

Managing the Learning University

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1

Introduction: Who Manages What?

Scope

This is a book about management, but of an unusual kind. It is not a textbook. In fact it is more like an anti-textbook. Written from management experience and a management perspective, it is also in a sense an anti-management book. This is why the concluding chapter asks whether the learning university is manageable.¹

For whom is the book intended? It draws mainly on experience of English and Australian universities, supplemented by work elsewhere and by what I have learned from the experience of university colleagues in many other places. It is therefore most obviously relevant to universities and higher education systems in the English-speaking world: Britain and North America, Australasia and other systems derivative from the British colonial period. Other traditions, notably in continental Europe, make it until now of less relevance to the management of universities there, since these systems have been more highly centralized, with little local management autonomy. As centralized government systems devolve management to individual institutions the matters considered in this book become relevant and important to them also. This was brought home forcefully during recent work with the Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education within the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): new interest is predicted from universities in decentralizing systems such as those of France, Germany and Italy, and also Japan.

A primary readership is those at all levels who manage universities, or try and are paid to do so. Some are paid to be senior managers full-time: line specialists who have come up through the ranks of academic administration, finance, human resources or IT-based information management; or erstwhile academic staff who have stepped sideways or risen from the ranks of scholars to become full-time administrators. Have these left for ever the 'community of scholars' to seek a new kind of career? Or are they there as a kind of leader-delegate, a sort of *primus inter pares* blessed and legitimated by their

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peers to sustain the values, conditions and working environment in which scholarship in its several diverse forms may be sustained? If this is their unwritten contract, how long can it be sustained? Other academic managers, and specialists of other kinds working as general managers of their areas in universities, may be part-time in this element of their roles. If academic they may be managers elected or partly elected, more or less reluctantly serving a stint as Department or School Chair, even Faculty Dean or Pro-Vice-Chancellor, yet trying to adhere to a primary identity and concept of self as scholar or some other kind of professional.

I use the word *scholar* to refer to that class of university workers known alternatively as 'academics' which can carry a disparaging 'merely academic' connotation and is best reserved for use as an adjective. The term *faculty* can cause confusion with the administrative unit of academic activity – the Faculty of this or that. The older term *don* has fallen almost into disuse, as was neatly captured by A. H. Halsey in the title of his study of changing academic status (Halsey 1992). Academic staff are – if this word is still relevant and acceptable – the profession at the heart of the university, doing its 'core business' – a term now well in vogue which ill accords with the connotation of *don*. Since Ernest Boyer's four scholarships have slipped into common usage (Boyer 1990) we may accept that scholar is broad and non-prescriptive enough to encompass most things academic. Whether scholars are to be seen and treated as professionals by university managers is altogether a more problematic matter.

Though not a management text, this book does seek to interest and have relevance for those interested in the way universities are managed – led – administered – whether or not they themselves are full- or part-time managers, and whether reluctant or exuberant in their management roles. More broadly its themes touch the lives of all university workers, especially academic staff for whom and whose staff associations changing academic role and identity are chronic contemporary concerns. The issues are also important for those in positions of authority, whether managerial or for governance, who have come to their responsibility by routes other than the academic. Universities are under increasing pressure to modernize and adapt to new and more diverse demands. As they have been joined by 'new universities' of different and varying origins, with intentionally differing missions and accountability, it has been increasingly assumed that all universities require more vigorous guidance, and governance, from community representatives from outside the academy.

