



# *External relations*

as support for internal renewal

National Agency for Higher Education 1998

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**External relations as support for internal renewal**

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# Preface

The relationship between universities and the community is a topic of increased attention in Sweden, as well as in many other countries. Governments and citizens expect to get more from universities in terms of solutions to economic and social problems. This means that universities will have to be more open while maintaining their integrity. They have to ask themselves what they are doing and what they should be doing in the future.

Two issues in higher education have recently been on the national agenda. First, the framework law for higher education was changed to emphasize the task of providing service to society in addition to the standard tasks of education and research. Second, the boards of the public higher education institutions will have new external chairpersons, chosen from outside the institutions. The traditional role of the rector as chairman of the board has been abandoned.

A number of organizations, including the National Agency, are conducting studies to learn about these new relationships, their benefits as well as their drawbacks. The issue is also raised in the quality audits performed by the Agency, where the institutions are asked about their policies for external relationships. The perspective of these audits is to see external relations as support for internal renewal. Universities, like all other organizations, could learn a lot from the individuals and organizations they are related to.

In order to add information to the debate within the Agency and the general higher education community – including the interested “outsiders” – a seminar was arranged, where three papers provided general starting points for the discussion.

The first paper, by Sir Douglas Hague of Templeton College, Oxford, paints a picture of what is happening in the world and how it will affect universities. Sir Douglas was chairman of the Economic and Social Research Council and has a reputation as a renewer of higher education. His advice has been sought by present and former British governments.

Sir Douglas discusses, among other things, the impact of life-long learning and indicates that universities will need to have more “professional schools”, working closer to the labor market. The staff of universities will be more mobile between various sectors, and other experiences will become more relevant.

The second paper is written by a Swede who was until recently President of the University of Minnesota; Nils Hasselmo. He generously shares his experiences as a leader in a period of change and describes the factors that either helped or hindered him as a leader. Four case studies are included in which he shows how events developed, where external relations were very much in focus. To other Swedes, his paper also gives an indication of current thinking in the US on matters such as the renewal of undergraduate education.

Last, but not least, is a paper on the role of boards at American universities by Marian Gade of the University of California. She has written extensively in this area and has worked in close cooperation with California’s legendary President Clark Kerr.

Marian Gade gives plenty of background information on the variety of boards in the US. In ten points, she summarizes the role boards play in relationship to presidents and academics. Perhaps surprisingly to Swedes, academics are seldom allowed on boards. What they have in common is, among other things, the role of boards as an arena where universities meet the outside world.

In addition we are pleased to publish comments by Madeleine von Heland and Madeleine Leijonhufvud, who add a Swedish perspective to the discussions.

These texts give food for thought rather than final answers. They can thus at least provide background knowledge for future events in Sweden by showing that some of these problems have been dealt with longer in other countries.

Stockholm, February 1998

Stig Hagström  
University Chancellor

Agneta Bladh  
Director General

# I The role and structure of the twenty-first century university

Sir Douglas Hague

I wrote the pamphlet *Beyond Universities*<sup>1</sup> in 1991 but it was four years before it attracted real attention. Now there are many examples of developments I foreshadowed and I here summarise my current views<sup>2</sup>. Very recently, the *Dearing Report*<sup>3</sup> from an important government committee in the UK, chaired by Sir Ron Dearing, has moved the official view in my direction.

## I.1 Basic trends

My starting point is unchanged. A set of four inter-related trends will transform universities in the 21st century, not least by reducing the monopoly which they have held over a reservoir of talent, especially talent devoted to research and to training the next generation.

### I.1.1 Post-industrial society

There are two economic trends. The first is the development of the post-industrial society. Increasingly manufacturing and service activities will be knowledge-based. They will use high-technology processes to produce high-technology products and services and so will need more well-educated and technically-competent people. Knowledge-based manufactured products will include pharmaceuticals and aircraft, while services will include telecommunications and transport.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Douglas Hague, *Beyond Universities*; Hobart Paper 115, Institute of Economic Affairs, London, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> This is an amended and extended version of a paper presented to a Forum of World Leaders in Higher Education at the City University of Hong Kong in July, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> *Higher Education in the Learning Society: Report of a National Committee of Enquiry*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), Crown Copyright, ISBN: 1 85838 253X, 1997. The main Report runs to 466 pages, but an Executive Summary was published in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* on 25 July, 1997.

Within services, an important sub-category for universities is the rising number of *pure* knowledge-businesses. Unlike *knowledge-based* businesses, they trade in knowledge itself and work in fields like R&D, design, software, consultancy, economic research, training and education.

### **1.1.2 New cost-pressures**

The first economic trend is an important reason for the rising demand for university places in the developed world. The second is bringing new cost pressures. Economic development raises incomes. Because the conventional university is labour-intensive, higher education will become increasingly expensive whoever funds it – whether governments or individuals. And these funders will react.

For example, in the UK since 1977, government spending on higher education has risen by 45 per cent in real terms. Since the number of students has more than doubled, funding per student has fallen by 40 per cent in real terms and, without a change in government policy, will fall by another 6,5 per cent by 2000<sup>4</sup>. To continue to recruit able people in competition with knowledge businesses, universities will have to be more willing to match pay in private sector organisations. Costs will have to be kept down by operating differently and especially by using more technology. The fact that the information/communications revolution is accompanying the knowledge revolution makes this possible but it is also likely to mean that, to achieve the economies of scale needed to keep costs down, the average size of universities will have to increase. And this may mean fewer of them.

### **1.1.3 Information and communications technology**

The third trend is therefore in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) which will transform ways of storing, manipulating and transmitting information and knowledge. Its impact on universities is considered in section 1.2.3.

### **1.1.4 More graduates**

In the knowledge age, these trends should mean opportunities for universities. This should be the golden age of the university. But a fourth trend may constitute as much a threat as an opportunity. More knowledge workers will mean more demand for university places and that itself will cause funding

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<sup>4</sup> *Dearing Report*, Executive Summary, paragraph 14.

problems for the state. Yet, with more graduates than ever, substantial numbers of people outside universities would be capable of setting up private universities to engage in teaching and research in competition with them, if they wished to do so. And they would have more than a fighting chance of success.

Moreover, the development of knowledge businesses depends significantly on the quality of the graduates universities produce. I have therefore been predicting that, beyond a certain point, failure by universities to provide the types and standards of teaching and research training which business requires would lead them to put pressure on universities to raise standards. Alternatively, it would cause them to establish their own “corporate universities”. This is now happening. In the USA, where the term “corporate university” was coined, there are now said to be over one hundred, and the UK is following on. The stimulus is a wish to provide skills which the corporation requires and/or a shared ethos/culture among employees. “Current academic curricula simply are not meeting their needs”.<sup>5</sup>

Even here, though, there are opportunities for universities. In the USA, for example, employees are keen for “corporate universities” to form partnerships with academic institutions, so that employees can obtain qualifications from “an accredited academic institution”. But it is claimed that businesses seeking to do this are often “frustrated with the reception they get from academia . . . . Universities and corporations speak two different languages, there is inevitably a period of awkwardness, of trying to understand each other”<sup>6</sup>. But I believe partnerships are what we need.

In the UK, British Aerospace – the country’s largest employer of graduates – has recently threatened to establish its own university, because of a shortage of good engineering graduates<sup>7</sup>. In 1995, British Telecom established a virtual university for its employees with “classes, lectures and tutorials and experiments . . . . all presented and prepared by many universities and organisations around the world selected because they are regarded as the best

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<sup>5</sup> Jeanne Meister, “Corporate Universities”, *Computer Careers*, 15 July, 1996. Ms Meister writes of 1,000 corporate universities. Most of these are not universities in our terms, so I quote the 100 claimed in private conversations. And many, even of these, cannot be working at university level.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Financial Times*, 11 March, 1997.

of the best.”<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the British pharmaceutical industry is impressing on government the need to ensure that science graduates are well-enough trained to be acceptable researchers in the industry, which also means that a decline in the quality of scientific equipment in universities must be reversed<sup>9</sup>.

In total, some six businesses are currently establishing corporate universities in the UK, but there will be many more. There will also be more joint ventures. One between Warwick University and Rover/BMW, provides technical and/or management training. Another by Microsoft aims to establish a European basic research laboratory in England, through a joint project with Cambridge University. It will work on aspects of computer science and Microsoft will spend £50 million over five years.<sup>10</sup>

The rich mixture of change in prospect therefore brings both opportunities and threats to universities. To the extent that they fail to grasp the opportunities, the threats will be greater. And some opportunities may require alliances with businesses rather than independent initiatives.

I must, however, emphasise one point. All faculties in all universities will have to change but not all will have to do so in the same ways or to the same extent. For example, the arts may be affected less than engineering or the social sciences, but we cannot yet be sure.

## **1.2 Consequences of the basic trends**

### **1.2.1 More lifelong learning**

An important consequence of the knowledge revolution will be the end of the notion that the basic knowledge necessary for a career can be acquired in three or four years at around the age of twenty. A graduate’s knowledge will become quickly out of date so that, at intervals, knowledge workers will require education and training in order to increase their understanding of

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Gell and Peter Cochrane, “Learning and Education in an Information Society” in *Information and Communications Technologies: Visions and Realities*, W H Dutton (ed), Oxford University Press, 1996, p.260.

<sup>9</sup> I learned this in private correspondence with the Director-General of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, April, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> *Financial Times*, 18 June, 1997.

current and future developments and to give them what they need to go on handling their jobs well. “Lifelong learning” is no longer simply a slogan. It is becoming reality, as the title of the Dearing Report, *Higher Education in a Learning Society*, shows.

To the extent that lifelong learning takes place within universities there will be substantial challenges. At the undergraduate stage few universities have experience of how to spread a three- or four-year first degree programme over a longer period. They will have to become expert at developing part-time or modular degree programmes, enabling students to choose their own mix of subjects and increasingly, one hopes, learning styles.

As lifelong learning brings in more senior “students”, there will be two further pressures. First, as I know from working with older people on programmes both at Manchester Business School and in Oxford, they set high standards for presenters and tutors, and expect skillful and professional teaching. They know enough about the outside world to recognise lags between what they are being taught and what is current practice in the organisations where they work. Their experience there in making and attending good professional presentations, using high-quality visual aids, means that the quality and up-to-dateness of both presentations and of equipment will have to rise substantially beyond that in most of the universities I know. The conventional lecture or “talking-head” video is no longer enough.

Second, with older students there must be much more openness and interchange between lecturer and student.

Beyond this, lifelong learning means that much of that learning can and will take place on the job or close to it. Universities which cannot reach out to students will find that employers and others do so instead – as the current development of corporate universities in the USA and the UK shows.

### **1.2.2 More professional schools**

Much of the demand for lifelong learning will arise because more people need to attend university-level programmes directly related to their work, so there will have to be more “professional schools” to cater for them. They will handle fields like technology and subjects like business, law and accountancy. These schools may be part of conventional universities, as many are now. But

they need not be. Decisions on the links needed between professional schools and universities is an important issue, which will call for careful thought as we build a more-diverse set of institutions to meet more-diverse demands for higher education.

Where professional schools *are* within universities, we know that there are often clashes between the academic and the professional culture. It is unfortunate that such conflict exists. But it *does*. If it prevents professional schools operating successfully within universities, it may be best to keep them separate, though I would prefer to see the diversity of culture contained within the same organisation.<sup>11</sup>

I therefore believe that an important question for the 21st century will be how best to foster high-quality professional schools. They must become leaders of innovation in teaching and research. They must set rigorous intellectual standards, foster conceptual thinking and disseminate research findings widely. But they must also increase the ability of students to tackle the current problems of the organisations where they work.

More even than other university faculties, professional schools need to be open to the outside world, combining with outsiders to create and share knowledge and to develop and use ICT well. Partly because of their ties to university systems which assess research in conventional academic terms, too many of today's professional schools – even business schools – are too academic and too out-of-date. In particular, the concept of “research” needs to be redefined, so that at least some is carried out faster and is more relevant to current business issues.

