*Keynote Address*

## Change Matters: Making a Difference in Higher Education[1]

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'Good ideas with no ideas on how to implement them are wasted ideas' (Michael Fullan)

## 1.     Why Bother with Effective Change Management in Universities?

The external pressures for change in universities are increasing, not decreasing. Funding from the public purse is down in many systems, competition is up, students are becoming more forthright about getting value for the money paid, instances of litigation against universities are emerging, government scrutiny is increasing and external quality audits are more common. Higher education (HE) is expected to play a central role in social and economic transformation in some countries; in others it is seen as being a key export.

To remain viable, universities must be able to respond promptly and wisely to this combination of change forces[2]. That is, as the above quote from Michael Fullan indicates, they have to become particularly skilled at not only identifying key quality improvements and strategic developments but also at making sure that these changes are put into practice successfully and are sustained.

Failed change costs—not just economically but strategically, socially and psychologically. When enthusiastic university staff commit to a change project and that project fails they take the scars of that experience with them. Students and the country receive no benefit from failed change. Institutions which take on a change project that fails suffer a loss of reputation and, in the current climate, this can cost jobs.

## 2.     The Aim of My Session

- To provide an overall picture with which to understand how universities operate and where change can occur.

- To propose a research-based framework for effective change management in universities with which to make sense of, locate and enhance your own experiences with change in HE. I hope that this will help you label good practice, assist the implementation of your own change projects and identify the aspects of change management in your university which most require improvement.

- To identify a small number of key lessons about effective change management and leadership based on this research by drawing upon our practical experience and action research with HE change projects in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, Cambodia and Scandinavia.

- To relate what I say to the case studies being explored at this workshop.

The ideas which follow are outlined in more detail in my book, *Change matters: Making a difference in education and training*[3]. An overview of our local, national and international work and research on the area and a rationale for it are given in Attachment 1.

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[1] This paper was presented originally in February 2004 as a keynote at the European University Association's Leadership Forum in Dublin.

[2] See Fullan, M (1993). Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform. London: Falmer.

[3] See http://www.allen-unwin.com.au/shopping/product.asp?ISBN=1864489162&string%3DChange+matters

## 3.　　Universities and Change

Diagram 1 gives an overall picture of how universities operate and where change can occur.

It indicates that there are activities and roles concerned with Overall Direction Setting, Resourcing, Governance and Communication (A); with the university's Core Activities of Teaching & Learning, Research, Community Engagement and Entrepreneurial Activities (B); and with the provision of associated support, infrastructure and administrative activities for students and staff (C).

Universities which manage change effectively have A, B and C working well and in synergy.

Diagram 1　**The Activities of a University**
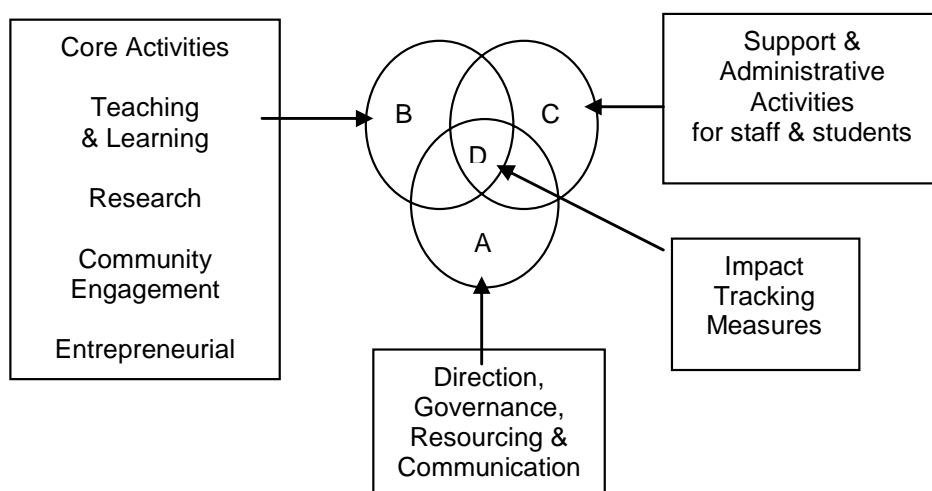


