Values, Principles and Integrity: Academic and Professional Standards in Higher Education

by

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This paper is based on responses to a web based survey generating nearly 300 responses from academic staff in U.K. universities and HE colleges. It examined their personal/professional values and their views on the values that should underpin higher education. That contrasted with their perceptions of current operating reality in terms of system level policy and institutional management expectations and academic/professional standards. Those covered the ethics of behaviour of staff and students, the threshold standards set for students in assessing academic performance and the organisational culture of the academic community. Examples were sought to give concrete evidence to the opinions expressed.

The findings show considerable dissonance between two sets of values and examples of efforts to retain standards in what is perceived as an unsympathetic context. They have formed one basis for discussion by a small colloquium and the preparation of a monograph for publication by the Society for Research into Higher Education. This session will allow participants to consider how far the characteristics highlighted are common across different national systems of HE provision in an era of mass participation.

Introduction

This paper is based mainly on responses – nearly 300 – to a web-based survey of academic staff in UK higher education. The survey examined their personal and professional values and their views on the values that should underpin higher education. Their perceptions of current reality in terms of national policy and processes and of institutional management expectations, with examples provided of events that disturbed them, raise questions about the longer term health of higher education as it has been understood. The session aims to provoke debate about how far traditional values and standards "fit" with mass levels of higher education provision, and how far the UK experience is replicated elsewhere. The findings are set in a theoretical context drawing on models by Clark (1983), Becher and Kogan (1992) and the author (McNay, 1995, 2005a).

Mass higher education and managerialism

For the UK, the most recent, cogent expression of fundamental values came from the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (1997), set up to remove from the 1997 election the issue of funding for the system, given increased levels of participation. The report was not a great manifesto for the incoming New Labour government, but did have some good elements, including paragraph 5.39, which claimed that:

There are values shared throughout higher education and without which higher education, as we understand it, ***could not exist*** [my emphasis]

Such values were identified as including:

- A commitment to the pursuit of truth.

- A responsibility to share knowledge

- Freedom of thought and expression.

- Analysing evidence rigorously and using reasoned argument to reach a conclusion.

- A willingness to listen to alternative views and judge them on their merits.

- Taking account of how one's own arguments will be perceived by others.

- A commitment to consider the ethical implications of different findings or practices.

Those align with writers such as Leavis (1943) who saw a university as:

A focus of humane consciousness amid the pressures and dehumanising complications of the modern world; a centre where, faced with the specialisations and distractions in which human ends lose themselves, intelligence, bringing to bear a mature set of values, should apply itself to the problems of civilisation.

That issue of "dehumanising" was a theme in work I had done on one university. One senior academic commented:

Increasingly the university places emphasis on systems rather than people and much of the humanity and excitement, which I found a feature of the institution when I first came, has been lost.

The importance of the individual person had been recognised by the English Funding Council as part of a commitment to widening participation and lifelong learning:

We regard delivering, with others, the government's target for increased participation as the first step in a longer campaign of ***developing bespoke education to meet the needs of individual learners*** (HEFCE, 2003, emphasis added)

But…that extract is from a *draft* strategic plan; it did not appear in the final version. Widening participation for the English government became much more aligned with the state's needs for a qualified workforce (DfES, 2003), although the Scots retained a more balanced commitment:

The overarching framework and priorities within which higher education and the higher education sector operate are those of lifelong learning. These seek to achieve personal fulfilment and enterprise; employability and adaptability; active citizenship and social inclusion. (Scottish Executive, 2003)

The liberal, collegial values of the Dearing Committee, listed above, contrast with the expectations of New Managerialism. Pollitt (1990) argues that new managerialism can be seen as a generic package of management techniques which include:

- Strict financial management and devolved budgetary controls.

- Efficient use of resources with an emphasis on productivity.

- Extensive use of quantitative performance indicators.

- The development of consumerism and the discipline of the market.

- The manifestation of consumer charters as mechanisms of accountability.

- The creation of a disciplined, flexible workforce, using flexible/individualised contracts, staff appraisal systems and performance related pay.

- The assertion of managerial control and managers' right to manage.

Within UK higher education, such approaches, and the implicit values that underpin them, derive from the Jarratt Report (CVCP, 1985), which recommended a more executive model of management and decision-making for universities. They were embedded in legislation in the Education Acts of 1988 and 1992, which set the governance framework for "modern" universities designated after that time. Their Instruments and Articles of Government make the Senate/Academic Board only advisory to the chief executive, with no authority over academic policy or strategy except through monitoring procedures at the implementation phase. Recent work on benchmarking of governance for the European Association for Strategic Management of Universities (ESMU) has shown this approach to be common in several other European countries. It is matched by an approach at system level (national or regional) based on contracts, with the state acting as a dominant customer of the set of universities (McNay, 2005b). So, in Denmark and Finland, recent legislation has introduced external members of governing bodies, as a link to the employment market, and in several countries the executive authority of the rector and his/her team has been formally strengthened relative to the participative committee structure.

