore, department chairs face situations of cultural diversity because they function in various arenas with different expectations and demands (Becher, 1989; Birnbaum, 1988). The purpose of this paper is to describe ambiguity and role conflict at the departmental level. The focus is on the department chairs and how they and other individuals perceived the demands and expectations facing the department chair.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGERIAL WORK

For a long time issues of leadership and management have been areas of great interest in the media, in the work of consultants, and in research. Yet, research on leadership and management in the academic world at the departmental level has not, at least in Sweden, been blooming. This is a deficiency since leadership in the academic context differs in many aspects from the kind of leadership that is practised in trade and industry. The criteria for what constitutes effective, successful behaviour and leadership differ (Kelly and Shaw, 1987, pp. 330-333). The beliefs and values held by the individuals about the organisation and how it should be led depend on the context. Even if we can see some similarities, we do not expect to see the same kind of leadership in the military as we do in a small family business or in universities. That means that there is no one right way to practice leadership. Different epochs have had different ideals, and different countries have different traditions as well.

The literature on leadership is overwhelming. Leadership issues have been looked at in many different ways. One perspective has tried to determine the basic characteristics that make a leader (trait theories); another has looked at how leaders behave (behavioural theories); others have studied the impact of situations on leadership (contingency theories); and some theories have emphasised how power and influence is used or how the culture affects leadership. Only in simple popular management “cookbooks” are the recipes for leadership clear and predictable. In real life, leadership is always limited by both external and internal factors. Lindblom (1959) wrote in his classic article that decision making is the “science of muddling through.” Research on leadership and decision-making processes in organisations has demonstrated that decision making is not simply a question for the “boss” but that several individuals are usually involved. Bounded rationality, divergent interests on the part of individuals and groups of individuals,
Role Conflict and Ambiguity at the Departmental Level

and other internal and external limitations mean that the department chair cannot be a dictator.

Specific characteristics of the university can also create special problems for department heads. Cohen and March (1974) clarified in their book Leadership and Ambiguity, The American College President, certain characteristics for the university. Their book emphasises the instability and complexity of the university:

“The organisation appears to operate on a variety of inconsistent and ill-defined preferences. It can be described better as a loose collection of changing ideas than a coherent structure. It discovers preferences through action more than it acts on the basis of preferences” (p. 3).

The process of teaching and conducting research is open to various interpretations. More or less fluid participation and, at times, a lack of common goals mean that certain departments are characterised by fragmentation. Other researchers have criticised the view of Cohen and March and argued that there is, however, an effort toward rationality in decision-making and control (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1991; Starbuck, 1983).

Management differs from leadership. Bass (1990, p. 19) wrote that the definition to be used for either one of the terms depends on the specific study. In this study (as in many others), for pragmatic reasons, the concepts leadership and management are used synonymously (see e.g. Bass 1990, p. 30-33; Schein, 1992, p. 5; Yukl, 1989, p. 4). Hughes et al. (1993) argued that much of the work undertaken in organisations needs both managerial and leadership competencies. It is clear that the notion of effective leadership in a managerial setting has become important. At the department level in the university, the two functions (leadership and management) are often closely integrated. Based on empirical work in the field of higher education one can conclude that the traditions of leadership in higher education are underpinned by entrenched amateurism (Middlehurst, 1993, pp. 178-179). Leadership tends to be perceived as a task almost any educated person can undertake and it requires no formal training. This means that the nature of leadership at the university in general, and (perhaps) at the departmental level in particular, is unclear. Managers at different levels can be expected to experience role conflict and role ambiguity.

ROLE CONFLICT AND AMBIGUITY

Much of organisation theory indicates that dysfunctional individual and organisational consequences result from the existence of role conflict and role ambiguity: when the behaviours expected of an individual are inconsistent role conflict occurs, and when there is a lack of the necessary information for a given organisational position role ambiguity will increase (Kahn et al., 1964). As subject departments at universities can be seen as professional organisations it is impor-
tant to understand Role Theory in that specific context. Many role-conflict situations are temporary but some positions constantly have to deal with role conflicts. The chair of the department may face such a situation, caught in the middle between superiors and subordinates. Blau and Scott (1962) pointed out that in professional organisations two sources of authority exist. These are, firstly, organisational discipline based on the power associated with the position (i.e. supported by formal position and sanctions) and secondly, professional expertise, which is enforced by collegial authority. Several studies have shown that individuals oriented primarily toward their professional norms are more critical of the organisation and are more likely to ignore administrative details (Blau and Scott, 1962; Evans, 1962). Becher and Kogan (1992) pointed out the diffusion of authority in universities and the considerable degree of autonomy exercised at basic units (such as departments) and at individual levels. This has implications for the process of change in universities. If employees at the university are not in favour of a change programme they might ignore the changes undertaken and keep acting in the way that they themselves prefer. This may cause even greater role conflicts and ambiguity for the middle management in such a situation.

METHOD

It is obvious that both role conflict and role ambiguity are important aspects of being a chair of a university department. This study was undertaken from a cultural perspective and aimed to provide a clearer picture of what it means to be a department chair. In order to understand role conflict and ambiguity, interest was focused on the situation of department chairs and how they, and other individuals, perceived the demands and expectations facing the department chair. Considering that our world is complex and that people have a limited mental capacity, it has been found that people who function within organisations have simplified concepts of what that organisation is and should be (e.g. Albert and Whetten, 1985). Research in a university context from a cultural perspective was introduced in 1972 by Burton Clark and was followed by others (Becher, 1989; Chaffee, 1984; Chaffee and Tierney, 1988; Harman, 1990). With a cultural perspective there is attention to the meanings and the processes through which the members of particular “worlds” make those worlds meaningful to themselves and others. The essence of this type of research consists of two conditions: a) the use of close-up, detailed observation of the natural world by the investigator, and b) the attempt to avoid prior commitment to any theoretical model (Van Maanen et al., 1982, p. 16).

Four different types of departments were included in the study; 1) a small/medium-sized (ca. 20 employees) liberal arts department (P1); 2) a small/medium-sized (ca. 20 employees) scientific/technical department (P2); 3) a medium-sized (50 employees) department in the social sciences (P3); 4) a large (ca. 150 employees) department in...
Role Conflict and Ambiguity at the Departmental Level

the field of science and technology with an extensive teaching and research workload (P4). The departments were chosen in order to present a more general spectrum of different perceptions rather than to reveal anything about the specific departments themselves. The interviews on which the study was based included those with 49 employees of the four departments. Extensive notes were taken during the interviews, and transcribed immediately following the visit. The four department chairs, were interviewed on four different occasions over a period of one and a half years. Some questions formulated in advance were asked at each interview, after which the interviews took on the character of informal discussions. To measure how the department chairs experienced their conflicting roles and uncertainty, a questionnaire was developed precisely for this purpose. The conflict and uncertainty questionnaire was inspired by the method used by Rizzo et al. (1970). The chairs were requested to respond to 20 items which dealt with role ambiguity and role conflict.

A diary method was used to determine the nature of the chairs’ working patterns and to obtain a picture of their patterns of contacts. The participating chairs were encouraged to list and categorise all work-related activities in their diaries. A model diary was created to simplify the entries as much as possible, and to facilitate the recording of what they did, with whom, and how. It was also important to include the fleeting contacts – those lasting just a few minutes. A great number of such contacts fragment the work day of the department chairs and make other tasks, such as individual research, difficult. The four department chairs kept diaries for 14 days, over approximately the same time period (late November to early December 1995). The diaries were then collected, coded, and processed statistically using Minitab.

THEMES OF THOUGHTS

An external observer of an organisation cannot understand or discover all the different aspects of an organisation. Neither can a person who has been involved in an organisation for a long time avoid making simplified pictures of the nature of the organisation. There were certain recurring themes in the interviews with the employees in the departments. The first of the three themes deals with the view of the department as a collegial body. The second theme sees the department as a professional body, and the third stresses varying goals and conflicts within the department. A fourth metaphor is inherent in the first three: the department is a part of the university bureaucracy, and the main task of the chair at present is to manage the finances and the administration of the department. Metaphors are often used in organisational theory to illustrate certain phenomena and are obviously not a full reproduction of an objective organisational reality (Morgan, 1986, p. 12). The empirical study showed that the knowledge of the researchers and teachers as to what the bureaucratic side of the university means to the depart-
A collegial body

In the collegial view, the role of the department chair is to facilitate and encourage the work of the individual and of the group. One of the professors explained his views about decision making the following way:

“It is very important that the decisions are not made above our heads.

What decisions?

Decisions that are important to all of us, of course. I don’t think that we all have to take part in small decisions such as vacations and leaves of different kinds. No, I mean the important decisions. We should make the important decisions together.

Who do you think of when you say ‘we’?

I think of us, we who work here - professors and associate professors together. We should make the important decisions together.”

This quote illustrates some of the characteristics in the collegial metaphor. This professor preferred a model for decision making in which “all make the important decisions together.” The professor was not the only one with that opinion; many of the employees talked about the importance of joint, democratic, consensus decision-making. This was also found to be the case in an earlier research project undertaken by Harman (1990, p. 32) in Australian universities. From this perspective, the department chair is often seen as a servant of the group, and the best department chair is the one who embraces the group’s values and goals to the greatest extent. Those who are involved solely in teaching or administration do not advocate this view. Administrative personnel do not expect to have a chair who serves; rather, they usually demand distinct leadership in which someone is clearly holding the reins. In spite of the administrative personnel’s very different expectations for the chair, the same person - the chair of the department - is responsible for the administrative as well as all the other aspects of departmental activities.

Professional organisation

The second organisational view that was clearly articulated was that of the department being a professional organisation. Many of those interviewed spoke of the
specific capabilities they (and others) possess, where expertise is an important basis for legitimacy, influence, and authority. They required that department chairs act as a leader, have the ability to inspire and lead personnel, and create a positive climate in the department. They also asked for a person who was able to attract resources for the benefit of the department by effectively representing the group of professionals. Consequently, they wanted an active, strategic, and inspiring force from their own field and not an administrator as their top leader. The competence and ability of the heads are of great importance. In the collegial metaphor, chairs of department are expected to act as servants whereas those in the professional metaphor are expected to act as leaders and to be able to represent the department well. In response to the question whether a professional manager (e.g. from private industry) could be the head of the department, the overwhelming majority said no. Instead they emphasised the need to know the organisation from the inside – to know the profession well and be successfully socialised into it.

The conflictual perspective

Several of those interviewed in the departments said that various individuals and groups of individuals had different goals in their work. Conflicting interests – caused by different goals, values, and expectations – can sometimes lead to tensions in the department. Conflicts can occur in many ways in a department, as in any other type of organisation. One metaphor often used in organisational theory for an organisation is the “political system.” With this metaphor, the point of departure is that individuals and groups of individuals compete and have different wills, values, interests, and norms (Cyert and March, 1963; Pettigrew, 1985). The conflicts observed in the four departments studied could be categorised into three types. The first category covers conflicts about the contents and character of diverse work tasks. Another category of conflicts includes the individual, career-oriented concerns: conflicts about who will get qualifying tasks, resources and so forth. The third category refers to those caused by personal characteristics, when people just simply “can’t get along.”

The majority of the employees interviewed emphasised that chairs must be able to manage complex situations and should not be afraid of conflicts. Earlier research showed that during times of change different strong conflicting goals are often expressed (Eriksson, 1995). Since the departments were facing change during the course of this study, the ability of the chair to handle conflicts was particularly important. A good department chair is, according to the interviewees, one who listens to and respects the diverse individuals and groups and has the ability to lead people. A bad chair was illustrated by one of the interviewed employees as follows:
Higher Education Management

“One who does not dare to get out from his office, who never eats his lunch or takes a cup of coffee with us or is always busy in external meetings or in his ego and career – that's a bad chair.”