Why universities? What is special about the university as an institution that it deserves distinct attention? This question we approach with an open mind, while acknowledging a preoccupying interest in the established public university or higher education institution, rather than in the new corporate and virtual models *per se*. For the moment, and not solely to capture a wider readership, let us concede that universities are an institutional type within systems of higher education which are increasingly seen and planned *as systems*. This identifies them, autonomous statutory bodies as they may

be, as elements or subsystems with a part to play in another authority's larger plan of things. Not only that, but they are increasingly identified for policy purposes as elements within a *tertiary education system* (OECD 1998). Other kinds of educational providers, technical or further education colleges, private as well as publicly funded colleges, even industrial and business concerns operating as education and training providers for their own personnel and maybe also for others, are part of the landscape – and increasingly of the 'system'. There are also research and consultancy organizations which may partner universities, or compete for their business. To the extent that these other organizations are similarly involved as educational providers and knowledge makers in all or some of the creation (discovery), analysis and integration, dissemination, application and utilization of knowledge, they may be engaged in essentially similar processes with essentially similar people and products. In this event they confront essentially similar problems and propositions about managing in modern times and contexts.

One step further. We have grown up with the understanding, based on an earlier reality, of different kinds of organizations and different 'sectors'. The public sector differed from the private sector in essential respects, as a result for example generating 'public sector management' executive programmes. The MBA (master of business administration), as it multiplied and diversified in its manifestations, sought to incorporate public as well as private sector organizations. Some ground was lost to the MPA (master of public administration). The public-private sector distinction, however, swirls, and partly dissolves with mixed modes of semi-privatization and marketization, including internal markets now common to the public sector. Universities as self-governing academic communities or 'collegialities' have sat somewhat outside this binary sketch as autonomous corporate entities, possibly in a third, human services or not-for-profit category, depending on the concepts and criteria being employed. As public sector utilities are sold off, broken up or part-privatized, and the 'social service sector', education, health, social welfare is brought under quasi-market strictures, the different traditions break down and distinctions partly dissolve.

This book is about the university as a particular institution and an organizational species. But changes in management philosophy and practice reflect changes in political economy and shifting ideas of the role of the state, its relationship with civic society, and its different kinds of institutions. Many of the new issues facing university managers also confront managers of other kinds of educational – learning, training, research, knowledge-based – institutions. Much of the dynamics and many of the implications for management are essentially the same across a broad swathe of the formerly 'public sector' but now partly marketized human or social sector. At the least this book is relevant to those managing and working throughout what we now call the health as well as the education industry, and to some extent beyond, in the public and social services arena.

The traffic in ideas

Behind this assertion lurk two important questions. How far are the management precepts and texts fashioned from experience of the private sector transferring to the human services 'sector'? And how sensible and productive is it for the traffic of ideas and emulation to flow in this direction? It is already trite and dated to think in these sectoral terms. But are universities and other educational institutions essentially dependent and derivative in their approach to management? The twenty-first century is fond of 'the knowledge society'. Universities are in principle at the forefront of knowledge-based organizations. In principle forms of organization and management of the university, which should be an archetypal 'learning organization', provide models for the emergent knowledge society to emulate, in the leadership and management of knowledge-based entities more generally.

Either way, I put my cards on the table, asking how far the invasion of the organizational life of the university by economic rationalism should be allowed to run. Will the tide in management fashion turn across higher education, as it appears already to have turned against the excesses of economic rationalism as the basis of social and economic policy in a number of countries (Giddens 1998; Latham 1998)? If it does not, universities will put both their past and their future at risk.

This book is an invitation to those charged at all levels with managing universities to reflect on and act in response to certain management tendencies, fashions and ideological assumptions, and to avoid being taken down a false trail. To thrive in the knowledge economy under conditions of global competition universities must be vigorous organic learning communities, able to adapt to and proact organically in the fast-changing environment. At its worst strategic management drawn from a form of economic rationalism is as functional as a charge of the Light Brigade in the Vietnam jungle, with similar length of vision. There is a 'third way' for managing the 'learning university'.