The professional schools of the future must be genuinely open to what their professions need and can offer. First, they must ensure that, with mature students, no one is permanently either teacher or taught.

Second, they must have close links with practitioners. Especially since more of these will be graduates they should be able to offer advice, both on

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<sup>11</sup> Despite being a “professional” subject, medicine is different. It holds a powerful and respected position in (almost?) every British university with a faculty of medicine. Perhaps it is because the study of medicine began very early in university history; perhaps because medicine is relatively well funded; or perhaps medical scholarship and skills really *are* superior to those in other “professions”.

teaching syllabuses and on research topics and processes, which is constructive but often counter-cultural. They can also provide stimulating contributions as presenters and tutors on campus and distance-learning programmes. The most entrepreneurial may even provide philanthropy. Somewhere out there is another Bill Gates.

Third, their own alumni should be the most valuable members of the networks of insiders and outsiders which professional schools and universities must organise, however time-consuming that may be. Alumni can be first-rate tutors and advisors because they know the ethos and culture of “their” university.

But there is more. What far too few academics seem to realise is that in the knowledge age every professional school – even most universities – are sitting on potential mini gold mines. With knowledge becoming a saleable product, both knowledge and training can be big sources of revenue. A university which neglects its alumni is throwing away valuable client lists. This may well be the most important lesson for the successful 21st century university to learn.

### **1.2.3 Learning to use ICT**

The only certain prediction about the impact of information and communications technology (ICT) on universities is that it will be dramatic. The challenge for individual universities will be to work out how best they can use the developing knowledge media. It is certain that, at least initially, a substantial R&D effort will be necessary in order to learn the best ways of using what is becoming available. And those ways will differ, perhaps substantially, between universities. To explore possibilities, diversity must be encouraged.

Those with experience of using ICT insist that, during the learning phase, all expenditure on hardware and software for teaching must be matched pound for pound by similar expenditure on research and development. This learning phase may be lengthy and, again, the advice of those with experience is that universities should begin early, even if that seems too soon.

We know a good deal now about the contribution to learning which can be made by high-quality audio and video material, whether transmitted to students through broadcasts or cassettes. And the British Open University

has shown that we should never underrate the parallel contribution of well-tailored written material to learning.

We are moving into a phase where inter-active computers using CD ROMs will have a big impact. These “knowledge media” enable computer screens to provide text and graphics to explain material, reinforcing this with film clips of talking heads, of scientific experiments, of recent and distant events, etc. By interrogating students, well-programmed computers will discover what a student has so far learned from the CD and, if need be, provide further illustration and more questions. The computer will itself be able both to assess students’ performances and to reveal their patterns, preferences, strengths and weaknesses in learning. Its main contribution may be in subjects like standard mathematics, statistics and economics, but this is certainly not to be despised.

Virtual reality is becoming increasingly important. Already, some airlines train pilots from the very beginning on simulated flight decks, while medical students learn to operate on “virtual” patients. The potential for improving education, and especially training, is enormous. Moreover there are potential cost savings because students can increasingly use “virtual” scientific equipment, as the UK Open University does, rather than the expensive real thing. This may help to solve the problem over the quality of equipment highlighted above.

In the end, the Internet will have the biggest impact of all. Though in existence for 25 years the Internet has been growing explosively only for the last four. It is likely to provide the standard way to disseminate multi-media learning material. Stanford University launched its first postgraduate degree course on the Internet in 1995. But that was only a start. Soon software like Java, which is both a computer language and itself a computer providing small “applets” of software, will give students with PCs direct access to enormous computing power and to whole libraries of software. I therefore concur with the comment by Sir John Daniel, based on his experience as Vice Chancellor of the UK Open University, that the coming-of-age of the Internet represents “a defining moment in the development of technology-based university teaching and learning”<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> John S Daniel, *Mega-Universities and the Knowledge Industries*, Kogan Paul, London, 1996, p.120.

But none of these developments will be cheap. As John Daniel makes clear in *Mega-Universities*, it will be important for universities making substantial use of ICT in teaching to find ways of achieving economies of scale. Otherwise cost per student will be excessive. Some universities will form alliances, producing material for their joint use. Some will draw heavily on materials produced by others, not least by mega universities, and so on. Many will have to get bigger.

## **1.2.4 Innovations in teaching and research**

### **1.2.4.1 Teaching**

Some of us have for years been astonished how few of our university colleagues spend much time studying the effectiveness of teaching, in the sense of judging not the presentations which teachers make, but the extent to which students “learn how to learn” rather than how to remember and reproduce material from books or, even worse, from lectures.

Information technology will itself give us greater understanding of learning. The Open University’s use of video conferencing, which allows “interactive, reflective and synchronised group communication”, is doing this. It has revealed more clearly than ever, “that many students have a very poor understanding of the course materials”<sup>13</sup>. ICT will both compel us to tackle such shortcomings and enable us to check on our success in doing so.

Team working will spread, if only because the economic and educational pressures to use ICT to provide first-class education will force universities to establish teams to develop new teaching materials and methods. The UK Open University’s experience shows that this is the only way to produce high-quality material for substantial audiences, whether that material is disseminated on paper, tape, CD or by television. Universities will have to recognise that, in many cases, the task can no longer be left to individual academics.

I hope we shall also recognise the need for much more research by cognitive scientists and other academics into the way university students learn. It is a scandal that universities know so little about individual students’ learning

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel, *Ibid*, p.114.

methods and processes, and therefore very encouraging that the *Dearing Report* wants to put students “at the centre of the process of learning and teaching”<sup>14</sup>, though achieving that aim will be far from easy. There has been a good deal of research by cognitive scientists in the USA on learning in schools, whose findings have been splendidly summarised by John Bruer in his book *Schools for Thought*<sup>15</sup>. There is virtually none about universities though Diana Laurillard, in *Rethinking University Teaching*<sup>16</sup>, has made a good start. Far more research into teaching is now needed, but there are other issues too for university research. I highlight three.

#### **1.2.4.2 Research**

First, not least because of the ease with which research findings will become accessible as a result of developments in ICT, there will be a knowledge explosion. Better teaching material for students will help to make sense of parts of this new knowledge, but at too low a level for most professional academics. They will themselves need interpreters who can both cope with the knowledge explosion and help to counter the seemingly irreversible trend towards hyperspecialisation.

In the UK, we often use the term “scholarship” to mean interpreting whole fields of research and we need more of it. The necessity for good “scholarship” is inadequately recognised in most universities, while “original” research – even if not all that original – has too high a status. I know that this is true in the social sciences in the UK, from the difficulty I had in encouraging “scholarship” while I was Chairman of the Economic and Social Research Council in the 1980s. With the knowledge overload, scholarship is now more important than ever. Will universities play an effective role here? Or will they allow, or even encourage, commercial knowledge businesses to take the role over?

Second, the explosion of knowledge and the increasing availability of the Internet will force even more change on university libraries, information centres, or whatever they end up being called.

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<sup>14</sup> *Dearing Report*, Executive Summary, para. 32.

<sup>15</sup> John T Bruer, *Schools for Thought: A Science of Learning in the Classroom*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993. (MIT Press, paper back edition, 1994.)

<sup>16</sup> *Rethinking University Teaching: A Framework for the Effective Use of Educational Technology*, Diana Laurillard, Routledge, London and New York, 1993.

Gell and Cochrane go too far in describing libraries as “outmoded, disorganised and irretrievable” but a recent demonstration showed me what is becoming possible. Using a database of American scientific and medical journals, within a few minutes a computer listed all publications within the database that related to a key article, and were able to call up detailed text from them as requested. As such databases become bigger and more widely accessible, the tedious business of making literature surveys will become enormously easier and quicker.

More than one individual will have access to such a database at the same time, so that frustration of discovering that a journal has been sent away “for binding”, as currently happens in too many distinguished university libraries, will end. Databases will allow searches for key words off-setting the lack of an index, as in most journals, or the presence of a bad one, as in many books.

Again, software which is steadily becoming even more effective can, within seconds, produce competent summaries of long passages – even articles – held on databases, and so will provide students with their own abstracts.

Such examples do not begin to provide a blueprint for the “library of the future”, but they do show how much imagination and foresight is going to be required. An early question for its planners must be: Will the future library, if it exists at all, be more than an adjunct to large computer networks and the Internet? If so, what will the relationship be?

Third, universities must ask whether they should abandon some research fields entirely. This is partly because no university can research into everything and partly because knowledge businesses will move into niche markets which could be (or have been) occupied by universities.

UK economics provides two striking examples. First, the top 40 British economic forecasters currently include only two universities, London and Liverpool. Second, British studies of short-and-medium-term economic developments, in the UK and the world, now come mainly from banks or stockbrokers in the City of London. Their reports are well written and authoritative, many with intellectual standards at least equal to those of universities. Here, UK universities have virtually given up already.

Worst of all, our experience in the UK is that the government's centralised control processes, which judge academics by the number of their peer-assessed research papers in recognised journals, drives out time urgently needed both for essential activities like course design and renewal and/or for improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning. *The Dearing Report* highlights concerns over “the downgrading and devaluing of teaching”. And a survey of academic staff commissioned for the Committee showed that only three per cent of academics felt that the current payment system rewarded teaching<sup>17</sup>.

### **1.2.5 Future university structures**

Some Western management experts characterise a knowledge business as composed of three parts – a professional core; a contractual fringe; and a flexible labour force. I believe that the organisation of universities will need to be similar, though with two additional elements.

The university of the future will clearly have to employ a core group of high-powered *and* well-paid academics. Otherwise too many of them will be attracted away by knowledge businesses. If university finances are to balance, economies of scale will have to be exploited, using the knowledge media to give the best academics access to large, international audiences. Some will become rich “stars”, as Frank and Cook have suggested. The consequences of such developments will often be uncomfortable, not least because they will make incomes more unequal both in universities and in society as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, as I have noted, many academics in the core will have to work less as individuals and more as members of teams. This too will often be a difficult transition. For the teams will not only have to include academics who can draw on the findings of the research of others, rather than their own ideas. Media experts and members of the contractual fringe, for example, writers and “researchers”, will come in to complete the kind of production team which today produces films or television programmes.

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<sup>17</sup> *Dearing Report*, p. 178 and Executive Summary para. 32.

<sup>18</sup> R H Frank and P J Cook, *The Winner-take-all Society*, The Free Press, New York and London, 1995.

We can be sure that books will remain important means for disseminating knowledge but the capacity of CD ROMs and the speed of the Internet will both transform and bypass much traditional publishing, as far-sighted publishers already recognise.

One hesitates to categorise less-prestigious academics as part of a flexible labour force, but there will certainly have to be an unprecedented shift here. The emphasis must switch from lecturing to tutoring. We know that established academics find this a threat to their professional status, but without it the economies of scale which technology is making possible will be lost.

Tutors will be needed to interpret teaching material; to recommend multi-media presentations, books, etc. to students; to act as tutors in the traditional sense; and, especially where there is distance learning, to keep much more fully in touch with students by electronic and other means than is currently the case.

The two other elements in the future university structure will be the campus and the network, though the relationship will often be a competitive one. The more work goes on in the campus, the less there may be a need for a network, and vice versa. We all understand the campus. By the *network* I mean the university's web of relationships with people based outside the campus, whether these are students, tutors, academics from the "cores" of other universities, business practitioners, alumni or others. They will be linked by whatever media best enable the network to function well.

