Chapter 3
Collegiality: The Contemporary Challenges

The Tension between Image and Reality

The previous chapter outlined some of the characteristics of collegiality. An ideal-type model was not constructed, as the purpose was to show that collegiality could assume different, if overlapping, forms (for Weber's interesting interpretation of the origins of collegial authority, see Weber, 1964: 392–407). However, we have in the process created the difficult problem of how to define the boundaries of collegiality. In a nutshell, how far can those boundaries be stretched before collegiality evaporates?

It could be claimed that a concept that is open to varying interpretations lacks a secure sense of its own meaning and thus is inherently fragile. However, collegiality prescribes individual and institutional behaviour, and for it to persist its meaning has to change over time. Institutions cannot survive unless their structures and procedures can adjust to the changing environment within which they function. Whether it is pertinent to term the new institutional models as collegial is another issue, but the inevitability of change is a reality, and even ancient, venerable institutions face this dilemma.

The interpretation of collegiality that was presented in the previous chapter imposes an image on the functioning of those institutions it is employed to analyse. In that sense, even allowing for a very generous understanding of the collegial tradition, a gap between conceptual definition and actual institutional practices may be identified. The collegial tradition, more especially its representation in the collegiate universities, incorporates *possible* contradictory consequences. To provide a simple example: small may be 'beautiful' but should there be internal institutional conflict then smallness may make it more difficult to diffuse the tensions as the warring parties divide into self-contained cliques. The implication is that as circumstances change gaps between conceptual construction and institutional behaviour, no matter how broadly the idea of collegiality is stretched, will almost inevitably emerge.

Formally, within the collegiate universities of Oxford and Cambridge, both their colleges and the universities, the idea of academic demos (in Halsey's terms 'donnish dominion') may still reign supreme. However, it is very much a reserve power

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as given testament to by the spread of college councils/executive committees and the failure of their general assemblies (Cambridge's Regent House and Oxford's Congregation) to attract little more than a cursory attendance except when issues of perceived principle are at stake (note, for example, the fracas generated by the recent moves to give Oxford's executive body, its Council, a majority lay membership). In his analysis of the consequences of Oxford's Franks Commission, Halsey argued that 'Franks left the public life of Oxford as he found it, quietly led and controlled by the private life of the colleges' (1995: 166). It is interesting that, some 40 years after the publication of the Franks Report, Halsey is still prepared to sustain this perspective. However, his interpretation is heavily dependent upon attaching considerable weight to the constitutional structures and leaves unexplored what precisely is meant by control.

If the first issue is that of conceptual clarity, followed by whether change makes a mockery of our traditional labels, then the next question to address is whether we are indeed facing a 'crisis of collegiality'. What, if anything, is so special about the contemporary situation? Are we experiencing another process of adjustment or is the collegial tradition about to disappear? And is this essentially a crisis for English higher education because its system contains the two most renowned collegiate universities, with collegiality in its broader but less comprehensive form continuing to prevail elsewhere?

The final chapter of our *Oxford and the Decline of the Collegiate Tradition* was entitled 'Crisis? What Crisis?' (2000) and concluded with the ambivalent observation 'that much of the contemporary malaise within academic circles' is more a consequence of the general direction of higher education policy outcomes 'than the erosion of collegiality' (Tapper & Palfreyman, 2000: 199). In the context of the late twentieth century, more especially within Britain, this may well have been a justified claim but it is not to deny the possibility that there was also a serious and continuing erosion of collegiality. However, with respect to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge even if this is the case, it is important not to ignore the historical perspective. With such long histories it is to be expected that they would have experienced both positive and negative times.

There is a case for arguing that the recreation of the collegiate universities was a direct response to the various pressures that emerged in the nineteenth century: the changing balance between industry and agriculture in determining the nation's wealth, the rise of the manufacturing and professional classes, the expansion of the state administrative apparatus in response to both home and colonial needs, and the steady extension of political democracy. The emergence of Oxford and Cambridge as refurbished collegiate universities represented their response to those pressures and in the process they slowly detached themselves from the Anglican Church to become institutions of higher education. The question, therefore, is whether contemporarily that tradition is in the process of being constructively reformulated or is in fact now in its death throes? The final section of the chapter will address this question and reach a tentative conclusion as to how successfully the collegiate universities are responding to the pressures for change.