*Determining Quality*

Successful universities not only track how well the various activities depicted in Diagram 1 are working by regularly seeking user feedback, they also recognise that the acid test of quality involves determining whether these activities are, in combination, having a positive impact on their students and the other key beneficiaries of their work (D). For example, in the area of Teaching & Learning they not only use satisfaction surveys on areas A and B but also look at impact indicators (D) like benchmarked trends in demand, retention and graduation rates, assessment performance, graduate employability and salaries and employer satisfaction with their graduates. In the area of research they use benchmarked trends in doctoral completions, refereed publications per full-time staff member, number and value of grants won to applications, research income and so on. Equally, they look to evidence of a positive impact on the communities they serve and to their overall financial performance.

The tracking data gathered about the quality of operation of A, B and C and the university's impact (D) can be both qualitative and quantitative and can be used to both prove and improve the quality of what a university does.

*Speaking a Shared Language*

There are a number of key terms which are used repeatedly when discussions of change in universities take place. These terms include *change, progress, culture, climate, evaluation, quality, quality assurance, quality improvement, benchmarking and strategic planning*. One way of defining these terms is given in Attachment 2. For a change effort to be effective, it is very important to ensure that the people involved are using such terms with shared meaning.

*Different Types of Change in Universities*

The cases being discussed at this Forum cover a wide variety of changes, all of which fit into one or more of the three circles in Diagram 1. Some are concerned, for example, with curriculum change, the use of new teaching and assessment methods and with opening up more flexible learning pathways (B), often in conjunction with developments in associated support services (C). Others are about changes to facilities or new approaches to staff development (C). A third group concern the development of new administrative structures, new decision-making processes and changes in governance arrangements (A). Some—for example, mergers, amalgamations or the development of a new teaching school—require simultaneous and aligned change in all three areas.

Examples from our own work in the core activity areas of Diagram 1 (B) include the development of more flexible and responsive learning environments[4], introducing new approaches to the use and support of IT-enabled learning, innovations in practice-oriented learning, and new ways of formulating research partnerships. We have also been working on a range of support innovations and quality tracking and improvement systems.

Changes in HE can also vary in their condition and scope. Some have never been tried before and have to be developed from scratch. Others have been proven elsewhere and the change focus is primarily on adapting them to suit local circumstances. Some are broad in scope and affect the whole university or even groups of universities, whereas others are much more local and individual. Change can focus on improving the quality of current practice or can involve setting out in a quite new strategic direction.

Some changes are voluntary; others are forced on an institution by external circumstances.

## 4.    Overall Change Themes

There are four recurring themes which underpin the effective change management lessons which follow:

1. Change is a complex learning and unlearning process for all concerned. It is not an event.

2. Organisational and individual capabilities to manage change are directly linked. Change ready and capable organisations are made up of change ready and capable staff.

3. There is a profound difference between *change* and *progress*. The former is about something being made different or becoming different. The latter involves coming to a value judgement about the worth of each change effort. Change management is, therefore, heavily value-laden.

4. Strategic change and continuous quality improvement are two sides of the same coin. The former is concerned with setting and implementing quite new directions; the latter, with ensuring that current practice is regularly tracked and the key areas for enhancement identified are addressed promptly and wisely. Having 'good ideas' for both strategic innovation and quality improvement will not make them happen. For this to occur and for the impact to be positive, the following nine change management lessons need to be addressed appropriately and effectively in the unique context of each university.

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[4] See http://www.educause.edu/pub/er/erm03/erm036.asp. One interesting innovation was the flexible delivery in 2003 of a Masters Level UTS Subject on Change Management with senior academics responsible for implementation of the Swedish NetUniversity initiative in that country's 16 universities and colleges. The approach was to enable the participants to experience first hand what it is like to be a student learning off-campus and to use this shared experience as the case material for the course.

**5.     Key Change Lessons**

*1.   You cannot address every relevant change idea that comes along*

Priorities must be set. This process needs to be evidence-based by referring to robust tracking data on satisfaction and impact, external strategic intelligence and by ensuring that what is to be pursued is consistent with the university's core values, mission and overall direction. The process and criteria which will be used to determine the university's improvement and innovation priorities need to be transparent and accepted if the change agenda which emerges is to be actively pursued by those who are to implement it. The aim here is to achieve consensus around robust evidence on what needs to happen, not just consensus around the table.