This book draws on first-hand experience, and on the burgeoning literature and case studies of management in higher education. It also refers to a wider management-related literature. Most of the issues are quite common if not universal, allowing for vitally important differences of context from place to place (see for example Watson 2000: 8, referring to the 1998 Unesco World Conference on Higher Education). Australia and the United Kingdom are deeply if subtly different as societies and in their higher education systems. Bodies like Unesco and the OECD draw out common trends, in fostering comparison and mutual learning about different approaches in different societies to shared problems (Unesco 1995, 1998; OECD 1998). The common challenge is how to manage universities through the transition from a large 'mass' or post-elite system towards universal higher – often now tertiary – education. The different contexts of each society, tradition and emergent system make the particular formulation and prospective resolution unique. Diversity is therefore a central theme of this study.

All this assumes that 'the university' will and should survive as an institutional form. It recognizes that those managing universities at all levels, in what are now often large and complex but still value-infused organizations, need to be better informed of the changing world of higher or tertiary education systems. What is their scope, and the role of different component institutions? How does each institution relate to the changing political, economic, social and cultural environment which it inhabits and with which it must coexist with mutual understanding for mutual advantage?

Planning in a whirlpool

More and more people now see themselves, and are treated – some maltreated – as managers. Their roles are changing, confused, confusing. There is also great pressure on resources, and greater pressure for accountability, presenting new and scary agendas. They include, for example: the purchase and use of more costly and sophisticated software; public scrutiny and audit of all aspects of management and not merely the fiscal; the management of risk; legal issues including IP (intellectual property); student and staff appeals; 'competitive neutrality' as a part-subsidized business; and a host more. Cookbook remedies are superficially attractive. There are consultants in plenty to respond to the felt needs and insecurities of managers from vice-chancellors downward. There is certainly a place for consultants, for management texts, for training courses and resource databases.

Before and above this, however, are questions about the identity, mission and direction of the institution and of the larger system and context in which it is a far from independent player. All managers need to recognize these questions and have answers as a basis for confident management decision and behaviour. These answers will always be interim and provisional. To be able to respond confidently, flexibly, proactively and in a timely manner at all management levels is a prerequisite for 'building entrepreneurial universities' (Burton Clark 1998). A twenty-first-century 'learning university' must above all learn to be entrepreneurial – but also, as Burton Clark suggests, feel good about itself within its 'stimulated academic heartland'.

As the size and cost of higher education systems grow government pressure to secure and demonstrate 'good management' and value for money increases, often backed by a critical press and a sceptical public. Letters especially in the broadsheet or 'quality' press are a barometer. The role of the UK funding councils demonstrates this tightening pressure, with new indicators and requirements for funding, as does the often bitter story of quality assurance in the UK and elsewhere. Intervention and accountability requirements run through a very broad spectrum: from specific technical matters such as the management of capital borrowing and partner investment, through the use of space and the maintenance of building stock, into the efficient management of the institution judged by means of national benchmarks and comparators, and up to the highest levels of university

governance (CVCP 1985; Shattock 1994; Hoare 1995). Britain has exercised sophistication in these matters for a decade and more. Australia is making up ground from a lower base of publicly known and shared performance indicators (see for example McKinnon *et al.* 2000). Its universities profiles exercise requires universities each year to present themselves to the federal Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA), to justify and defend their proposed profiles.

Not surprisingly a main response is the strategic plan. There is nothing very novel about strategic planning, although the reasons for the activity, and the context in which it takes place, are changing. A vigorously debunking view around Australian universities is that strategic planning is the next best thing to golf for keeping senior managers well away from the business of the institution, allowing teachers and other workers to get on with the job.

This is not as silly and cynical as it may sound. Strategic plans can become an end in themselves. They may substitute for getting results. They may take the place of intuition and common sense. They may be an excuse for not doing things not anticipated and written into the Plan. They can be a security blanket for anxious senior managers, a flight from actually getting things done. It depends whether the product of strategic planning plans is action, changed behaviour and different results or mainly the Plan.

