

International Perspectives on Leadership Development

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Maintaining and enhancing “competitiveness” is a policy objective of most if not all governments, whether state or national, with respect to their higher education systems. It is also of concern to institutions themselves. Doubtless, competitiveness means different things in different parts of the world; in some places it will assume mainly local and regional dimensions, for others the competitive arena is clearly global. However, the issue of competitiveness is rising on the political agenda as the impact of globalization is felt more keenly. For higher education there are two key dimensions of competitiveness: the positioning of institutions and higher education systems in an international higher education arena and institutions’ contributions (through research, teaching, and engagement with society) to the economic and social positioning of their countries and regions in a global context. Both of these dimensions are the focus of higher education reforms in different parts of the world.

The United Kingdom has embarked on a series of reviews of its higher education system over the last six years in order to achieve reforms that some see as necessary and others as contested. The most recent government report was published in February 2003. The competitiveness of the higher education sector and the institutions within it are a major theme within this latest strategy document. The issue of competitiveness is addressed, as one would expect, in chapters on research, teaching, knowledge transfer, access, and participation. However, what is of particular interest for this article is the proposal to establish a “Leadership Foundation for Higher Education” with a specific role to enhance the competitiveness, efficiency, and effectiveness of U.K. higher education. An important task of the foundation, in serving senior institutional leaders, managers, and governors, would be to reach out internationally and across sectors so that individuals, institutions, and professional networks can collaborate, learn, and exchange good practice. Encouraging such permeability across the boundaries of the academy acknowledges the changes that are emerging in an increasingly “borderless world.”

Some countries have long traditions of training and development for the academic leaders and professional administrators and managers who govern their higher

education institutions, whether at departmental or institutional levels. The United States probably leads the way in the quantity and variety of programs on offer with some (such as the Fellows Program of the American Council on Education) having a track record that extends over 30 or more years. In other countries, too, particular institutions have carved a niche in higher education management research and development; and interuniversity bodies (such as the Australian and South African Vice-Chancellors’ Committees or the European Association of Universities) have designed and mounted programs to meet management training and development needs. However, the concept and shape of the United Kingdom’s Leadership Foundation appears to be somewhat different from the leadership and management development approaches in other parts of the world, so its features may be of interest beyond the United Kingdom.

The Leadership Foundation is conceived primarily as an “intelligent commissioner and broker” of developmental opportunities for senior staff, accessing and collaborating with the leading thinkers and practitioners from across the world. The outline plan suggests that this foundation should have four core areas of activity: individual development; institutional capacity building; a “futures lab”; and acting as champion and coordinator for leadership, governance, and management development in the higher education sector. These four core areas are in effect overarching themes, each of which has a number of more focused strands of work.

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The individual development strand includes flagship programs (for different levels of leadership, management, and governance); brokerage of exchanges, visits, and international projects; and more personalized development opportunities such as mentoring or action learning. Institutional capacity building includes benchmarking exercises, twinning arrangements, an awards program and the acquisition or design of relevant learning resources such as case studies and simulations. The futures lab encompasses environmental scanning, research, and spaces for policy debate on the “modernizing agenda” for higher education. Each of these strands of work must be designed with international and cross-sector possibilities in mind.

The fourth strand, acting as champion and coordinator, is perhaps geared more particularly to the U.K. political context, although other higher education systems may still find some resonance with their own situation. This strand commits the Leadership Foundation to raising the public and political profile of higher education leadership and management practice, not only as a worthwhile field of research but also as a distinct area of practice that has lessons to offer as well as to learn across public and private sectors. The issue of coordination addresses the need for synergy and cross-fertilization between the disparate initiatives that exist in the United Kingdom to enhance management practice in higher education.

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The Leadership Foundation is at an early stage of development and there is much work to be done to make the concept operational. However, at a time when international and cross-sector collaborations are growing, exciting possibilities lie ahead. This kind of leadership and management development initiative—which is likely to involve a wide range of activities—can be used to promote and enhance collaborations and can also be used as a space for learning about the realities of cross-cultural and cross-sectoral collaborative management. Consortium arrangements such as the Worldwide University Network or Cardean University are growing—and there are already examples of success and failure. Is it not timely and opportune to use international leadership and management development opportunities as vehicles to discuss the lessons of experience and debate and develop the possibilities for tomorrow?

Author’s note. Comments on this article and ideas for international collaborations in the territory of leadership, management, and governance of higher education are welcomed. The author can be contacted at the e-mail address above.

Trade Talk—à la Four Modes

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Even though many would claim that trade in higher education is not a new phenomenon, the inclusion of education in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is introducing new issues for the higher education sector. One of the unexpected consequences is the growing use and perhaps unconscious adoption of trade language and trade policy frameworks in higher education.

The purpose of this brief article is to address the issue of “trade creep” in the language and concepts fundamental to postsecondary education and to introduce the notion of “education models” for cross-border education as alternatives to the “trade modes” used in GATS.

As more attention is given to trade liberalization and the international dimension of higher education, we are seeing the term internationalization being used as shorthand for increased commercial delivery of education across borders. In particular, cross-border education is being described in terms of the four modes. The four trade modes are, in fact, very helpful in the effort to understand how GATS approaches trade in higher education services; however, they have significant limitations in reference to the variety of ways that higher education is moving internationally. This article focuses on the limitations of the trade approach and proposes an education approach to cross-border models of education.

Terminology

First, a few words about terminology. Internationalization at the nation, sector, or institution level is broadly defined in GATS as “the process of developing/implementing policies and programs to integrate an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and provision of post-secondary education.” Cross-border education is seen as one subset of internationalization strategies.

Trade Modes

Four methods of trade supply used in GATS. Mode 1: “cross-border” supply focuses on the service crossing the border, which does not require the consumer to move physically. Examples in higher education include dis-