Our research on effective approaches to strategic planning (Attachment 3)[5] suggests, for example, that it is best to set just two or three overall key strategic directions for the university rather than dozens. It also reveals that people regularly confuse setting improvement priorities for current practice with setting key strategic directions.

As George Bain observed in his address on the Vice-Chancellor's job to the Universities Personnel Association Conference in September 2003: 'People will march for a phrase; they will not march for a paragraph and, even less, a page.'

*2.   Change is a learning process—not an event—and the motivation of key players to engage in and stick with it is critical to successful implementation*

Change in HE is fundamentally about the staff who are to put each development into practice learning how to do something new. If staff do not have to do something new there is no change, only 'window dressing'.

And it is motivation which drives this learning process. Staff will not engage in a change effort and the learning that goes with it unless they can personally see that doing so is relevant, desirable, clear, distinctive and, most importantly, feasible. Being appropriately involved in shaping an agreed change project and being clear on what is envisaged are also powerful motivators. Right from the outset the staff affected by each change will be weighing up the benefits of engaging and persevering with it against the costs. This is a process which carries on over the whole life cycle of every change effort.

Motivation to engage can be both extrinsic (e.g. a financial crisis, threat of job loss, the prospect of a financial reward, praise from one's boss, negative student feedback, pressure from colleagues) and intrinsic (e.g. seeing that what is proposed is consistent with one's moral purpose, having a sense of personal ownership of and commitment to what is planned). Motivation to engage in change always has both a rational and emotional dimension.

The same flexible and responsive approaches to learning now being advocated for use with HE students apply equally to university staff involved in change. We know from Alan Tough's research more than 25 years ago[6], for example, that a key resource for productive learning is having timely access to a fellow staff member who is further down the same change path one wants to pursue. We know also that one-off, generic staff development workshops led by 'outside experts' unfamiliar with the daily realities of the university's operating context have little effect[7].

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[5] See http://www.qdu.uts.edu.au/pdf%20documents/StratPlngHE03ExecSum.pdf

[6] Tough, A. (1977). The adult's learning projects, 2nd Edn. Toronto: OISE Press.

[7] Fullan, M. (2001). The new meaning of educational change, 3rd Edn. NY: Teachers College Press, ch. 15.

3. *A university's culture is a powerful influence on motivation*

A key influence on motivation is the peer group and the collegial networks in which university staff are engaged. These groups develop a particular culture ('the way we do things around here'). Universities develop an overall culture but they also develop a range of subcultures which feed the micropolitical processes that can help or hinder change. When amalgamations or restructures are in the air, the potential for a clash between differing cultures and histories is heightened. Just as the peer group for school or university students profoundly influences their motivation to engage in learning, so too does the peer group influence staff engagement in the learning necessary to put desired changes into practice. Attachment 4 summarises the results of a November 2003 senior university managers' workshop in which the attributes that characterise university cultures conducive and unconducive to effective change management were identified.

We know also that culture change in universities takes a lot of time (unlike change in 'climate' which can be quite rapid). A fundamental factor in reshaping culture is how well the senior management consistently model the desired behaviours over time.

4. *Change in one area of university activity typically triggers a need for change in other areas*

For example, when, in the mid-1990s, the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) Flexible Learning Task Force[8] moved to make the introduction of interactive web-based learning a key, university-wide development, it was soon evident that not only was it necessary to engage academic staff in the ways outlined above, it was equally important to ensure that our IT infrastructure and services were robust enough to deliver the support that was required. That is, we had to have the relevant activities and staff in sections B & C of Diagram 1 working in synergy. Our student feedback surveys consistently confirm the importance of this by showing that it is the total UTS experience which shapes students' judgements of quality, not just what happens in the traditional classroom. For instance, over the past eight years, the top two items for importance out of the 89 that make up the UTS Student Satisfaction Survey have been ease of access to IT and to the Library.

It is gradually being recognised that support and general staff are just as important to the success of a university as the academic staff. The best universities bring both groups together strategically into a consolidated team effort around key areas of activity and reform, with each member contributing their own specific area of expertise.

One of the challenges in many universities is how to overcome a lack of alignment between improvement projects in their core activities of teaching, research and community engagement on the one hand and, on the other, developments in their support, infrastructure, budgeting, administrative, overall direction-setting and communication activities.