A majority of the interviewees said that, in times of conflict, heads must make clear what is important for the department and create a commitment to it. One of the interviewed employees said:

“A good chair informs and tells us about what is going on. He or she can explain why certain things have to be done and does not care about irrelevant things. A good chair doesn't sit on old information or myths or choose to be the voice for the central administration or some groups in the department. He must be open to disparate needs and not focus on just one or a few problems.”

Expected roles - summary

Many different expectations are expressed at the departmental level. Interviews with employees at the departments identified the themes (described above) of how they viewed their department. The beliefs and values concerning what the department is and should be, are closely connected with the expectations of, and demands made, on the chair of the department. The expectations that are placed on the department chairs could be summarised in terms of the following roles; Able administrator, Leader, Representative, Skilled economist, Diplomat, Public relations officer, Personnel chief, Co-ordinator, Strategist, Experienced teacher, Mediator, Counsellor, Established researcher, Decision-maker, Spokesperson, Boss, Conflict-solver, Advisor, Colleague, Provider of inspiration, Problem-solver, and Servant. As we can see, chairs face many expectations. How do chairs handle these many expectations? And how do the chairs perceive their work?

BEING THE CHAIR

In interviews with the different department chairs in the empirical study all confirmed that they are aware that they are expected to assume many different roles. They stated that it is not possible for them to meet all expectations – which sometimes appear to be either incompatible or impossible - and a deliberate choice must be made as to which roles are of secondary importance. One of the responding department chairs stated that a prerequisite for being the perfect department chair was to not be oversensitive to the different demands placed on the department chair:

“I believe that I handle this job rather well - I am tough enough for it. It is a matter of recognising that one cannot satisfy all demands. It is also necessary
Role Conflict and Ambiguity at the Departmental Level

to be able to choose what one wants to prioritise and dare to make unpopular decisions."

Another department chair in the study said that it is very difficult to take the role as manager and that it is difficult to handle all of the demands.

"I am not the manager type. I do not want to make decisions and control others in the department. I know that I am expected to take a stand and get involved with university issues, but I am not that type of person. I serve as department chair only because I feel it is my turn to bear the responsibility now, but it is oppressive knowing that I cannot live up to the demands."

The empirical study does not give any answers about which of the department chairs best succeeds as manager or about the process of prioritising roles. It has proven to be very difficult to evaluate in a scientific manner which manager is most effective. There is no single "best approach".

Based on the conflict and uncertainty questionnaire devised for this study (see Table 1), it was found that all the department chairs felt both conflict and uncertainty in their roles. Three of four department chairs felt uncertain about how much authority they had. They all believed that they as department chairs sometimes had to perform tasks that were too easy or too boring and they often received incompatible requests from two or more people. Item number 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 18 and 20 dealt with role conflict and item number 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17 and 19 dealt with role ambiguity. Just on a few questions (item number 2, 7, 10, 11 and 19) are the opinions divided. On those questions, department chair 2 (P2), working in a small/medium-sized (ca. 20 employees) scientific/technical department, expressed little less role conflict and ambiguity. On all the other questions did everyone of the department chairs express role conflict and ambiguity.

To a certain extent, department chairs are able to choose the aspects of their job they wish to stress or avoid. The study shows that the four department chairs used their time differently and that they sometimes had different ideas as to how the chairmanship should be handled. All four chairs worked more hours than were expected. The average hours worked by the four chairs was 50 hours a week. This includes not only conventional working time but also time spent in official entertaining, in work-related social activities, and in working at home. It does not include non-working lunches or other periods of private time during the workday. There are no comparable studies of actual working hours of managers on this level in Sweden. In an earlier study of 160 managers in British industry (Stewart, 1967) the managers worked an average of 42 ¼ hours a week. A comparative study of 400 senior managers in Britain and the USA found that, on average, they worked a 50-hour week (Norburn, 1981).
Three of the four department chairs used varying amounts of their free time to carry out some of their tasks. As many different expectations are raised at the same time, which lead to role conflicts, one could expect their workdays to be fragmented. It was also found through the diaries that a large portion of the activities the department chairs carry out last 15 minutes or less (see Figure 1).

The department chair in the largest department (P4) had the most fragmented workday, and just over 80 per cent of all his activities lasted 15 minutes or less. Someone calling or knocking on the door, every 11 minutes on average, also interrupted the department chair in the largest department. Although the job of department chair is officially a half-time position, there is little chance of working uninterrupted on other tasks during the day. This meant that the chair in the largest department was not able to spend any time at all on his own research. This was also true of the department chair in the smaller liberal arts department (P1). However, the department chairs in the medium-sized department (P3) and in one of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have enough time to complete my work.</td>
<td>P2</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I perform tasks that are too easy or too boring.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There are clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I have to do things that should be done differently.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am able to act the same regardless of the group I am with.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am corrected or rewarded when I really don’t expect it.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I work under incompatible policies and guidelines.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I know that I have divided my time properly.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I know what my responsibilities are.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I have to “feel my way” in performing my duties.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I feel certain how I will be evaluated for a raise or for a promotion.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I have just the right amount of work to do.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I know exactly what is expected of me.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I am told how well I am doing my job.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I work on unnecessary things.</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Rizzo et al. (1970).
the smaller departments (P2) were able to work on their research to a satisfactory extent. All four department chairs stressed that it is important for them to conduct research. Unfortunately, when there is not enough time for everything research was the first area to suffer.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Every department is, to a certain extent, unique. But this study seeks to understand the shared and common interpretations – on how the departmental employees perceived the demands and expectations facing the department chairs. Certainly, the department chairs use their time differently and they can to a certain extent choose which aspects of the job they wish to stress or avoid. Yet, there are several common features in the departments that were studied. First, the three images of a department – the collegial, the professional, and the conflictual – recurred and permeated all four departments. There appears to be an “academic culture” with deeply rooted beliefs and values that unites departments of varying natures. This academic culture causes specific conditions for the academic leader – the chair of the department – and stresses the importance of not simply applying industrial models of leadership into the academic context.
Secondly, as we have seen, regardless of department, people have a great number of different expectations of the department chair. Differing and conflicting expectations of a certain person or position can cause problems. Chairs face an inherent conflict as they are expected to carry out the rector’s will, with the formal responsibilities it may imply, and at the same time they are considered by the departmental employees to be “one of us”. Many different expectations are expressed at the departmental level. These expectations are closely linked with the individuals’ view of the organisation and how the work should be carried out. The beliefs and values concerning what the department is and should be, proved to be closely connected with the expectations of, and demands made, on the chair of the department. Earlier research has shown how beliefs and values interact and reinforce one another. Human beings tend to seek consistency among their beliefs and values, they try to reconcile divergent attitudes (Zajonc, 1960). The expectations that are placed on the department chairs could be summarised in many roles. One conclusions that can be drawn from the extensive list of roles presented earlier is that it is hard to meet everyone’s expectations.

Finally, we should also note the reactive behaviour of the department chair as an effect of handling role conflicts. All of the responding department chairs experienced a certain degree of insecurity and often found themselves in conflicting roles and ambiguous situations. The interviewed department chairs said that they chose which roles they wished to prioritise. In situations where we are forced to prioritise – where the demands are many and resources are limited – we must choose to work with whatever is experienced as most rewarding (or least punishing). We have also been able to see that the department chairs are often interrupted and that their workdays are rather fragmented. The department chairs also stated that they do not have time for long-range planning. This calls to mind a classic work by Sune Carlson (1951) in which it was observed that people at the managerial level seldom control their time, that they have rather fragmented days, and that they act reactively more often than actively. Carlson observed:

“Before we made the study, I always thought of a chief executive as the conductor of an orchestra, standing aloof on his platform. Now I am in some respects inclined to see him as the puppet in a puppet-show with hundreds of people pulling the strings and forcing him to act in one way or another” (p. 46).

Further research is needed in order to understand the interaction between the individual, the role expectations and the job. We also need to find out what aspects of behaviour are determined by the individual and what by the job and the wider context.
NOTES

1. For the purpose of this paper, the position “prefekt” in the Swedish university system is translated into either the chair or the head of the department. The terms “head” and “chair” of the department are here used synonymously. A distinction between the terms could be made, reflecting the different selection patterns or organisational images in use in different university systems. In this paper, such a distinction is not necessary.

2. Of this number, 14 had purely administrative positions (many of the others had jobs including some type of administration). The remaining 35 were teachers/researchers in the departments.
REFERENCES

ALBERT, S. and WHETTEN, D.A. (1985),
"Organisational Identity," in L.L. Cummings, and B.M. Staw (eds.), Research in Organisa-
tional Behavior, 7, JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, pp. 263-295.

BASS, B. (1990),
Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership, Theory, Research and Managerial Applications, The
Free Press, New York.

BECHER, T. (1989),
Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines, SRHE/Open
University Press, Buckingham.

BECHER, T. and KOGAN, M. (1992),

BIRNBAUM, R. (1988),
Francisco.

BLAU, P.M. and SCOTT, R.W. (1962),
Formal Organisations, Chandler, San Francisco.

CARLSON, S. (1951),
Executive Behaviour, Strömbergs, Stockholm.

CHAFFEE, E.E. (1984),
"Successful Strategic Management in Small Private Colleges", Journal of Higher Education,

Collegiate Culture and Leadership Strategies, American Council of Education, Macmillan, New
York.

COHEN, M.D. and MARCH J.G. (1974),

CLARK, B. (1972),
"The Organisational Saga in Higher Education", Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 17,
No. 2, pp. 178-184.

CYERT, R.M. and MARCH, J.G. (1963),

OECD 1999
Role Conflict and Ambiguity at the Departmental Level

CZARNIAWSKA-JOERGES, B. (1991),
Rationality as an Organisational Product, manuscript, Företagsekonomiska institutionen, Lunds Universitet.

ERIKSSON, C.B. (1995),
Föreställningar och värderingar i en organisation under förändring, ak. avhandling, Företagsekonomiska institutionen, Uppsala Universitet.

EVANS, W.M. (1962),

HARMAN, K.M. (1990),

HUGHES, R.L., GINNETT, R.C. and CURPHY, G.J. (1993),
Leadership. Enhancing the Lessons of Experience, Irwin Homewood, Boston.

KAHN, R.L., WOLFE, D.M., QUINN, R.P., SNOEK, J.D. and ROSENTHAL (1964),
Organisational Stress, Wiley, New York.

KELLY N. and SHAW, R. (1987),
“Strategic Planning by Academic Institutions - Following the Corporate Path?”, Higher Education, 16, pp. 319-336.

KOTTER, J.P. (1990),

LINDBLOM, C. (1959),

MIDDLEHURST, R. (1993),

MORGAN, G. (1986),
Images of Organisations, Sage, Newbury Park.

MOSES, I. and ROE, E. (1990),
Heads and Chairs, Managing Academic Departments, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane.

NORBURN, D. (1981),

PETTIGREW, A. (1985),
The Awakening Giant, Continuity and Change in Imperial Chemical Industries, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

RIZZO, J.R., HOUSE, R.J. and LIRTMAN, S.I. (1970),
“Role Conflict and Ambiguity in Complex Organisations”, Administrative Science Quarterly, pp. 50-163.

RUT (1993),
Arbetsrapport 1 från utbildningsdepartementet (Working Report 1 from the Ministry of Education), Fritzes, Stockholm.

OECD 1999
SCHEIN, E.H. (1992),
Organisational Culture and Leadership, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

STARBUCK, W. (1983),

STEWART, R. (1967),

TUCKER, A. (1984),

Varieties of Qualitative Research, Sage, Los Angeles.