If this is an anti-management anti-textbook that is partly because the strategic plan is an unsafe refuge: a false panacea for handling real-world complexity and uncertainty. The fallacy and the hubris of many senior managers is to believe that as planners they do actually know better than those down the line what works and how to get results. Planning is an essential characteristic of human and organizational life and behaviour. The 'learning organization' is a continuously thinking, planning, reviewing and adaptive organization.

The challenge for managers and a central theme for this book is how to manage in a turbulent and chaotic world – a world of mess (Stacey 1998). We explore in the chapters which follow the way organization theory and management texts help towards understanding the real-world circumstances of the university after 2000; and the ways in which those charged – privileged or cursed – with its management can help or hinder its capacity to learn, to adapt and to survive.

Chapter 2 is about 'changing universities' in its several senses. It is also about the 'abiding university' – the sense and extent to which the university is something special and distinctive which societies need and should value. Literature on the crisis of the university, especially insightful studies by Ron Barnett and Peter Scott, is relevant (see for example Barnett 1990, 1994, 1997, 2000; Scott 1995, 1998). Our interest extends to the characteristics of universities and to how far these characteristics should and will extend and diffuse into other kinds of learning organizations, especially those dedicated to teaching and research. Are the values of the essential university not best preserved by their wider diffusion, as the boundaries of the university

collapse? If managers have no clear sense about what is important, even essential, their prospects of giving good service are poor.

Universities are changing because their world is changing, and perceptions of their functions, role and utility change with it. If they are in any sense distinctive, individually or as a species (self-governing communities of scholars, a place at least somewhat apart from and slightly above more short-term and venal daily business), managers need to understand wherein the differences lie. What is essential and what is unimportant? What new prospects present real opportunities? Which are merely threats?

The new opportunities provided for access to information by the marriage of new communication and information technologies is a salient example. Australia has had a particularly vigorous preoccupation with these new technologies. Its universities excite and frighten themselves with its potential and the threat. May 2000 saw the very upbeat announcement of a News Corporation – Universitas 21 ‘global university’ – which promptly died in childbirth. The main architect of Universitas 21, the Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University, was reported (*The Australian Higher Education*, 17 May 2000) as saying ‘First into the market wins; that means people need to think about other markets or niches in markets.’ Some managers will see such an opportunity with lust as the new big-business winner, others with despair as beyond their budget and a proxy for dropping out of the competition; others more defiantly as a passing phase which leaves them and their business untouched. A fourth response is that it represents the further stimulation of an already insatiable appetite, which will increase the demand for all kinds of services from many kinds of universities. This kind of change, coming from outside and transforming much else in society, is not of the university’s making; but its managers need to understand it and to be as clear as is possible how to respond.

‘Changing universities’ suggests action – an initiating mode. Many books about management are now about the management of change. A cohering theme in this book is the need to reconcile and embrace opposites in a continuous process of paradoxical dialectic. Universities are about continuity, the conservation and transmission of understanding, knowledge and values. They are also about the creation and application of new knowledge, so they embrace and celebrate change. In fast-changing times, with new clienteles, demands and expectations, new social, economic and environmental problems and circumstances, they must of course learn to change and to do new things in new ways.

The task of the manager is not however to make and manage change in a gung-ho contest in restructuring which is inimical to productivity and reduces adaptive capacity when it results in loss of identity, confidence, and sense of purpose. The task is to manage the tension between continuity and change, to combine opportunism with vision, future with past, ideas with action. ‘Changing universities’ is not only a *double entendre*. It identifies a crucial underlying issue. Without a grasp of this management becomes fashion, technique and drift.

The third chapter acknowledges the enormity of change in the world at large, and the impossibility for universities of shielding themselves from these changes. Between them they penetrate every crevice of the institution and touch every facet of its life. Not that this legitimates attacking everything 'traditional' about academic values and institutional lifestyles in the name of development, management and planning. Since no university is an island unto itself we ask how wisdom from the literature of management and organizational behaviour illuminates and guides the task of management in contemporary higher education.