5. *Successful change is a team effort*

It follows from lesson four that change needs to be a team effort, not a solo one. However, great care must be given in selecting the team members who are to work on a particular change project. The leader of the team must not only be expert in the area which is the focus of change but also must have the emotional intelligence and capability to optimise the contribution of each member. A good example of how this can be achieved was the use of Flexible Learning Action Groups (FLAGs) at UTS to support the implementation of its key strategic developments in the area in the late 1990s. Each FLAG was comprised of a carefully selected and led cross-functional action group of excellent practitioners that tested and refined a particular component of the flexible

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[8] The UTS approach to creating a more flexible and responsive learning environment has been written up as a case study of change in two international journals. Scott, G. (1996). The effective management & evaluation of flexible learning innovations in higher education, *Innovations in Education & Training International*, *33*(4), 154–70, and Scott, G. (2003). Effective change management in higher education, *Educause Review*, Nov–Dec, 64–80.

learning development agenda and then assisted the university to scale up the most effective approaches. The interactive web-based learning FLAG has continued to meet as a 'community of practice'[9] over the past five years. In the latest UTS Student Satisfaction Survey, the University's web-based learning system, *UTSOnline*[10]*,* is ninth on importance out of the 89 items surveyed and second on performance.

6. *It is necessary to focus simultaneously on the present and the future*

As noted earlier, strategic change and continuous quality improvement are two sides of the same coin. The former is about how best to position a university strategically to ensure that it remains in alignment with a rapidly changing external environment. The latter is about how best to ensure that current practice operates as well as possible and continues to deliver the benefits intended.

7. *Change is a cyclical—not linear—process*

'We rise to great heights by a winding staircase.'

As the above quote from Francis Bacon implies, the process of developing, implementing, monitoring, refining and scaling up a change operates in a cyclical—not a linear—fashion. No significant change ever works out in practice exactly as anticipated.

This is why, at UTS, we used FLAGs to identify, pilot and refine what was most likely to work well in our unique operating context and then asked them to assist us to scale up the most successful solutions with their colleagues. In this sense our motto is more 'ready, fire, aim' as we seek to learn how best to make a desired change work by testing and refining potentially relevant solutions under controlled conditions, rather than 'ready, aim, aim, aim', an approach in which there is an attempt to prespecify all that will happen before implementation commences.

For this spiralling approach to action research and work-based learning to work, it is essential to have in place robust tracking systems which enable the team to determine how effective implementation is proving to be. Details of the UTS approach to tracking and improving teaching and learning can be found at http://www.qdu.uts.edu.au/activities/index.html

8. *Need to look not just inside but outside for effective change solutions*

Effective solutions to key change problems may lie hidden in pockets within one's home university. Equally, however, they may exist in similar universities and institutions elsewhere. And this is where strategic networking, shared tracking systems and working in a reciprocal way with equivalent institutions within and beyond Australia has been so important to the effectiveness with which UTS has been able to address its agreed change priorities. Some of the key strategic networks in which UTS is currently involved are identified in Attachment 1.

For these networks to work it is critical that participation in them is both personal and reciprocal—that is, one needs to give in order to receive.

9. *Change does not just happen—it must be led*

Leadership of change in HE is going to be a key issue in the coming five years internationally. This is because we know that change does not just happen but must be led and because, in many countries, there is going to be a large-scale exit of the so-called 'baby boomers' who currently hold middle and senior management positions in universities.

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[9] Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning, meaning & identity. Cambridge University Press.

[10] For a general overview, see http://online.uts.edu.au/. For a specific course-level example of how this interactive learning support system operates, see http://journalism.uts.edu.au/subjects/jres/tcguide/utsonline.html

There is a growing database on what constitutes an effective approach to change leadership in education. For example, we have just completed a study of 322 effective principals[11] which aligns with studies already completed in a range of other professions and sectors[12]. The findings consistently reveal that high levels of knowledge and skill may be necessary but they are not sufficient for effective change leadership in education. It is personal and social emotional intelligence and a distinctive, contingent, way of thinking that interact to make for excellence in leadership in education. Good leaders understand that they need to listen and then lead, that informal and ongoing communication, staff trust and respect all encourage people to speak up promptly and honestly about the quality of change proposals and implementation difficulties before they escalate. They understand that change is an emotional as well as a rational process and that listening not only to enthusiasts but also to those who resist gives important insights into how to ensure that a desired change effort succeeds.