As my discussion of professional schools implies, I believe we have to recognise explicitly that university structures and cultures will need to differ depending on the role of the university, or a particular part of it. This view has important support. The OECD argues that "a system growing and responding to the needs of an increasingly heterogeneous group of students must work actively to maintain its diversity."<sup>19</sup> And the *Dearing Report* asserts that "diversity has considerable strengths . . . with the concomitant flexibility and autonomy of mission afforded to institutions."<sup>20</sup>

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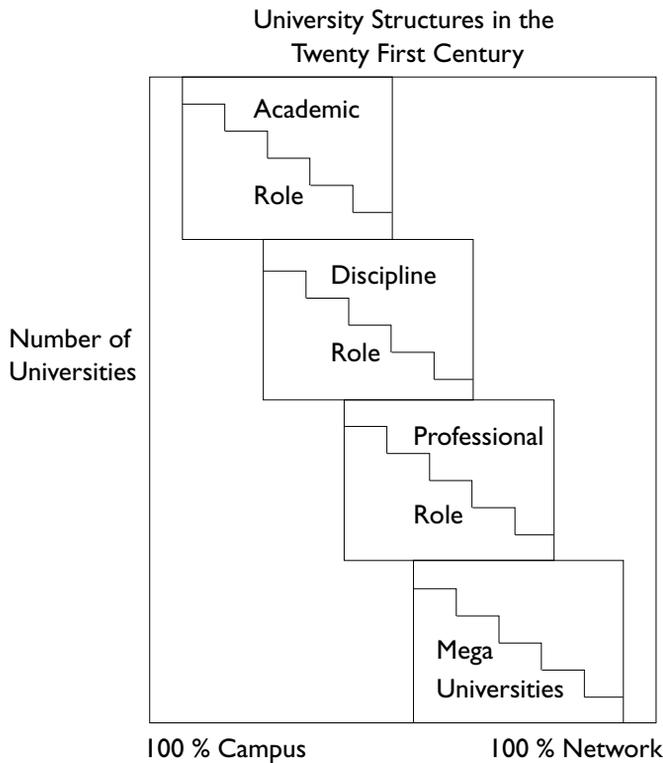
<sup>19</sup> OECD, *Thematic Review of the First Years of Tertiary Education*, unpublished.

<sup>20</sup> *Dearing Report*, p.249.

One of the bases of diversity is, in my experience, inadequately recognised in universities. This is that universities perform one or more of three distinct roles. There is, first, an *academic* role in producing future teachers and researchers. Second, and closely linked to this, is a *discipline* role allowing students to acquire knowledge for its own sake in one or more chosen subjects, but in the hope that both this specialist knowledge and the general skills of thinking and learning acquired in the universities will help in later careers. Third, as we have seen, there is the role of providing *professional* training specifically aimed at education and training for a career. Here again, we find diversity, often unacknowledged.

Because I emphasise the need for diversity I also emphasise that universities will not all develop the same structures. At the “academic” extreme some – perhaps Oxbridge, London and Harvard – will nourish a strong professional core, financing themselves through high fees based on reputation. Keeping a strong campus, they may have a smallish network.

Figure 1: Ratio between campus and network



I find it helpful to show this diagrammatically, as in Figure 1, where the vertical axis shows the number of universities with each of my three roles. (Of course, I recognise that, in different departments or faculties, the same university may be carrying out all three roles. But I am trying simply to put some conceptual issues and therefore ignore this here.) The horizontal axis shows the relative importance of the campus and network. It is unlikely that any university will be in an extreme position with no network, or indeed with no campus. The rectangle for each type of university therefore shows the range of relative size for that type. The university with the relatively smallest network in the “academic” group is on the left, and that with the relatively largest network is on the right. My zig-zag line shows the ratio of campus to network for every individual university.

The “discipline” rectangle implies that universities in this category have somewhat larger networks than “academic” universities. I similarly assume that performing the “professional” role will, on average, put the universities or schools in this category further still to the right, with smaller campuses and larger networks than for “discipline” universities. Again, the zig-zag line for these two categories shows how the relationship between campus and network varies from university to university.

At the bottom of Figure 1, mega-universities are seen as the most assiduous in developing the professional core, the contractual fringe and the flexible labour force to produce excellent multi-media material and use it in teaching. They will have relatively small campuses, but will develop extensive networks. For example, Britain’s Open University, with 150,000 students, has 7,000 geographically-dispersed tutors.

Between the extremes, in the twenty first century there will be a diverse spectrum of universities. Each will develop its own structure, but it will use the building blocks which I have specified. I am certain these are the right ones. Choosing where to locate a particular university in the range of institutions in its own country will be far from easy.

I was impressed during the discussions in the Hong Kong conference, in July 1997, that almost all participants were determined to keep their own universities “academic” or, at most, “disciplinary”. But that will not be possible for every university, given the growing need for lifelong learning and so for professional education/training. The overall balance between the roles

in higher education is bound to move towards more “professional” training and each individual university will have to find its own place in the new scheme.

A less certain possibility – but one we have to face – is that ICT will enable an unpredictable number of students to teach themselves, using products of the knowledge media which are on open sale. The extreme at this end of the spectrum may be outside Figure 1, with neither network nor campus, and so outside the university system altogether.

In the coming knowledge society, the average number of students per university will rise, but whether there are more or fewer universities will depend on whether the demand of the knowledge society for trained and retrained graduates rises faster than economic and technological pressures raise the size of universities. But, by 2010, a substantial number of universities must surely have 250,000 students or more. This will pose formidable management challenges.

### **1.2.6 Entrepreneurial universities**

Very few universities are entrepreneurial, in the sense of being flexible, innovative and creative, and it is difficult to see how existing higher educational organisations can change far in this direction. If there are to be entrepreneurial universities, they are likely to be relatively small and to operate in specialised markets.

Because mainstream universities are usually so slow to innovate and change, at least in the UK the contractual fringe overlaps a “freelance fringe” of individuals and small organisations. These carry out activities very like those of professional schools, but their frustration with the lumbering ways of academia has driven them into the fringe. I have myself spent the last 12 years operating in the UK’s freelance fringe for precisely this reason. So I know there is energy and entrepreneurial ability there. At present most fringe organisations are small, but they will grow. Some will lead the way in helping the development of universities which are fully appropriate to the knowledge age, not least by fostering the diversity in university roles and structures which is becoming necessary, and which I have begun to explore in Figure 1.

### 1.2.7 Diffusing innovation

Entrepreneurial innovation will be easier in the USA with a decentralised university system than in Western European countries like the UK and Sweden, where politicians and civil servants play a substantial part in setting policy and providing funding. The difficulty for us in Europe is that such regulators do not recognise that this is a typical example of the diffusion of innovation; even less do they understand how to orchestrate a diffusion process effectively. This remark is less critical than it may sound. The whole ethos of a civil service is to inculcate non-innovatory thinking and practice, since the task of all but the most-senior civil servants is to devise and apply conventional rules. The problem is that, because of their training, those among them who later reach the highest levels in government find it difficult to recognise the need to open up, even dismantle, centralised systems. But only thus can innovation take place.

Radical innovation cannot be managed from the centre. The *Dearing Report* points to concern that, under central regulation, British universities have become more alike, with less diversity between institutions.<sup>21</sup> Experimentation is needed to create the diversity of structures I see as essential, and that means pluralism. I have suggested in recent writings in the UK that ten – even twenty – out of our 120 universities and colleges should be encouraged to experiment to discover how to develop and run the university of the 21st century. Each should create its own vision of a 21st century university and seek to put that into effect: to set objectives for genuinely innovative teaching and research; to do so by carrying out and drawing on research studies into the processes of both teaching and research, including the way that ICT can and should change those processes; to open themselves to more outside influences, including those of pure knowledge businesses; and, not least, to find more effective ways of disseminating research findings and so influencing the outside world.

The results of such experimentation should then be captured by a simultaneous and high-quality research programme and made widely (and quickly) known to all other universities, which should be encouraged to use what appear to be the most successful models and approaches. This sounds messy and dangerous, but that is what innovative processes are.

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<sup>21</sup> *Dearing Report*, p.43.

In the UK, it is now likely that all students will pay modest fees and possible that there will be a more market-oriented approach. The *Dearing Report* recommends a move to a situation where “at least 60 per cent of total public funding in higher education institutions will be determined by student choice by 2003”.<sup>22</sup> Of course, we do not know what the Government’s response will be or whether it will keep to this timetable. I obviously welcome a move in this direction, but I still advocate the process of experimentation outlined above. The 21st century is too close to wait for a market solution.

### 1.3 Concluding comments

For those who have always worked in conventional universities, the future I am predicting may seem surprising. Indeed, when I wrote *Beyond Universities* I myself wondered if I was creating a fantasy. Now every week that passes brings new evidence that there is development in the directions I have set out in this paper. For me, since I work in the UK, the most encouraging confirmation of my six-year-old predictions is the *Dearing Report*. I point especially to its emphasis on the need for diversity among universities; on the importance of learning, not teaching; on the future impact of ICT on learning, teaching and research; and on the increasing interpenetration of universities and business. But, until the British government publishes a White Paper in the Autumn, we shall not know what view it takes of the Dearing Report’s 120-plus recommendations.

Ideas are changing, and my call for diverse and permeable universities matches ideas about larger entities in today’s world. Geoff Mulgan is the young founder of an independent, non-party-political think tank in the UK and so, on my definition, a “knowledge entrepreneur”. In *Connexity*<sup>23</sup> a book about our complex, inter-connected world, Mulgan writes: “In a global economy that is more and more dependent on information, every society has to be concerned about whether it has sufficient edges . . . . Certainly, the failure to cultivate an edge is one of the explanations for the collapse of Communist economies”. Lying behind my paper is a belief that most universities have too much the culture of a self-contained centre, and too little that of an “edge” which is “always seeking out new connections . . . . and

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<sup>22</sup> *Dearing Report*, Recommendation 72, p.297.

<sup>23</sup> Geoff Mulgan, *Connexity*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1997, p.85.

new forms of knowledge”<sup>24</sup>. Of course, academics have professional contacts outside their own universities, but too many of them are with other academics. My paper shows that this is no longer a tenable position.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.87.

## 2 Comments

Madeleine von Heland

First of all I want to congratulate Sir Douglas on his excellent paper, a discerning analysis of what is going to happen with the systems of higher education in the post-industrial society. Your description of the present situation is very much in line with my own thinking and I must confess that I was quite surprised to discover in you a kindred spirit. There are not too many of them around in the world of higher education, as you may well know. In Sweden they are extremely rare. I know of only one and he is luckily here: Stig Hagström. Surely he must be the master-mind behind my presence here today and I am very grateful to him for having invited me here.

As I have accepted to comment your paper, I cannot get away by just saying "I agree". Luckily there are statements in your paper which lead to questions worth pondering upon. One of these statements deals with the problem of the increasing number of students pouring into the universities and with them the increasing number of graduates. According to you, this may lead to the establishing of private universities. This is indeed very likely, especially if we consider that today the increasing quantity of graduates is met by accepting a decreasing quality in teaching and tutoring at most universities. Surely there must be many academics who discuss this problem. But not as openly as the problem has to be discussed in order to be solved.

Thus the noble art of keeping quality up by pouring quantity down is still waiting for a wizard to appear, turning this art into a tool that all those, who are concerned, will be able to handle with ease.

### **2.1 Applied humanities**

If you try to visualize this wizard, you may catch a glimpse of him in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) itself. Personally I am convinced that I saw him already in 1986, when I was trying to establish *The Institute for Applied Humanities* in collaboration with SICS, the Swedish

Institute for Computer Science in Kista, Stockholm. The wizard was then hidden in the area of interactive, educational games. Unfortunately he is still hiding there.

It is getting late now. But we still have time to give him all means he needs to step forward and get going. Allow me to quote myself in an interview from 1986: "The post-industrialized society requires independent, intellectually well-trained citizens. If we don't reconstruct our system of education in order to produce such individuals, Sweden will be a loser in the explosive development of information technology"<sup>1</sup>.

In the same interview I also stated that the ability to scan large amounts of information, to summarize and to extract new knowledge from a given amount of information was a typical, humanistic quality. It was therefore important to tap the humanists on their methodological skills when reconstructing the educational system in Sweden.

