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Editorial Comments

In this era of boycotts, temporary travel restrictions and virtue signalling it is often extremely difficult to take the long view. Short-termism and the resultant institutional myopia is as true of the higher education sector, as it is of many other walks of life. That said, it behoves all of us to reflect on how educational practitioners and champions have wrestled with challenges in the distant past, and see whether these can help us in our present endeavours. Our work is not merely about the here and now, but about helping set the course for the future. Those in leadership and management roles shape short to medium term priorities, yet sadly there seems precious little evidence of foresight planning for the years after their own retirement. Regardless of our role in the scheme of things we could all take considerable comfort, and I hope some inspiration from Jean Giono's allegorical tale *The Man Who Planted Trees*.

This edition of the *International Journal of Higher Education Management (IJHEM)* contains five scholarly articles conforming to the principal objective of the journal, namely the dissemination of both applied and theoretical knowledge. The papers help elucidate a range of issues, both with local and global significance, and afford us an opportunity to appreciate the way in which the HE sector is endeavoring to adapt in this era of rapid change. Changing expectations from various stakeholders means that the sector is required to endeavour to adapt at a rate that is as bewildering and often unwelcome. In addition there are issues concerning accountability and ensuring that those in leadership roles are much more representative of society as a whole.

The Editorial Board is grateful to the contributors for making IJHEM the platform by which they have chosen to put their research into the public arena, and trust that they will use their good offices to ensure that others do the same. The findings of a number of these papers are significant not only for academicians, but also for professionals, policy makers and those responsible for local, regional and national strategy.

The first paper of this edition is entitled: **Developing future employees for new and emerging constructs of business: Are current educational models of teaching business up to the task? -Bowerman & Reich**. This thought provoking paper is clear in its assessment of the failings of universities, it states clearly that many institutions have failed in respect of "relationship building, knowledge building and knowledge creation." This is quite a damning indictment, one that requires not a defensive reaction, involving instant indignation and rebuttable, but a measured reflection on what has been written. Such a trenchant critique throws down the gauntlet to every educational institution to undertake that which should be routine, but which is sadly all too uncommon, namely a root and branch examination of the way in which education is delivered.

It is noteworthy that the catalyst for this research was a series of conversations and insights gathered in Brazil. Yes Brazil, not the US, or the oh-so virtuous and self-obsessed EU. Brazil as a Lusophone country in South America is routinely ignored by many, yet Bowerman had discovered a business that had embraced the concept of ACDC - Amore (love/passion),

Consciousness, Discipline and Commitment. Passion is something one hopes we are all familiar with, but when it comes to business education, it is not often that the word "love" is part of the lexicon, unless it is the branding department waxing lyrical about a product or service. This paper makes the case why the ACDC model is; "current, relevant and necessary for today's global world". Exploring "alternate learning states" does rely very heavily on the assumption that students want to learn and be enlightened, sadly in some quarters there is ample evidence that they do not, they merely want their certificates and often even at masters level and beyond are reluctant to read, let alone think. Institutions themselves have actively gone along with such conduct, by pressurising academics to 'pass' students, and even engage in grade inflation in order to ensure positive outcomes in student satisfaction surveys and national and international HE league tables. Whilst some people might be somewhat sceptical about the apparent idealism of this academic paper, it is worth remembering that this ACDC model was encounter being used by a business having to make its way in a country that is a period of economic depression. Similar models and concepts challenge existing notions, in the same way that new technology has challenged means of knowledge delivery, learning and engagement. The paragraph entitled: 'The Future, ACDC and the Role of Learning in the Classroom' is particularly pertinent. Whether the powers that be are willing or able to listen and adapt, well therein lies the real challenge.

I return to the point made about Brazil playing a part in the genesis of this paper. The prevailing narrative would have us believe that Brazil is in a bad way, and in a period of political and economic paralysis. Whilst this may be true to some extent, the drivers for entrepreneurial activity raise questions as to why there is such ignorance in the business schools of the world as to what is taking place in a country such as Brazil. Second-hand learning has a lot to answer for. Academics and policy makers really need to get out more.

Given that in academia we appear to preoccupied by day to day 'firefighting', it is refreshing to have as the second paper a thorough examination and exploration of prevailing theories in relation to managerial practice. In his paper entitled: **Revisiting Ghoshal's view on the implications of bad management theory - a system view of moral governance and managerial practice - John Davies** puts various theories of management practice under the microscope so to speak. Whilst certain theories may have established a firm hold in educational institutions and other organisations, this does not mean that we should not examine their veracity and whether they remain fit for purpose. Management practitioners often cling limpet-like to notions, practices and ways of doing things, and are loath to accept let alone admit, that they might have misplaced their faith. Education institutions for all their apparent championing of new ideas, are often some of the worst when it comes to intellectual and cultural lock-ins that appear impervious to change, and what is more actively discourage independent thought. Davies in this important paper makes mention of organisational attitudes, and this is especially important when it comes to the adoption of ideas. Some might argue that adoption, does not mean that people have embraced the ideas, they might adhere to the letter of them, but not to the spirit. Management might resent the apparent reluctance or indeed passive resistance, and yet realise that a supine workforce invariably results in a demotivated one, that ceases taking risks and generating new ideas. That which Ghoshal termed 'perfunctory compliance' has a lot to answer for.

The issue of confirmation bias is an important one, which deserves far greater exploration in relation to education institutions. The very places that are supposed to be open minded and objective, are invariably the very places where confirmation bias is most in evidence. Davies is a passionate advocate of causal loop diagrams (CLDs) and the manner in which he expounds on moral governance provides further evidence why his research should be taken seriously.