For example, in our studies of effective principals[13], the top-ranking items on importance in the 40 items surveyed were, in rank order[14]:

Item 4:    Being able to remain calm under pressure or when things go wrong (A1) •
Item 11:   Having a sense of humour & being able to keep work in perspective (A1)
Item 42:   Having a clear, succinct & justified vision of where the educational institution must head (B)
Item 22:   Being able to deal effectively with conflict situations (A2)
Item 7:    Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible (A1) •
Item 12:   Being able to bounce back from adversity (A1)
Item 13:   The ability to empathise with and work productively with people from a wide variety of backgrounds (A2)
Item 9:    An ability to make a hard decision (A1)
Item 30:   Being able to set and justify priorities (B) •
Item 14:   A willingness to listen to different points of view before coming to a decision (A2)
Item 1:    Being willing to face and learn from errors & listen openly to feedback (A1) •
Item 24:   Being able to identify from a mass of information the core issue in any situation (B)
Item 20:   Being able to develop and contribute positively to team-based projects (A2) •

This research needs to be replicated internationally with successful leaders at the university level to see if, as we would predict, similar results emerge. Either way, the results of studies like this can be used to make the identification of potential leaders more targeted and can help to ensure that the support given to their development is more focused and better situated in the unique context of the university.

The outcomes of studies into educational leadership also align closely with the recurring results from parallel investigations of effective teachers in post-secondary and higher education. This suggests that one useful way to conceive of the role of leader in a university might be to see oneself as an adult educator assisting one's staff to set priorities for change and then helping them to learn how to do them.

One final note—it is often implied that the only leaders of change are the senior executive of a university—this is wrong. Every member of staff is a leader of change in their own area of expertise.

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[11] See http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/leadership/docs/Learning_principalsnewb.pdf

[12] See, for example, Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, and Fullan, M. (2003). The moral imperative of school leadership. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin/Sage. The January 2004 Issue of the *Harvard Business Review* is entitled 'Inside the mind of the leader' and is solely dedicated to investigations of the role of emotional intelligence in successful leadership in non-educational settings.

[13] The effectiveness criteria included evidence that agreed projects were delivered on time to specification; high outcomes on agreed school performance indicators; and high levels of staff, student and community support.

[14] Items marked • are also ranked in the top 15 on importance in other studies. A1 indicates an Emotional Intelligence (Personal) item; A2, an Emotional Intelligence (Interpersonal Item); B, an Intellectual Capability Item.

The implications of this research are profound. First, we are finding that emotional intelligence may not be teachable but it is certainly learnable once the key elements that account for successful practice in each role are made explicit. Secondly, we know that few leaders are aware of this leadership research or of the more general findings about effective change management in HE that have been outlined above. Thirdly, we know that what senior staff do to lead change profoundly influences staff culture, morale and their willingness to engage in and pursue actively necessary change projects.

## 6. Conclusion

Higher education institutions are at a watershed. To survive in the increasingly uncertain, shifting and challenging environment now faced, universities need not only to identify an achievable number of 'good' and carefully formulated change ideas, they must also make them happen consistently and sustainably in practice if they are to remain viable. It will be, therefore, the capability to bring together the *what* of change ('good' priority ideas for improvement and innovation that are evidence-based, relevant, desirable and feasible) and the *how* of change (research-based 'ideas' on how best to implement them) that will, more than anything, determine each university's future. The stakes are, in my view, that high.

The nine change lessons identified in this paper and the overall framework depicted in Diagram 1 for understanding where they can be applied are intended to assist in giving this process focus.

The change lessons and the themes which underpin them do not constitute a formula. This is because effective change management is essentially about the art of managing paradox. For example, it is about figuring out where, in each unique situation, to set the balance between:

- using top-down and bottom-up strategies
- listening and leading
- concentrating on the core and the support components of change
- emphasising stability or change
- focusing on improving current practice and setting out in quite new directions.

Change is typically a mix of drift (the impact of forces beyond one's control) and individual action (taking the broader external context into account and figuring out how best to move things forward).