There are differing degrees of control exercised along a spectrum identified by McDaniel (1996). One participant in the benchmarking exercise claimed that their institution had "considerable autonomy. The state only approves all course proposals, appoints all staff and allocates most of our funding". This control model may have passed its peak: there was evidence of greater freedom being delegated to institutions, though it was two-edged. In one case there was greater financial freedom to operate within a much reduced budget; in another the state had recognised that entrepreneurial approaches were better led and managed at devolved level, and there was an increasing awareness that national/regional administrations are not best fitted to controlling international activities that are an increasing feature of many universities. So, the ends may be specified; the means to deliver are determined more at a devolved level in a context of "subsidiarity", where decisions are best taken closest to the point of making the decisions operational.

If (and the condition is not universal) controls are being reduced at input stage, they are being increased at output stage, with increasingly onerous systems of accountability being used to "steer" expectations (Orr, 2004). Neave (1988) and others use the concept of the evaluative state to describe this phenomenon.

If there is some movement to conditioned *institutional* autonomy within previously highly regulated state systems, it seems to be balanced by lesser freedoms for individuals as members of the internal

communities. In the main, that was a democratic deficit, with rights of "citizens" being reduced. In the UK, that has been further compounded by academic staff withdrawal from many of the decision-making arenas (Macfarlane, 2005), either because of pressure of other work or because of a view that participation did not influence those with power.

Model frameworks

What is clear within the UK is that the two-headed state in Clark's model (Clark, 1983) has been increasingly active since the Thatcher project (to "roll back the frontiers of the state") started in 1979. With massification of provision has come massification of the state and its agencies. Both policy and regulatory functions have increased. They have been couched in the language of the market, with the state as interpreter of market needs, and with some politicians' discourse blaming the consumers for making "wrong" choices. In other cases, there has been micro-management of supply through political intervention. The position of academic professionals has increasingly been located within new managerialism – they have to be disciplined and flexible in responding to the market and are managed in a hierarchy, rather than being self-determining with significant professional autonomy.

McNay (1995, 2005a) maps Clark's four elements of higher education systems onto a model of organisation cultures within universities. These are based on four quadrants formed by the axes of the degree of central control over policy *development* and the control over policy *delivery*. They embrace:

- Collegium, with a value of freedom, based on Humboldtian concepts of the university.

- Bureaucracy, with a value of equity, linking representative democracy and collective decision making to due process and, increasingly, to data requirements.

- Corporation, a power culture, with decisions concentrated at the centre, using the bureaucracy as a control service for top management, not a support service for academics and students in the collegium.

- Enterprise, which in its better manifestations, makes the collegium less of an ivory tower and more conscious of clients – students and others – and costs, and which provides processes for innovation and creativity.

The corporate bureaucracy tends to be driven by *system imperatives*. These include the policy and regulatory functions of the state and its agencies and emanations. Within institutions, this culture tends to adopt strategies perceived as of low risk and has features of centralism, control, conformity and compliance. Heads of institutions may be more local managers of a national provision than leaders of their academic community. Equally, as one middle manager put it in a recent development programme, heads of unit serve the top management to whom they are *responsible*, not the students and employers to whom they should be *responsive*.

The collegial enterprise is more driven by perceived *service needs* and tends towards allowing devolution, development and diversity. It echoes Clark's (1998) "development periphery". Shattock (2003) claims that it is characteristic of all successful universities. The paradox is that policies aimed at improving quality may be having the opposite effect by being manifest through regulation, and corporate drivers that undermine collegiality, creativity and enterprise. That is certainly the perception for the Research Assessment Exercise (McNay, forthcoming) and was one reason for changes in Teaching Quality Assessment. Both of those are bureaucratised peer review processes, which are seen more as quality (re-) assurance for the state as customer, than of quality development for students and other clients as

consumers/users. Such an effect is evident from comments by survey respondents. Rowland (2004) identifies some consequences:

> …there is a lack of confidence in a higher education system that has become obsessed with narrow measures of accountability, standardisation and management control. Under this influence, university life – for students, academic staff and managers and administrators who support their work – has become increasingly fragmented.