Of course I knew and made it very clear to the interviewer that a national, educational sector is a very stiff system that cannot be changed over night, even if everyone concerned agrees to do so. But humanists as well as other academic teachers and researchers could contribute substantially to the much needed, new educational sector by producing computerized, interactive, educational games.

My own, vain endeavours to create an ICT platform for humanists eleven years ago have no other role in connection with Sir Douglas' paper than to explain why I do not accept his statement that the faculties of arts may be less affected than other faculties by ICT. First of all I am absolutely convinced that the many problems with the interface between man and machine can only be solved by tapping the huge amount of knowledge stored in the visual arts of mankind. Tapping this knowledge will mean that faculties of art will have to be strongly attached to the development of ICT. And this will change these faculties, whether they like it or not.

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<sup>1</sup> "Marknaden för humankunskap är jättelik och oexploaterad", Intervju med Madeleine von Heland, *Tvårvetenskap för framtiden. Forskare om humaniora och samhällsvetenskap som resurs för teknisk utveckling*, STU (Styrelsen för teknisk utveckling, nr 535, 1986.

## **2.2 The ugly computer**

Secondly I am also absolutely convinced that the ICT will come to an abrupt end, and this soon, if it doesn't understand that the only quality which really matters for human beings is beauty.

Just look at your computer. It's ugly. Look at the prewritten texts on the screen. Ugly. Terribly ugly. Look at this monster Mir, orbiting around our planet Earth, unsurpassed in beauty. How dare we pollute the fathomless space around the Earth with such an utterly unaesthetic object as Mir? No wonder it breaks down. If I were an angel up there, I would certainly do everything in my power to get rid of it.

I am not particularly interested in farming. But I do give the agrarian society credit for having created a much more beautiful rural and urban environment than the industrial society ever did.

So, please, Sir Douglas. Do try to change your opinion on art as not being affected by and therefore not affecting ICT. I can see no future for our society if we don't reinstall BEAUTY as our guiding-star into the ICT society.

## **2.3 The academic nobility**

Another issue, hidden between the lines in Sir Douglas' paper, deals with the changing social role of the university itself. For the last 100 years – in the UK perhaps even for the last 150 years – university people have looked upon themselves as a kind of nobility, a privileged class protected by the national state and with very much freedom as to how and when to work and with higher salaries than other groups employed by the state.

Today the university is exposed to the same kind of pressure as society at large. This pressure is commercial and there is no escape from it. In order to tackle this commercial pressure I believe that the university must look outside itself and study what strategies the industry use to tackle new pressures. But I must confess that I have only little, if any experience of industrial strategies. Still I hope it is correct to state that formerly the industrial strategies were formed on the prerequisites of each factory. Now a given factory must form its strategy according to the needs of the market.

The university has a very strong bottom-up organisation, i.e. an organisation based on its own conception of the world. But now the university will also be forced out on the competitive market and can no longer rely on the state for its existence. This means that the management of the university must change completely. But the university has no experience in creating an executive group and suitable persons will probably not be found among the leading professors, as they have been qualified for their positions on quite different grounds. Therefore I believe that we soon will see the university applying to the head-hunters on the open market in order to find the leaders that can help the university to tackle this tough, very real but also mysterious market.

## **2.4 Individuals as true winners**

Let me finish my comments by pointing at one short paragraph in Sir Douglas' paper, where it is stated that far too few academics seem to realise that in the knowledge age every professional school – even most universities – are sitting on potential gold mines. With knowledge becoming a saleable product, both knowledge and training can be big sources of revenue.

I think I have known this for a long time, referring once more to the interview from 1986: "The market for humanistic knowledge is giant and unexploited"<sup>2</sup>.

But, Sir Douglas, you neither discuss how this knowledge is going to be sold nor to whom the profit will be given. For me this is one of the most intriguing subjects to be discussed and I have even written a novel about it called *From Aquilonia* (1994). From the short remark in your paper I gather that you believe that schools and universities might become very rich in the future. You may be right. But I believe that it is much more likely that when knowledge will start operating on the market, the true winners will be the producers of these valuable goods, i.e. the individuals. When this happens, the hub of the economic wheel will definitely shift from industrial labor to individual creativity. And this will affect and change our whole society.

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

# 3 Leading change at an American university

Nils Hasselmo

## 3.1 Leading change or being led by change?

The phrase “leading change” is ambiguous. It can mean “to lead change” or “change that leads.” In the first instance, someone is leading the change; in the other, the change is leading someone. Certainly, we want to be the ones who lead change. I will in this paper use this interpretation of the phrase.

It is, however, useful to pause for a moment at the outset and consider the second interpretation of “leading change.” As much as we want to lead change, we must accept the fact that change is not entirely, if even modestly, under our control, and that the changes we lead, or at least try to lead, are prompted and in fundamental ways conditioned by “changes that lead us.”

The most important change that leads us is, it seems, a change in the relationship between our universities and society. As has often been pointed out, there has been in existence since World War II what has been regarded as a “contract” between American universities and the federal government, in research as well as in education. The universities have been seen, and treated, as if they were an essential – and unquestioned – partner in dealing with the strategic interests of the United States. In the 1990s, that is no longer true.

The relationship between American universities and the government, and the public, is being questioned. Even those who still see the universities as a major partner for the federal government, and for state governments and the private sector, do insist on raising questions about the goals and operation of our universities. A host of more specific questions about the relationship between the universities and society are being posed.

As we attempt to lead change, this change in attitude and the many more specific questions that result from it – many of them actually posed most

vigorously from within the universities themselves – lead us and set many of the terms for our attempts to lead.

The gallows humor of American university presidents reflects some of the difficulties involved:

- The university president is “the navigator of an iceberg,” suggesting that there is a certain amount of inertia in the system.
- He or she is “a herder of cats,” suggesting that there are many disparate and self-willed constituencies that somehow have to be made to move in the same direction.
- He or she may even be “the grease on the contact surface between academe and society (or reality, as some would have it),” suggesting both friction and heat.

I will in my comments draw on my experiences over the past eight and a half years as president of the University of Minnesota, a major research and landgrant university. It was founded in 1851 as an amazingly ambitious effort on the part of the then territory to ensure that the people would have educational opportunities equivalent to those available on the East Coast. When the so-called Landgrant Act was adopted in 1862, the university became the state’s landgrant institution and adopted the landgrant mission of research, teaching, and service.

From the very beginning, the University of Minnesota was thus intended to provide “service” to society through its research and education. The idea is old; the interpretation of the idea in the 1990s is what is in question.

### **3.2 A bird’s eye view of the landscape of change**

What are some of the specifics of this agenda of change that is such a potent element in the environment of the 1990s?

#### **3.2.1 The expectation of change**

There is an expectation of change. Is it the end of the Cold War? Is it the revolution in information technology that has suddenly become part of the public awareness? Is it the budget deficits?

Whatever the reason may be – and maybe all of the above and many others are relevant – it is a fact that the 1990s have been characterized by a general feeling that things are changing, and that somehow they must change. This expectation of change has in itself been a powerful element in the debate about our universities (and in regard to, for example, education from kindergarten to 12th grade, "K-12"). We are operating under a mindset that demands change, and that may be relatively receptive to change. As we will see, the demand for change may, however, not necessarily be accompanied by receptivity to specific changes!

### **3.2.2 A global, diverse, technological knowledge and information society**

I have compiled in this heading most of the key buzz words driving the debate on change. Taken one by one, these terms can serve as rubrics for categories of change in our society. Our universities are, and must be, deeply involved in each of these areas. The "global" and "diversity" areas can, of course, be seen as two aspects of a single agenda: recognizing and dealing with the fact that our world and our society are multicultural, and that our universities to a very special degree must address that fact in their curricula as well as in their recruitment of students, faculty, and staff. Technology, to a considerable extent aided by university research, is indeed changing the way we operate, and the universities must continue to be vital partners in that development as well as leaders in the application of technology. The knowledge and information society is certainly upon us, and the very nature of this new society, of course, makes universities – our oldest and most successful "knowledge and information industry" – more important than ever.

### **3.2.3 Accountability**

For a long time, at least since World War II, society has pretty much allowed universities to operate the way they wanted. The goals were assumed to serve the national agenda, and the results – and a certain amount of disinterest in the means – made the public, and even the politicians, leave the universities alone. They enjoyed benign neglect, to use a popular phrase, with the exception of occasional flare ups over some radical professor or student prank which were on the whole seen as rather harmless. Now, society demands accountability not only as to the use of public resources but also as to the usefulness of specific programs.

### **3.2.4 Cooperation and competition**

The demand for cooperation is spurred by accountability. “Duplication” has been a key word in the recent debate. It must be avoided by mission differentiation and cooperation, even if the duplication as often as not is due to political pressures. Because of the costs involved, cooperation has become a sheer necessity. Competition is rampant today, not only among universities but also between universities and the corporate sector. Who hasn’t contemplated the inroads by companies such as Microsoft into areas previously considered the hallowed domain of universities? An interesting pattern of competition and cooperation is developing among universities and between universities and corporations. Where it will take us is a major unresolved question.

### **3.2.5 Financing**

Federal and state budget deficits have been very much part of the scene during the first half of the 1990s. In the perspective of the recent upswing of the American economy, and recent reductions in governmental deficits, it may already be a little difficult to remember just how violent the demand for deficit reductions and for economies through restructuring was only two or three years ago! Universities were accused of price gouging, and of poor management. Public universities, which had already seen their state funding reduced to maybe a third of the total budget, were told to restructure to accommodate cuts as well as investments in new programs and technology.

### **3.2.6 The academic culture**

Perhaps as a result of all these factors, the academic culture itself came under attack. Books alleging “profscams” and massive neglect of students, especially undergraduate students, hit the market and sold well. Faculty governance was seen as little more than a means for entrenched members of the professoriate to hinder needed changes. “Tenure” became the catch word for an array of perceived abuses.

And, this happened to institutions – including America’s leading universities – which have deservedly been recognized for their accomplishments! Will we be able now, after the “crisis” of the first half of the 1990s, to approach the need for change in a more thoughtful and constructive way, acknowledging both the achievements of the universities and the need for change, without inflammatory hyperbole?

### **3.3 Observations on leading change**

#### **3.3.1 Strategic planning/strategic outcomes**

Leadership must ensure that an institution carries out a cycle of systematic environmental scanning, planning with identification of goals and priority setting, action to implement plans, and evaluation of outcomes and performance with well-defined critical measures. Over the past two decades American universities have made major strides in establishing such cycles. The SWOT approach has been popular: identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Systematic planning along these lines began at the University of Minnesota in the late 1970s, but of course planning of various kinds had been done throughout the university's history. The new emphasis on planning was prompted by the realization that resources were not going to flow endlessly. (There were retrenchments also in the 1970s, long before the "crisis" of the early 1990s). There was a sense that universities had overextended themselves, partly as a result of the GI Bill which provided educational financing for World War II veterans and led to an enormous increase in enrollment, and by a sense that the decentralized decision making that characterized most universities had to be supplemented by more centralized planning.

Under my predecessor, the planning effort produced a plan entitled "Commitment to Focus," a plan to "focus" the university's activities by reducing enrollment at the undergraduate level, pruning programs, and investing in high priority areas. My predecessor resigned after a vicious campaign against him, ostensibly because of cost overruns in remodelling the president's house, but probably also because of negative reactions to some of the specific actions that were to help the university focus.

There is an important lesson here: It is much easier to get agreement in principle that we must "focus," "set priorities," "play to our strengths," "emphasize quality," etc. than it is to get support for the necessary actions! "We need to gore some oxen – but not mine!"

I endorsed the focusing effort when I was recruited as president, but had to recast the effort in new terms, since the very term "focussing" had been contaminated in the public's eye. The plan had been grossly misunderstood.

The idea that undergraduate education and outreach were to be de-emphasized was probably the most serious misunderstanding.

### **3.3.2 Setting, timing, actors: what influenced events at the University of Minnesota?**

My experience certainly suggests that it is not only the content of what is being proposed that is important. The setting, timing, and actors are very important. They may well spell the success or failure of the effort.