Finally, it is important to be wary of a number of pervading change management myths:

- *The consensual myth.* 'Look we've all agreed that putting our lecture notes up on the web is a good idea so that's what we're going to do!'
- *The change event myth.* 'Well, the hard work's done, we've got the new university structure approved, now all you lot have got to do is implement it.'
- *The silver bullet myth.* 'Just follow this five-step method to successful change and all will be well.'
- *The brute logic myth.* 'I've told them three times now and they still can't see that using practice-based learning in their course will make it much more exciting.' Or, as George Bernard Shaw put it: 'Reformers have the misplaced notion that change is achieved by brute logic.'
- *The linear myth.* 'It's easy: we'll get the new transdisciplinary course approved, get the infrastructure in place, run a staff workshop on it and it'll be working by next semester.'
- *The knight on the white charger myth.* 'Now we've got a better Dean, this Faculty will really take off.'
- *The either/or myth.* 'There's nothing I can do—I'm a victim of forces beyond my control.'
- *The structural myth.* 'Now we've restructured, the university will be a success.'

**Attachment 1**

## Working with Change in Higher Education

Over the past 30 years we have been involved in the practicalities of trying to make a wide range of 'good ideas' for improvement and innovation in post-secondary and higher education work successfully and sustainably in practice.

Examples include:

- establishing the New South Wales TAFE's Outreach Project, which now caters for 50 000 disadvantaged adult learners per annum studying flexibly in community locations across the state[15]

- developing a unique self-managed training program for Australia's Skill Olympians[16]

- establishing the first School of Adult Education in Australian higher education

- introducing a distinctive approach to flexible learning at the University of Technology, Sydney[17]

- setting up a new integrated quality tracking and improvement system for learning in universities[18]

- implementing a more comprehensive approach to quality assurance for international students, and

- developing, in partnership with 10 Australian universities, a new qualitative analysis tool for student written feedback—*CEQuery*.

Our international work on change management and quality improvement has included projects with the Swedish NetUniversity[19], the Finnish Higher Education Council[20], the South African Higher Education Council[21] and the Royal University of Phnom Penh in Cambodia.

## Studying the Change Process in Higher Education

At the same time, in my role as a Professor of Education, I have been systematically studying—in partnership with a wide range of practitioners—the process of change management and leadership in post-secondary and higher education over the same period.

Much of this work has been undertaken as part of a national network of five Australian universities—the Australian Technology Network of Universities[22]—and an international network including the Canadian Quality Network of Universities and the New Zealand HE Quality Enhancement Meeting. A key figure who has influenced much of my approach is Canada's Michael Fullan, former Dean of OISE at the University of Toronto in Canada and now an international consultant on effective change management and leadership in school education[23].

Together, we have been particularly interested in what distinguishes effective leaders in education, in what culture best enables effective change management in this area and, more generally, in how we might best understand and work with the process of change so that good ideas like those identified above

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[15] See http://www.lg.tafensw.edu.au/1650/1662

[16] See http://www.qdu.uts.edu.au/pdf%20documents/CLIP.pdf

[17] See http://www.qdu.uts.edu.au/pdf%20documents/Info.Sheet.manag.change.Fle.pdf

[18] See http://www.qdu.uts.edu.au/pdf%20documents/QM.UTS2002.pdf

[19] See http://www.qdu.uts.edu.au/pdf%20documents/Manag.Change.Flex.learn.Swe.pdf

[20] See http://www.qdu.uts.edu.au/pdf%20documents/FINHEECAddress.pdf

[21] Scott, G. & Hawke, I. (forthcoming) *Capacity building for effective quality management in South African Technikons;* National Council on Higher Education Funded Project. Pretoria: Committee of Technikon Principals.

[22] Curtin University of Technology, Perth; the University of South Australia, Adelaide; RMIT University, Melbourne; UTS, Sydney and Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.

[23] See Fullan, M. (2001). 'Leading in a culture of change' at http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/sim-explorer/explore-items/-/0787953954/0/101/1/none/purchase/ref=pd_sim_art_elt_mor/103-4059873-1544613

actually make their way systematically into daily practice and are sustained. We have also been interested in bringing together research on effective approaches to quality improvement in education with research on effective approaches to strategic change management.

