Coaching Democratically Empowering Leaders

Encouragement from Senior Leadership: Senior leaders need to encourage academics who want to undertake Academic Enterprise to creatively relate with business and the community. Academic Enterprise leadership cannot be managed in the same way as other types of university leadership. Universities need recognise the qualities of individuals with the life experiences to make things happen in the 'real world' and encourage the development of supportive contexts where co-creative and workable enterprising practices can happen.

Harnessing entrepreneurial experience, allowing leaders to flourish: Academic leaders must recognise what they are good at and buttress themselves against their weaknesses and learn how to develop smarter relationships with those from business and the community - harnessing each other's' skills for the benefit of a greater good. Universities should avoid 'hero' leadership for the activity of Academic Enterprise, and favour collaborative, collective and servant creative leadership. Universities need to recognise and harness the 'humaneness' of this kind of leadership: it is not about 'teaching' leadership skills but about harnessing experience, adopting a more open philosophy of action, and valuing the good practice which are routed through people: it is interpersonal and systemic. So, 'de-objectifying' what is often portrayed as good leadership, in favour of enabling more inter-personal leadership which is central to the success of Academic Enterprise.

Support and recognition: Successful Academic Enterprise leaders need to feel supported and recognised for their work through endorsement, material encouragement, access to resources, influence, and alternative recognition such as promotion. The opportunity to expound values upwards, with a reduction in the barriers of hierarchies or systems, is key in this. Supportive behavior from academics line managers, especially senior ones, actually enhances the likelihood of success.

Recognise passion: Good leadership is practiced through, and identified by, passion. Successful Academic Enterprise leaders are able to surround themselves with those they can work alongside and give them support. This implies an important role for recognising experience, expertise and passion in recruitment processes, while remaining aware of the dangers of creating 'personality silos' among Academic Enterprise teams.

Managing leaders: Ours has not been a project specifically about good university management. However, Academic Enterprise leaders have revealed problems they have had with their own managers, not as individuals or groups of individuals, but as a category of activities and practices associated with 'managerialism'. The best Academic Enterprise leaders also recognise the need for managers in their own enterprise teams; this is in order to ensure deliverables and outcomes are met, and impact is ensured. They not only recognise this need, but actively seek to recruit managers for their teams who will fulfil these tasks.

Effective integration across the university system: There is a need for an integrated and coherent approach to the delivery and governance of Academic Enterprise. Effective processes must be developed to ensure trans-disciplinary working across the university. This includes organisational structures, particularly relating to Human Resources that support rather than impede career progression. There should be a transparent career path for Academic Enterprise employees and leaders, with fluid structures enabling better coaching and education where individuals can move in and out of outreach; The Leadership Foundation in Higher Education or Enterprise Educators UK are both suited to support such developments[2].

Rewards and Incentives: Recognised transparent rewards and incentives schemes for those asked to lead Academic Enterprise must be developed. This has as much to do with its status and recognition in university values and goals, as it does with financial returns on investment. Rewards, however defined, must become a part of the means of getting visions realised by those working 'for' or 'under' these leaders.

University Councils: The position of university councils needs to be recognised. Councils can work closely with their VC's supporting a richer and more relevant form of Academic Enterprise. VCs, and other senior university leaders, are busy delivering the core activities of their Universities. Lay members could therefore have a real role in supporting this emergent aspect of university capability. Outreach represents many of the values and aspirations that brought council members to their university role in the first place. These can be better tapped – but not at the risk of taking VCs away from their wider vision or cutting across their views.

Successful out-reach leadership is not just about learning how to 'lead properly', and, its leadership is not just about paying for, hosting, or sending people on leadership courses. Rather, it's about potential leaders learning how to articulate their passion and focus, and how to 'walk the talk' with their fellow creatives; but they are the one with a clear vision. To be successful in outreach demands the confidence to innovate and try the new, developing a 'strength of character' which enables them to cope with uncertainty and complexity. Successful leaders have had to develop and articulate their passion, they also need to be supported. Here, we recognize the importance of VCs and other senior university leaders in authorizing enterprising developments. Through active encouragement, along with the development necessary rewards and promotion recognising success, they can empower staff who do, or want to, work with external partners. Senior leaders need to recognise those of their staff with a passion and capability of working with all external communities and match 'horses for courses' with the right people in the right relationships.

Lay members of university councils can support VCs in such endeavours. One former chair of a university council suggested:

...we need VCs, PVCs, other senior university leaders and lay members of university councils to support Academic Enterprise. They all could work together to make staff aware of the importance of innovative and engaged Academic Enterprise, that they want strong leadership in this area, and then be prepared to coaching for better practices in outreach (CoC).

Given university councils are frequently drawn from business or the local community, and have 'first-hand' knowledge and years of practical experience in it, they can help reinforce the role of Academic Enterprise in the community. They are often the guardians of the external world for the university, and can position it in an appropriate local perspective. Consequently, they could act as champions and mediators for Academic Enterprise staff and act as drivers for more relevant outreach by facilitating better conversation between university academics and external partners. University councils could also develop trust in those academics who demonstrate a passion for outreach more (and reward them appropriately). In short they are well placed to support the university in this area, especially at a time when senior university managers have so much else to do. However, *'such support will only work if it is done with support from senior academic leaders and in harmony with the university mission otherwise it won't work'* (CoC). To undertake such an enhanced role, university councils would themselves need to become more fully representative of their local communities, especially those who could benefit from Academic Enterprise offered by the university and thus do more than represent the university, but also play effective roles in promoting, or hosting, conversations between universities and their communities. Successful leaders who have already worked with such 'lay members' indicate they can become a major force for change, but councils will need help and guidance to do this sensitively and usefully. Lay members should be careful how they develop this relationship and try not simply tell academics how to do a better job for such an interaction is not trivial and could be counter-productive if handled inappropriately; rather they should get into a 'mutual coaching' position with university colleagues, virtuously knowledge share with them, and learn from each other how to develop more appropriate ways of working. The Leadership Foundation could provide such coaching and help lay members properly mediate between universities, academics and their communities, enterprise, and businesses.

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[1] The words 'Reach-Out', 'Outreach' and 'Academic Enterprise' are used interchangeably in this paper to represent what is called, in Britain, the 'Third Stream' of a University Mission. You will realise from the text that we see this as an equal 'First Mission' for Universities and not a lower level activity. For us it represents a rich form of relationship between Universities and their external partners from business, industry, the civil and voluntary services and the community. We prefer the term Academic Enterprise as the key term for this activity because it suggests universities becoming more enterprising in their ways of Reaching-Out/Outreach, where knowledge sharing between all parties in any partnership is virtuous, so Academic Enterprise is the main one used this through the text, but Reach-out & Outreach are also used in the writing for variety and to add colour,

[2] In recognition that this paper should be seen in the wider context of leadership in higher education, which the brevity of the present paper has not had time to cover, the authors have worked with Ian Hall of Glentrium Change Agents to produce a DVD integrating the thinking

presented here into general leadership as simply portrayed in his 'The Leadership Pocket Companion' (ian@glentruim.com); this is the best simple holistic guide we know.