What are some of the factors that influenced what happened both to my predecessor's and to my plans?

The following seem important:

- A general expectation that change was needed; I benefitted from my predecessor's work because that effort – although it failed at the time – had begun to mobilize those constituencies that were willing to support the specific changes that were needed, not just change in the abstract.
- The egalitarian/populist philosophy of the state; wonderful as it is, it made it very difficult to avoid the label of “elitist” for anything that limited access to the university, even in the face of a general acknowledgement that “the U was overextended.”
- The metropolitan-rural split of the state; changes tended to be seen as favoring the metropolitan interests over the rural ones. (The latter are still very well represented in the legislature, and include many of the university's traditional supporters).
- The gradual mobilization of, especially, the university's foundation and alumni association in support of the plans for change.
- The university's active faculty, staff, and student governance system; it played an important role, generally in support of change but sometimes in opposition to specific changes.
- The culture of the university's governing board and the aspirations of individual members of the board. (The board consists of twelve citizens elected by the legislature). Board activism became a major factor, for example, in the review of tenure.
- The state's higher education governance system; a “Higher Education Coordinating Board,” appointed by the governor, served for many years but was abolished in connection with the merger of the state's state university, community college, and technical college systems. (The University of Minnesota with four campuses is a separate entity with

autonomy guaranteed by the state constitution of 1858). The board had over the years allowed, or perhaps rather been unable to prevent, considerable campus and program duplication; before its demise, it supported the University of Minnesota's effort to "focus."

- The state's "open meeting" law which requires that all meetings of the governing board should be open to the public and the media; important as this openness is, it made it very difficult at some critical points to explore solutions with the full board involved.
- Perceived and real "scandals" involving the university, including remodelling of the president's house, alleged conflicts of interest and violations of federal rules and regulations concerning sponsored research and the licensing of drugs in the Medical School, and alleged violations of the rules of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics; skeletons in the closet, some of them twenty years old, kept the media kettle boiling in spite of the fact that the university had taken, and continued to take, strong action to deal with those problems.
- Intense media interest in the university, including two full-time reporters from the two rival metropolitan newspapers; the local newspapers also served as a forum for a sometimes lively debate of university issues among faculty, staff, and board members as well as public officials and members of the general public; increasingly the administration also began using the media to get its messages across; this was not necessarily an "optimal" way to consider important issues but part of our environment.
- E-mail; this new medium for disseminating information, and to a considerable extent misinformation, and for a kind of semi-public debate, has become a very important factor in the life of the university and has affected its ability to make and implement decisions; technologically enhanced rumor mongering is a problem!

These factors can work for or against change. Taken together, they create an environment which deeply influences how the university plans, how its plans are presented and accepted, and how they are implemented (even whether they are or are not implemented). I cannot here go into a further analysis of the specific ways in which they influenced what we did at the University of Minnesota. I hope that even this enumeration can give a feeling for the complexities that surround change in an American university of this type. In the case studies that follow, I will at least be able to give some further hints as to how some of these factors influenced the processes and outcomes

### **3.3.3 The need to act**

In the end, it is of course absolutely necessary to act! This is the existential aspect of university presidencies. If you are lucky – which has been described as the most important asset of a university president – the setting, timing, and actors will support your plans. If you are not, well, then it is important to regroup and try again!

### **3.3.4 National, regional, and local leadership**

Leadership for change comes from the national, regional, and local level. I will simply give some examples to suggest this broader context.

The national efforts have involved influential reports by groups of leaders from many sectors of society, including of course that of higher education itself. The report *A Nation at Risk*, although directed at K-12 education, certainly sounded an alarm in the 1980s concerning the need to mobilize the nation for educational quality because of the competitive pressures from East Asia and Europe. The needs of the economy were beginning to replace the political and military needs that had been driving American education since World War II, and K-12 education especially since Sputnik. A number of efforts have been made, and are being made, to substitute the economy for the Cold War as a unifying factor, and rallying cry, in seeking federal investments in university research and education.

Undergraduate education has been prominent among the national concerns. It is indicative that the very first report produced by the Kellogg Commission, established by the National Association of State Universities and Landgrant Colleges (NASULGC) in 1995, was devoted to the “student experience.” This report states goals for a general upgrading of undergraduate education and reports on the significant efforts that have been made, and are being made, by many universities to revise their curricula, teaching methods, and learning environments to meet new demands. The fact that a broad perspective is applied by the commission is indicated by titles for projected reports, such as “the learning society” and “the engaged university.”

Collective action by the major educational associations, the American Council of Education, NASULGC, the Association of American Universities, the Association of State Colleges and Universities, and others, helped reform and revitalize the system of university self-regulation institutionalized in the accreditation process for higher education. This was done under threat of

federal intervention by the U.S. Department of Education through the use of the certification process for receipt of certain federal funds as a means of imposing specific requirements for accreditation.

Regional efforts at change involve various forms of collaboration. In Minnesota, the University of Minnesota has established and expanded a number of cooperative programs with the other public and private universities and colleges in the state. The university also has extensive collaboration, and tuition reciprocity, with the University of Wisconsin.

The Big Ten, now actually eleven major research universities in the Middle West, has expanded its cooperation, and competition from the football field and basketball court to the academic arena through, among other things, the sharing of courses through Internet, joint international programs, and joint lobbying in Congress.

At the same time, it must be noted that all of these activities ultimately depend on local initiative. This is where the most significant changes are undertaken. The most important collective action is voluntary, even if it may be inspired by government, and very much in the hands of the leaders of individual institutions who also lead change at the local level.

At the University of Minnesota, our efforts were consolidated under the rubric of “U 2000” in 1993. This plan, or rather planning framework, drew in its basic thrust on the idea of “focussing” which had been launched in the 1980s. It actually followed upon a period of action to move the university in that direction without – deliberately without – calling the effort anything. The name of “Commitment to Focus” had itself become such a liability that it seemed, at least at the time, wise not to attract unnecessary attention by naming!

By 1993, however, the pressure to have a label became very strong. Since we didn’t call what we did anything – other than “Restructuring and Reallocation,” a title so dull that most people’s eyes glazed over when I mentioned it – some people didn’t seem to notice that we had already closed a campus (unprecedented, it seems, among American public universities in modern times), phased out most undergraduate teacher education (“focussing” on post-baccalaureate teacher education, leaving the rest to the state’s seven state universities, formerly state teachers’ colleges), eliminated

and/or merged several departments and centers, and cut and reinvested over \$50 million, then about 10 per cent of the university's state funding.

Once we had "U 2000," which was launched in consultation with university faculty, staff, and students and based on years of planning, and which involved interviews with 68 "stakeholder" groups around the state, our "plan" of course became the object of much debate, much support, and much opposition. "Stop U 2000" graffiti can still be seen on campus!

The "plan" was nothing mysterious. It identified a number of goals for the three traditional missions of the university, research, teaching, and outreach, and for appropriate access to the university's research and education and for diversity in its student body and faculty and staff. It identified the need for restructuring and reinvestment of university resources, and established a set of "critical measures" to assess progress on the stated goals.

### **3.4 Case studies**

I will now turn to brief summaries of four cases of change.

#### **3.4.1 Improving undergraduate education**

I deliberately made this the first item on my agenda when I became president. As the agenda grew, it remained its centerpiece. It was my conclusion that the further strengthening of the university as a research university – essential to "focussing" – somewhat paradoxically first required that we must provide truly outstanding undergraduate education. Conversely, the fact that the university is a research university gave us special opportunities to provide such education.

The plan that was developed involved a revision of the curriculum. The distribution requirements that define early undergraduate education were expanded to reflect both the traditional disciplines and new cross-cutting themes such as "multiculturalism," "ethics across the curriculum," and "the environment." New "majors" were designed in cooperation with local community colleges (in applied areas such as "information networking," "applied business", "emergency medical services," and "construction management"); new majors were also developed within the university itself, drawing on strength in interdisciplinary research (for example, in neuroscience); and existing majors were revised, for example, in management and

agriculture, again with an interdisciplinary emphasis. The plan involved the implementation of new, stiffer admission and preparation requirements, and increased attention to good teaching practices, drawing on the considerable resources that existed in the university's own faculty.

An expanded "Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program" offered students the opportunity to work directly with faculty members on projects resulting in papers presented at special "conferences" of undergraduates and their mentors. A series of "President's Forums on Teaching" became a vehicle for stressing that this initiative had central support and would receive funding. A major effort was made to improve the campus environment for the students, including "residential college" programs. Internships and "service learning" opportunities were provided, in cooperation with other colleges and universities, with business and industry, and with the university's own "Extension Service," with staff in all the 87 counties of Minnesota. New information technology was used to recruit, admit, register, advise, and place students. The students had access to e-mail – as I noticed, especially on cold days when they thought I ought to close the university!

The initiative was generally well received, although with concern about the increasing selectivity in recruitment of students. We had phrased this change in terms of "preparation," and had worked with the K-12 system to ensure that the students could indeed meet the new, stiffer requirements. The preparation of the students did indeed improve very significantly, and with it the graduation rate, which had been a major concern and political liability. The fact that we could measure the improvements in preparation and graduation, and publicize them, contributed to the success.

But, when we tried to reduce the university's traditional role in providing remedial education by recommending the closing of its "General College," serious problems arose – even in the face of figures that showed that the General College had a graduation rate for students entering through it of eleven per cent after 5 years, with even lower rates for minority students.

Maybe we were misled by the successful closing of one of our campuses. This campus in rural Minnesota had about 1000 students in agricultural-technical programs. It had had serious enrollment problems for some years, and its programs had over time been duplicated in the state's technical colleges. (In spite of presumably rigorous procedures for program approval

by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, this duplication had developed). The closing was done after the campus was given an opportunity, with central support, to try to find a revised mission that would be viable, and failed to do so. (Its sister institution in northern Minnesota, which was presented with the same challenge, did define a new “polytechnic” mission and is doing very well). The chair of the board was briefed early, and backed the administration when the politics got hot. He even accompanied me when I went to the campus to announce that I was recommending that it should be closed. (He did suffer considerable repercussions for this act of courage, since the campus was located in his own district).

Our attempt to close the General College was preceded by the same kind of briefing of key players, including the board. However, we did not – obviously – prepare the case as well as we should have. The faculty and staff of the college launched a massive demonstration, concentrating on the college’s role in attracting and admitting minority students to the university. The “gut” question of “access” became the stumbling block. We were not able to present effectively enough the fact that we had – in spite of stricter requirements – been able to increase our minority enrollment significantly under the undergraduate initiative. Although the chancellor of the other public system was willing to work with us to take responsibility for more remedial instruction, the board voted 11–1 against my proposal.

However, all may not have been in vain. A committee is evaluating the university’s role in remedial instruction. Something is not right, and rather significant forces in the community began to say so.

### **3.4.2 Restructuring and reallocation**

One reason the campus closing succeeded, and perhaps one reason the closing of General College did not, was the fact that the closing was associated with a series of investments in important areas of research, teaching and outreach. The closing was directly seen as a necessary means to some very desirable ends. (Although we had tried to connect the closing of General College with other actions, the financial necessity was not made as clear).

I have hinted at some of the important investments we started making. They included, of course, various aspects of undergraduate education, among them special funding for the “top 40,” viz., the forty courses serving the largest number of students. This resulted in total restructuring of introductory

courses in, for example, psychology and biology, using new instructional technology, not to replace the teachers but to free them for more meaningful exchanges with students in class.

Other investments were made in centers for research and graduate education, for example, a Cancer Center, a Center for Interfacial Engineering, a revised Master of Business Administration program, half a dozen new “practitioner-oriented” master’s degrees in engineering, and a Consortium for Children, Youth, and Family, drawing in each case on special strengths and opportunities. In each of these cases, outreach and knowledge and technology transfer were part of the agenda.