**Attachment 2**

**Some Key Higher Education Change Terms**

*Change Versus Progress*

'Change' involves something being made different or becoming different. 'Progress' involves a value judgement that a given change has been in a desirable direction. It entails, therefore, an evaluation of its quality. 'Change', 'progress' and 'quality management' are all closely linked.

*Culture and Climate*

Culture is defined as the accepted and sought-after way of behaving in one's university ('the way we do things around here'). Climate is more volatile and more to do with 'how we feel about this place'.

*Evaluation*

This entails specific groups making judgements about the worth of a program activity or institution. It can involve making judgements about the quality of an activity's conception, resourcing, delivery or impact. At the heart of evaluation is value judgement. When people talk of 'fitness for moral purpose' they are bringing to bear evaluation and their own set of assumptions about what constitutes a valuable approach to teaching, research or community service. Various types and levels of evidence can be used to inform such judgements.

*Implementation*

Putting a desired change into practice. What a change looks like in practice.

*Manage*

To bring about, or succeed in accomplishing.

*Quality*

Fitness for moral purpose. For example, a learning program or activity is of high quality if it is demonstrably relevant, desirable and feasible for those intended to benefit from it.

*Quality Assurance*

Aims to assure stakeholders that the appropriate policies, processes, structures and procedures are in place to guarantee that the design and delivery of core activities such as learning programs or research projects are of consistently high standard.

*Quality Tracking and Improvement*

This has links to the total quality management (TQM) movement. These processes track activities and programs on agreed quantitative and qualitative measures as they are implemented in order to identify what is working well (for use in benchmarking for improvement) and what is not (in order to identify key areas for enhancement). The system requires sound tracking measures and processes to be in place and agreed procedures for ensuring that the improvement messages they generate are identified and acted upon promptly and wisely.

*Benchmarking*

This involves comparing programs, activities and institutions on an agreed set of quantitative and, on some occasions, qualitative tracking measures. The results can be used to prove quality or to improve quality. An example of the former purpose is the production of public performance reports and 'league tables'. An example of the latter process is *benchmarking for improvement* where one institution shares its good practice on a particular measure with another institution which is performing less well on that measure.

*Strategic Planning*

This complements continuous tracking and improvement systems. Whereas tracking and improvement systems such as TQM focus predominantly on current practice, strategic planning aims to identify what quite new initiatives (innovations) are necessary to keep the institution well positioned in a continuously changing external environment.

**Attachment 3**

### Research on Effective Approaches to Strategic Planning and Change

a.  *The approach must take into account what motivates staff to engage in and stick with strategic change*

What engages staff is seeing the personal relevance, need, desirability, feasibility, distinctiveness, and clarity of what is proposed. Engagement is enhanced if staff are appropriately involved from the outset in suggesting what might happen within their area of expertise, and if change is linked to both intrinsic motivators and extrinsic motivators.

b.  *Alignment is key*

Strategic planning is fundamentally about maintaining the university's ongoing alignment with its changing environment, both externally and internally. There needs to be synergy between the university's mission (moral purpose), mandate, vision and its key strategic directions. A key alignment challenge involves figuring out how best to balance mission, market and risk.

c.  *Decision-making about key strategic directions is evidence-based—not anecdotal*

This evidence can be quantitative and qualitative and can focus on current practice or indications of what might unfold in the coming years. The challenge is to ensure that such data are valid, accurate, timely and comprehensive whilst also allowing room for creative thinking. The general approach can best be described as being one of 'informed intuition'.

d.  *The focus is on thinking strategically—not producing long proscribed plans*

Being strategic is more about having a small number of wisely formulated, widely supported strategic directions than it is about detailed proscription of what must be done. This implies that all sections of the university need to align their energies to contribute to each direction.

e.  *Only a small number of overall key strategic directions, targets and tracking measures at the university level are set*

Once agreed, these form the non-negotiable parameters within which local units identify suitable solutions given their particular operating environment and core business. Each unit's contribution is likely to be distinct and some will make a more significant contribution on some parameters than others.

f.  *Each key strategic area of major change is funded*

Three types of funding for each key strategic change should be considered: (a) support for coordination and facilitation, (b) reward funding for achieving key targets, and (c) support for implementation and monitoring.

g.  *The focus in major change is on collaborative action*

Carefully selected action teams work together to identify the most relevant, feasible and distinctive local solutions. These need to work collaboratively with a senior management implementation support group and a network of practitioners in other units attempting the same strategic change. Performance on each key change is monitored and drawn together centrally each year in order to determine overall university progress in the area, to disseminate successful local practice and determine optimum distribution of the budget allocation to each key strategic direction.

h.  *Clear accountability and responsibility*

The roles and accountabilities for developing and implementing key strategic directions are clear and continuously monitored through a systematically applied performance management system.