YUKL, G.A. (1989),

ZAJONC, R.B. (1960),
The Engagement of Universities in Regional Economic Regeneration and Development: a Case Study of Perspectives

Madeleine Atkins, John Dersley and Richard Tomlin
University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
United Kingdom

ABSTRACT
This article seeks to analyse the factors that encourage or impede a university’s engagement with the economic development and regeneration agendas of its region. The article draws on work conducted by a team at Newcastle University for the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE) during 1996 and 1997. The work involved a detailed case study of one region – the North East of England – with comparative data obtained from the West Midlands. A 2x2 matrix is developed by the authors from the data using the twin functions of teaching and research analysed against organisational structure and funding.

INTRODUCTION
The last decade has seen increased interest in the potential roles that higher education institutions (HEIs) can play in the economies of their immediate region (DES, 1985; DES, 1991; Hoare, 1991; Goddard et al., 1994; McNay, 1994; Dearing, 1997). In part this has stemmed from the recognition that they are often major employers in their own right, significant consumers of goods and services in the locality and, in their students, a useful source of cheap, part-time labour. In part it stems from HEIs involvement in technology transfer, or schemes to encourage the dissemination of innovative best practice, that have been devised, propagated and often funded through national governments or by international agencies such as the European Commission. In part it stems from beliefs about the contribution that HEIs can make to the (regional) skill base and their place in the formulation and implementation of (regional) human resource policies by enhancing the
employment-related skills of all their students from access to doctoral level. (Skilbeck and Connell, 1996; Woollard, 1995; HEQC, 1997; Harvey et al., 1997; Neailey, 1997; Dearing, 1997).

In some regions in England, including the North East and West Midlands, the increasing regional focus has been manifested in a changed relationship between HEIs and their local Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), formalised in University-TEC Agreements which are funded on a performance basis by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). No longer are HEIs regarded as simply one among a number of potential training providers; rather they have become partners in providing labour market intelligence and in determining high level skill strategies.

This latest shift in emphasis has been strengthened by the recognition, common to many countries, that technology transfer is not a narrow, linear matter of patents, licences and new equipment undertaken at the end of research projects. Rather, it is a complex, holistic process involving multiple partners and crucially dependent on the quality and nature of the interactions between the human beings involved (Botham and Eadie, 1997; Grant et al., 1996; Walshok, 1995, 1996).

Behind the interest in regional development lurks the concern over the falling rate of return of graduates to society, and the debate over the relative merits of further expansion of undergraduate provision from the public purse (Keep and Mayhew, 1996; Dearing, 1997). One can argue that the pressure applied by successive governments for universities to contribute more effectively and immediately to wealth creation in order to justify continuing public investment has led to a normative expectation that universities should adopt a regional role in addition to their national and international missions.

For all the interest and pressure, however, previous studies suggest that, with notable exceptions, many HEIs in England do not have a fully articulated regional strategy and that the initiatives which have been put in place are patchy (Biggs et al., 1996). Universities in England operate within a predominantly national context which exerts a powerful influence on the extent of regional engagement. The international literature on technology transfer and on the engagement of HEIs with small and medium-sized companies suggests that this state of affairs pertains in other European countries too (Prosser, 1997) and in the United States (Feller, 1994). Conflicts in values, inadequacies or misalignments in structures, the absence of sufficiently strong incentives, and incoherencies in funding arrangements, have all been suspected as reasons for HEIs’ reluctance or inability to play a fuller role in regional development (Packham and Tasker, 1997; Kearst, 1995; Henkel, 1997).
THE STUDY

We examined two regions (as defined by the government), the North East and the West Midlands, in an effort to identify factors that would either promote or inhibit the engagement of universities in the economic development agendas. The two regions are, on the surface, sharply contrasting. The North East consists of a clearly-bounded geographical area and has strong historical and cultural roots which are once again seeking to find political expression in the calls for a regional assembly. Further, the North East as a unit receives substantial funding to support economic development against a Single Programming Document agreed between the UK government, regional partners and the European Commission. By contrast, there are fewer clear “edges” to the West Midlands and less historical and cultural coherence so that most of the people we spoke to saw “the region” simply as an administrative creation of central government. Sub-regional identities were, however, strong in both areas. And in neither region (with one exception) was there convergence between the boundaries of the Training and Enterprise Councils, the local authorities and the localities with which the HEIs are particularly identified.

In comparison to the HEIs in the West Midlands, the five higher education institutions in the North East are sparsely spread with less apparent differentiation in their “distinctive niches” as a consequence. The economic base is also different. The North East, following the demise of its heavy industries, has sought to rebuild through inward investment while the West Midlands has a more diverse economy which is being renewed to a greater extent by indigenous development. The potential economic role for universities is therefore different and this can be seen in the inter-HEI structure that has evolved in the North East and which has no counterpart in the West Midlands. HESIN (Higher Education Support for Industry in the North East) came into existence in the 1980s as a voice for all the HEIs in the region and as a platform for joint action. By contrast, it was an initiative of the Government Office in the West Midlands that first produced joint meetings among the region’s universities.

The methodology for the study was that of the case study. The first and more extensive case study to be conducted was that in the North East. Data collection included semi-structured interviews with vice-chancellors and pro-vice-chancellors, chief executives and senior members of TECs and other development agencies, and more informal meetings with the Director and senior officers of the Government Office. Members of the project team attended regional planning and policy meetings at which the HEIs were represented. Survey data were obtained from employers while national databases were analysed for patterns of student recruitment and graduate flow in and out of the region (UCAS and HESA databases). Specific documentary analysis was undertaken on bids for European regional development funding, on existing HEI–industry links.
partnership projects, and on TEC-HEI strategy documents. The findings which emerged from this first case study were then tested in interviews with comparable senior staff in universities and agencies in the West Midlands to see the extent to which they were replicated in a contrasting region.

It should be noted that the interviewees in the universities were all institutional “leaders” and that the findings reflect their perspectives rather than those of staff more directly engaged in teaching students in academic departments.

The data was subjected to content analysis using conventional techniques, and a series of inter-regional workshops was held during the project to enable provisional findings to be reported to “key players” in both regions (identified through the fieldwork) for validation and for a full discussion of their implications.

THE MATRIX

The analysis of the data and discussions in the workshops suggested that a matrix (Table 1) would be helpful in interpreting the HEI perspectives on engagement in economic regeneration and development in both regions. The similarities between the factors at work in the HEIs in the two regions were very strong indeed in spite of the differences in economic context outlined above. The matrix contained one axis labelled with the twin cores of a university’s work: the curriculum and research (including consultancy); while the other axis picked up institutional mission (with accompanying organisational structures), and funding. Within each of the four resulting cells it was possible to identify from the data a set of “drivers” which predisposed an HEI towards a regional economic role and a set of “inhibitors” which tended to restrain its engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell 1: Curriculum/mission and organisational structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drivers for adoption of regional role</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical roots linking the institution firmly to its local manufacturing base, its city or local authority. This was felt by participants in the study to be weakening as a factor fol-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The matrix of HEI disposition toward regional economic role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission/Organisational structures</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Drivers</td>
<td>3. Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inhibitors</td>
<td>Inhibitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>2. Drivers</td>
<td>4. Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inhibitors</td>
<td>Inhibitors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors.
lowing incorporation of the former polytechnics as "national" universities and the
depth of traditional regional manufacturing industries such as mining and ship
building. However, where there was a clear sub-regional identity reflected in the
"territories" of a university and the agencies it was linked to, the sense of "regional
mission" was much stronger than where "territories" were less clearly delineated.

Desire of HEIs to help regional development agencies to attract firms requiring high-status,
full fee programmes, particularly at postgraduate level (and collaborative research of course: cell 3). New courses consequent on the inward investment of Samsung, Siemens, and Nissan were given as examples here in the North East.

Desire of HEIs to improve their graduates' chances of obtaining appropriate jobs by develop-
ing their employment-related attributes and skills through a range of work placements and projects
with local employers - particularly in the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector. Being
able to demonstrate good graduate employment rates was thought to be an
increasingly important factor in securing recruitment of new students who will be
concerned to pay off their accumulated debts quickly at the end of their course
and realise the private rate of return on their investment in going to university. It
was also clear that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (the HEFCE)
would take employment rates into account when deciding where to award extra
student numbers in the future.

Interviewees thought that well designed placements and projects enhanced the curriculum
and were a particularly effective means of developing a constructive and on-going relationship with an employer. They were also a low cost, low risk way of bringing smaller businesses into closer relationship with HEIs. Further, where (as frequently happened) students were offered and accepted a job with their placement/project provider this meant that high level skills were being retained in the region. In turn, the presence of a graduate employee could enable the firm better to appreciate and grasp confidently the opportunities for collaborating with a university. This could lead to other, income-generating activities for the university such as continuing profes-

ional development (CPD) and short consultancies. These views support those
reported in Harvey's recent survey (Harvey, 1996).

The desire of HEIs to increase their portfolio of income-generating postgraduate (PG) and
post-experience CPD programmes to compensate for the tightly controlled quotas operating at
undergraduate level. It was felt that "learning for life" should open up major new mar-
kets for HEIs and that PG and CPD students were more likely to be recruited
regionally than nationally - thus making the curriculum more responsive to
regional characteristics. Enhanced PG/CPD provision, especially when delivered
flexibly and on a part-time basis in response to employer needs, was believed to
improve the levels of skill in the region and to disseminate leading edge knowl-
edge and practice vital for sustained economic development.

OECD 1999
Inhibitors to adoption of a regional development role

Interviewees in the HEIs pointed out that one cannot assume that young people in (or out with) a region will be attracted to study those courses which are particularly in the region’s economic interests – at least as defined by existing agencies. Indeed there was evidence from one of the universities in the study that home-based students in its subregion, like others nation-wide, preferred courses on communication and media studies to applied science or chemical engineering which would have been more relevant to the dominant local industries. Graduates from engineering courses in a second university were no more likely to take up employment in engineering firms in the North East, despite their prevalence, than in other regions of England.

Students from lower socio-economic groups are more likely than their wealthier peers to attend their local “new” university. In an area of economic decline they will have strong first hand experience of the problems of their local industrial base. Many therefore look to the university to provide them with the means of leaving the region by acquiring portable skills and knowledge, rather than locking them into it by following courses seen as relevant to the local economy. Since funding increasingly follows the student any tension tended to be resolved on the side of student preferences with the result that HEIs which used to have a pronounced regional flavour to their courses now have curricula that look much like others in the country.

Caps on the number of publicly funded students that each university may recruit can lock HEIs into an historic pattern of subject provision: even if there is a demand for diversification at undergraduate level to respond to changing regional needs, there is very little flexibility to do so and little incentive at departmental level in the absence of severe recruitment problems to existing courses.

Participants in the study frequently pointed out that a regional economic development strategy embracing all actors did not exist. All organisations and agencies which have a role in regional economic development have their own planning documents, mission statements, etc., which tend to be shaped by their need to bid for funds from various national sources rather than by a determination to identify long term regional goals. As a consequence, there was no single, agreed regional HRM document in either region to which all HEIs could subscribe to guide their curriculum planning. Even where efforts had been made to analyse labour market needs, the disparity in time-scales between the emergence of a skill shortage (or a new skill requirement) and the eventual production of graduates from a new programme imposed severe constraints on the capacity of universities to respond quickly to specific short-term regional needs.

Promotion and other reward systems in HEIs work against investment of time in design and delivery of CPD short courses, or customised, non-award bearing programmes, or more open/flexible distance learning opportunities which might...
be closer to what the region needs to upskill its existing workforce. Lecturers are likely to prioritise full-time undergraduate courses where they are coping with large numbers, award-bearing masters/doctoral programmes which carry status, and their research.

It was felt that many SME employers displayed a volatility and inconsistency in identifying and articulating the mix of knowledge and skills that their businesses needed, did not have the time or commitment to train their employees and did not necessarily make best use of their investment in a graduate. Their stance was (understandably) shaped by the “crisis of the day” rather than by longer term considerations. These points echo those made in a recent Institute of Management survey of managers of small businesses (IOM, 1997) and in the recent policy document of the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE, 1997).

