



# The Civic University

Reuniting the university and the city to jointly meet the challenges of social, economic and community development

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## OUTLINE

- 'The Civic University' - bridging the divide between academia and civil society
- Two examples: Newcastle University and University College London
- Drivers and barriers to city and regional engagement: the policy and academic discourses
- Lessons for institutional leaders

## Reuniting the City and the University... the Civic University?



- Historically many universities had their foundations in supporting the economic and cultural life of the city/region (e.g. UK provincial cities, US land grant institutions)
- National higher education policies, reduced state funding, marketisation, corporate governance have contributed to an increasing disconnect between universities and their 'place'
- However new thinking on regional development away from a narrow focus on economic growth, competitiveness and innovation towards a more multifaceted approach, 'holistic, progressive and sustainable' is a potential driver to reconnect the University with its city and its development

## Two separate knowledge communities...

**Domain:** Education and Research

**Focus:** University as an institution

**Seeking:** International Academic Excellence

THE UNIVERSITY



THE CITY



**Domain:** Territorial Development

**Focus:** City and regional development

**Seeking:** Answers to societal ills

### What is a “Civic University”?



- Provides opportunities for the society of which it is part (individual learners, businesses, public institutions).
- Engages as a whole not piecemeal with its surroundings.
- Partners with other local universities and colleges.
- Is managed in a way that facilitates institutional wide engagement with the city and region of which it forms part.
- Operates on a global scale but use its location to form its identity.

### Newcastle University: “A World Class Civic University”

- *“ The combination of being globally competitive and regionally rooted underpins our vision for the future. We see ourselves as not only doing high quality academic work ... but also choosing to work in areas responsive to the large scale societal challenges and demands, particularly those manifested in our own city and region”*

Chris Brink, VC

## Meeting the 'grand challenges' – Newcastle Institute for Ageing and Health

**Institute for Ageing and Health**

Newcastle University

About the Institute: About Ageing | Research | People | Postgraduates | Campus for Ageing and Vitality | Business

Welcome to the institute for Ageing and Health

The Institute for Ageing and Health (IAH) brings together basic, clinical, social and computer scientists, engineers, and researchers in a variety of other fields, to address the increasingly important issues of:

- how and why we age
- the treatment of associated disease and disability
- the support of through-life health, wellbeing and independence

We have progressed from a new institute in 1994, to a unique, multidisciplinary environment for:

- research
- teaching
- engagement with public
- business

based on the rapidly developing **Campus for Ageing and Vitality**.

We place great importance on our involvement locally, nationally and internationally through initiatives such as:

**Seminars**  
Academic Opening Seminar...

### Newcastle Charter for Changing Age

- Increased life spans represent one of humanity's greatest achievements
- Increasing life expectancy is an economic good
- Ageing concerns us all
- Each individual has an equal place in our society regardless of age
- Much better information about older people is needed
- Older people are an under-acknowledged asset
- We need to use and expand our scientific knowledge about ageing
- We need urgently adapt infrastructure for an ageing population

## Meeting the 'grand challenges' – University College London "London's Global University" and the 'wisdom' economy

**UCL**

UCL Home | Environment Institute

UCL Environment Institute

The UCL Environment Institute is the lead center for environmental research and related activities at UCL. Our core mission is to foster the interdisciplinary research that is needed to tackle today's complex environmental problems effectively.

Our work covers on main areas:

- Thematic Research Development: Our team works across eight thematic areas to develop research collaborations for writing and innovative research projects and to disseminate research results.
- Policy Impact: We undertake a range of activities and collaborations to ensure that UCL's environmental research impacts on practice in policy, business and communities.
- International Links: UCL Environment Institute acts as a hub for academic visitors from overseas who are interested in an interdisciplinary perspective on environmental research.
- Support for UCL's Grand Challenge for Sustainable Cities: The institute supports this Grand Challenge and takes forward key ideas for developing an interdisciplinary focus on Sustainable Cities.
- Greening the Campus: We also provide support to UCL's Environmental Sustainability Steering Group which is seeking to reduce the environmental impact of UCL's activities and services.
- Consulting: We undertake a range of consulting activities through UCL Environment Institute and our spin-off company Carbon Justices. Thomas Edison Partnership, who we support, can also provide consultancy services.