That Balkanisation may be the risk of a mass system with extra-large universities, often on several campuses. The pressures for a corporate identity and common processes applied universally across diverse disciplines may run counter to the needs to create small within large and develop local communities where the sense of identity is preserved and the human dimension is not submerged in the search for economies of scale by standardisation and homogenisation of the student body and the student experience.

We should not be misled by idealised notions of a golden age of universities as idyllic Arcadian academies. McNay (2005c) draws on several writers to show a longstanding concern about the nature of academic communities. Bill Readings (1996) in the USA voiced reservations about idealised visions:

> …anyone who has spent time in a University knows that it is not a model community, that few communities are more petty and vicious than University faculties.

Mary Evans (from the UK) warns against rose tinted nostalgia:

> …it would be possible to embark on a lengthy hymn to the departed university, a world of intellectual conversation, engaged students and limitless indulgence. To do so, as anybody who has worked at a university for any significant period would know, is to depart to the realms of fantasy. Universities in this country (and elsewhere) once admitted fewer students and were almost entirely un-policed by the kind of bureaucratic Rottweilers now snapping at our heels, but they were not necessarily admirable institutions…we cannot easily defend the past, or invoke that past as an attack on the present…what can be done is to suggest that what universities have become is a distortion of the values of the academy. The shift… is not from the very good to the very bad. Rather it is a shift from a collective world in which independent and critical thought was valued, to a collective world in which universities are expected to fulfil not these values but those of the marketplace and the economy…(of)…a very small-minded master: the rational bureaucratic state of the twenty-first century.

That clash of values, and the narrowing of mission to serving the needs of the economy more efficiently (as a previous government policy paper had defined the role of higher education) was a recurrent theme in responses to the survey. Becher and Kogan (1992) postulated a thesis that change in higher education provision comes when normative values and operational values are incongruent. The dissonance that this sets up needs to be resolved by greater alignment of the two. Given the unequal distribution of power, there is a danger that the operational values embedded through bureaucratic processes in a corporate culture will dominate over the normative values of the academic staff. The gap between the two is evident in the survey results.

The survey sample

A web-based survey instrument was established. The URL was notified to "registered practitioners" through the Higher Education Academy and some of its Learning and Teaching Subject Networks. (The Academy was set up to promote excellence in teaching and to re-balance the esteem of teaching and research). The respondents would, therefore, be academic staff likely to have a primary interest in teaching, rather than (but not excluding) research – note the high percentage of middle ratings in response to

question 2.8b in Appendix 3. The returns were "cleaned" and responses from outside the UK (six) removed from analysis. The sample used was 274, dominantly from England, with a 60:40 male:female split. About 87 per cent were from "modern" universities, whose strength is in teaching. 76 per cent had more than 10 years' experience within higher education; 12 per cent had over 30 years experience. The figures on sex and service (Appendix 1) are close to the distributions for total academic staff in the system. Anonymity was allowed; the majority took advantage of this and a few did not give institutional details, so the figures above are indicative, not exact.

Discussion of the data

Appendix 2 gives a small sample of returns to Part 1 of the questionnaire. They are representative of the overall sample. There is, not surprisingly, considerable congruence between 1.1 and 1.3. The first is about the principles and objectives that should imbue higher education provision and the values that underpin those; the second is about personal values that academic staff bring to their work. The range covers:

- Personal/moral/aesthetic development (the traditional liberal approach).

- Pursuit of knowledge within a discipline.

- Development of the general powers of the mind (Robbins, 1963).

- Contribution to society (a mix of emancipatory, meritocratic and social equity approaches).

- Employment/skills/economic benefit.

By contrast, the last dominates the perceptions of government policy in operation, with some small recognition of a social equity agenda. The first three above are near invisibility.

Section 1.4, as well as containing assertions of positive experiences and commitments, often despite pressures, does give prominence to factors that make operating to personal normative values difficult, and to the lack of alignment between two sets of values. So, there is reference to the pressures of numbers in mass provision where funding per student has been drastically reduced. There is pressure to push students through, driven by imperatives of finance and published performance indicators. There is scepticism about the culture of accountability, of target setting. The anger and frustration may be directed at senior staff, but is also about government policies for which they are the messengers and mediators into institutional practices. Concerns are also directed at students – their changed attitudes, motivations, expectations and abilities at entry. Those characteristics may have been developed at secondary school level where similar pressures to deliver output in the form of exam passes may have affected the inculcation of lifelong learning habits, displaced by spoon-feeding and "training for the test". With increased fees in England as from 2006 entry, there may well be a further shift by students to see a degree as a commodity, bought to specification and with an expectation that the supplier will deliver.