For a substantial proportion (50-60 per cent) of programmes currently offered by the HEIs in the study the content was determined and accredited by national professional/statutory bodies which on the whole did not give much attention to regional development priorities.

In some HEIs in the study there were felt to be too few executive/implementation links between the senior management team and individual lecturers. So regional policy initiatives agreed by senior management in their networks were not in fact followed through on the ground. On the other side, middle managers in the regional agencies such as the TECs and Government Office had very few links to individual lecturers or departments except in the “semi-detached” units like Business Schools and Industry Centres. For them too, collaborative agreements reached in joint HEI/Agency senior management meetings might have little impact on their day to day ways of working. The emphasis on interactions at senior levels, based on a business assumption that power will be concentrated at the top of the organisation – and hence that such interactions will produce results – is often misplaced. Experience in both the North East and the West Midlands suggests that effective networks between key people at middle management levels (who have the confidence of their superiors) are an essential complement to top level contacts. Top management can sanction, but rarely do very senior people have the time to develop complex collaborations, still less to see them through into operation and then keep them running. This work calls for a different set of skills and commitments.

**Cell 2: Curriculum/funding factors**

**Drivers for adoption of regional development role**

Where an HEI cannot rely for its solvency on its core grant from the Funding Council then it is likely to be attracted to income generating regional initiatives.
It was felt that many more students in the future would study from home to avoid large debts on graduation. There is therefore an incentive for HEIs to develop regional access arrangements, local further education franchises, and work-based learning initiatives to protect market share and open up new, non-traditional student markets. Participants concluded that these new “ladders of opportunity” would bring into HE students with deep local roots and little intention of leaving the area. To be attractive to them, the curriculum would have to appear regionally as well as personally attractive, be more flexible in its delivery and make its relevance to work futures in the region more explicit.

Inhibitors to adoption of a regional development role

The HEFCE formula for funding teaching, which accounts for 60-80 per cent of many HEIs’ income p.a., does not currently reflect any regional criteria. In the future, regional criteria will be considered only as one of several factors in the allocation of extra, rather than core, student numbers.

If an HEI is relatively financially secure on its core HEFCE funding, then in a climate of resource cuts it may withdraw from activities such as regional, collaborative short-term projects because they appear to be marginal yet expensive of senior staff time and a drain on overall budgets.

As a rule HEIs do not charge the full costs of continuing professional development, post experience programmes and they are frequently subsidised by other provision. However, as government core funding diminishes, HEIs will review the income and expenditure for all their operations and may well decide to drop those which are unprofitable even if they are designed to serve a regional need.

The regional incentive funding made available to HEIs through the Government Offices, TECs or other regional development agencies cannot currently bear the full costs of new undergraduate or postgraduate programmes.

Several participants pointed out that there were too few sources of financial support for individual students in the region wishing to access the highest levels of skills training. Postgraduate studentships are small in number and are distributed on an historical, national basis that takes no account of regional needs. Historically, TECs and Government Offices have been most concerned with training opportunities at Level 3, not 4 or 5. Projects funded by the European Union, which can provide financial support for courses and students, are a nightmare of bidding and late payment with some interviewees doubting whether there was any overall net gain for the HEIs involved.

The way that TECs and HEIs are funded leads both partners to see training in terms of provision of “courses” delivered in a certain place at a certain time and with a rather traditional specification. In the view of some participants, this has
inhibited development of more flexible types of learning opportunity which might be better suited to employees and employers in the region. One example cited was a recent HEFCE consultation document on the Funding of Teaching which proposed that distance learning provision would attract a lower payment than traditional on-campus delivery.

Cell 3: Research and consultancy/mission and organisational structure

Drivers for adoption of regional development role

The perceived thrust of government policy—research as an aid to wealth creation. Study participants pointed to the shift of emphasis in research councils from responsive to directed mode. The research councils were also focusing fundamental research in line with the Technology Foresight exercise and were requiring bids to demonstrate the involvement of user groups in the definition and design stage of the project as well as in the dissemination stage. It was noted, however, that these factors promoted industrial links in general; they do not bring a specifically regional dimension to projects and programmes. Nevertheless it was hoped that the proposed policy factor in HEFCE’s selective research funding would mean that more projects acquired a regional dimension to them. Further evidence came from Department of Trade and Industry which had established a regional mechanism for pursuing the Foresight initiative with a view to supporting HEI/regional industry partnerships in setting national ground rules for technology transfer. A new role had also been given to the Government Offices in prioritising Foresight Challenge bids and in selecting Faraday Centres with both initiatives requiring strong links to HEIs.

Involvement of the case study HEIs in regional fora concerned with technology development and transfer including the Regional Innovation and Technology Strategy (RITS), Regional Technology Foresight, and the Northern Informatics Applications Agency (NIAA). For example, the European Process Industries Centre in which one of the universities in the North East is heavily involved was taken up through the RITS for funding from European regional development funds. Additionally several of the HEIs had aligned themselves closely with local Business Links. The demand from the Government Offices and some Training and Enterprise Councils for collective HEI action as a pre-condition of funding projects had helped to sharpen consensus on regional priorities. The example offered was the funding of the Knowledge House—a brokerage service designed to link regional businesses with relevant research expertise in the five universities in the North East. This in turn had led to greater awareness among senior managers in HEIs of the need collectively to influence the R&D agendas of the region.
The Teaching Company Scheme (TCS) had in the view of participants in the study offered a successful model of a programme with a regional dimension. The presence of regional TCS consultants with a brief to act as brokers in putting together Teaching Company programmes has been instrumental in bringing together HEIs and local companies that might not otherwise have worked together.

Inhibitors to adoption of regional developmental role

Currently the research agenda of HEIs is much influenced by the Research Councils and the Government who do not require evidence of consultation with, or benefit to, regional interests when reaching funding decisions.

In traditional universities promotion depends on research of national or international significance rather than contribution to regional development. Similarly there is no status or other incentive for applying the research findings of others to the solution of problems in local companies. These points may not be so true in the new universities although at least one pro-vice-chancellor in a new university believed that the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) had distracted some staff from contributing to the University’s regional mission.

Once again the absence of linkages between policy formation at senior management level and the research agendas adopted by individuals and groups lower in the hierarchy (who have a less well developed sense of corporate identity) may weaken the effectiveness of “agreed” regional R&D priorities. For example, in one HEI a national lead in virtual reality and community informatics grew from the enthusiasm and determination of an individual lecturer, not from the corporate plan.

Cell 4: Research and consultancy/funding

Drivers for adoption of regional developmental role

In the new universities, HEFCE funding for research awarded for the first time in 1992 tended to be allocated to projects which acquired external support from industrial partners. This was felt to have led overall to increased funding for research on local issues. (However, this source of HEFCE funding has since been discontinued and replaced by a scheme centred on individual academics wishing to work for a period of time in a department with a high research rating. There is no guarantee that the resulting research will have a regional focus.)

Opportunities for regionally focused research in the health care field are increasing, especially in the new universities, because of funding links with local National Health Trusts and training consortia.
European funding which does have a regional dimension has been crucial to the development of research in the new universities in the North East. They were proportionately more likely to have projects going forward for consideration for these sources of funding.

**Inhibitors to adoption of regional development role**

Base funding for research in HEIs is selective and likely to get more so to the advantage of institutions in the “superleague” who tend not to have regional concerns at the heart of their mission. A significant proportion of funding for the pre-1992 universities is dependent on the results of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). Few, if any, of the 1996 RAE panels identified a contribution to regional economic development as one of their criteria for regarding a department's submission as a 5*, 5, 4 or 3a – these being the ratings which receive funding. International, leading-edge significance is what is looked for, followed by research that is regarded by academic peers as of national importance. The number of research active staff is the main volume measure thus strengthening the claim of individual academics to pursue their own research plans regardless of regional priorities. It is worth noting here that the issue of regional research requirements did not feature in the recent HEFCE Consultation Paper on the organisation of the next RAE. Instead the paper proposes involving more international peer reviewers in order to give greater substance to the claims of “international excellence” used as a criterion for the higher grades (HEFCE, 1997).

The other side of the Dual Support system, funding from the Research Councils, again does not require or reward in England a regional dimension in bids, Programmes or Centres. The system as a whole is multiplicative and therefore very powerful as a determinant of behaviour. Departments that do well in the RAE are likely to be successful in bidding to the Research Councils and vice versa.

Judgement of research quality by academic peers is deeply entrenched in the RAE and Research Council processes. This may militate against the success of projects that have a regional focus either because they look parochial, or because they are replicative of work elsewhere rather than breaking new ground, or because they look too “applied” as opposed to “basic”. The informal, discipline-based networks which many believe are powerful determinants of the success or otherwise of research bids tend to have a national, not a regional, base maintained through research conferences or subject associations and co-membership of national committees.

Research funding from the European Union R&D programmes in Framework IV, from national government departments and from most charities does not generally require or reward a close identification with regional development issues.
R&D funds tend to flow to places with a strong HE-industry nexus. HEIs in regions like the North East that lack a major industrial research base will therefore tend to seek partnerships outside the region in order to compete with other universities for research funds. Certain universities in our study had found that relationships with branch plants in the region, while useful in other ways, had not produced much in the way of research funding.

The European Union itself funds work on regional development in "centres of excellence" wherever they may be. It does not necessarily fund such research in HEIs in regions which have marked developmental needs. The EU has recognised the potential problem in this approach and the STRIDE programme was designed to counteract it by promoting diffusion of new technologies into disadvantaged regions. However, the HEIs in this study did not feel that they had had a well-defined role in the local implementation of STRIDE.

Regional programmes do not command sufficient funds to commission a research programme of substance focused on regional development issues.

**DISCUSSION**

Several points emerge from the matrix which require further discussion in terms of values, structures and funding.

Two points in relation to values can be made. First, only one interviewee questioned whether universities were getting too closely identified with the economic agendas of the region. The other interviewees in HEIs seemed to accept, often enthusiastically, that all aspects of learning in a university could benefit from partnerships with the private, public and voluntary sectors in the region, though they wished such relationships to extend beyond the immediate region as well. No interviewee saw his or her university as limited to being a regional institution.

There was, however, the admission that some academic staff were yet to be persuaded of the importance of regional economic regeneration to the university’s mission. This perception accords with the findings reported by Botham and Eadie (1997) from a survey of academic staff in Scotland. While the vast majority of their sample accepted that universities had a key role to play in increasing the prosperity of the British economy, half rejected the view that the main purpose of a higher education was to prepare students for the labour market and half agreed that too much emphasis on the commercial application of research leads to a decline in academic standards.

One can argue that if the curriculum becomes over-determined by (regional) employers’ agendas there is a risk that there will be too little space for students to reflect critically, or to deepen their theoretical understanding, or to think through challenges to the accepted ways of doing things: characteristics of learning that
many still believe are central to the concept of a higher education (Barnett, 1994, 1997). Further, if the curriculum is too tightly tied to local businesses which are not at the forefront of their sector – and there are likely to be many such companies in regions which underperform economically – then the knowledge, skills and competencies that are identified by those employers may give the students a second-rate training and lead to a spiralling down of expertise in the region. Universities need to bring international, leading edge practice to local and regional problems if they are to promote economic development (Kanter, 1995).

A second values issue which surfaced from the analysis was the tension between collaboration and competition as the basis for conducting regional business. Throughout the last decade the Conservative government in the United Kingdom pursued competition between HEIs as the way to achieve cost effective expansion of HE. It can be argued that the emphasis on competition has been so strong as to limit the effectiveness of attempts at regional collaboration. Further, the emphasis on competition has strengthened the sense of individual autonomy of HEIs and made it harder for development/government agencies to plan provision across the region. Added to these difficulties is the ambiguity of whether regional agencies are redistributing government funds to enhance distinctive local economic agendas or whether their purpose is to seed local initiatives that will support the current Whitehall notion of national competitiveness.