UCL Public Lecture Series 2010-11

Past Conferences

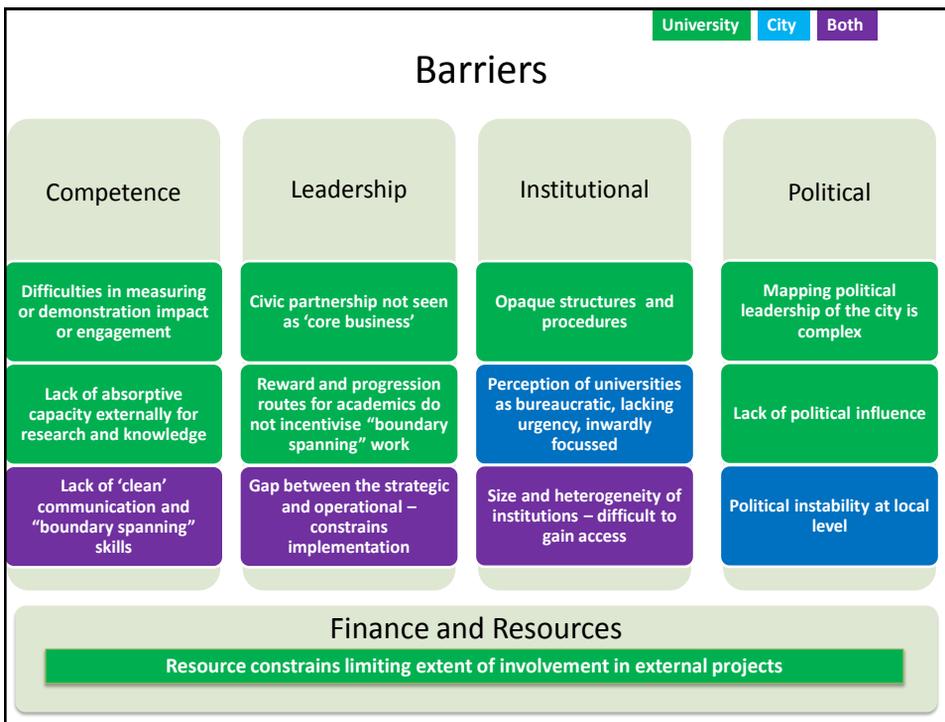
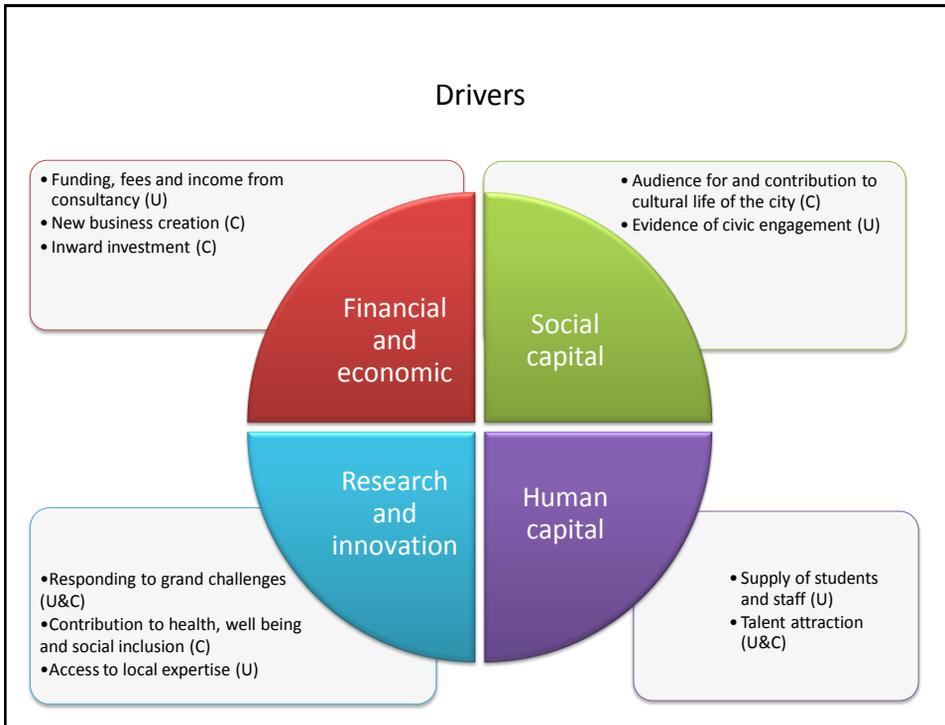
MS ES Conference June 09

WYPC Conference April 09

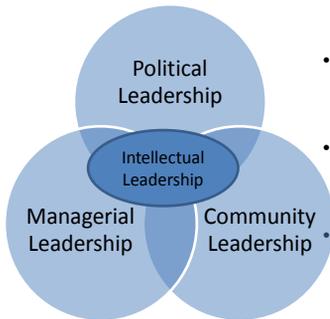
Sustainable University Conference Sept 08

Stockfish Conference June 08

- Working in partnership with government, commerce and society, the best universities can propose robust solutions to the problems articulated by those groups.
- Only universities with excellence across the disciplines, a critical mass of expertise and a commitment to impact can respond with wisdom on the scale and with the speed required by current crises.
- Establishing a culture of wisdom therefore requires transformative action:
  - respecting specialist knowledge, while dismantling the barriers to its cross-fertilisation
  - supporting the synthesis of new knowledge both within and across fields and disciplines
  - facilitating collective, collaborative working practices in order to gain fresh perspectives and, ultimately, wisdom
  - establishing and advocating policy and practice based upon the wise counsel so developed.



## Lessons for building civic partnerships



- Leadership is crucial, both internal to the organisation and within city partnerships
- The principal of outreach and engagement needs to be reflected in workloads and reward structures
- Civic partnerships should be independent of transactional relationships between the institutions
- A shared vision for the city's development should be articulated in plans and strategies
- Leaders from the university and the city should be supported to improve their 'boundary spanning' skills by focusing on a key challenge to mobilise the intellectual, political, managerial and community knowledge around
- Formal structures and regulatory regimes that act as barriers should be challenged/modernised