*i. Leadership*

Sustained leadership is put in place during implementation. This operates at both the senior level and through the leaders of local action teams responsible for each key strategic direction.

*j. Managing strategic change requires an ability to manage paradox*

Effective strategic change management requires figuring out where to set the balance between top-down and bottom-up strategies, stability and change, academic and administrative change, listening and leading, looking inside and outside for change ideas and solutions, and enhancing current practice and setting out in a quite new direction.

One useful reference in this regard is:

Sevier, R. A. (2000). *Strategic planning in higher education: Theory & practice.* U.S.: CASE Books. (http://www.case.org).

**Attachment 4**

| A University Culture Unsupportive of Effective Change Management | A University Culture Supportive of Effective Change Management |
|---|---|
| Endless meetings, poorly focused with no discernible outcome—a focus on talk without action. 'Contrived collegiality' or a tendency for group consensus to override taking hard, evidence-based change decisions | A commitment to collective action—more 'ready, fire, aim' than 'ready, aim, aim, aim' using carefully monitored pilot projects to learn how best to make a desired change work by doing it |
| Decision-making is ad hoc and anecdotal | Evidence-based decision-making which is outcomes focused—consensus around robust data and research evidence, not simply around the table |
| Lack of clarity about what really counts most to the university | People know what is happening and what the key change issues are that affect them |
| Communication overload where a 'shotgun' approach to using emails and memos is used and there is no indication of their relative importance or response to feedback given | Communication is controlled, focused, targeted, personal and followed up with action |
| Pockets of excellence which are unknown to others | There is a systematic approach to identifying good practice, rewarding and disseminating it |
| Intolerance of diversity. Tendency towards 'group think' | Recognition/toleration of diversity and encouragement of justified dissent |
| Small cliques of people being 'in the know' whereas many others are left out | Decision-making is consultative, inclusive, decisive and transparent |
| Individualised, competitive, isolated pockets of practitioners, without any shared institutional 'moral purpose' | Existence of a large number of reciprocal, informal networks and 'communities of practice' both within and beyond the university |
| High levels of micropolitical behaviour, passive resistance, anomie, back-room deals and 'back stabbing' | A 'can do' feel where people help and share ideas with each other in key areas |
| Individual and institutional defensiveness about criticism or poor performance | Willingness to face and address areas of poor performance |
| Unwillingness to question traditional approaches, structures, systems | |
| Transfer of responsibility to others: 'why don't they' | Widespread acceptance of responsibility and accountability—'a why don't we' mentality |
| People are cynical, uninterested or negative about the institution. There is a high staff turnover rate | Staff are proud to be working at the institution. There is a low staff turnover rate |
| Staff are hard to access and unresponsive | A strong commitment to responsiveness and doing a quality job with students and other key beneficiaries of the university's work. A commitment to equity, transparency and fairness |
| Institution is slow to respond and overly bureaucratic | |
| Senior executive are isolated and show little interest or commitment to getting into contact with line staff | Senior executive are in regular personal contact with staff and their priorities for change are widely known |
| Staff work around poor performers and tolerate them not 'pulling their weight'. An unwillingness to raise unpleasant issues in the interests of social affinity | Staff are interested in finding out key areas where they need to improve and then set about addressing these |

**Attachment 4 (cont.)**

| A University Culture Unsupportive of Effective Change Management | A University Culture Supportive of Effective Change Management |
|---|---|
| A primary focus on economic performance and buildings | Strong support for the triple bottom line—economic, social and sustainability outcomes |
| Limited knowledge of which staff are doing high-quality work or recognition of it | Rewards for strategically important collaboration across disciplinary boundaries and between academic and support areas |