The Pressures for Change

The pressures we are going to dissect are impacting globally upon national systems of higher education, and the subsequent chapters consider how different institutions are responding to those pressures with particular reference to how traditions of collegiality are being reshaped. The task for this chapter is to impose some symmetry upon the range of variables, although it is recognised that this creates order where very little in fact prevails. The process of change is interactive and subsequent chapters will present evidence to demonstrate this. It is not simply that institutions respond to change pressures but institutional responses can modify their impact and perhaps even the manner in which they are exerted, so they are intensified, weakened or deflected.

Broadly speaking, institutions of higher education have to respond to three contextual pressures: the economic, the political and the social. Frequently, these pressures are transmitted through a combination of state and market demands, which can reinforce one another. This does not preclude independent action by the institutions – they perceive a problem or an opportunity and act accordingly. Indeed they may pre-empt state and/or market pressure or even stimulate it by creating a model of so-called 'good practice' that others are then called upon to emulate, either thanks to state intervention or to the realisation by other universities that action is needed in order to protect their market position. There may also be rare examples of universities whose market positions are secure but, nonetheless, they act to bolster reputations to ward off potential long-term threats. For example, in several countries there is current sensitivity to the charge that elite institutions are pursuing aggressive research agendas to the detriment of the quality of their undergraduate teaching. Thus Harvard is compared unfavourably with Princeton and promises action to rectify the situation. It is a question of preserving institutional pride and may have little rational basis because students (despite what they may say) go to Harvard to acquire what can best be termed 'symbolic capital' rather than to experience quality undergraduate teaching (for a sophisticated analysis of the types of 'capital' associated with elite higher education, see Bourdieu, 1988, 73–127). But not to act is to take a risk; institutional reputations are at stake, and it is important to counter the charge of complacency.

Political Pressures

Integral to the concept of collegiality is the idea that higher education institutions should be independent corporate bodies free to determine their own development. In the United Kingdom, from 1919 onwards, given the increasing financial dependence of higher education upon the public purse, including also the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and – although to a somewhat lesser extent – their colleges, it was obviously an autonomy that could prevail only under particular conditions.

First, there was the relatively small burden of higher education expenditure upon the public purse. Second, there was the policy concordat between the Treasury

and the University Grant Committee (UGC), which from 1919 to 1989 had the responsibility of distributing the government's annual grant as well as underwriting long-term development plans, by which the latter steered universities along a path that was broadly in line with dominant political opinion. And third, the state respected the idea of institutional autonomy – intrinsic to higher education was the belief that research and teaching were matters in which the state should not intervene.

A major policy development has been the emergence of the new public management (NPM) model of governance, with the state (usually through quangos) adopting a more dirigiste approach to steering the development of higher education. Ironically, the proliferation of the model in continental Europe has meant a sharper formal institutional separation of the state and higher education, although not necessarily to less central steering of the pattern of development. In the United Kingdom the consequence has been more state control with financial muscle acting as both a carrot (rewards for following the prescribed paths) and a stick (failure to comply means the loss of income).

Inevitably if there is to be more state steering of higher education it will incorporate an element of policy direction. It is possible to point to a number of examples in the United Kingdom of which three will be suffice to illustrate the potential impact upon collegial values. Globally student numbers have expanded so it has become possible, in Trow's terms, to refer to systems with universal access (Trow, 1973). In the United Kingdom the focus is not only upon *rates of participation* but also embraces the drive *to widen participation* so that access becomes more socially diverse (which in effect means more representative of the social character of the population) across institutions as a whole. Although there is no explicitly sanctioned political drive to enforce positive discrimination, there are targets that it is expected institutions should strive to meet.

In the British university system individual institutions retain the right to select their entry and there is no automatic guarantee of a place in higher education. While, in theory, this principle has been retained, in practice its operation is under scrutiny, and certainly the pressure for change has impacted upon how universities select their students even if it has not influenced directly individual decisions, which a positive discrimination strategy to promote widening participation would almost certainly do.