For this purpose I revisit the notion of the learning organization and specifically the learning university about which I wrote a decade ago (Duke 1992). How well does it stand the test of time and what has it now to offer? The term *learning organization* is dropping out of fashion in this time of rapid obsolescence; but the substance which it relates to is of still rising importance. Its passing may be temporary. Some older ideas have returned to the field, their work not yet done. This is true of the overarching concept of lifelong learning (together with recurrent education), which all but disappeared in the late seventies only to return as overwhelmingly – if tritely – popular at the century's end. 'Lifelong learning' risks losing credibility and utility from overwork and careless abuse. The *learning organization* may have been put aside because that is the nature of modern discourse in search of novelty. It has also suffered from superficiality and repetition, its full import never properly worked through within the management of higher education. *Knowledge society* is the new favourite.

With no pretence of being exhaustive, we review some earlier and some contemporary management and related literature. What does it say about abiding perspectives on organization behaviour and management? What changes in the context of higher education make these insights more or less important? Without a sense of the environment and of transaction with other kinds of organizations and interests, managers will not understand what it is and is not possible to achieve with new tools and means. They will also fail to understand who and what their university really is. We ask about the role of the charismatic, autocratic, democratic or neurotic leader in enabling or disabling the institution, and the relationship between management, leadership and administration.

Managing how and for what?

This takes us via some essentially prescriptive propositions to consider in Chapter 4 the role of values and vision in managing the learning university. What is essential and inalienable about 'the university'? Is it conceivably 'ideal-seeking' (Emery 1977) despite and within its diversity of forms? Or is it simply one bit of a state-driven system of provision for the lifelong learning needs of the post-school community? Is it essentially 'owned' by the state in exercise of the interest of society? What remains of the 'community

of scholars', of trusteeship and custody of higher values, and of longer views of society's direction and the civic good?

What about diversity in a mass higher education system with many non-university providers and partners? Is it 'the abiding university' with echoes of Cardinal Newman ([1852] 1965) or *this* abiding university, unique in its identity, myths and traditions, and aspiration for the future? Precepts from the likes of Philip Selznick (1957) may apparently conflict with HE *system* management. If all mission statements are more or less interchangeable, are all universities then essentially the same? Having the courage to be different, seeing wherein that difference lies and how it might best be expressed, is one test for modern university management. It is tempting to homogenize and level down in the very act of seemingly following good practice and taking a lead from others. It is tempting, in the absence of clarity and confidence, to listen too hard to the murmurings and ruminations of governments and quangos, to jump in order to please before the skipping rope is out.

'Academic freedom' takes several forms, one of the more important and solid being to do with the capacity to say *we are the university*; it is for us to manage and govern it. This defines government as one essential part of the network of influences, partners and resources in which the institution lives and operates, but not as *de facto* manager of the university itself. Managing the abiding, and the learning, university means allowing some internal controls to loosen up, while taking tighter ownership and control over essential things.

The character of the student body has changed. We talk not only about student-centredness but about the university's core business, customers or clientele. It seems impossible to identify, to sustain and protect boundaries around the university separating it from the world of what Ron Barnett (2000) calls 'super-complexity', and Fred Emery much earlier (1969, 1977) characterized as turbulence. Given the irreversible fact of multiple permeation of the boundaries we need a better formulation of this idea of protection.

The idea of lifelong learning and the equally loose idea of the learning society offer insight into the new world which is transforming the business of managing the university. Many of the changes involve forging relations with other educational providers and 'sites of learning', usually workplaces. Educational opportunities can then be 'delivered' by 'outreach' through mixed, partly self-directed, self-teaching distance modes to diversely situated client groups for whom being a student is one possibly minor element in a complex role-set. Much of the language used to describe these phenomena would have been unfamiliar if not unrecognizable in this context thirty years ago; even the idea of institutional mission was unusual and often unacceptable then. How much transformation can be accommodated before the known and established public university has disappeared?