There is a loss of trust in relation to government and its intentions for higher education, also directed at senior staff who are seen as cooperating, even colluding, in a narrow interpretation of the aims of provision, and the emphasis on statistical indicators, with the loss of the individual human being and the suppression of what the figures mean at any level below the surface. If the academy was once a conscience and critic for government and society, there now appears to be a cynicism that leads to disengagement from that wider debate and from full membership of the institutional academic community. This reflects a pattern of change in the exercise of citizenship rights and responsibilities in the wider polity, where elements of a "bully and blame" culture may have reduced whistle-blowing and "speaking truth to power"

– see the responses to questions 2.1 and 2.2 in Appendix 3. It may be worth noting that the view in question 2.3 in that appendix was expressed by a government minister.

Appendix 3 gives a statistical summary of returns to part 2 of the survey questionnaire. It is worth emphasising the size of the sample (<300 out of 140 000 academic staff), and its self-selected nature. Nevertheless, the distribution of responses to some items is so strongly concentrated, that they have validity, if only to provoke debate and to prompt further, fuller work. They can provide an agenda for debate in the session in Paris.

One thing that comes through clearly is the gap between espoused policy and policy in practice, between stated aims and their achievement. So, quality assurance regimes are seen to have encouraged an unimaginative view of quality (q8); the government skills agenda and its incorporation into the higher education curriculum has not produced "work-ready" graduates (q16); globalisation has not penetrated the curriculum or student consciousness through their higher education experience (q17) and the esteem of higher education has not risen following growth in access (q18). Work by Andrews (2005) supports that conclusion. She found that non-traditional students developed group solidarity to manage their collective dissatisfaction with their experience of institutions. Individual staff were praised for their willingness to see students as individuals, not faces in a big lecture, and to be accessible to give support. This confirms the efforts made by many of them, as indicated in the survey. With continuing growth in a mass provision, and continuing tight funding for teaching – much more so than for research – there must be limits to how far these compensatory activities can continue before time and good will are saturated.

A second concern is over standards in a mass provision. Questions 2.5, 2.7, 2.10, 2.12, and 2.19 suggest that pressures lead to admission of weaker students, to a dependency in the teaching-learning relationship that is not developing mature capabilities, and to compromises both on malpractice, such as plagiarism, and on threshold standards for crucial pass/fail decisions. The third part of the survey is not treated here, but responses gave evidence of these patterns by examples from respondents' experience. The issue is, then, not only about academic standards, but of ethical standards and professional behaviour at all levels in the institution. If higher education is to reclaim the moral high ground staked out by Leavis (see above), its own integrity must be beyond question.

Conclusion

The argument for greater monitoring of higher education was the increase in public money being spent as a result of massification. In fact, the percentage of GDP spent on HE in the UK is currently at the same level as in 1979 – 1.1 per cent, below the OECD average (OECD, 2004), with government spending static at 0.8 per cent. The measures introduced appear to have had an effect contrary to their purpose, and may have made provision less innovative and creative, and possibly of lower quality. That result is, in part, a result of the corporate bureaucracy culture in managing institutions, reflecting the approach of government to management of the system. The creative contribution of individuals to developing diverse student experiences for a diversified range of participants, consequential on massification, has, therefore been suppressed in the interests of administrative efficiency. The result may be reduced effectiveness and conditioned excellence, the loss of the human element in mass systems, and the loss of human good as an aim in a society dominated by economic imperatives.

Acknowledgements

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APPENDIX 1: SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY GENDER AND LENGTH OF SERVICE

There have been 274 questionnaires submitted which = 100%

Female = 107
Male = 163

	Length of association with HE											
	1-5	**6-10**	**11-15**	**16-20**	**21-25**	**26-30**	**31-35**	**36-40**	**41-45**	**46-50**	**51-55**	**56-60**
FEMALE	4	30	31	22	8	6	4	1	0	0	0	0
%	3.73%	28.0%	28.9%	20.5%	7.47%	5.60%	3.73%	0.93%	0%	0%	0%	0%
MALE	9	21	44	25	16	20	19	6	1	0	1	0
%	5.52%	12.8%	26.9%	15.3%	9.81%	12.2%	11.6%	3.68%	0.61%	0%	0.61%	0%
TOTAL	13	51	76	47	25	27	24	7	1	0	1	0
%	4.74%	18.6%	27.7%	17.1%	9.12%	9.85%	8.75%	2.55%	0.36%	0%	0.36%	0%

APPENDIX 2: RESPONDENTS' VALUES AND VIEWS ON AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF HE

Below, there are just 10 responses from Part 1 of the survey questionnaire. It should be noted that there were nearly 300 responses. They are to give a flavour of the raw data as submitted by respondents, and so to give their voice directly as part of this debate on values within higher education. Some replies extended to four pages; some were very brief. Those below fall in the middle, and are from people in a range of roles.