So in terms of Davies' (1997) four models of regional structures, there was evidence in this study for overt competition, for increasing vertical integration (through franchising, work-based learning initiatives, and semi-exclusive ladders of opportunity), and for short term collaboration. There was very little “regulation” beyond the collaboration required by the Government Offices and some TECs as a precondition for support on project bids over which they had influence. Collaborating and competing at the same time has still, therefore, to be worked out as an effective dynamic among the regional players in this study and it will be interesting to see whether anything comes of the rather weak recommendation in the Dearing Report that regional collaboration should “not be discouraged” by national policies.

Turning to funding, the study suggests that regional responsiveness in the curriculum is being hampered by the multiplicity of small-scale technology transfer and curriculum-related projects being funded by a range of agencies to involve HEIs and local employers. The sheer number of projects alone makes it difficult for heads of department and other key middle managers in HEIs to disseminate and assimilate good practice: funding is short-term and marginal to the main budget, there is little financial support for embedding or replication, and there is a serious question over the cost effectiveness of the time taken to prepare and manage the
bids and projects: new funding has to be chased to sustain the team almost as soon as the project has started.

Our study suggests that a single, sustained structure into which all such funding could be channelled and which has a long term perspective on high level skill and knowledge needs in the region, agreed by all actors, would provide a better return in terms of curriculum change and applied research than the present totally unplanned situation.

A second funding factor which emerges is the dependence on governmental agencies to support the outreach and collaborative work going on between HEIs and SMEs. In common with the Skilbeck and Connell survey (1996) respondents in our study reported that many employers were unwilling or unable to pay the full economic costs of training or consultancy. Nor were they easily persuaded to invest the time of their (graduate) employees in training opportunities. Sources for individuals to pursue continuing professional development on a part-time basis are limited also. There must be some doubt as to whether this regional “market” for continuing professional development and “lifelong learning” is mature enough to become self sustaining if project funding were to be withdrawn.

Finally, in relation to structures, our study showed that at least some HEIs are coming to terms with the new flexibilities needed to engage significantly with regional or more local regeneration – though others do not see the regional agenda as the most influential driver for structural change. There was considerable evidence of innovation in relation to curriculum content, mode of delivery, progression routes, assessment, credit accumulation and transfer. There were serious efforts being made to speed up decision making and quality assurance procedures within HEIs to bring the time needed to develop new provision closer to the expectations of employers without compromising the quality of what was offered. A sense of community was developing and impact studies with user groups were being undertaken. Senior management support was very much in evidence for the chosen regional or local initiatives.

But yet to emerge in either region in this study is a cadre of new professionals whose primary function is to span knowledge boundaries between universities and other organisations in order to be more effective collaborative partners in economic development (Walshok, 1996; UACE, 1997). Such individuals should possess credibility from advanced academic credentials of their own, yet remain committed to knowledge-linking roles and the exercise of leadership through problem-solving brokerage. There were isolated examples of such individuals in the HEIs in our study, and partial fulfilment of brokerage roles for example by the consultants supporting the Knowledge House in the North East. But at the regional level we found little conceptualisation of this emerging role or systematic attention to the training needs of those who were beginning to undertake it.
CONCLUSIONS

If HEIs have a knowledge-skilling role as well as a knowledge-product innovation role, and if engagement with the region is most effective when interactions are multiple and multifaceted, then it follows that a university will have to think about the implications of regional engagement not just in relation to a discrete part of its portfolio such as its applied science base, nor simply in relation to “semi-detached” units such as its careers service or industrial centre which have traditionally interfaced with employers. Additionally, it will need to consider its social sciences, its continuing professional development and education services, its admissions policies and progression routes, its view of what constitutes and can be accredited as “learning”, its modes of delivery and so on. Indeed, it is now being argued that the cultural contribution that an HEI makes to its region is also important in attracting inward investment and retaining highly skilled people in the area: the liberal arts and targeted community service may be as important to an HEI’s regional strategy as its scientific and technological capability (Walshok, 1995, 1996; Bradley and Lim, 1997).

However there remains a potential and important tension between developing a curriculum and learning culture that reflects regional economic priorities, and the drive towards greater consistency in standards across all HE institutions. Government anxiety about the “decline in standards” stems in large measure from the increased diversity of course provision at undergraduate and masters’ levels. Hence the desire for stiffer national/international benchmarking of content, level, and outcomes (HEQC, 1997). If the recommendations of the Dearing Report are followed the new Quality Assurance Agency will develop national standards for each subject using national subject groups and associations to do so. It was not clear to interviewees in this study what impact these changes would have on programmes designed to serve niche, regional or local needs but there was concern that such “improvements” at the national level were inherently inimical to greater differentiation and responsiveness at the regional level. It will be interesting to see whether in a more standards-regulated future it will be easier or more difficult for HEIs to integrate regional and international perspectives into the learning that they pursue.

Finally, in this study we found that there were real differences between the two regions in the strength of regional identity, in the inter-institutional arrangements which had evolved, and in the source of initiatives for engagement with the regional economic agenda. Nevertheless on closer examination of the data it was clear that the factors driving and inhibiting involvement were very similar in both regions reflecting the national frameworks within which HEIs are funded and regulated.

OECD 1999
This raises issues for the way that university-regional collaborations are promoted. Administrative definitions of regions will not in and of themselves create a shared sense of identity or purpose beyond those for which funding is provided through the regional administrative machine. And at present these funding arrangements are ad hoc, uncoordinated, peripheral and short term. (There will always be a problem, too, for institutions on the boundaries of administrative regions and for those with campuses that fall into more than one region.) If one took away the present types of funding, “the region” might cease to exist for practical purposes. There seems, therefore, to be an interesting choice of ways ahead. On the one hand one could improve and strengthen the regional planning processes so that steady, sustained, coherent funding can be applied to the mainstream of HEIs’ work allowing replication and embedding of appropriate practice based inter alia on better quality labour market information and regional Foresight analyses. Alternatively, rather than imposing such structures, it may be preferable to encourage collaboration but allow its extent to be determined by more natural “local” partners in the university's self-defined “territory”. The need to engineer schemes so that they have a region-wide coverage can add enormously to the complexity and cost of putting projects together; it may also undermine the scheme’s effectiveness in practice in the longer term.
REFERENCES

BARNETT, R. (1994),
The Limits of Competence, Buckingham, Open University Press and the Society for Research into Higher Education.

BARNETT, R. (1997),

BIGGS, C., BRIGHTON, R. and CLARK, R. (1996),


BRADLEY, G. and LIM, D. (1997),

COUNCIL FOR INDUSTRY AND HIGHER EDUCATION (CIHE) (1997),

DAVIES, J.L. (1997),

DEARING, R. (1997),
Higher Education in the Learning Society. Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, London, HMSO. The Summary Report is ref. NCHE/97/849. Report 9 contains the thinking on higher education and the regions. Report 7 (Rates of return to higher education), and Report 8 (Externalities to higher education: a review of the new growth literature) provide an insight into the economics of higher education. The ref. for all three is NCHE/97/859.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (DfEE) (1996),
Universities and Economic Development, Newcastle School of Management, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne, December.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (DES) (1985),
The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s, HMSO, London, Cmd. 9524.
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (DES) (1991),

ETZKOWITZ, H. (1996),
"From knowledge flows to the triple helix: the transformation of academic-industry relations in the USA", Industry and Higher Education, Vol. 10, No. 6, pp. 337-342.

FELLER, I. (1994),

Universities and their Communities, CVCP, London.


HARVEY, L., MOON, S. and GEALL, V. (1997),
Graduates' Work: Organisational Change and Students' Attributes, Centre for Research into Quality, the University of Central England, Birmingham.

HENKEL, M. (1997),

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND (HEFCE) (1997),
"Research Assessment: Consultation", Circular 2/97, HEFCE, Bristol.

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COUNCIL (HEQC) (1997),

HOARE, T. (1991),

INSTITUTE OF MANAGERS (1996),

KANTER, R.M. (1995),

KEARST, D.A. (1995),

KEEP, E. and MAYHEW, K. (1996),

OECD 1999
KIRKLAND, J. (1996),
"Barriers to technology transfer: motivating the science base", Industry and Higher Education, Vol. 10, No. 6, 382-387.

LYNTON, E.A. (1996),

MCNAY, I. (1994),

NEAILEY, K. (1997),

PACKMAN, D. and TASKER, M. (1997),

PROSSER, E. (1997),


UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION (UACE) (1997),
Best Practice in Collaboration between Higher Education Institutions and Training and Enterprise Councils, Report commissioned by HEFCE and DfEE, HEFCE, Bristol, May.

WALSHOK, M.L. (1995),

WALSHOK, M.L. (1996),

WOOLLARD, A. (1995),
The Changing Climate of Australian Higher Education: an International Perspective

Peter Coaldrake
Queensland University of Technology
Australia

ABSTRACT
The Australian higher education sector has been subject to sustained change for many years, culminating in a national review in 1998. The pressures on the sector are familiar to many of those who are involved in higher education in any country. In this article attention is directed towards changes in the external environment for Australian universities, particularly in government policy, and these are linked to broader patterns of change in the economy, and in the public sector in particular.

The Australian higher education system shares a number of features in common with that of a number of other OECD countries:
- most universities are predominantly publicly funded;
- the introduction of student contributions to tuition is relatively recent;
- most government involvement – including funding – occurs at a national level;
- major national reviews of the higher education system have recently been undertaken;
- “public good” research is supported through a dual system involving university block grants and competitive funding provided through funding councils; and
- diversity in the form of institutional mission and academic aspirations is relatively limited..

117
Another common feature is that Australia's universities have been undergoing sustained change. The forces driving these changes are international in nature, and by now familiar to most observers of the sector. Because these factors are so familiar, I will simply present the following “A list” and not dwell on them in detail at a general level:

- the higher education “market” is diversifying and becoming increasingly competitive, both nationally and internationally;
- the growth experienced in the post-war growth period, fuelled both by demographic growth and appreciation of the economic role of higher education, is levelling off or declining;
- there is growing difficulty in synthesising for undergraduate education the rapid growth in, and fragmentation of, knowledge;
- government funding has been reduced on a per capita basis over the past two decades, and efficiency cuts have been made in recent times to university budgets;
- students are bearing an increasing share of the cost of their education, and are demanding higher standards of service and flexibility;
- expectations and demands concerning demonstration of performance and quality in higher education are growing; and
- rapid developments in communications and information technology, notably their convergence in the form of the Internet, are raising expectations that universities will be able to operate with greater flexibility, reach and efficiency.

In this article I will concentrate primarily on developments that have been occurring in the external environment, largely those relating to government higher education policy. Given the above similarities of structure and influence, one might expect that such developments in Australian higher education will hold lessons for other countries and at least should be of significant interest. However there are two prior observations which should be made. First, the changes in higher education are part of a broader pattern of changes occurring in the economy, and in the public sector in particular. Second, while the drivers of change are international in nature, they are interpreted and realised in a particular national context. It will be useful, therefore, to sketch briefly this national context before outlining some of the recent developments in the Australian university sector.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

At the broadest level, Australia is experiencing profound changes arising from its exposure to the international marketplace. For many years the Australian economy was underpinned by the high earnings of primary industry exports, encapsulated in the catch-phrase that Australia rode on the sheep’s back (although mining
exports have been every bit as important as farming). Such a situation enabled widespread industry protection and the maintenance of high wages and job security.