There is a long tradition in universities of hostility to those engaged in trade and commerce. For some this is based on snobbery, for others it stems from deep seated anxieties about intellectual integrity and the feeling that external forces might inveigle their way in and corrupt the Groves of Academes. The simple truth is that there has always been contact with the world of business, with many august institutions owing their very existence to the philanthropy of industrialists and the like. Rather than seeing the business world as in some way threatening, universities would do to look afresh, and may well make some discoveries that prove to be advantageous to various parties. With this thought in mind we now move to a paper entitled: **University knowledge transfer capacity - organisational structure and regional cooperation - Glodek & Stawasz**. There are several refreshing dimensions to this paper, firstly that it looks at the scope for meaningful relationships and knowledge transfer with SMEs, and secondly the fact that the research relates to regionalism. This is all the more encouraging as the majority of studies tend to focus on tie-ups with large commercial entities and as a consequence usually appertaining to institutions and companies based either in a capital city or a major metropolitan centre. The fact that the authors acknowledge that local cultural attitudes play a part, especially when it comes to uncertainty avoidance is significant. Geert Hofstede's work maybe well known in some quarters, but it might surprise some readers just how unfamiliar most in leadership and management roles in the Higher Education sector are of him.

This paper, whilst limited in scope to some degree, still manages to produce some compelling findings when it comes to the mutual benefits to be gained by both universities and SMEs thanks to the meaningful transfer of knowledge. Incubator hubs and all that can emanate from them do not just happen, hence the potential value from the data collated and tabulated in Table 2. How one affects a sea-change in key leadership and management roles is another matter. What is presented here is heartening to some degree, yet it would have been useful to have some information in regards to the major impediments to embracing change, as well as analysis of the key concerns of the various stakeholders. Might there be a danger that those faculties and departments that do not have obvious commercial benefits be starved of funding? The fact that this research was based in Poland raises another possible factor, namely the brain drain that is currently damaging the country's long term prospects. In respect of the research, whilst some might remain sceptical about emulating this undertaking, this could well be a route that other institutions design to take.

Those familiar with the Principle of Competitive Exclusion would assume that for an entity to reach equilibrium it must work to strive to eliminate competitors. Such is the nature of the HE sector that one really would believe that some institutions are on a mission to undermine, subjugate or even ruin rivals. Clearly, for all the Darwinian overtones, as regards to survival of the fittest, it is evident that most people are unaware of the 'Paradox of the Plankton'.

Elements of biological competition theory has much to teach us when it comes to complex systems, something we all need to open to as education institutions and the societies in which they operate are certainly highly complex systems.

The penultimate paper in this edition comes from Canada and is entitled: **Leadership: the linchpin of effective institutional partnership - Glenn Hanna**. A paper as erudite, yet as candid as this one is indeed refreshing. By exploring the way in which two educational institutions have found a mechanism to deliver joint projects in a deep and meaningful manner Hanna has elucidated some crucial elements with regards to leadership. What has emerged here is a potential case study, one that can help others explore the challenges and opportunities. The linchpin analogy is an interesting one that is equally applicable for other entities. It certainly helps that Hanna is able to identify that the path to any such cooperation can be problematic, "strong leadership was not always present", is one of those lines that one senses is heavy with both meaning and anecdotes. Personalities and their commitment to any given problem is crucial, and if others sense that the project is no longer a priority or has been put on the back burner, well then it should come of little surprise that matters do not progress, more often than not they begin to fray at the edges. Conviction, faith and a degree of personal chemistry can make all the difference. It also helps if before too long there is tangible evidence of the strength of the joint initiative. The fact that this venture has already been shown to be generating sizeable revenue streams is important, not least as such income can help enhance facilities for all at the respective institutions and possibly secure employment. An interesting dimension that is not explored in the paper is with regards to where sectoral attitudes have begun to change. The world of education is no stranger to snobbery and one-upmanship, so anything that helps change preconceptions and misconceptions has to be a good thing.

The final paper of this edition is: **Some lessons learned in establishing the University of Rwanda - Robin Farquhar**. As with any such initiative, context is king. Anyone who has examined the journey that Rwanda has undertaken since the genocide of 1994 cannot fail to be amazed. Nation building has been a monumental task, part of this being a conscious decision to reject French and embrace English. Inevitably there are many official who pay lip service to change, and there are others whose energies and concerns lie elsewhere. What comes across from this paper is the earnest desire to affect positive change often against the odds. When we think of the things people whinge about in the Senior Common Rooms of many of the world's leading universities, maybe they need to experience what it is like try and lecture in a university where basic essential are hard to come by. For all the difficulties and occasional cross wires (culturally), one thing that universities Rwanda and elsewhere can teach us is that a desire to learn does still exist. The learning is two way, and as ever we would do well to keep an open mind, and be willing to embrace new experiences. When it comes to the 54 countries of Africa, it is to be regretted that so few institutions make any effort to engage with them, other than endeavouring to entice away some of their brightest students. Maybe when it comes to Africa the HE internationally has yet to address its knowledge deficit, and all to offer is guilty of confirmation bias. Those few organisations and individuals who are venturing forth and playing a positive and purposeful part deserve to be saluted. Those on the ground, often building institutions and academic values from scratch are little short of heroic.

Finally, it is important that we acknowledge that the atmosphere on my many university and colleges campuses has become polarised and less tolerant of late. We all need to be mindful of what is taking place and in this respect the following three books make for essential reading: *I Find That Offensive* - Claire Fox, *Trigger Warning: Is the Fear of Being Offensive Killing Free Speech?* - Mike Hume, and *Unsafe Space: The Crisis of Free Speech on Campus* - Tom Slater. We certainly live in interesting times.



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