Management in such a world means managing without sharply defined parameters. It means relating to a host of interest groups, partners and other stakeholders in varieties of interdependence. It calls for new modes of communication, partnership and trust, changed understanding of how

the university's business of teaching and research is done, with and to whom. It calls for new personal skills, if not personalities, at least among senior managers. It requires familiarity with new words to explain new kinds of activity, and new ways of doing established things with which the university as a community of co-producers can feel comfortable – purposeful, wholesome and at ease with itself. It means enabling and trusting pretty well the whole institution to manage 'external relations'. In such a heavily penetrated institution it is impossible to distinguish residents from invaders, like sorting guerrillas from the citizen population in urban warfare conditions in Grozny or Jaffna. It is more like managing activity in a Saturday morning shopping mall, to borrow an analogy from Elaine El-Khawas, than supervising, *in loco parentis*, the walled and guarded college of my Cambridge youth.

The central part of this book, Chapters 5 to 8, considers in turn four of the main areas of responsibility of university managers, drawing out what is required to nurture and strengthen the institution as a *learning* university. These are, respectively, what may be called the external world and external relations, including its relationship with internal structures, processes and culture; the academic work or core business of the university; managing the university as an organic community of human individuals commonly called human resources, as well as its physical resources; and the increasingly important matters of communication and information handling for administration as well as for teaching and research, with successive waves of new information and communication technology.

These chapters therefore address the implications of approaching university management from an organizational learning perspective in terms of the culture of the organization, its structure, and a number of the key issues and tasks common to the diversity of universities today. *Culture* is an overworked and undervalued concept: devalued by poor understanding and by frequent trite use. It is undervalued as being about the softer, less tangible and less quantifiable processes and problems of management; the 'soft Ss' in contrast to the 'hard Ss'. And yet I first encountered the 'soft Ss' term and perspective from a manager who was then an administrator at hard-nosed Warwick, with its rigorous use of objective performance data in the form of widely distributed and referenced Academic and Financial Databases (Palfreyman 1989).

It is a mistake to elevate one dimension at the expense of the others. Culture, structure and process are all important to performance and productivity. The interaction and relationship between them is crucial, if practically speaking they need to be teased apart for purposes of analysis. Process presents itself Janus-like as the key to successful management and enhancing organizational capability to learn, and as a trap. Excessive preoccupation with process can divert management from products and outcomes; planning, including consultation processes, can become a means which displaces the ends. Success in management requires managing the relationship between structure, process and culture. Nonetheless, because culture is, I think, increasingly overlooked, it is considered here ahead of structure.

Organizational design and structure offer a more obvious focus of attention for 'change managers'. In my recent experience these come in two types: new executive heads who wish to modernize by rebuilding; and change management consultants brought in on set-term contract to assist them. The inclination to restructure is a butt of satire running back at least to Roman times. It has merits and limitations. With goodwill people can make almost any structural arrangement work. Conversely, stopping well short of purposeful and wilful sabotage, without goodwill and a spirit of cooperative shared purpose, even the best conceived and best oiled of designs and structures fail. With poor morale, resentment and ill will there will be neither high productivity nor growth through learning. Hence the logical precedence of culture over structure.

Another overused and trivialized term is empowerment. Organizations need power. The learning organization, of which the university by its nature and function must be a leading type, is a system which generates and uses more and more power. The creation, distribution and use of power is a central theme of this book, which touches the heart of management and the motives, characteristics – and perhaps the Achilles heel – of the manager.

No resting place

At an early stage I had seen this book as closer to a conventional how-to-do-it textbook than it now is. As a compromise I then visualized part of the book, and a penultimate chapter in particular, as being a manual-style checklist applying the precepts and insights of earlier chapters to a list of key tasks facing the university manager. It soon became obvious not only that this was not feasible but that such an approach would fundamentally contradict the essential theme of the study. There is no recipe. Such handy tips as there can be are of a different order and generality than a recipe-style planning and problem-solving manual would offer. The nature of the context or environment, the organic character of the open-system university and its hugely diversified membership, the ever-changing character of the puzzles and conundrums which face the manager, defy their reduction to set tasks for which there is a set of steps and a solution.