Activities in continuing education were consolidated in a new “University College,” which offered degree and certificate programs in different locations and by correspondence, and increasingly by interactive TV, as well as providing access to individual courses for students exploring a university degree. It was intended to supplement and extend the programs offered through the university’s regular, and increasingly selective, programs.

Over the past six years, the university has cut and/or reinvested about \$130 million, about one third of its state funding (which in turn makes up about one third of the university’s total budget of about \$1.5 billion). Financial plans became a major part of the overall planning effort, including biennial budget plans directed to the state for funding under their biennial schedule, and annual implementing budgets. An “all-funds budget” was established. Previously, the state and tuition funded portions of the budget had been treated separately from funds from other sources, such as overhead on federal grants and private donations. We now looked at all sources of revenue and all objects of expenditure within the framework of a single overall budget.

We struggled to make sure both that budget concerns did not drive unplanned programmatic decisions and that planning did not take place without considering the financial implications.

A good deal of change was also undertaken in the internal management of funds. An effort was made to preserve the university’s strong tradition of decentralized management, but to ensure that decisions would be made within a universitywide framework, and that the financial management systems were able to provide timely information and controls.

A variety of what has been called “Responsibility Center Management” was introduced, which established principles for the allocation of state funds, allocated earned tuition and overhead from sponsored research grants to the college earning it, and assigned the management of space to the colleges (with costs associated with the use of space).

The discipline of making major investments in, for example, undergraduate education and a number of areas of research and graduate/professional education without additional resources from the state created a different environment than that of essentially incremental budgeting. It taxed the ability of the university to coordinate central goals with those of the university’s twenty-four collegiate units, and it taxed the ability of the university to make its case for change with a variety of internal and external constituencies. The series of cuts, especially because they occurred during a period of financial problems for the state which resulted in a couple of salary freezes, did lead to morale problems in the university. At the same time, the ability of the university to make these decisions did build confidence both in the legislature and with the foundation and alumni leaders that the university was after all able to change.

In the end, when the state’s financial situation improved it came through with a 16.4 per cent increase in the university’s state-funded base budget, which made possible an 8.5 per cent increase in faculty salaries.

The overall trend, however, in public institutions has been away from state funding and to more funding from tuition and private contributions. This is certainly one of the major changes taking place in American higher education. The University of Minnesota now charges an undergraduate tuition of about \$4,000 per year for a Minnesota student or one from a “reciprocity area” such as Wisconsin, about \$10,000 per year for out-of-state students. This is a significant increase over past years. Tuition now generates about \$200 million per year in income. The university raises about \$125 million per year in private and corporate support, up from half of that just a decade ago and nothing thirty years ago.

These changes in funding in themselves have altered the dynamics of the interaction between the universities and the public. “Marketing,” a word much resisted and scorned in academic circles, has made its appearance in

the universities by necessity. Operating in this public-private combined territory, serving a public agenda with a mixture of public and private funds, is part of the challenges of change facing American universities.

Federal and state government have tried to regulate themselves to achieving what they consider public policy objectives, in some states including attempts to control tuition rates, but have been unable, or unwilling, to finance such objectives. As the private sector and the students pick up more and more of the cost, they have obviously begun to place their own demands on the universities.

This issue looms large at this time. So far, I must say that I am impressed by the way America's universities have been able to strike a balance between these competing interests.

Providing "critical measures" of outcomes has been an important part of our efforts to restructure and reallocate. We have found that our ability to demonstrate progress has been very valuable in building support. Of course, measuring what we do is the only way we will really know whether we are accomplishing what we set out to do or not.

Our critical measures were established after extensive internal and external consultation. They are now an integral part of our plans, with new base line data and annual reports. The data include surveys and qualitative evaluations.

The measures deal with the following aspects of our operation:

- Related to students: characteristics of entering students; graduation rate; investment per student; student experience; post-graduation experience.
- Related to faculty: sponsored research funding; scholarship, research, and artistic accomplishments (qualitative analysis).
- External outcomes: return on investment and voluntary support; overall satisfaction of Minnesota citizens; interaction with society (partnerships, services, and impact).
- Related to core resources: characteristics and satisfaction of faculty and staff; quality of facilities (including "technology standards") and status of deferred maintenance.
- Underrepresented groups/diversity.
- Information resources (access and use).

### 3.3.3 Dealing with tenure

I will now turn to an issue that at Minnesota caused considerable controversy, and that pitted a more traditional view of university employment and governance against demands for change.

The issue of “tenure,” the rules by which you grant and cancel continuing, guaranteed appointments for faculty members (similar to the European system of “ordinarius”) is a national issue as well as in our case a local issue. It has been linked to faculty productivity as well as to flexibility for change. Tenure is, of course, originally a matter of protection for academic freedom – and it has served and does serve, I believe, a very important function in that regard – but it has been extended over the years to job security in a more general sense. While few, if any, participants in the debate have argued for limitations on academic freedom (although some think that the general protections provided by the American Constitution are sufficient), proposed revisions in layoff procedures have been seen by many faculty members as a threat to that protection.

The debate at Minnesota was initiated by two successive chairs of the Board of Regents. In a series of meetings of the board and its Committee on Faculty, Staff, and Student Affairs, issues were identified, including the following:

- Post-tenure review of performance.
- The relationship between tenure and different types of salary (especially recurring base salary versus clinical income in the Medical School and various types of augmentations for special service).
- Whether tenure should be held in the university or in a college or department (and presumably be possible to revoke if the unit was closed); this issue – revocation of tenure for reasons of program change – became the crucial issue.
- Reasons and procedures for revoking tenure (apart from programmatic change).

A joint administrative-faculty committee was established by the academic vice president and the chair of the Faculty Consultative Committee (a group elected by the faculty, which also serves as the steering committee for the Faculty Senate) to lead the review, and a number of hearings were held. This ad hoc committee was to present proposals for consideration by the Faculty

Senate's regular Committee on Faculty Affairs, which would then forward its recommendations to the senate for consideration and recommendation to the board as required by the existing tenure code.

Things did not go well. Why?

Although the process established was intended to ensure strong faculty leadership in the actual review, it was not perceived that way. A letter from me to the chair of the board, intended to state the agenda as it had begun to emerge, became a flashpoint. Faculty members who were interested in unionization saw the issue of tenure as an opportunity for a campaign. (Unsuccessful unionization efforts had been made in the 1970s and 1980s). Re-engineering efforts in the Health Sciences were vigorously attacked by some faculty members, partly because the provost for that area had made statements to the board and the legislature about the presumed need to change tenure to make necessary changes in the Health Sciences under the great pressure created by the new managed care system. The continuing discussions in open board meetings, with considerable press coverage, kept opening new wounds. A nationally distributed e-mail message from a faculty member, alleging that the board and I were engaged in an effort to abolish tenure not only locally but nationally, led to an editorial in the Washington Post and a wave of protests from other universities. The governor and some members of the legislature seemed to be encouraging the board chair to "take action," as was – allegedly – "the man in the street."

A revised code was eventually recommended by the Faculty Senate in the late spring of 1996, which proposed post-tenure review of performance, the definition of recurring salary tied to tenure, university-based tenure (no change), and various procedural simplifications. After some "interpretations" were added as requested by me, I recommended the adoption of the revised code to the board. The recommendation did not include layoffs for reasons of programmatic change, only re-assignment.

The board chair indicated that he wanted some additional changes. The issue of layoffs for programmatic reasons began to loom large. The board had previously hired national consultants to advise them, and one of them began to prepare further revisions.

At the September 1996 board meeting, things blew up. The board chair had presented me with a revision of the code a few days earlier, which I objected to in the most strenuous terms in a confidential memo to the board members. The proposal contained language about layoffs and about “maintaining a proper attitude” which would clearly cause a very negative reaction, and which I considered highly questionable. The proposal was nevertheless made public, and with it my highly critical letter to the board.

The unionization effort that had languished for several months caught on with support from faculty members who had previously opposed it, including the prestigious Regents Professors. Within about a week, the signatures of the 30 per cent of the faculty required to call an election were obtained for the largest election unit of the university, and a “status quo” order was issued by the state. No further discussion of the tenure code would be allowed for that unit until after an election. The Law School was a separate bargaining unit and did not acquire the necessary 30 per cent signatures. (Other units voted not to join in the election, including the Health Sciences. I will not be able to go into the rather byzantine election process).

The Law School provided an opening for compromise, and a compromise code was developed for consideration by the board, and adopted after considerable haggling. The board was actually quite split on the issue of layoffs, but no vote had been taken which would have made this public. The new proposal for the Law School provided an opportunity for face saving, and for those regents who were willing to support the original proposal to do so without directly undercutting the chair and some other colleagues on the board. A clause concerning collective salary decreases, with the approval of the relevant faculty bodies, for the university or individual colleges under conditions of “financial stringency” became the heart of the compromise.

Eventually, the unionization effort was voted down, and a new code modeled on that of the Law School was adopted for the university.

This is clearly a case where there was a confrontation between the university “culture” and societal pressures. There were some legitimate issues, such as post-tenure review, which were in the end resolved, I think quite successfully. But, the process was greatly complicated by other issues of change within the university and by a “board activism” that clashed with the “academic culture.” The requirement under the “open meeting law” that all discussions

involving more than three board members must be public made negotiations involving the board members all but impossible. In my view, the outcome was acceptable in terms of its balance of needed change and preservation of basic values, but the cost in acrimony was high.

#### **3.4.4 Marketing the university**

The University of Minnesota has a tradition of taking itself for granted, and being taken for granted. The need for the university to make its case with the media and the public has, however, become abundantly clear in recent years. If tenure had been better understood by the media and the public, including some public officials, and if misinformation had been challenged more quickly, maybe the acrimony of the tenure review would have been ameliorated. Public opinion clearly swung in favor of the position adopted by the faculty and the administration as more information became available through the media.

A systematic information campaign helped settle the political protests against the campus closing. A similar effort in regard to the issue of remedial education could not overcome what board members saw as a challenge to deepseated philosophical commitments. Nevertheless, the data presented helped mobilize important constituencies for further change, and may lead to change over time. The comprehensive presentation of information about the undergraduate initiative created a breakthrough with both the legislature and the public concerning the university's willingness and ability to change, amply demonstrated by the large budget increase.

The new marketing effort included:

- The building of a "legislative network" of over 2,000 alumni throughout the state to build support with legislators from their districts.
- Presentation of carefully selected data in opinion pieces in the major newspapers, and in university publications.
- Establishment of 68 "stakeholder" groups for consultation and sharing of information throughout the state.
- Regular press conferences.
- The use of university events to highlight achievements.
- Radio commercials with wellknown alumni and students about changes at the university.
- Outreach to the public schools, ranging from direct contact with high-ability high school students to sending the university mascot, the "Gopher,"

to visit grade school classes and hand out achievement awards to students (to try to overcome the dangerous notion, not least among minority students, that “the U is not for me”).

- Strengthened staffing for federal, state, and local relations to keep public officials well informed.

The fact that the university’s basketball team went to the national tournament and was one of the “final four” teams in the nation helped!

### **3.5 The university and society**

Let me end by addressing directly a couple of the questions posed for this conference.

#### **3.5.1 What kind of relationship should universities have with surrounding society?**

We cherish our independence, our autonomy, and we must continue to protect that independence, that autonomy. Without it, we cannot meet society’s needs for challenge, analysis, debate, innovation, and change. We need independence from society to serve society.

We must strive to protect ourselves against one ideology or political wind or another. We must not allow the imposition of constraints on the universities’ market place of ideas. We must allow all those winds to blow in free and open universities.

We are often accused of being ideological, of being – in America – politically correct. Yes, we are sometimes guilty, but on the whole, over time, we have done reasonably well in allowing free and open inquiry. (A big topic, since winds of ideological change are blowing right now, from liberal to conservative; witness the attacks on affirmative action in California, including the California board of regents).