They are identified by respondent number. They are all from different institutions.

In each case, the text gives responses to the questions as posed in the survey. To avoid repeating those each time, they are listed here.

1.1 Can you state, briefly, what you think ***should be*** the aims and objectives of higher education? Assume you are the Secretary of State after the next election!

1.2 What do you think ***are*** the aims and objectives driving higher education policy and provision as you observe them currently?

1.3 Can you summarise the values, principles and behavioural codes/rules that underpin your view of higher education, given in reply to question 1.1?

1.4 Is today's reality different? What values, principles, codes of behaviour do you see operating currently in the delivery of higher education?

1.5 Please make any further comments if you wish to expand your answer.

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1.1   To discover and develop the potential of citizens
        To contribute to knowledge and creativity
        To develop thinking and practising in specific disciplines

1.2   To develop citizens to be part of the workforce (NB. I'm not "anti" employability, I do believe it is essential to think about lifelong learning as part of the curriculum – but I think there is too much focus on "get a degree to get a better job")

1.3   Value of education in helping people understand themselves and their potential
        Value of engaging intellectually with concepts and ideas as part of this process, and to contribute to new knowledge
        All parties (student, institution, lecturer) accepting responsibility for their part in this

1.4   I think the focus has shifted too much towards seeing students as customers who expect a degree in return for a certain amount of money and effort, and output in terms of employability. I think that is a problem of the Government giving parents, students etc. this message – I can't blame students for reacting to this.

1.5   There is also the fact that the HE picture is changing due to expansion, students working during the semester etc – I think that there needs to be come more radical thinking about the whole picture – institutions and Government seem to want to deny that so much has inevitably changed. Some more humbler "what are we all doing here? why do we want people in Higher Ed? why do they want to be in Higher Ed?" questioning needs to be done on all sides.

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1.1   Social inclusion through the empowerment that the knowledge, skills and processes of education provide.
Promoting individuals and groups to reach their potential (academic and social).
Research to benefit students and society (in that order).

1.2   Maintaining teaching and research at its current "level" but diminishing unit costs.
Shifting the burden of financing HE from State to individual and (to a certain extent) business.
Improving the balance of payments through invisible earnings from overseas students.

1.3   Education is too important to disenfranchised people (UK and Overseas) to be left to the academics, therefore I support opening up HE.
HE should push students as well as pull them and failing/counselling alternatives to struggling students should not be a performance indicator called "wastage".
Research matters, but those involved in research must see their role as primarily in support of teaching and not industry (unless industry pays full costs).

1.4   Yes, reality today revolves around business plans and models without acknowledging that most business plans fail (literally or metaphorically). Energy and talent are wasted in marketing and regulation compliance.

The main reasons I left the slippery pole of business management 15 years ago were the tyranny of always having to "beat" last week's or last year's figures and the constant struggle for competitive advantage by any means possible, especially cutting costs – now true in education and market driven fees will make it worse.

1.5   I still like working in HE – it's not as brutal as business nor as case critical as the NHS nor as mind-bogglingly ineffectual as local government. And it's less regulated than Schools or FE.

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1.1   To provide the opportunity for those with intellectual ability to develop their learning.

1.2   To meet what are perceived as politically attractive aims. Very wide participation as cheaply as possible.

1.3   That individuals are individuals, and that encouraging students in learning to learn and developing their passion for a subject is the most important gift I can give to them.

1.4   The student codes appear very different – a wish to tick boxes rather than engage in serious (not hard, or boring, but serious) study. Sometimes it is as if they wish to take no responsibility for their own learning.

1.5   It is a pleasure to teach those who appear to have little ability but engage and achieve, but for much of the time I am contributing to teaching those who are devaluing the worth of a degree. Fortunately there are always exceptions.

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1.1   To explore key ideas and disciplines.
       To transmit key ideas and disciplines
       To create new ideas.
       To provide intellectual frameworks to improve the world.
       To develop individual intellectual capacity
       To develop individual autonomy in making assessments of ideas and developments in the world.

1.2   Training the workforce.
       Fulfilling statistical targets determined by party political needs.

1.3   Importance of enabling individuals to act and think outside the framework set by firms, government and media (autonomy).
       Importance of thinking rigorously within a discipline (rigour).
       Importance of seeing limitations and alternatives to a discipline (alternatives).
       Importance of seeing the world through other eyes (empathy).
       Commitment to improve the world (solidarity).
       Respect for other people (respect).