Exemplification is a rhetorical strategy to make things clear, which reduces hard-won scientific constructs to the realm of ordinary knowledge (Bourdieu 1988: Chapter 1). Our purpose is to achieve just this: to discover which 'scientific constructs' from the study of organization behaviour and management illuminate and assist through 'ordinary knowledge' in the tasks of managing the university, while avoiding good-for-all-time answers which become at once obsolete and bad advice. Exemplification is therefore used in two senses. I have taken some examples of the major tasks and arenas which fall to different kinds and levels of managers, and considered what it means to nurture a learning university in these arenas. Throughout this book I have illustrated anecdotally what a proposition may mean in a practical

situation. At most, this takes us a little closer to a 'do-it-yourself' guide in which essential principles are set against some operational areas in such a way that the reflective practitioner can make a specific and relevant diagnosis, and desirably reach an intelligent judgement for solving what is so often a novel manifestation of the particular class of problem.

In the spirit of this approach it is consistent for the concluding chapter to ask whether the learning university is 'manageable'. The answer is in the conditional affirmative, only by understanding who the managers are, and what that difficult and necessarily democratized calling nowadays entails. The answers are not reassuring for those attracted to high office by the power and the glory.

Much of the most functional management for modern times and circumstances is transparent yet indirect – features not loved by those who love the exercise of power and control. It requires long-term directional planning. It demands the self-discipline and frustration of deferred gratification. It is about delegation, trust, valuing of 'local' expertise down the line, nurturing teams and giving credit, rather than displaying one's own virtuoso performance. It makes free use of the second and third person, preferring the plural over the singular use of the first person – a lot of 'you, we, he, she and they', not a lot of 'I, my and me'. Put another way, successful management is more about leadership which creates energy than about control which absorbs and monopolizes it.

A newspaper article discussing Australian Prime Minister John Howard's 'downward slide' in 2001 listed characteristics sought in a leader: 'Strength, integrity, good humour, transparency, unpretentiousness, energy, confidence, creativity . . . and an ability to act decisively.' On the other hand, 'If you are driven by personal ambition – for power, position, influence – hubris will get you in the end' (Mackay 2001). As university leaders incline to become more presidential in style, something we turn to later, the same caution applies.

Is 'change management' now the same thing as management because of the universality and rate of change? Rather than accept this, and without denying the fact of change in the world inhabited by the university, the university manager (I am increasingly inclined to use the word 'manager' in inverted commas) has a duty to stand outside change. The task is to objectify and problematize change, to make its management and the university's response to it shared matters for continuous review and reflection, throughout the continuous process of responding to and initiating change.

The discerning reader will have identified a particular *bête noire* in the hubris of strategic management as I have encountered it. I was fascinated to come upon David Watson's book *Managing Strategy* (2000) as I did this work. It belongs to the Open University Press higher education management guides series edited by Warner and Palfreyman as 'practical handbooks' giving 'examples of good practice and guidance where appropriate'. It did not surprise me to read that Watson 'has been forgiven by the editors for his more reflective approach than the norm for this series, because the gains

far outweigh the losses' (Watson 2000: xii–xiii). Such reflectiveness, it seems to me, is the most practical if not the only effective approach to offering guidance in managing the learning university, an activity which demands no less than relentless, untiring, unflinching reflexivity.

Note

1. I have followed the common practice of using the term *managerialism* in a pejorative sense. This associates it with assertive authority, strong hierarchy, management prerogative, and the exercise of principles of economic rationalism within the university. In principle *managerial* and *managerialism* also have a neutral descriptive sense connoting systematic planning and efficiency.

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