

# Continuity and Change: Old and New Challenges for Leaders in Higher Education

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# The New Emphasis on Leadership

- Leadership in higher education widely seen as poor, by governments, by business, by the public and within higher education itself
- Seen as slow to change, wasteful, bureaucratic
- Better leadership seen as the way to greater efficiency, innovations in teaching and research, more responsive universities
- Leadership also associated with ideas of greater responsibility and accountability, between higher education and governments and society, and within institutions.
- But, is higher education different from other sectors?

# Styles of Leadership (1)

- Transformational Leadership – creating an environment for change; inspiring change
- Transactional Leadership – based on exchange principles; “carrot and stick”
- Servant Leadership – power sharing; collective decision-making
- Autocratic Leadership – “hands on”; based on control and power, position and law
- Laissez-Faire Leadership – “hands off”; staff free to go their own way

## Styles of Leadership (2)

- Democratic Leadership – based on participation; consultative
- Bureaucratic Leadership – highly regulated; based on rules
- Charismatic Leadership – based on the personality of the leader
- Situational Leadership – uses a wide range of styles depending on the context

## Styles of Leadership (3)

Leadership required at all levels of the organisation – top, middle, research group, course team, specific tasks

Style may vary according to skills available, task necessary

Style may vary over time – transformation followed by servant

# Some Differences

Wide variations in leadership, between and within countries, within institutions and over time

Method of appointment – elected, appointed by institution, appointed from outside

Period of appointment – permanent, fixed term renewable/not renewable

Powers available; institutional governance; centralised/decentralised

Levels of reward

# Pressures for Change

Increasing marketisation and competition; pressure to “succeed”

Massification, growth and diversity; increasing complexity

New technology; the pace of change; availability of data

External pressures; governments, business/employers, students (and families) as “consumers”

Emphasis on quality – assurance, assessment, enhancement

Internationalisation

But are these all new?

# New Priorities

- Encouraging diversity in higher education leadership
- Women; ethnicity; disability; age
- Are too many university leaders white, middle-aged, men?
- Diversity of professional backgrounds – recruiting leaders from government, business; mixed results
- Leadership as a full-time commitment; leadership as a career decision



# New structures

- Changing relationships with governments and with governing bodies; increasing marketisation
- New managerialism
- Changing structures; devolved leadership/management
- New forms of accountability

# New Roles

- Increasing specialisation
- Leadership teams. Deputy Vice-Chancellor/Vice-Rector
- Research, Teaching and Learning, Quality, External Affairs, Internationalisation

# Leadership throughout the organisation

- New emphasis on leadership from Deans and Heads of Department
- Moves towards larger organisational groups
- Specialisation within groups
- New relationships with professional managers

# The importance of leadership development

- Skills and knowledge
- Personal skills and qualities – self confidence, trust, sensitivity, enthusiasm
- Professional skills – clarity, ability to absorb large amounts of information, communications
- Knowledge – finance, law, rankings(!)

# Different forms of leadership development at different levels

- The balance between skills and knowledge
- Other forms of support – coaching, mentoring, hand-over periods
- Identifying and supporting future leaders
- Continuing development
- Personal development – loneliness, burn-out, family life

# Ideas of Shared Leadership: Key Principles

- A greater number of individuals in leadership than traditional models
- Leaders and followers are seen as interchangeable
- Leadership is not based on position or authority
- Multiple perspectives and expertise are capitalised on for problem solving, innovation and change
- Collaboration and interactions across the organisation are typically emphasised.

(Kezar)

# Some Reflections

## Continuity and Change?

Many aspects of good leadership remain unchanged – development of vision, encouraging and inspiring staff, dealing with problems as they arise

So what has changed? Transparency; open competition; accountability; availability of information

# Thank you!

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