Over the past two decades international realities have fractured this halcyon picture. Commodity prices have fallen and become more volatile, and governments in Australia, in line with the rest of the world, have concluded that greater competitiveness is a necessary condition for national prosperity, and this requires a reduced role for government and a greater role for market forces. Widespread deregulation has transformed many sectors of the Australian economy and changed the face of the labour market. Australia is facing persistently high unemployment, while paradoxically those who have jobs find themselves subject to dramatically increased demands and workloads. Employment growth over the past two decades has been concentrated in the more highly skilled occupations accompanied by an increase in the relative share of part-time jobs. As a result, there has been growing inequality in income, a phenomenon common to most OECD countries. Both political sides have supported moves to determine wages and conditions at the enterprise level rather than nationally, although there has been some disagreement about the place of unions in enterprise bargaining and the role of the Industrial Relations Commission in acting as a moderator and umpire.

The national government has sought to reduce its economic and social role by constraining outlays and taxation, reducing the size of the public workforce, and transferring the delivery of services to the private sector. The advent of a conservative government in 1996 accelerated this process. The Australian Public Service workforce was reduced by around 8 per cent between 1987 and 1996, and is expected to fall by another 25 per cent between December 1996 and June 1999. In its 1997-98 Budget, the Commonwealth has projected a reduction in outlays from 25 per cent of GDP in 1997-98 to 22.8 per cent over the next four years. One third of the national telecommunications provider, Telstra, has been sold and the Government has plans to increase this to 49 per cent and subsequent total privatisation. Employment services have been outsourced, with private companies tendering alongside a restructured public job placement agency for payments related to finding jobs for unemployed people on social security.

An ongoing process of public sector management reform has accompanied these changes. The essence of these changes is the similar to that applying in other OECD countries, and involves:

- a shift to focus resource decisions more on outcomes and outputs in an accrual framework;
- the use of tools such as risk management, benchmarking and strategic planning;
- pursuit of efficiencies in the form of reductions in the cost of outputs;

OECD 1999
OECD 1999

– deregulation, devolution and decentralisation of administration;
– negotiation of employment arrangements on a local basis;
– linking of pay to performance; and
– use of competitive tendering and contracting for “non-core” activities.

Inevitably these changes have impacted on universities. In part this has been because governments have required universities to comply with certain operational requirements in exchange for funding and in part it has occurred as universities have had to adopt similar approaches to adjust to changing circumstances.

Government has looked to universities to play a role in national economic development. This was articulated in direct terms in the so-called Dawkins Reforms in the late 1980s, which saw the end of the binary system of universities and colleges and advanced education. Higher education was to combine under a unified national system, which would be co-ordinated nationally and encouraged to respond to economic need. In the intervening decade the extent of Commonwealth steering has been variable, focusing on quality assurance and the negotiation of university profiles between institutions and Commonwealth government officials. The tide is now turning away from national regulation and direction towards more market-based approaches, at least in the rhetoric of government. In the first Howard Budget, it was stated that “The Commonwealth’s objective is to secure high quality outcomes for the public investment in higher education while... streamlining reporting and accountability requirements for institutions”. Such streamlining has yet to be seen in practice. More recently, the Minister has stated that “We want Australia to have and to be recognised for high quality, world-class education and training. We expect increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public funds and we encourage institutions to expand and diversify their sources of income on a secure base of public investment but with increased self-reliance”.

Such diversification has been underway for some time. In 1974 the then Labour Government assumed funding responsibility for higher education, and abolished all tuition fees. Over the preceding fifteen years, higher education enrolments had grown substantially as a result of the post-war “baby boom” and the perceived value of higher education in adding to national human capital. But between 1975 and 1980, demographic demand slowed and financial problems at the Commonwealth level forced something of a crisis in university funding. To some extent this was eased in the 1980s as school retention rates increased, thereby fuelling further increases in university enrolments. The Dawkins reforms heralded further growth in university enrolments, this time funded significantly by student contributions. Full fees were introduced for international students and some postgraduate courses, while all but a few students were required to contribute through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), whereby a debt
was accrued during study and repaid through the tax system on an income-contingent basis. Initially, HECS was set at a flat and repayments began once former students earned above-average wages. Since 1996 changes have occurred both to the level of HECS debt and the schedule for repayment. These changes have significantly increased student contributions. Now, on average, one quarter of the income of Australia's universities is derived from student payments, a level similar to that applying in the United States public university system. The likelihood is that in Australia it will continue to rise in coming years.

CHANGES IN FINANCING THE AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The trend in recent years has been towards a partial deregulation of the university sector, coupled with a steady reduction in government unit funding. The extent to which this deregulation might be secured, however, is not a matter on which there has been a clear decision either from this government, or from the preceding Labour administration.

The West Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy, which reported to government in April 1998, was in no doubt that much more deregulation was needed. Two influential members of the Review Committee were Mr Gary Banks, a member of the Productivity Commission, a body which has advised the government on reform and deregulation in a number of industry and service sectors, and Professor Lauchlan Chipman, Vice-Chancellor of Central Queensland University, one of the country's more entrepreneurial university leaders. The West Report recommended allowing universities to charge fees for all courses, dissolving the boundaries between higher education and the vocational education and training sector, and allocating government subsidies by way of a mechanism similar to learning accounts. The Report also recommended that funds for research training be allocated on a student-driven basis in the form of portable scholarships. A four-stage process was outlined whereby the system could move to a more deregulated environment, the first stage allowing universities to set fees within prescribed upper limits.

The first steps toward allowing undergraduate fees for Australian students were made in the 1996 Budget, when the government allowed universities to charge full fees for domestic students enrolled above the quota negotiated in the profiles process. A limit of 25 per cent of students in any particular course was imposed. This situation has proven unpalatable, at least initially, to many universities; apart from anything else, mixing full fee-paying domestic students with subsidised students in the same course raises concerns about equitable treatment. For 1998, the first year in which such students could be enrolled, only seven of Australia's thirty-seven universities offered fee-paying undergraduate places and,
instead of the projected 1,300 enrolments, some 800 eventuated, many of these on university scholarships. This is, however, only the first year, and more universities may choose to follow this path in the future.

The Government has yet to provide a formal response to the West Report, although it flagged in the May 1998 Budget that it would provide a statement on research and training following consideration of the Report, and that it was "keen to further increase the responsiveness of universities by investigating ways of strengthening the links between student choice and public funding". However the government has ruled out, at least for the time being, the prospect of allowing universities to charge fees for all Australian undergraduates.

In a speech in April 1998, the Minister said, "All in all, the indications are that university management has room to improve the efficiency of its operations and use responsibly their autonomy. In this context the Government has no interest in either providing indexed grants to universities to cushion their enterprise bargains nor deregulating their fees simply to pass on their costs to students. The next round of enterprise bargaining should involve actual measures to reduce costs and increase productivity."

It would seem, then, that the government wishes to reserve for itself the right to shift the burden of increasing higher education costs to students. In particular, in the 1996 Budget it changed the schedule of charges and repayments for HECS. Prior to 1997, students accrued a debt at a flat rate of around £930$^1$ for a full year of study, on average around 23 per cent of course costs. From 1997 a three-tier rate was introduced, ranging from £1,240 for low-cost and low-return courses such as Arts and Nursing, to £1,800 for medium courses and £2,070 for higher-cost or higher-return courses such as Medicine and Law. HECS levels now range from over half the cost of the course (for lower cost courses) to around one third for higher cost courses. It should be borne in mind, however, that the government provides a subsidy in the form of zero real interest rates on HECS debt and there is a high level of unrepaid debt. The government has estimated that just under 14 per cent of the 1997 HECS debt will never be repaid.

Studies of applications patterns in the years since the introduction of postgraduate fees and increased HECS charges seem to support the notion that incurring an up-front cost or additional debt is a significant deterrent to mature-age students in particular. School leaver demand, after taking into account demographic changes, is relatively stable, presumably since the prospect of repaying debt some years down the track is less of a concern to this cohort. It is interesting to note in this regard that university applications in the under 21 age group in the United Kingdom have declined following the introduction of the up-front United Kingdom tuition fee.
Concerns about equity and access aside, the ability to charge fees is attractive to universities not only in attaining greater independence from government intrusion, but also in enabling them to secure the resources necessary to operate more effectively. The point that government is exhorting universities to act like businesses while preventing them from deriving revenue like businesses has not been lost on university managers. This is perhaps most acutely felt now that the government has refused to supplement university budgets to cover wage increases, as it used to prior to the advent of enterprise bargaining. The last round of enterprise bargaining, concluded last year, resulted in salary increases of around 10 to 15 per cent over an eighteen month period, an additional cost that had to be borne within existing budgets. The next round of bargaining will prove to be even tougher, as the capacity to fund such increases is more limited and the academic union has signalled that it intends to pursue a national pattern of major claims. The union's initial claims, undoubtedly of an ambit nature, include wage increases of around 19 per cent, a 36 hour working week, and a one semester break from students each year – all without conceding any significant offsets in conditions.

University managers are also now digesting the implications of a recent ruling by the Industrial Relation Commission regarding the use of contract employment (known locally as the HECE decision). In Australia, as in most other countries, full-time academic and general staff employment has been proportionately decreasing, as universities wish to allow themselves maximum flexibility in an uncertain climate. It is undoubtedly true that some of this behaviour has been excessive, with some individuals maintained on serial short contracts in jobs which were not of a short-term nature, and such staff have borne the brunt of changes, as staffing policies have not aligned permanent staff with appropriate performance systems. The full bench of the Commission has ruled that from June 30 1998 all contract staff will have to be assessed against the award at the end of their contracts, after which the position (if it is to continue) will be made permanent unless exceptional circumstances apply. Significant severance payments apply for contract staff whose employment is terminated. The circumstances justifying contract continuation include:

- work on a specific task or project;
- research not exceeding five years;
- replacement employees;
- recent professional practice of not more than two years;
- pre-retirement contracts only up to two years; and
- postgraduate students under contracts that do not extend beyond the time they cease to be students.
While this undoubtedly provides some security for contract staff, the reality is that some will lose their jobs as contracts are advertised externally and wider pools of people, including some more qualified people seeking security, apply. Clearly the implementation of such a system will reinforce the need for strong performance systems for ongoing staff, both academic and non-academic.

In the course of enterprise bargaining unions will undoubtedly draw attention to the relatively low remuneration of Australian academics, when compared with their counterparts in the United Kingdom and the United States. The level of Australian total income per student is low by international standards, averaging around £4 600. Even most of our research-intensive wealthier universities only come in around the £6 500-£7 500 mark. This is around the same as the average for United States public universities and well behind many United Kingdom universities and the private and more research-intensive United States institutions. However this situation has contributed to an element of competitive advantage in the international student market. As a general rule, Australian fees for international students are lower than United Kingdom fees (except, apparently, for MBA courses) and have gained advantage against United States fees with the recent turmoil in Asia. The south-east Asian market in particular has been important to Australia, and the international student market is now recognised as a major export industry for Australia.

The broader benefits and components of internationalisation are of course additional to these venal monetary advantages. It is of some considerable concern, therefore, that recent political developments in Australia have emerged to cast doubt on Australia's commitment to participation in the international community. The profound effects of globalisation and economic restructuring in the rural areas and urban fringes in particular have generated a backlash of resentment, and opportunistic elements are peddling dreams of an unobtainable return to the days of isolationism and protectionism. These dreams are not only unrealistic, they have been contaminated with overtones of intolerance and ignorance. The great majority of Australians do not share these views, and Australia's universities are at the forefront of demonstrating the positive benefits of greater contact with the international community and in countering negative perceptions generated overseas.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The quality assurance debate in Australian higher education is in abeyance, pending further advice from the government's main advisory body the Higher Education Council, which has yet to be appointed. Early in the 1990s a standing committee of the Council undertook three annual rounds of system-wide assessment of quality, basing this assessment on short institutional visits and examina-
The Changing Climate of Australian Higher Education

tion of portfolios drawn up by the universities. There was general agreement that this process was rather shallow, and while the linking of additional funds with the results of the assessment encouraged compliance, the overall effect on quality was unimpressive. Initially the results were presented in league table form, a problem with which all universities will be familiar. Over time greater sophistication was introduced into the measurement of diversity and quality, however the allocation of money attached to the quality round necessitated some form of ranking. In a similar vein, a commercial non-government assessment of university performance and attributes is published each year as the Good Universities Guide. Again, over time this publication has come to reflect greater complexity and less ranking, and significantly focuses on course level, which is of interest to students, rather than on the institution, which is of more interest to government.