If the state's policy on widening participation represents an indirect attempt to reshape collegial values, then its strictures on the principles of governance are more direct. There is support from the Higher Education Funding for England (HEFCE) for the emergence of 'senior management groups' within the governing structures of universities. Although there is a recognition that universities will have different models of governance, the contention that the executive body of a university should have a majority lay membership is one of the recommendations supported by the Council of University Chairmen (CUC), and the Treasury-inspired Lambert Report made explicit criticisms of the governing structures of Oxford and Cambridge (Treasury, 2003). As we have argued, it may well be inevitable that the reshaping of collegial values will result in the restriction of academic control over the

delivery of academic goals (with some ambivalence as to the determination of academic policy), but it should not be forgotten that there has been a persistent official push to achieve this end. The state is an active participant, far from a neutral force, in these affairs.

A very explicit manifestation of the NPM model of governance, and one with international resonance, is the development of more extensive accountability mechanisms. Note that in the United States this was one of the issues raised in the Spellings Report – a quite remarkable development given the Federal Government's limited formal responsibility for system outputs (US Department of Education, 2006). But it is the institutionalisation of the accountability mechanisms in the United Kingdom that represents one of the most developed forms of state steering in this domain. The United Kingdom leads the way, with European nations apparently lining up to emulate us. Currently, the universities have reached a temporary *modus vivendi* with the most significant regulatory body, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), but its continued presence is now taken for granted and what is at issue is the extent of its remit and how that should be implemented.

The developments in terms of accountability mechanisms have critical implications for professional groups in general and not just academics. Intrinsic to the definition of professional status is the idea that the person delivering the product is responsible for the maintenance of standards. This has been an essential element in the integrity of the professional person. If there are to be regulatory bodies then they need to be constructed and dominated by professional interests – the watchword is self-regulation. In effect state-controlled regulatory procedures imply a lack of trust in professionals – they have little incentive to regulate themselves fairly and effectively. In the contemporary climate, globally and not just in the United Kingdom, it may be impossible to resist the accountability culture (if you have nothing to hide then you have nothing to fear) but, nonetheless, it is a development that eats away at the morale of institutions steeped in collegial values.

The three politically driven policy areas we have examined pose direct challenges to collegial values: intrusion into the selection of undergraduate students, prescription as to the desirable modes of governance (the advocacy of principles that would augment managerialism and limit the scope of academic policy control), and the implementation of accountability procedures that are controlled by quasi-state organisations, which demonstrates a lack of trust (or at least declining trust) in the efficacy of professional training, practices and values.

Besides these focussed messages there are indirect pressures that impact upon the core characteristics of the university. For example, accountability mechanisms open up a wide range of possibilities: what should be taught, how it should be taught, and what are the desired outcomes of the process. While there may be formal support for institutional diversity, accountability pressures inevitably, even if surreptitiously, generate pressures in favour of a safe norm. Universities have always been part of the wider society responding to the needs of state and society, but the collegial tradition has embedded within it the idea that the terms of this relationship are infused with academic values and practices. Increasingly, however, the values and practices

that guide this relationship are shaped outside the institutions of higher education, with pressure to make them more subservient to the needs of state and society.

Economic Pressures

In the sense that most national systems of higher education, and indeed most institutions within those systems, are underwritten by public funding the distinction between economic and political pressure is somewhat artificial. For publicly funded institutions a perennial issue is how to ensure a favourable political outcome in terms of resource allocation. Inevitably publicly funded bodies are vulnerable to political pressure exercised through control of the purse strings. Ideally, therefore, if collegiality is to thrive, institutions need to have an undemanding paymaster (the alleged circumstances that prevailed in the United Kingdom after 1945 – although for how long the halcyon days lasted is a matter of dispute) or they need to have alternative sources of funding – student fees, entrepreneurial activities or their own endowment income. Although institutions can augment their private incomes, most universities and certainly all national systems of higher education in today's world continue to be heavily dependent upon public funding, if only indirectly in the form of financial support for students or state-funded research projects.

The question, therefore, is whether economic pressure is being used to secure political ends. In terms of the United Kingdom, and with particular reference to the widening participation and accountability agendas, it can be argued that this is indeed the case. However, the pressure is more in the form of incentives than sanctions – the rewards that follow from implementing a widening participation strategy and the possibility of accessing funds that enable institutions to research and develop programmes designed to enhance the teaching and learning process. Perhaps as critical as the levels of public support are the changes in how funding is channelled into higher education (competitive as opposed to formula funding), which inevitably impact upon how universities conduct their affairs. Increasingly universities have to decide what values they want to embrace and how they can best organise their affairs to maximise their fulfilment.

