DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT, IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Autonomy and Governance: an introduction

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AGENDA

- The parties
- Why autonomy is valuable for them
- Political and Ministerial issues
- University issues
- Key points and discussion

Acknowledgement: This presentation draws from preparatory work undertaken by Professor John Davies for, and from, the findings of Leadership Foundation programmes with a range of countries .

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The Parties

- Political
- Ministerial
- Regional Government
- Universities
- Stakeholders
  - National – Local
  - External – Internal

- staff and students

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Why autonomy is valuable

Potential benefits/positive outcomes for university

- Strategic
  - Responsibility breeds maturity: more 'ownership of destiny' and commitment to achieving it
  - in control
  - Enhanced stability
  - Likely to result in competitive H.E. environment – market, selectivity, responds more quickly to social demands
  - Shift to international orientation: partnerships

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Why autonomy is valuable 2

- Enhancement of social engagement and meeting of regional demand
  - Relevant new programmes for employment needs – design flexibility
  - Partnerships with enterprises and other universities – training and R&D innovation
  - Diversification of funding streams

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Why autonomy is valuable 3

Academic

- Intellectual freedom of thought, publication etc.
- Freedom to determine specialisms, range of disciplines, academic profile and related programmes – modernisation
- Flexible
- Joint companies-universities developments
- Individualised learning

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Why autonomy is valuable 4

- Flexible student entry
- Use of credits
- Superior and more flexible PhD training
- Alignment with Bologna :
  - Quality Assurance
  - Best practice
- Improved internal Quality Assurance culture
- Research – education continuum freed up
- Research themes – R&D – commercial exploitation

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Why autonomy is valuable 5

Governance

- Reduced state controls/detailed accountability
- Real authority to Governing Body of Supervisors/Trustees to manage accountability demands

  [Budget probity]

  Senior management appointments

  [Performance]
- Democratised administration

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Why autonomy is valuable 6

Strategic planning and resources

- Freedoms in personnel area
  - Salary and pay, Selection/dismissal
  - Development, Determination of faculty load
- More efficient use of personnel
- Funding diversification and transparency
  - Investment in infrastructure
  - Tuition fees
  - Consulting [etc.]
  - Investment partners – companies

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Political and Ministerial

Aspects of operation of higher education system (Ministry level) which may need to be reformed to facilitate and sustain autonomy

General

- Imperative of making universities independent of political authority

  Academically

  Morally

  Operationally

  [case for 'buffer' organisation?]

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Political and Ministerial 2

- Creation of clear legal status for universities: not a traditional civil service organisation
- Shift in role from controller to coordinator and facilitator

  Incentives/regulations
- Establishment of competitive, healthy market for HE but not destructive
- Ensuring accountability mechanism (possibly performance accountability)

Political and Ministerial 3

- Transparency (across the whole system)
- ‘joined up thinking’ between various Ministries in facilitative coherent guidelines for policy
- quicker consistent decisions
- supporting the research – education – R&D – innovation – commercialisation continuum
- Simplification of various laws which limit authority and re-codification
- Reduction and simplification of various reporting mechanisms to Ministry in light of autonomy

  Volume, Frequency, Duplication, Statistics, KPIs

  Planning agreements? Strategic plan? Audit? QA?

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Universities- generally

- Institutional culture and readiness to sustain autonomy – opening up of new possibilities - but need to build
  - Awareness of demands of autonomy at all levels
  - Team spirit, trust, toleration, cooperation
  - Innovative behaviour cf (dependence)
  - Readiness for financial responsibility and entrepreneurial expectations
  - Risk management capability
  - Languages for internationalisation
  - Significant development process needed to transform culture to “Autonomous behaviour”

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Corporate Governance

- Need effective Governing Body for each university
- Define precise role, scope of functions and authority vis a vis Government and Senate/Scientific Council Terms of Reference, reporting etc.
- Membership appropriate to nature/vision of specific university
  - Who selects?
  - Who replaces?
  - Skills and competencies needed (Business-like)
- (S)election of rector
- Training

Corporate Governance 2

Priorities for new Boards e.g.

- Evolution of strategic plan
- Financial analysis and risk assessment:
- Stimulation of corporate/entrepreneurial culture
- Leadership succession strategy
- Commercialisation of academic strengths
- Effective Human Resources strategy
- Appropriate organisation structure

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Rectorate/leadership issues

- Rector appointment
  - Election or nomination Appointment by Gov Bdy
  - Profile of rector role and competencies for autonomous university
  - Performance assessment and renewal
- Design of functional portfolios for senior team/rectorate
  - Selection and competencies
- Style of operation of team e.g.
  - Strategic – results
  - Free discussion – team collective
  - Collegially engaged but ….Decisive
  - Emphasis on quality across all portfolios

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Strategic Planning and Finance

- Broad policy and process guidelines from Ministry
- Responsibility of Governing Body
- Periods/annual cycle
- Budgets and monitoring
- Engagement of stakeholders – internal and external
- Diversification of sources of funding
- To give confidence re accountability and capacity

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Internal and External Auditing

- Responsibility of Governing Body
- Audit Committee
- Internal Audit
- External Audit
- Transparency and reporting
  - Internal
  - External
- Risk Management

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A method and some approaches to capacity development

- Master plan involving all parties
- Transition plan (stages) to operational autonomy
  - For each function and organ
  - From bureaucratic to performance and market accountability
- Legislation
- Training (capacity development)
- Leadership development
  - All parties
  - Together and separately
  - All levels of an organisation – cascade
  - Project-based (training helps build systems)
- International and local inputs

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Concluding points

- There is much more to it – this is just a summary
- Realistic time-scales and budgets important
- Building consensus and trust and confidence are as important as building robust systems
- Culture and change management necessary
- Project management thinking helps –
  - especially regarding reviewing performance
  - Readiness etc.

- Questions and discussion