1.4   Conformity
       Greed
       Selfishness
       Commerce
       Compliance
       Superficiality

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1.1   To foster curiosity, a love of knowledge and learning.
       To encourage enthusiasm for an area of study and to make connections between different disciplines.
       A sharing of skills and expertise.
       To foster creativity and facilitate personal development for both staff and students.

1.2   The minimisation of economic expenditure.
       To place as many pressures as possible on academic staff while severely reducing every resource possible.

To appear to aim for social inclusion while reducing the educational experience which is in actuality offered to students.

To insist on research outputs while not providing/enabling a research culture to exist in the first place.

To make everything fit into ridiculously neat categories ('aims and objectives', 'learning outcomes' etc. etc.).

To go for quantity over quality, the RAE being symptomatic of this.

1.3   An overall passion and enthusiasm for life, discovery and learning.

1.4   The exact opposite to 1.3 – every attempt possible to stifle much of the enthusiasm. The pleasure and importance of thinking time does not fit into neat bureaucratic categories. The notion of research has now acquired machine-like qualities and is described in mechanistic and dehumanising terms (e.g. research-active; research outputs…).

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1.1   To teach people to think independently, creatively and efficiently in whatever discipline they study and to teach them to be able to apply that learning experience to whatever wider challenges they come up against.

1.2   To provide a range of work orientated transferable skills in order to make people more conformist and commercially useful economic units.

1.3   Fundamentally I aim to promote empowerment and confidence in order to permit students to fulfil their potential.

I aim to challenge them to think more deeply, widely and with less bigotry.

I see my duty as equipping them with skills of writing, analysis, research and performance that will enable them to realise these aims and to do the best they can at the University.

I expect them to work with commitment and if possible passion, to respect others, and in return I try to offer them my assistance whenever they need it.

1.4   I think many of my colleagues have not dissimilar aims, though they may not frame them in the same rather idealistic terms I know I use here. However, the dominating ethos from government and university hierarchies is so much about numbers, accountability, efficiency and transferable skills that colleagues get ground down and end up just servicing the requirements of the job rather than the students.

1.5   I think the prevailing obsession with accountability, rooted in a fear of litigation and the possibility of loss of opportunities for promotion if one is not seen to be conforming to imposed targets has led to an overwhelming amount of bureaucratic work which gets in the way of academics doing what they are good at, i.e. teaching in their areas of expertise.

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1.1   These will differ in emphasis between subjects, with some more training oriented subjects (such as engineering or dentistry) sharing certain aims and objectives with say, Classics or Philosophy, but also having more precisely targeted career-related aims. Underlying all of the subjects taught,

however, should be the development of enquiring, critical minds with capacities to develop informed and independent judgements, and an interest in how whatever subject the student is studying responds and contributes to the broader society.

1.2   Utilitarian values which are privileging neat packaging of 'learning' over broader educational development of individuals and which define research only in narrowly quantifiable terms, rather than as something which may contribute in much broader (and frankly, useful) ways to a university's regional community as well.

1.3   When I began as an academic, my approach was informed by some of the mix of humanist and socialist values which were around in the late 60s and early 70s. For me, the product of a working class (Australian) who ended up going to Oxford, my undergraduate and post-graduate days had provided a heady introduction to all sorts of ways of viewing and participating in the world which I had never previously encountered. While the courses I was formally enrolled in demanded a lot of me, the broader atmosphere was one which encouraged challenge and experiment, even play. When I first started as a lecturer, I wanted to encourage such an attitude amongst my own students. We had small enough classes in those days and enough opportunities for extra-curricular work with students, to get to know many of them quite well and nurture their individual interests, while also delivering a demanding curriculum: our approach was informed by a desire to 'educate' not 'teach' … research was often geared towards work with students or work in the wider community (where I was involved in a lot of activities that related to my subject).

1.4   Very much so. A doubling of student numbers – while our staff numbers have remained the same (and indeed were lower for a while), a quadrupling of the apparatuses of surveillance (of both students and ourselves – through all the various TQA, RAE and other time and motion type exercises), and the greater difficulties faced by students (along with changing perceptions of what education is about) have led to what I would see as a diminution in the time and care that staff are able to invest in the educational experience of the students. While we are perhaps more organised about publishing our research than we once were, I am not sure that the quality of research overall has been enhanced and I think that increasingly research choices are being shaped by the extent to which any particular research idea is able to attract prestigious funding, as opposed to whether it is an interesting idea.