Indications at present are that the focus of government intention for the next few years will be on the quantitative measurement of performance, with a possible agenda of linking such measurement to the allocation of funding. A considerable amount of information on university operations is collected by the national government under the Unified National System, data which have until recently not been published in detail. Over the last couple of years, the relevant Commonwealth Department (DEETYA) has published more of its data collections, and sought to present them in a way which measures institutional performance. Not surprisingly, institutions have been critical of this process, arguing that much of the data is unreliable and that the purposes of publication have not been sufficiently well defined. The most recent DEETYA publication took the form of an on-line presentation of 148 indicators aggregated at the institutional level, ranging from enrolment data through to the results of national surveys of graduate satisfaction and employment. While ostensibly provided to inform the public, even the most knowledgeable individuals would have been bewildered by the mass of information, and at a loss to determine how to use the data. Part of the problem is that information relating to courses of study has been aggregated at the institutional level and part is due to a failure to distinguish clearly between measures of performance and operational indicators. Work is continuing on these issues. At this stage, the Australian Vice-Chancellor’s Committee is focusing on six key areas that might reasonably be considered to measure performance: student completion rates; student satisfaction; student employment or movement to further study; research outputs; research student graduations; and achievement of equity targets. Each of these is fraught with its own complications, and there will be some difficulty in taking into account contextual factors. It is recognised, however, that if universities do not involve themselves in the exercise, they will have to live with whatever the government produces.

The Minister, Dr. Kemp, has also announced his intention to develop a national test of Australian higher education graduates, based on the United States
Graduate Record Exam. This proposal, which has had a lukewarm reception from the sector, mirrors similar proposals that he has put forward for the secondary schools system, and which have yet to be implemented. DEETYA will call for tenders to design and field-test some instruments over the next year. Interestingly, the only country of which I am aware that has implemented such a system is Brazil, which has lesser traditions of institutional autonomy and also has the distinction of having been embroiled in a major national strike at its 52 federal universities in 1998. The Brazilian test results look at fields of study, are ranked on an A to E scale and publicised. The process has received growing acceptance, but mainly because the Brazilian system, in contrast to Australia’s, was chaotic, poorly regulated and haphazardly grown. One of the major issues raised by this test, and of institutional performance assessment systems in general, is how to assess the value added by the institution, rather than the absolute merits of graduates.

Whatever the shortcomings of government attempts to assess or quantify quality, they reflect a reasonable desire for the public, and universities themselves, to understand better what the outcomes are of university education, and moreover to demonstrate that these outcomes have been attained. In the vocational education and training sector this has been ingrained through the competency movement to the extent that all education in this sector in Australia is provided in terms of the delivery and assessment of defined skills or competencies. Clearly this is not an appropriate framework for higher education, but it is reasonable to expect that our sector will not simply avoid the issue of outcomes. Many universities in Australia have now at least articulated the generic and professional attributes which their graduates ought to possess on graduation. Progress on translating these into practice has been slow, and even if agreement is secured on purpose and direction, the obstacles in the form of academic territorialism and financial incentives for “owning” student load are formidable.

RESEARCH

As mentioned above, the Minister is due to make a statement on research funding and training in the near future.

Our broader national innovation system provides the proper background for considerations of Australian university research. While we have a relatively strong system of publicly funded basic research, private sector support for research and development has been well behind international benchmarks, and there are several key structural weaknesses, which have been summarised neatly in a recent government report:3

“... Disincentives to collaboration among research providers, the weak links between research organisations and users, the lack of critical mass due to the institutional and geographical dispersion of Australian research and research...
application, the lack of mobility of personnel between government research, academia and industry, and the challenges of effective international links for a country isolated from the international centres of research and innovation."

One of the success stories of recent years has been the development of the Co-operative Research Centres (CRC) programme, which began seven years ago and brings researchers from universities together with other organisations. There are now 67 such centres, involving over 250 companies (both Australian and international), 61 state government departments and agencies, 35 universities, 24 divisions of the national applied research agency CSIRO, 8 other Commonwealth research agencies, 8 rural R&D corporations, and numerous other organisations. The Commonwealth's dedicated contribution to the programme covers around 30 per cent of the total funding of around £170 million, with universities providing 23 per cent, industry 17 per cent and the CSIRO 14 per cent.

Despite the CRC programme's success in bringing together universities and users, concerns have been raised by some recent reviews of industry assistance that some firms are benefiting excessively from public funds. In addition, government has been concerned that the Centres have not shown the potential to be weaned from public funding. A recent review of the CRC programme concluded that the concerns about excessive private benefit were unfounded, and that continued public support was both necessary and warranted. These findings appear to have been accepted.

Nevertheless the CRC programme is only a small part of the national R&D picture, and problems with low levels of private investment in research and low interaction between universities and research users remain.

The West Report did not dwell too long on such issues, instead concentrating on reforms to the financing of university research and associated training. West recommended that funds for research training be separated from university operating grants and allocated by way of portable scholarships, and that more explicit priorities for research be set by the Australian Research Council (which together with the National Health and Medical Research Council plays a role similar role to the United Kingdom research funding councils). The Report also recommended that competitive grants pay the full direct cost of research, that is, infrastructure be included with the grant.

Australian universities receive money for basic research through a dual system, similar to that of the United Kingdom. A proportion of our operating grants, an amount notionally ascribable to research which is not directly linked to training of research students and known as the Research Quantum, is allocated by the government on a quantitative basis. The size of the Quantum was originally set at around 6 per cent of operating grants, when devised in 1990. Since then, it has declined in relative size as it has not been adjusted in line with enrolment growth,
and is now around 4.5 per cent of operating grants. The Quantum is allocated on the basis of an index derived largely from research grant income, weighted in favour of competitive public grants through the research councils, and partly on research completions and publication counts. The publication component has proven difficult to collect on a reliable basis, and its future is in doubt. Some of the older, more research-intensive universities have been lobbying for an increase in the Quantum, as they are heavily favoured by indices based on competitive grant income. Should this occur there is potential for Australia's research effort to be reduced in diversity, and in particular the research capabilities of the newer universities, which typically emphasise strategic and applied research, would be jeopardised.

There are as yet no firm indications whether the government will alter the size of the Research Quantum, or favour a scholarship system for allocating research training funds. It does recognise the value of diversity in the research system, and the need to improve links between universities and the various categories of users. However it is also attracted to solutions which are administratively simple. Last year DEETYA commissioned a national accounting firm (KPMG) to estimate the cost of peer review, and showed that it was high relative to the cost of grants awarded, particularly for the smaller grants. Informal suggestions have been made by some officials that the cost of peer review is too high, and the trend of the past two decades, which has been to move away from operating grants towards competitive schemes, might be reversed. Such suggestions fly in the face of other reforms designed to make universities more responsive and competitive, and have the potential to reinforce the current pattern of university research. There may well be a case, however, for research funding councils to move toward funding fewer and larger projects.

THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND CHANGES TO ACADEMIC WORK

The potential for advances in communications and information technology to have a major impact on higher education has been widely recognised for many years. Governments in most countries have been quick to seize upon this to exhort universities to extend access and lower unit costs. In Australia, again as in many other countries, the government has specifically indicated that it wishes to replace funding for bricks and mortar expansion of universities by support for IT infrastructure.

Government grants programmes designed to support innovative teaching have been dominated for many years by IT-based projects, a pattern also reflected in most university-based initiatives. Initially many of these projects took the form of add-ons under the general rubric of “multimedia”, typically involving the production of a CD-ROM or exploratory use of the Internet. In many cases
these projects were initiated by motivated individuals, and were rarely embedded in fundamental programmes of reform. This situation has been changing in recent times, and institutional and government programmes are now focusing on larger-scale efforts which aim to achieve mainstream changes to the design and delivery of educational programmes. Even so, progress has been less than enthusiasts might have anticipated, even in the area of distance education, which has been prominent in Australian higher education since its earliest days. There are many reasons for this lack of progress, including physical obstacles in the form of suitable IT infrastructure, and more intangible obstacles in the form of scarcity of time for major development and uncertainty about the effectiveness and purpose of such change on the part of many academics.

Some observers have pointed to the adoption of information technology by the financial sector in particular to argue that there is considerable scope for improvement in its use by universities. Banks in Australia are moving quickly to implement phone and Internet banking, and to close branches that have previously been spread over wide geographic areas, notably in rural towns. Other observers have pointed to successful companies like Amazon, suggesting that the global reach of information technology could lead to global domination of higher education by opportunistic universities, particularly if teamed up with multinational media organisations.

In 1997 a team from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) undertook an international study of this latter situation. It was clear that media organisations, including computer companies, did not see most of higher education, particularly undergraduate education, as being a potentially profitable market, and the primary interest of companies like IBM and Microsoft lay more in securing market share in universities than in transforming their core business. However, it was equally evident that universities were themselves actively exploring the use of the Internet. This applied even to the upper end of the market in the United States, which had traditionally resisted the notion of distance education. It is, of course, possible that either the respondents to this study may have chosen not to inform our interviewers of strategic directions, or that the situation has changed since 1997. Certainly the vehemence with which the representative from Oxford asserted that they would never enter the Internet distance education market has been contradicted by the announcement of relatively cheap online postgraduate degrees from that institution.

The threats and opportunities of such developments need, however, to be assessed realistically. It is a similar situation to that raised by the growing ranks of corporate universities. These are only a threat to existing universities to the extent that they intrude on the markets in which traditional universities operate or aspire to operate. The advantage of existing universities in terms of location, reputation,
accreditation and, often, favoured government treatment, means that they should adopt a considered approach rather than panic. However what the new providers do demonstrate is that the current culture and practices of universities may not be necessary to respond effectively in at least some areas of the changing higher education market.

The West Report was enthusiastic about the potential for IT to transform both teaching and administration in universities. Certainly on the administrative side there has been some progress. There is widespread use of data warehousing to coordinate university information and students have recently been able to enrol via the Internet at some universities. In Australian universities a major co-operative programme to coordinate the core specifications and development of administrative computing, known as CASMAC, is finally bearing fruit (in the form of upgraded administrative systems) for at least some universities, after many years of confusion.

Australians have been enthusiastic adopters of technology, and use of the Internet is growing rapidly, both at home and at work. A study by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, undertaken in February of 1998, found that 23 per cent of the population aged 18 years and over has accessed the Internet in the previous year, and the number of home users of the Internet has quadrupled in the past two years to around one million. The Australian government is also groping towards a comprehensive policy on information technology. It released a preliminary statement in July 1998 which was short on financial commitment, but indicated an intention to pursue the goal of providing all Australians with access to the information economy at high bandwidth and low cost. The statement also indicated that the potential to enhance use of IT in the education and health sectors would be a priority. Unfortunately some of the proposed strategies are long on rhetoric and at times simplistic. For example, the government favours “ensuring information resources of university and major research libraries, research programmes and other data are packaged appropriately and made available as a resource on the Internet, subject to legal obligations including copyright, to reduce educational disadvantage in our community experienced by those who are geographically isolated or affected by illness of disability of any kind”. Putting to one side the issue of infrastructure outside university networks, the problems posed by copyright are far from straightforward. In the research arena, major publishing houses are dictating price, packaging and usage of electronic journals in ways which alter the traditional patterns of purchasing and access within universities, and Australian universities are not in a powerful position to exert purchasing leverage. Progress is certainly being made, but the early predictions that on-line access to information would be cheap and simple are proving difficult to fulfil.
Governments in Australia at Commonwealth and State levels have actively promoted the introduction of computer technology to secondary schools. Unlike the emphasis in higher education, the intention is not so much to achieve administrative efficiency as to enhance the general information literacy of students. It is likely that within a relatively short period of time, if not the case already, school leavers will be entering universities with a higher degree of information literacy than many academic staff.