Society has served as a special prod for change in recent years. We have been jolted out of a certain insularity and self-satisfaction by society – sometimes in ways I consider unfair, highly unfair. Our success – yes, it is a great success story, the story of our universities – should certainly be recognized and celebrated, but it has perhaps blinded us to the fact that change is needed.

We must in fact change some of our ways to save our values. We must listen to, discuss with, and report back to our stakeholders. They can and will enter into such dialogue, I have found, from agriculture to high tech industry, from K-12 to the arts.

### **3.5.2 What are the instruments for ‘appropriate’ relationships between universities and society?**

In our setting in Minnesota, it is quite clear that the leadership in forging an ‘appropriate’ relationship between the university and society has to come from the university, but a university that is prepared to work with other higher education systems, with a variety of external constituencies, public and private, and with the federal, state, and local governments. We cannot wait for solutions to come from others, even as their challenges are often accompanied by proposed solutions. If we are to preserve the nature, the values, of our universities, the needed changes, the solutions, must come from within.

We must take a very active role in shaping regulation by government, and must occasionally – as in the case of accreditation – fight back.

We must engage the many public and private constituencies, our alumni and foundation boards and many advisory committees (which practically every department or center in the university has), and the media in explaining the need for, and use of, the public and private funding we receive.

We must encourage the spirit of entrepreneurship that comes from the faculty to establish a network of contacts with all aspects of society, while guarding against conflicts of interest and actions that would undermine the universities’ basic freedom.

We must encourage and support the development of new models for interdisciplinary research and teaching, in cooperation with partners inside and outside higher education, including especially the many new “knowledge industries.”

We must learn to deal better with the – perhaps typically American – legal challenges to what we do, and how we do it, which we have encountered in recent years. We must be proponents of quality – and be able to measure it – in every phase of our work.

### **3.6 Conclusion: universities will prevail**

These have been a few scattered glimpses of the landscape of change in an American university. It is a struggle, but it is of course in the end nothing new. For a thousand years, our universities have struggled to protect themselves against society, while serving society. They have prevailed, for the great benefit of society. They most certainly will prevail under the challenges of the impending 21st century, too!

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# 4 Comments

Madeleine Leijonhufvud

In his paper, Dr Hasselmo gives us a very concrete illustration of the difficulties that a university president in the US encounters in his or her daily work. By using cases concerning major changes in different areas of university administration he gives us a broad overview of the task of leading change. Anyone who has any experience of university leadership will recognize the kind of problems he describes: the difficulties to bring about changes especially when resources are reduced, the easiness with which misinformation is spread within a domain where a critical mind is supposed to be the hallmark.

His viewpoint is that of the president, not an overall, macro-view, like the one a politician may have, or anyone who could have an opinion about how universities ought to be managed. It is a very realistic way of tackling the issue of academic leadership, that can be of great help to dr Hasselmo's Swedish colleagues.

## 4.1 Serve the people

Dr Hasselmo referred to President Lincoln saying that landgrant universities shall serve the people. I think we all hold this to be true also for other types of universities. Investment in human capital – what we non-economists call Education – and research serve the people involved and also the larger society in obvious ways. Thus the universities influence or "change" society. But, as we all know, this is not a one way street. We who work within the universities have become more and more concerned with how society influences us. It is no longer possible to withdraw into the quietness of a university library or one's own office and claim that important research is being done: Don't disturb! The problems of today's society must be faced.

In serving the people any university president would not like to have his or her hand forced by anybody. But no matter how much you wish to be in

control – there are, as Dr Hasselmo states, plenty of stakeholders who will try to enforce their will. Here, I think we have a reason to dwell a little on the situation in Sweden. We, also, have a number of different categories of ”stake-holders”, who think they are entitled to have a say when it comes to the management of higher education. Not quite as many, perhaps, as in the US, where for example, alumni organizations play an important role, but still. How do we deal with these people? Dr Hasselmo’s paper illustrates the necessity for a university president to make it clear who these categories are and how to approach or handle each one of them. When a problem occurs there is no time for such strategic planning.

## **4.2 Dependent on public funding**

There are of course great differences between American and Swedish universities. Even if we limit the comparison to landgrant universities it is obvious that the Swedish institutions are much more – almost entirely – dependent on public funding, while the University of Minnesota gets most of its money from other sources. Swedish university staff, including faculty, is to a great extent ”unionized” – and happily so, I have reason to believe, being myself a union boss (chairman of the organization for lawyers, social scientists and economists). Still, we have not managed salary increase of 8.5 per cent, like they did at the University of Minnesota! Another difference, that I appreciate being a lawyer, is that our universities are not yet suffering from the kind of over-ambitious activities that American lawyers produce.

Still we could learn a lot from Dr Hasselmo’s rich and sometimes amusing experience. What we are concerned with here is not what change the president wants to enforce – or, in some cases, resist. It is, of course, all important that you know what you want to do. But that Nils Hasselmo in his paper takes for granted. I think we should do the same during this session’s discussion and stick to the question of how to bring about – or resist – change. A university president may often have difficulty making up his mind, with conflicting interests to consider and influential groups trying to force their views upon him, but that again is another aspect of academic leadership than the one Dr Hasselmo focuses on in his paper.

Let me point at some of the many interesting questions that Dr Hasselmo raises.

Should a president try to use his authority to force the change through that he thinks is necessary or should he try a less authoritarian approach? It seems to me that Dr Hasselmo would have it both ways, and here I would very much like to hear him elaborate his standpoint. In the case concerning the closing down of a general college he states that he did not lay the groundwork with the Board. But in the case of tenure, on the other hand, Dr Hasselmo blames himself for not having marked his own position at an early stage. I do not mention this because I think the two standpoints are inconsistent. As Dr Hasselmo underlines in his paper there are no general solutions to all the different problems that are encountered in academic leadership. Still I think it would be fruitful for us to consider for a while this general aspect of "timing".

### **4.3 Chairman of the board**

Another issue, that has special bearing on the current situation in Sweden, is illustrated by the case where president Hasselmo was successful in closing down a campus. "The key to the success was that the chair of the Board took this stand. He helped swing the rest of the Board", Hasselmo said. Today, in September 1997, at Swedish universities the president is the chairman of the university board. This will change from January, 1st 1998. Considering the strong resistance to the proposal it is interesting to note the point that Dr Hasselmo makes here. Maybe it will be easier to make unpopular changes when the president will be able to "hide" behind a chairman recruited from outside the university. Considered, of course, that the chairman and the president agree on what should be done!

A third issue – and the last one I will mention – deals with how to tackle government policy. It seems to me that American universities have a greater amount of selfdependence than ours. Here in Sweden changes in universities are more often initiated by the government, which thus forms the strongest external force on universities. The task of enforcing a change that has been politically decided can of course be seen as a purely administrative task (a current example is the "tampering with tenure" by the Parliament), with no room for individual policy by the university president and his staff. The good – or bad? – side of this is that a Swedish university president does not have to take responsibility for changes to the same extent as an American one.

But before a change is politically decided, during the political process, university presidents have to make up their minds on a policy. If they find the proposed change a bad one, what methods could and should they use in trying to influence the politicians? Here in Sweden lobbying is still not quite accepted in all areas of society. The academic world still hesitates a little to use all the possibilities of the modern media world to support their views. Still, lobbying must today be an important part of academic leadership. There are all sorts of aspects to consider, and university presidents may take different stands here. Let me take a current issue to illustrate my point. The government is now showing intentions to put a growing share of the education and research budget into small colleges and would-be-universities. Some presidents at the large universities may feel that this takes away research money from their institutions. How should they tackle that issue?

I stop there and hope that we can have a fruitful discussion about means and methods to bring about the changes that are necessary to have our institutions for higher education serve the people while keeping up, as Dr Hasselmo finally stresses, the noble heritage of universities – whether they will be named so or not!

# 5 Governing boards as a link to society: The American experience

Marian L. Gade

Boards of trustees, or governing boards, constitute the corporate “owners” of colleges and universities in the United States, and, to a lesser degree, in some other nations. Providing both a “bridge” to the larger community and a “buffer” against it, to use James Perkins’ terms, the American board of trustees is the key collective body in the governance system of US colleges and universities.

## 5.1 Governing boards

The term “lay board” refers to a group of persons that constitute the corporation of a college or university – its legal owners in the case of private institutions, and in some public institutions as well. The word “lay” indicates that the board members, the trustees, are not, except in isolated instances, members of the professional teaching staff of the institution they govern. Institutions governed by these boards stand in contrast to those that are administered by the state and its ministry of education, by professional academics (the faculty), or by their students.

The board may govern a single autonomous campus, a single institution that operates in a unitary fashion but in more than one location (i.e., with branch campuses), a multi-campus institution, a single institution within a multi-campus system (usually with powers restricted by the system board), or even the full array of institutions and branches that constitute an entire state’s public higher education system. While the scope and complexity of their duties and functions will vary, the principles of trusteeship remain generally the same throughout all these institutions.

In addition to *governing* boards, a number of states in the US have, in addition, what we call *coordinating boards* – state entities established to exercise control and coordination, especially in budgetary matters, among

public (and sometimes private) institutions within a particular state. What follows deals principally with governing rather than coordinating boards.

## **5.2 The members of the board**

Today there are over 3,000 nonprofit institutions of higher education in the United States, with approximately 46,000 trustee positions.

Who are these people and how did they get there? The various ways trustees are chosen reflect their dual history that stems both from charitable institutions and as civic establishments. The former, charitable trusts, are usually governed by self-perpetuating boards of trustees, and this model is followed in the private sector of higher education. Public institutions use a variety of methods to select trustees, appointment by some political entity (usually the state governor) being the most common. In some states local boards are elected, either by the populace or, as in North Carolina, by the state legislature.

Some trustees are chosen by law on the terms of their charter, from internal or external constituencies, to represent their special views or interests. Colleges founded by religious orders or denominations often require church representation on the board of trustees. Some states have requirements for a balance of political party members.

In the wake of the 1960s student movement, many institutions put one or two students on the board, sometimes as full voting members but often with limited participation. Less frequently, faculty members from the institution sit as board members; in a number of cases faculty leaders are given a voice before the board but not actual membership. Many observers consider that there is an inherent conflict of interest in faculty representation on the board ultimately responsible for faculty personnel policies and compensation.

## **5.3 Special interests**

A major concern in the US among observers of boards is the increasing number of board members who represent, *de facto* rather than *de jure*, special interests. Interests may be those of a particular racial, ethnic, or gender group that wishes to place its agenda before the institution to ensure

affirmative action in hiring or curricular reform, for example, or it can be a trustee out to "get" the president or even an academic department.

The "single-interest" trustee may view items before the board through a single lens and vote, not in the interest of the institution as a whole, but in terms of whether the action will help or hinder his or her particular interest or group. It is generally agreed that it is desirable for members to bring to the board a wide diversity of backgrounds, ages, talents, skills, experiences, and interests, but that it is inappropriate for any trustee to "represent" a single interest or group to the point of jeopardizing the trustee's larger responsibility to serve the institution as a whole. In practice, some single interest trustees become converted to the larger institutional view as a result of their service on the board, but this is widely viewed as a fairly common problem in today's boards.

## **5.4 Functions and duties of the board**

A board of trustees is a corporate body, and its members may make no decisions as individuals that can bind the institution. Nor can a single trustee speak for the board unless authorized to do so – but this is another area where irresponsible trustees can do great harm by speaking out of turn.

The board, as a legal and corporate body, has a number of duties and functions which tend, on the whole, to be similar even in quite different types of institutions. However, in practice boards differ widely in their styles and internal modes of operation – in their general approach to their responsibilities and in the way members come to decisions among themselves. History, tradition, personal and political loyalties, and the presence of cliques are among the many factors that make up the "culture" of a given board, and new trustees are socialized into that culture.

What is it that boards of trustees actually do? The responsibilities and functions of boards can be categorized in a variety of ways, and the following draws heavily on John W. Nason's (1982, 1989) typologies. Underlying all specific duties is the responsibility to ensure the long-term viability of the institution – to ensure continuity, stability, and integrity.