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1.1   Creating an environment in which students and academic staff can learn, expand the boundaries of knowledge, and in which students can be prepared to excel in their chosen occupations after graduation.

1.2   In the UK – to monitor and thereby stifle any chance at creative and intellectual activity; to document and over-bureaucratise every aspect of the learning process so that it loses spontaneity.

1.3   Abstract values relating to the good of society (the nurturing of creativity and non-rationalised intellectual activity that cannot be quantified and scored produces the most positive atmosphere for all members of society).

1.4   Yes. See 1.2

1.5   I came here two years ago from a state run university system in the US. I am appalled at the over regulation of every aspect of HE and will try to leave as soon as possible. This system is crushing intellectual creativity and people are leaving to escape the over-bureaucratisation that exists in HE (including second marking, external examiners, endless quality assurance exercises, the RAE, etc. – myriad systems that attempt to rationalise complex and unquantifiable aspects of learning and knowledge into numbers and rigid systems).

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1.1   Firstly, there needs to be a distinction between vocational training and skills of higher critical thinking. In theatre and media departments across the country young people think they're being trained for a profession on a course which may make them critical viewers, but not professional operators. Many students on 'academic' courses lack the life experience and maturity to make the most of three years' absorption in their academic environment. So it's not about what all the aims should be, but about how different sets of aims and objectives are articulated to what is now a 'client group'.

1.2   A market place mentality dominates, in aims and objectives and the emergent undergraduate generation. A degree is a strategic attainment facilitating a given career path. The antiquated grading system of first to third creates little distinction – as with A levels, only the best will do – making MAs an increasing necessity.

1.3   A University should be a forum for education, not a factory of vocational learning.
        A University should be a safe place to risk and fail. On a practical level, we have failed to incorporate any notion of multiple intelligences into the Higher Education system, or indeed the culture at large. (Mostly) Middle class parental pressure to get 'a solid degree' clogs courses up with people who really couldn't care less what degree they are on, and whose skill base would be fulfilled in more vocational and practical training.
        My ideal: University modelled as a laboratory of society. Whether learning skills for a vocation, or developing high level critical thinking skills, or training as an athlete, a genuine opportunity to take time out to understand, perhaps recognise one's immediate professional experiences, techniques and knowledge, and, if desired, the wider social systems.

1.4   I am (at 24) part of a generation of strategic learners, over-examined since we entered formal education. We are short to medium-term planners, refusing to take risks for fear of failure. Our lifestyle expectations are high. We are a reflexive, questioning generation on an interpersonal and, perhaps, community level, but don't carry that type of thought through into wider questioning of social systems.
        Current delivery has not adapted sufficiently to the general type of learner produced by the school system. Much of the teaching I see working in an HE education development centre is delivered as if to focused, willing students while said students sit and sleep. This is nothing new, but should be addressed. To remain independent of the instrumental values enforced upon the school system and so generating these strategic learners, HE needs to demonstrate an independence. It must address the way in which we have learned to learn – strategically.

1.5   Fees have not made students value their Higher Education as Education – it has only increased this idea that there MUST be tangible return on investment. The root cause may be the education system at large rather than the fee paying itself, but either way, it isn't helping.

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1.1   To provide knowledge and skills to students so that they understand the past, can grow as individuals, can participate as thoughtful members of a dynamic democratic nation and an increasingly global world, and can contribute to their communities (large or small).

1.2   Bureaucracy. Corporate and bureaucratic style control for political reasons over day-to-day and ongoing decision-making by those not actually committed to education or students. Secondary seems to be "making" students into people who can contribute to the economy.

1.3   Students need to be taught to think, to analyse, to consider. They need to be taught how to learn, so that learning becomes a lifelong process. They need to be taught to doubt, to test, to assess. They need to be taught that life is not certain, that there are no hard and fast answers to most questions, and that our answers often depend on our history, our own beliefs, and our own understanding.

1.4   Very different. Today's values in UK higher education, especially at the UG level, are based in the somewhat silly notion that there is a knowledge set, a group of facts, which students should learn. In this context, who teaches them those facts doesn't matter; how they "learn" those facts doesn't matter; who assesses their understanding of those facts doesn't matter; how they "learn" those facts doesn't matter; whether they've "tested" those facts, both on the basis for the factual assertions and their understanding of them, doesn't matter. Knowledge is a thing. Give students this thing. Give it to them in this way. Might students, or at least some of them, learn better a different way? Too bad. Teach this way, assess this way.