Continued uptake of information technology will be driven by student expectations, government policy and by universities themselves, as they look for ways to modernise their operations and improve quality. It is more likely that in the medium term the major transformation will be internal rather than external. That is, new providers will not overwhelm existing universities. Rather they will be changed within, in particular as technology alters the nature of academic work.

We are already seeing much greater involvement of technical and non-academic staff in areas previously considered the domain of academics, and as demands on academic time increase, greater selectivity and specialisation in tasks will inevitably result. The link between teaching and research is increasingly being called into question, and being strained further by government policies which seek to concentrate research resources. The standard expectation is that all academic staff will combine the skills of teacher, researcher and administrator. Yet we know that most do not do so, at least not at the highest standards. Some Australian universities will have to acknowledge that they cannot aspire to support a comprehensive spectrum of research, and so they will need both to reconsider how their teaching and learning processes incorporate research and to redefine the scholarly expectations of most of their staff.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

The Australian university system was based on an amalgam of models, derived both from the older universities of the United Kingdom and the more recent practically focused institutions of both the United Kingdom and the United States. Today, universities in Australia and elsewhere in the OECD are facing an environment characterised by a focus on outcomes and outputs, and expectations of greater responsiveness to the needs of students and external communities, including industry and government. Government is moving from being a patron to purchaser of university services on behalf of the public, and this is reflected in a re-focusing of public subsidies. Governments in both countries have indicated a preference for allocating resources via the student, but neither as yet seems prepared to fully de-regulate the system. Australia is further down the path of de-regulation than some countries, such as the United Kingdom, and is more concerned with pursuing administrative savings both within universities and at the

OECD 1999
Higher Education Management

government level. Accordingly, the Australian government favours mechanisms based on funding formulae in the place of bureaucratic systems or extensive peer review. This is most starkly illustrated in relation to processes for quality assurance and allocation of research funds.

In response to major national reviews, governments both in Australia and the United Kingdom have supported the rhetoric of lifelong learning, and yet neither has settled on a clear position as to the role of universities in this context, nor on the appropriate role of government. As a general trend, the Australian government seems intent on determining a minimum subsidy for higher education, probably at the level of first degree and for research training. In all other areas the prospect appears to be that full fees will apply, and so the burden of cost will be assumed by students, their families or by employers. It is also likely that before long public subsidies will be available to suitably accredited private institutions. There has been less debate in Australia than in the United Kingdom about who should have the right to call themselves a university; we seem to somewhere between the United Kingdom and the United States in this regard. Some TAFE colleges now offer degrees, but only in a limited range of usually non-traditional areas, and it seems unlikely that they will expand much in this area. Some universities are developing commercial offshoots: one such, Melbourne University Private, has recently been approved by the Victorian State government, but only after some intensive debate about what activities an organisation carrying the term "University" ought to undertake.

Both the United Kingdom and the Australian higher education systems are proceeding rapidly down a path which will lead to greater structural diversification. At first glance this would seem to be following the United States model, however it is bereft of the historical and political context of the development of the United States higher education system, and is being shaped largely by financial pressures. While a recent audit of university finances found that they were in relatively good shape, now is not a good time to be a small university heavily dependent on government funding. As income sources become more varied and less reliable, institutional mission and policies will inevitably change. In Australia the thirty-seven public universities can broadly be grouped into five clusters:

- five regional institutions which specialise in distance education but which have few overseas students;
- ten institutions with significant overseas enrolments and with a special focus on teaching;
- five large research-oriented institutions with few distance education or part-time students;
- eight smaller research-focused universities;
nine large universities with diverse student profiles which combine teaching and research, but focus more on the former.

This is only one of several possible taxonomies, and in any case it represents a snapshot rather than a view of how institutions should develop over time. Simon Marginson from the University of Melbourne has proposed a simpler classification: the sandstone research universities, the technological or applied universities, and “wannabe sandstones”. Whatever the categories used, the structural form of higher education is changing both by choice and necessity, and with it the array of internal values, policies and processes. While the taxonomy will be different, the shifting nature of the landscape will characterise the United Kingdom as much as it does Australia.

It is hard to describe the changes in the external environment affecting universities in Australia as better or worse than in the United Kingdom. In some respects Australian universities are left more to their own devices, as there is less scrutiny of processes by government and less emphasis on national standards. On the other hand, we look with some envy on the level of increased funding recently announced for United Kingdom higher education, albeit boosted by student payments. One common factor is that those external to universities, including students, employers and government, are putting increasing pressure on us to demonstrate that we provide something valuable, and moreover that it represents value for money. In both countries universities need to accept and promote the agenda of performance, at an institutional and individual level, but find ways of advancing it in terms acceptable both to us and those external parties.

The new environment will not be kind to some cherished academic attitudes and processes, particularly those that have protected academics from scrutiny, even from their peers. The battle-lines between individual autonomy and institutional interest, and between institutional autonomy and external interest, continue to be re-drawn.

This paper began with an "A list" of factors driving much of the change in higher education both in Australia and in other OECD countries. These factors have been much discussed and debated by scholars of higher education and senior management. However there is a troubling disconnection between the perceptions of change held by senior people and those held by staff responsible for the day-to-day business of university life. This disconnection manifests itself in a series of issues that relate primarily to the inner workings of universities, and which can only be addressed by universities themselves. In many ways these matters are more important and more difficult to deal with than those relating to government policy. The following "B list" summarises just some of these issues:

- a very significant proportion of graduating students are unhappy with their experience at university;
- not all academics are all-rounders, and the teaching-research nexus is already very significantly broken at the individual level; it also is unrealistic for many universities to be comprehensive in scope;
- much of our teaching and its support is being undertaken by a large underclass of academic and support staff for whom our systems have traditionally not catered;
- universities need to adapt the ways they deliver material and assess student work in an environment where students (both school-leavers and those at home or in the workplace) have greater access to and familiarity with diverse sources of information;
- we have yet to absorb the extent of the income gap we face;
- much decision-making is still representational; and
- the performance improvement agenda has, to date, been waged at the institutional level; in dealing with that agenda we must learn to link people to the organisation.

NOTES

1. All financial amounts are expressed in United Kingdom £, using a conversion of A$1 = £0.37 and no adjustment for purchasing power.
7. Technical and Further Education.
The following section contains a list of contribution published in Volume 10/1998. The list is organised in alphabetical order of authors. The title of articles is listed only once in the case of multiple authors.

Appropriate articles are abstracted/indexed in Current Index to Journals in Education (ERIC).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions</th>
<th>Vol. No.</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAYENET, B. and DEBANDE, O. Budgetary Indicators and International Comparisons: A Tool for Higher Education Management</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>119-136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEN-ZADOK, E. and CARTER, R.Y. Negotiation over University Teaching Awards: the Evaluation of Undergraduate-Graduate and Quantity-Quality Instruction</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>31-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERGLUND, S. Consortium Governance – Experiences of the Swedish LADOK Consortium</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>7-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERRELL, M.M. The Place of Research, Scholarship and Teaching in Newly Established Universities</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>77-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERTRAND, D. and BUSUGUTSALA, G.G. Organisation of First-cycle Teaching at University: Models and Issues</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>109-136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOBSON, I.R., SHARMA, R. and HAYDON, A. Undergraduate Intakes in Australia – Before and After</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>43-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDITOR’S NOTE, Quality Assessment in Higher Education – Conference in Mexico City</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL-KHAWAS, E. Accreditation’s Role in Quality Assurance in the United States</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>43-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARAYAMA, Y. The University System in Japan</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>69-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOGAN, M. University-State Relations: A Comparative Perspective</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>121-135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OECD 1999
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions</th>
<th>Vol. No.</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LORD, B.R., ROBB, A.J. and SHANAHAN, Y.P. Performance Indicators:</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>41-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences from New Zealand Tertiary Institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCINNIS, C. Managing Mainstream and Marginal Responses to Diversity</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>29-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEUHÄUSER, R. The Austrian University System in Change:</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>55-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Adequate Response to New Challenges?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIESANEN, E. The Finnish Open University as Young Adults Testing Arena</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>137-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REICHEL, A. and MEHREZ, A. The Development of the School of Management at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>105-118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMAINVILLE, M. and NOËL, B. Learning Support for First-year University Student</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>59-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANTOS, F., HEITOR, M.V. and CARAÇA, J. Organisational Challenges for the University</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>87-108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJÖLUND, M. Strategic Management in Research Funding</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>107-120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKODVIN, O.J. and STENSAKER, B. Innovation through Merging?</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>73-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS, H.G. Reform and Change in Financial Management:</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>95-106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Need for an Holistic Approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THUNE, C. The European Systems of Quality Assurance - Dimensions of Harmonisation and Differentiation</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THYS-CLÉMENT, F. and WILKIN, L. Strategic Management and Universities:</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>13-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes of a European Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VÄLIMAA, J., AITTOLA, T. and KONTTINEN, R. Impacts of Quality Assessment:</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>7-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Case of Jyväskylä University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZORRILLA, J.F. Quality Assessment in Mexican Higher Education</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>57-72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OECD 1999
Information for Authors

Contributions to the IMHE Journal should be submitted in either English or French and all articles are received on the understanding that they have not appeared in print elsewhere.

Selection procedure and criteria

Selection of articles for publication is carried out by the Editor of the Journal. Articles short-listed for consideration are submitted to independent referees for review.

The Journal is primarily devoted to the needs of those involved with the administration and study of institutional management in higher education. Articles should be concerned, therefore, with issues bearing on the practical working and policy direction of higher education. Contributions should, however, go beyond mere description of what is, or prescription of what ought to be, although both descriptive and prescriptive accounts are acceptable if they offer generalisations of use in contexts beyond those being described. Whilst articles devoted to the development of theory for its own sake will normally find a place in other and more academically based journals, theoretical treatments of direct use to practitioners will be considered.

Other criteria include clarity of expression and thought. Titles of articles should be as brief as possible.

Presentation

**Three copies** of each article should be submitted, typewritten (1½ spaced) on one side of a page only.

Length: should not exceed 15 pages including figures and references.

The first page before the text itself should appear centred on the page in this order the title of the article and the name(s), affiliation(s) and country/countries of the author(s).

Abstract: the main text should be preceded by an abstract of 100 to 200 words summarising the article.

Quotations: long quotations should be single-spaced and each line should be indented 7 spaces.

Footnotes: authors should avoid using footnotes and incorporate any explanatory material in the text itself. If notes cannot be avoided, they should be endnotes typed at the end of the article.

Tables and illustrations: tabular material should bear a centred heading "Table". Presentations of non-tabular material should bear a centred heading "Figure”. The source should always be cited.

References in the text: Jones and Little (1986) or Jones et al. (1988) in the case of three or more authors. However, the names of all authors should appear in the list of references at the end of the article.

References at the end of the article: references should be listed in alphabetical order under the heading “References”. Examples of the reference style used in the Journal are:


Electronic text: articles should be retained in electronic form, since a diskette or electronic transfer will be requested if the article is accepted.

The Covering letter

This should give full addresses and telephone numbers and, in the case of multi-authored papers, indicate the author to whom all correspondence should be sent.

Complimentary copies

Each author will receive two complimentary copies of the Journal issue in which his article appears, in the original language.

OECD 1999