

the McKenna case, he made that decision about a US degree grantor, which he should not have, and he got it wrong.

In paragraph 36 of the opinion, the judge wrote that whether a LaSalle degree is “scholarship worthy of academic recognition” is not the matter being litigated. The fact that the judge italicized the word “academic” only emphasizes the underlying problem: All PhDs are academic, and must be so to be genuine, and no such thing as a nonacademic PhD exists. In paragraph 60, Eady repeats this odd view when he mentions the distinction between the academic value of the PhD and “its practical use.” It is not difficult to get some practical use out of a bogus PhD—for a while. If that were the standard upon which issuance of PhDs were to be based, we would all be calling each other “Doctor.”

Thus, Eady got it wrong, but the greater concern involves his determination about a foreign college contrary to how the home nation would treat such a college. I hope that other British judges do not make the same error and that this case remains not an anomaly but an utterly freakish event, as it is widely viewed in the education community. Does Great Britain really have nonacademic doctorates?

#### DEGREES ARE NOT COMMODITIES

Finally, it is important to compare this case with the recent cases involving fake schools in Liberia. In the St. Regis case, a US court was presented evidence that the college’s approval in Liberia had been obtained through fraudulent means and bribery and that the approval was therefore invalid, as were the degrees. The court then ruled against St. Regis. Any nation should hold the right to decide whether degrees issued by a so-called college in a foreign country are substandard or fake and therefore unusable in the receiving nation, based on evidence supporting that view. Degrees cannot be imported like coal: degrees are not commodities and do not uniformly contain the same ingredients. All nations need the right to protect their citizens from fakes.

No nation has the right to compel acceptance of degrees issued by a fake school in another country, simply because someone thought it was a real school. In fact, Mr. Justice Eady has done the academic community a favor by saying that the *Mirror* newspaper had not shown that LaSalle was sufficiently bogus. This should wake up the British ministry in charge of postsecondary education, which will, I hope, establish a meaningful screening system for grossly substandard degrees issued by fly-by-night suppliers in other countries.

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## Universities and Leaders: A Causal Link

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For a number of years, a question about university leadership has circulated across many countries: should research universities be led by good scholars? Given the importance of academic research to the mission of universities this seems a logical inquiry. An alternative question, one that has been aired particularly in the United Kingdom, asks: is it more essential that university presidents are good managers? Search committees from Beijing to Budapest grapple with these issues.

New research is showing that a university led by a good scholar will improve its performance level. Likewise, universities led by weaker scholars will proceed to decline relative to the average level. Thus a causal link appears to exist between a leader’s research ability and future university performance. The evidence for causality comes from the time frame and goes beyond a simple cross-section correlation.

In my earlier article, “The Leaders of the World’s Top 100 Universities” (*IHE*, no. 42, Winter 2006), I reported the strong correlation between the individual lifetime citations of a university president and the position of that university in a global ranking. In other words, the top universities are being led by better scholars. A follow-up study of mine focused on deans of business schools and found a strong correlation between the position of a business school in the *Financial Times* Global MBA ranking and the lifetime citations of its dean.

#### A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Recent work on the performance of 55 UK research universities over a nine-year period focuses on the issue of causality. By drawing upon longitudinal data, the study attempts to go beyond cross-section patterns. It uses regression analysis, with university performance as the dependent variable, and the lifetime citations of presidents as the key independent variable. The study also inputs controls for the university income, the president’s age, and the academic discipline of presidents.

An established measure of performance is used, one that has existed in the United Kingdom since 1986—the so-called research assessment exercise (RAE). Unlike league tables, RAE is based on a more objective system of peer review; it provides quality ratings for research across all disciplines. The data in the study come from 55 universities—namely, institutions that

competed in terms of RAE in 1992, 1996, and 2001.

The sample includes 165 British university presidents, those who have led the 55 institutions over approximately a 20-year period. Again, the focus is on presidents' lifetime citations, normalized for discipline and used as a proxy measure of each individual leader's past research productivity.

#### EVIDENCE OF CAUSAL LINK

The longitudinal study uncovers evidence consistent with the existence of a causal relationship between the research ability of a leader and the future performance of the university. Thus, across the nine years, universities led by better scholars went

*The longitudinal study uncovers evidence consistent with the existence of a causal relationship between the research ability of a leader and the future performance of the university.*

on to perform better in terms of RAE measurements. The data indicate that the top-performing institutions were disproportionately led by presidents with higher lifetime citations. Put simply, of the total 55 universities in the sample, the 10 percent that improved the most were led by presidents with average lifetime citations that were four and a half times higher than those of presidents who led the 10 percent of universities that improved the least.

#### SCHOLARSHIP OR MANAGEMENT?

Scholarship does not serve merely as a proxy for either management experience or leadership skills. Of the 165 presidents in this study most were either deputy-heads or had led major centers and laboratories before their step to the top position. Maybe a different question to ask is does management matter more than scholarship?

Twenty-three leaders of UK and US research universities were interviewed. The majority defined leadership as setting the overall direction and planning the execution of strategy. Interestingly, the leaders interviewed overwhelmingly saw themselves as responsible for developing university strategy, albeit admitting that a process of consultation followed.

Increasingly, UK university presidents are trying to centralize decision making, a customary US structure. Many regarded making decisions by committee both inefficient and untenable. Commonly, they also expressed frustration at not being able to appoint members of their own top management team. Deputies, deans, and even heads of departments were traditionally appointed by committees of academics, with numbers sometimes as high as 100. Most of the interviewed leaders had successfully changed the process of appointing top teams in their organization, allowing leaders greater powers of selection.

While most saw it as essential for presidents to have had

some experience, they clearly felt that, when needed, many areas of managerial expertise could be brought in.

#### WHY MIGHT SCHOLARSHIP MATTER?

The root of this question is about context—namely, does leading a university differ greatly from leading any other organization? Of the 165 presidents in this study only eight were not career academics. To explain the faculty leadership norm among UK research universities, university presidents cited three general themes. The first was about the importance of gaining credibility and respect from peers. It was suggested that a good scholar will appear more credible, which enhanced a leader's influence. Second, leaders needed to act as the arbiters of quality—to set the institutions' academic standards. Therefore, in the words of one leader, "the standard-bearer has to first bear the standard." Finally, leadership required fully understanding the university's business and culture, a capacity they felt was not easily achieved by nonacademics nor, to a lesser degree, by those who gave up research a decade earlier. It was also suggested that being a scholar signals that a leader may well sympathize with the needs of other scholars.

#### CONCLUSION

Earlier research has uncovered a pattern showing that top universities and business schools are led by top scholars. A recent longitudinal study has started to reveal a causal relationship between the former research success of a university president and the future performance of the respective university. This evidence suggests that research universities need more than managers to lead them, specifically, that universities are organizations requiring leaders to have expertise from within the academy. The appropriate level of scholarship for a leader may, ultimately, depend on the ambitions of a university. ■

## Private Tutoring in India

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India has a tiny quality sector in higher education. The seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and six Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are at the top of this quality hierarchy. With a strong meritocratic tradition, these institutions are ranked among the most highly selective higher education institutions in the world. Entry into many other medical, engineering, and management institutions is just as difficult. As a result of strong linkages between admission to these insti-