There is a debate in Britain as to the homogeneity of its system (increasingly systems) of higher education. There is a general acceptance of its diversity (although as long ago as in 1998 Watson discussed, 'The Limits to Diversity') but it does not necessarily follow that it has a status hierarchy composed of a number of clearly defined institutional strata. There is a common funding mechanism for the distribution of public resources (which perhaps for some time meant the equal sharing of misery) and a range of shared purposes. However, there are two critically important funding initiatives that undermine, or potentially could undermine, this scenario: the selective distribution of research income through the periodic (approximately every 5 years) Research Assessment Exercises and the introduction of variable fees (that is in England) to be repaid through an income-contingent loans scheme. The impact of the latter policy change has yet to be realised as all but one institution charges the maximum permitted fee for all their courses (some £3,000),

which for the time being curtails the development of a market that could impact upon student access to higher education. Moreover, the 2008 RAE resulted in a somewhat flatter distribution of research income, thanks to a funding model that recognised 'pockets of research excellence' within departments rather than simply distributed resources based only on an overall departmental grade. But the institutional levels of research income still remain acutely different and are likely to intensify.

The setting of the £3,000 cap demonstrates two things – the strength of the lobby that is opposed to sharp institutional differentiation and the desire not to move one step further than necessary down the road of abandoning state regulation. The creation of the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) beautifully demonstrates the potency of this latter faction. OFFA negotiates 'access agreements' with the universities before they can exercise the right to charge variable fees. Moreover, the political drive to strengthen the cause of widening participation remains strong. The expectation is that universities will use a percentage of this additional fee income to provide grants for students from lower-income families.

It is evident that the politically driven introduction of these funding mechanisms has had a significant impact upon the relationship between the state and the universities, and with a much bigger impact to come should the fee cap be raised or removed following the ongoing review. In that context a more competitive higher education market is likely to emerge in England as institutions compete for students in part on the price of their courses. While this may be a brave new world for English universities, it is quite familiar territory for many higher education systems (most notably that of the United States) and indeed to the private sector of schooling in Britain. Regardless, its repercussions are potentially traumatic.

The most notable consequence for collegiality of the public policy measures that reshape the mode of state funding is their impact upon the balance of authority within the federal model of governance. In the collegiate models of the university (with reference to Oxford and Cambridge in this chapter) the authority of the university has been reinforced, a shift further enhanced by the channelling of the declining public funding of college fees through the Universities rather than directly to the colleges. In the federal universities of London and Wales the reverse is the case because it is the individual colleges that organise their responses to the quality regime as well as their research submissions, and thus they receive directly the concomitant funding. In other words these are matters handled at the periphery rather than at the centre.

Besides the impact of the changing funding strategies upon the federal model of governance, there are two equally important concomitant cultural changes that also impact collegiality. The response to external intervention has to be managed because both institutional prestige and funding are at stake. Increasingly universities have managed research strategies, a change that runs in the opposite direction to the informal spontaneity associated with the idea of intellectual collegiality. Even if intellectual collegiality and research management can be co-ordinated, the end result is another layer of bureaucracy, undoubtedly under the auspices of a newly created post of pro-vice chancellor along with the required support staff. And what

is true of research management is equally true of quality assurance. Although it may be possible to find academics prepared to undertake responsibility for such functions, it is harder to imagine that too many would rotate easily between academic and managerial roles. Membership of the senior management group beckons as the department and even college fade into the past. The cultural change means that effective management is increasingly perceived as critical to the smooth functioning of the university and that donnish dominion – if not carefully circumscribed – could represent a threat to long-term institutional welfare.

The second critical cultural change, underwritten by the new pattern of research funding, is the shifting balance of research and teaching priorities in the careers of academics and the purposes of universities. In view of the fact that the national and international league tables that purport to measure and rank the academic status of institutions place such store by research output and the attendant rewards that accrue to the most distinguished researchers (Field Medallists and Nobel Laureates), it is scarcely surprising if those universities that think of themselves as 'word class' should place an increasing premium upon the quality of their academic staff's research. It would be difficult to resist the claim that promotion has been linked increasingly to research output and, moreover, in Britain success in the RAEs is related directly to core public funding for research. In Japan, Germany, China and France, to provide just a few examples, considerable trances of public money have been made available for the purposes of promoting research excellence in higher education with the distribution usually determined through a competitive process of bidding (for examples see, Kehm & Pasternak, 2009; Kitagawa, 2009).