1.5   Much of what is in place today seems frustratingly to be based on simple historical practice, sometimes obtained from the rhetoric of corporate and business efficiency and training. Students are individuals. They learn in different ways. Yet, they come to university and are handed "knowledge" on a silver platter, spoon fed to them in bite-sized handouts that present complex, potentially controversial issues in simple, easy to understand ways. They are not taught to think, or to question, and many times seem not to be able to engage with the knowledge they are given. Additional depth to knowledge – such as questioning facts, is sad, and is a testament to the overpoliticalisation of higher education in the UK. So long as this holds, students from countries where education is more robust, less "consumer" oriented (where the student is the "consumer" – silly notion, that), where students are expected not only to memorise, but also to think, the UK and UK students will be at a decided disadvantage.

There have been 274 questionnaires submitted which = 100%

Female = **107**

Male = 163

	Question	1	2	3	4	5
		strong disagreement <----> strong agreement				
2.1	Higher education has lost its role as conscience and critic of society.	3.64%	9.48%	14.2%	37.5%	34.3%
2.2	There is a fear of sanctions against those who 'speak truth to power', with corporate management approaches verging on a culture of 'bully and blame'.	2.91%	6.93%	10.9%	35.4%	43.4%
2.3	The joy of learning has reduced with the focus on job preparation through skills development.	5.10%	4.74%	12.0%	31.0%	46.3%
2.4	The emphasis within universities is now 'more on systems rather than on people, and much of the humanity and excitement has been lost' [PL in a northern university]	2.55%	3.28%	8.39%	28.8%	55.8%
2.5	There is a risk of supporting students so much that it becomes spoon-feeding not encouraging them to find their own stance.	4.37%	10.2%	11.3%	31.3%	41.9%
2.6	Research integrity has been compromised: by a mix of pressures to publish, perhaps prematurely, commercial	2.18%	6.56%	19.7%	37.5%	32.1%

	pressures and sponsors' expectations in commissioned projects.					
2.7	Funding pressures have led to the admission of weaker students without resources being provided for extra support to them.	**1.82%**	**5.83%**	**5.47%**	**18.9%**	**67.5%**
2.8	Quality assurance processes have encouraged low-risk conformity at the expense of innovation, independence and 'difference'					
	in teaching	**3.28%**	**6.93%**	**11.3%**	**30.6%**	**46.3%**
	in research	**1.09%**	**6.93%**	**35.4%**	**24.8%**	**26.6%**
2.9	If higher education is to serve the 'public good', that has now been redefined as economic competitiveness, and financial prosperity.	**4.01%**	**3.64%**	**10.2%**	**25.1%**	**53.6%**
2.10	Pressures from performance indicators and formula funding have led to pass/fail decisions being pushed towards leniency to keep pass rates higher and to retain students.	**4.74%**	**5.83%**	**12.4%**	**27.7%**	**47.0%**
2.11	The competitive ethic has reduced co-operation among academics.	**4.74%**	**19.3%**	**24.4%**	**30.2%**	**18.6%**
2.12	The definition and understanding of academic malpractice has changed so as to allow behaviour, previously unacceptable, to be condoned. This is true of behaviour by					
	students	**8.39%**	**14.2%**	**24.4%**	**27.0%**	**23.3%**
	academic staf	**13.8%**	**28.4%**	**30.2%**	**16.0%**	**8.39%**
2.13	Less effort is now given to imbuing students with ethical awareness and a sense of personal and civic responsibility.	**4.74%**	**4.74%**	**26.6%**	**28.8%**	**22.2%**
2.14	Universities are now more open to their local communities.	**4.3%**	**14.9%**	**31.7%**	**37.9%**	**9.48%**
2.15	Despite all the talk of 'dumbing down', the gains from growth of higher education have outweighed the losses.	**18.9%**	**23.7%**	**28.1%**	**17.8%**	**9.12%**

2.16	Graduates are now better prepared for work because of the emphasis on skills development.	17.8%	25.1%	28.8%	21.5%	5.47%
2.17	Courses now make students more aware of the wider world – Europe and beyond - preparing them for a globalised society.	18.9%	28.4%	30.6%	17.5%	2.91%
2.18	With nearly half of all young people going in to higher education, the public perception of universities has improved	21.8%	37.2%	27.3%	9.85%	2.55%
2.19	Student attitudes and expectations are now more instrumental – they are just chasing qualifications.	4.01%	5.10%	11.3%	38.6%	40.1%
2.20	Paying fees makes student value higher education more.	32.4%	29.1%	25.1%	8.39%	3.28%

Survey Web Site produced and designed by the GILT office

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