



***Choices and Responsibilities:  
Higher Education in the Knowledge Society***

**Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE)**

Collegial participation in university governance:  
A case study of institutional change

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In 2000, Massey University in New Zealand underwent “Repositioning” resulting in redundancy for more than 100 staff; over 200 others had to reapply for and/or were affected by other changes to positions. Acrimonious public debate throughout this controversial exercise left bitter legacies of low staff morale and hostility to management. Repositioning also resulted in legal action by staff unions and an out-of-court settlement to review Academic Policy-Making at the university.

This was the first ever review of academic decision-making at a New Zealand university. Key recommendations were subsequently approved by Academic Board and Council, and major changes to constitutional structures and practices of academic policy formation are being implemented as a result.

This paper provides a case study of major reform, authored by a member of the Review Committee who has also been involved throughout implementation. What has been a most challenging process of institutional change illustrates tensions at today’s university between those striving to uphold traditional academic values of collegial participation and those influenced by more managerial approaches driven by business sector models. Preliminary evidence of successful outcomes enabling both collegial participation as well as effective management will be described, as will the persistent deep divisions in philosophy that have resulted in a far longer timeline for implementation than anyone might have predicted.