Note the verbs in the following list: "clarify," "ensure," "approve," and the like. A part-time, volunteer board cannot do these tasks; its job is to see that

they get done – by the faculty, the administration – and to keep them in line with the mission of the institution.

#### **5.4.1 Clarify the institutional mission**

The board should work with faculty and administration to define the mission statement clearly. What are the values and purposes of the institution? Who are its primary clientele? Do all the parts contribute something to its central purpose? Campuses within systems may be constrained by the larger system-wide purposes and by assigned purposes within the system, and public institutions in general are likely to have their missions determined to some degree by the legislature or a state board.

The board is also responsible for a periodic review of the institutional mission to meet changing demands, and its members must serve as principal interpreters of that mission to the outside world.

#### **5.4.2 Appoint, support, and assess the president**

Hiring, and sometimes firing, the chief executive officer (usually called the president or chancellor) is often considered the most important task of the board.

The board is also responsible for supporting the president and for monitoring the president's performance towards achieving institutional goals. Such assessment goes on constantly on an informal basis, and, in addition, a more structured assessment or evaluation, often with input from institutional constituencies and possibly aided by a trained consultant, may take place at intervals of two to five years.

#### **5.4.3 Ensure effective long range planning**

The board as a whole cannot act as a planning agency, but it is responsible for seeing that faculty, administration, and other constituent groups at all levels do effectively plan for the institution's long-term future, in line with its mission. Boards approve the plans, review institutional progress towards their fulfillment, and make adjustments as needed. Planning is based on factors such as demographic trends that will impact enrollment, financial prospects, the direction of educational trends in the region and nation, and other strategic issues.

#### **5.4.4 Ensure adequate resources**

This mandate covers a variety of board activities, including:

- contributing personally to the institution
- assisting with fund raising, through approval of the fund-raising plan, identification and cultivation of private donors, and appropriate intercession with foundations, industry, and, in the case of public institutions, with the governor and legislature
- approving the budget
- ensuring that the budget is balanced, but not at the expense of deferred maintenance on grounds or buildings or deferred purchases of essential equipment.

#### **5.4.5 Manage resources effectively**

Because institutions of higher education in the US are exempt from most property and some other taxes, trustees have an obligation not only to institutional constituents but to the public at large for managing finances wisely and prudently both for the present and for the future.

Management of resources includes:

- monitoring financial expenditures to see that they are in line with the budget
- approving the selection of financial managers to oversee investments and endowments
- ensuring development and maintenance of physical facilities adequate to carry out the educational program.

#### **5.4.6 Approve the educational program**

Traditional wisdom states that the educational program of a college or university is primarily, if not exclusively, the provenance of professional educators – the faculty – and that trustees should confine themselves to the business and public relations side of the institution. But budgets and physical facilities are based on, and support, the academic program. In approving a budget the board is necessarily approving the academic program upon which it is based.

#### **5.4.7 Serve as court of appeal**

Boards possess the final legal authority within an institution and their decisions cannot be legally challenged except through the courts or legislature. Faculty, staff, and students normally have no further avenue of redress

beyond the board. Therefore, trustees are responsible for seeing that policies and procedures are in place within their institutions to provide due process and fairness. These may take the form of publicized codes governing personnel practices, tenure, faculty and student conduct, and the rights and obligations of faculty, staff, and students.

#### **5.4.8 Assess board performance**

Boards monitor and review the performance of presidents, faculty, financial managers, and others within the institutional orbit. They are also responsible for evaluating their own performance, and that of the institution as a whole in attaining its goals and carrying out its mission, although the latter task is also undertaken by statewide agencies, legislatures, and the public at large.

A board self-assessment may include a review of board practices, organization, and information systems, and the adequacy of overall administration, for example. The board is also responsible for ensuring that each individual member has a clear understanding of his or her legal, moral, and fiduciary responsibilities.

A board of trustees, as a corporate body, can only conduct its business as a board, not as individuals. Therefore, its organization and processes are particularly important to its overall effectiveness. Boards may organize themselves in a number of ways to conduct their business, adopting by-laws that set out and define the roles and responsibilities of board, officers, standing committees, and president with relation to the board.

#### **5.4.9 Serve as bridge and buffer between campus and community**

Trustees, coming from outside the academy, can interpret the needs of the society, in the present and in the foreseeable future, to ensure that colleges and universities are responsive to the needs of the society as a whole. They stimulate change, aid in mission clarification, and contribute to the planning process. Trustees also serve as a bridge from the institution to the community, explaining its mission, documenting the need for resources, and enhancing its public image. A third bridging function that trustees may serve is to interpret the institution to itself. Individuals throughout the organization see only small portions of it whereas the board, along with the chief executive officer, can assemble and present the information from various parts of the college in a coherent whole.

The board, in addition, acts as a buffer to protect the institution from conflicting or too rapidly changing demands from outside forces, or from groups that would use the university to further political or ideological agendas contrary to its basic missions. This remains to this day a particular utility of the governing board in the public university as state governor and legislators rapidly come and go.

#### **5.4.10 Preserve institutional autonomy**

Closely related to the function of the board as a buffer is its obligation to preserve institutional autonomy. The university's function as a critic of society requires a certain independence from that society. Intrusions on university autonomy may come from major donors who want to influence social or economic policy, from athletic boosters, or from religious groups desiring to influence what is taught or what is permitted on campus as well as from the state or church that supports the institution. Multicampus systems may decrease campus autonomy. In recent years national governmental regulations and restrictions in the areas of affirmative action, women's sports, occupational health and safety, and environmental protection, among others, have increased the bureaucratic burdens and external focus of higher education institutions. Research universities, heavily dependent upon federal funds, are especially sensitive to changes in the larger environment. And the so-called "accountability movement" has meant more and more state regulation of what shall be taught and how the outcomes, "value added" or proficiency levels of students, e.g., shall be assessed.

University autonomy has never been absolute. Protecting institutional integrity and independence in the face of outside interference has, however, been a major contribution of lay trusteeship to the American college and university. The board is responsible for maintaining an internal environment that protects academic freedom for faculty, and that provides an atmosphere in which students, scholars, librarians, researchers and others can engage in independent thought.

### **5.5 External relationships**

Donors; local, state and federal governments; the legislator and governor; churches; interest groups; political parties; labor unions; media; private foundations; accrediting bodies; higher education associations; voluntary associations; businesses and professions; and even athletic boosters are among

important external constituencies for some or all universities and colleges.

External relationships of higher education institutions are very complicated and are becoming more so in societies heavily dependent upon higher education for a trained labor force, for technological innovations and for basic research.

These constituencies include a large portion of the American public and, indeed, as higher education has become more central to society and the economy, almost everyone does take an interest in its welfare as well as its cost. Interpreting the institution to the outside world, ensuring that it is responsive to the needs of society while at the same time preserving its autonomy from inappropriate intrusion by that society, in sum, acting as both “bridge” and “buffer,” constitute important roles for the American board of lay trustees.

Boards are often seen as having been “captured” by internal constituencies, especially by presidents and administrators who are, after all, their principal source of information about what is going on in the institution, and also the major actors in recommending new policies or courses of action. The president usually controls the flow of information to the board, and one common technique is to bury the trustees in too much unprocessed data – the president cannot be accused of withholding information, but it is useless for decision-making in the form it arrives in the trustee’s mailbox.

## **5.6 Activist trustees**

The “activist trustee” is a new phrase we’ve been hearing over the past five years or so in the US. Sometimes this is a pejorative term, indicating a trustee (and some of them are on almost every board) who meddles inappropriately in minor matters of administration. More frequently in recent times the term refers to trustees who share several characteristics:

- they are not content to accept uncritically presidential policy recommendations; they want to be heavily involved in discussions of strategic decisions.
- they are likely to seek sources of information outside that supplied them by the president and administration, talking in groups or singly with constituencies such as faculty, business and industry leaders, and government officials.

- they are results-oriented, stressing student outcomes, accountability on the part of faculty and administration, and using words like "productivity" that are foreign to the faculty vocabulary.
- they are concerned less with tradition and more with immediate service to the surrounding society.

The trend toward more activist trustees may stem from developments in the corporate world where the CEO-dominated board has been giving way in many quarters to boards with heavier representation of stock-holders and "outside" directors, and where words like "downsizing" and "Total Quality Management" have become common. Since a large number of college and university trustees are also corporate directors, it is inevitable that trends in business – often thought to be more efficient than higher education – would find their way into university boardrooms.

The concern is that such trustees may become so involved in the minutiae of administration that they lose sight of their original goals of increasing the strategic capacity of the institution, or ensuring its viability in a rapidly changing political and economic environment. And, of course, activist trustees, no matter how well intentioned or well informed, are often harder for a chancellor or rector to deal with than are passive ones!

Another current discussion involves an age-old dilemma that will never be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. That is, how can higher education, and especially publicly supported higher education institutions serve "the public interest"? Now, how you answer that question, of course, turns on how you define the public interest! And it is generally defined quite differently by each set of constituents, including many who assume that their own private concerns, generalized, constitute the public interest (e.g., students are likely to take this attitude).

## **5.7 Power**

Then there is the related question of power: who decides? Who decides how much will be spent on higher education, who will pay, who will benefit, what missions or functions will be performed and by what institutions, and so on. Power within the academy is widely dispersed, a phenomenon that legislators and governors – and sometimes even trustees – frequently do not understand and, when it is explained, they simply shake their heads in disbelief. They ask

again, "Who's in charge?". They want one phone number to call to get all their questions answered; they expect campus or system presidents, like corporate CEOs, to be able to set an agenda, tell the faculty what to do, and have it happen. Shared governance (i.e., faculty involvement in governance) is often viewed by those outside the academy as simply one more way of seeing that nothing at all changes, while faculty meet, discuss, postpone, travel to conferences and fail to arrive at decisions. And sometimes these critics are quite correct, and not just about faculty.

It is certainly true that dispersal of power is sometimes used by administrators and even trustees as a way of avoiding responsibility or accountability: if no one is "in charge", then no one can be blamed when universities fail to increase productivity, or meet the demands of the labor market, or when they increase fees beyond what most families can afford.

Boards of trustees are increasingly being turned to meet these challenges, and where they do not step forward, take an activist role, the state legislature or other state officials are likely to do so, an outcome deplored even more by internal constituencies, but one that is occurring with increasing regularity.

So, in the words of a forthcoming report on "citizen boards" (below), "The perennial tension between institutional autonomy and accountability remains unresolved in many states, with system boards often caught between the interests of institutions and those of the state government."

There are undoubtedly a variety of appropriate ways of structuring the state/board/institution relationship, but the overall feeling today in the US, is that in many states a balance has not yet been achieved that will, all at the same time serve a variety of public interests, such as:

- satisfying the variety of constituencies for current education and service from universities, including service to the labor market and job training for individuals, and research for business and industry;
- preserving for the future a system that treasures institutional diversity, autonomy and academic freedom;
- being accountable for its own productivity, efficiency, and results as measured by objective criteria; among other desired objectives!

Is a board of lay trustees a good way of approaching the problem? Historically, boards have provided fresh strength to universities. They have presided over

the growth of what many consider the most effective system for research and higher education in the world. Now, the consensus seems to be "yes, but...". Just as war is too important to be left to the generals, education and research are too central to today's societies to be left to the educators. In the US system, no one really wants direct control by government – the results of a diverse and highly autonomous higher education sector are too obvious for such a drastic measure to be seriously considered. At the same time, many wonder whether present structures, including boards, are sufficiently flexible and responsive to meet the increasingly rapid changes in society that universities must be a part of.

The study I mentioned has been undertaken by the leaders of the American Council on Education (the umbrella higher education president's organization); the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges; the Education Commission of the States; the National Conference of State Legislatures; and the National Governors Association, in an attempt to, as the tentative title of their report puts it, "strengthen the relationship between state government and public higher education by reforming citizen trusteeship." Stay tuned!

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