This poses a real problem for British universities, and perhaps even more so for Oxford and Cambridge. Not surprisingly, the recent imposition of fees has increased student complaints about the quality of undergraduate teaching and universities can scarcely ignore the perceived grievances. Both Oxford and Cambridge have reputations for taking undergraduate teaching very seriously, and we have argued that 'the Oxford tutorial' is integral to its collegial tradition and represents perhaps that university's most important contribution to higher education. But, in the face of RAE pressure, the drive of many individuals and institutions to acquire international reputations, and the natural desire for promotion, it does not cut much ice to argue that there is a symbiotic relationship between teaching and research (even if true) or, if you are a star research professor, you should deny yourself a considerably reduced teaching load. As we have argued, the collegial tradition promotes the idea of a common academic identity and cannot easily embrace the notion that some have an elevated status and so are deserving of special privileges –including considerably enhanced economic rewards.

In recent years one of the most interesting developments in British higher education has been the state's encouragement of universities to become more entrepreneurial. In part this has been stimulated by funded initiatives coupled with a great deal of exhortation: the need to attract overseas students (especially non-EU residents), to build more links to the local economy, to work closely with Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), to market research, to use campuses to generate

income (hosting conferences, catering to public and private local events), to encourage alumni donations and to restructure investment portfolios. In effect the state has helped to promote the marketisation of higher education by encouraging initiatives that diminish the reliance of institutions upon the public purse. And if you examine university budgets you will discover that this represents a general shift with many institutions now generating comfortably over half of their annual income from the market.

Ironically, the most potent pressure in the stimulation of this shift to the market was neither state exhortation nor its special funding initiatives but rather its protracted financial parsimony. Between approximately 1992 and 2002 the number of undergraduate students at British universities doubled but the public support for teaching (funding per student) remained more or less static, so in time each student was supported by almost 50% less public funding. For institutions of higher education it was a question of acquiring private income, cutting their commitments or going into debt (or, possibly, all three at once). Rather than seeing the creation of private universities (the University of Buckingham is the only British university that can be classified as a truly private institution in terms of both its legal status and its non-reliance upon public funding) the sector as a whole has become increasingly dependent upon a mixture of public and private funding with variations in the relative inputs from university to university. However, it is fascinating to note the continuation of most universities as essentially publicly funded bodies in the United Kingdom, which contrasts with trends in countries as different as Poland, Hungary, South Korea, China and India with their expanding private sectors.

There is no reason why the market will not place greater pressures upon the collegial tradition than the state. The issue is whether the market position of a university allows it to remain in control of the pressures or whether its position is so fragile that it has no choice but to respond in a manner that it believes will best ensure the augmentation of its income with all other considerations of secondary importance. It appears that some courses are constructed because of their assumed (hoped for) market appeal, which is particularly true of the flourishing 1-year-taught masters' programmes. Moreover, some of the combined honours undergraduate degrees seem so convoluted that it is difficult not to believe that they were put together with the aim of buttressing degree programmes with declining market appeal. The manoeuvring may work in financial terms but whether one can say that academic control of the curriculum (a key facet of the collegial tradition) remains secure is an entirely different matter. It is possible that academic integrity gives way to income generation, accompanied by the inclusion of a 'Director of Marketing' in the 'Senior Management Team'!

With regard to their respective market situations there is a clear distinction between universities that are in a position to select their students and those that have to recruit them. Formally universities select their students, but if student demand for places is weak then to all intents and purposes these universities can lose control of their admissions process. In such circumstances it is not at all unusual to learn that a minimum academic entry requirement (usually quite undemanding) is agreed

upon and recruitment is handled bureaucratically until the quota is met (or possibly not met). It is difficult to imagine that any pristine interpretation of collegiality can survive in such circumstances because the market has determined who enters the university, not the academic faculty. But the pressure to be financially solvent is a hard taskmaster.

Social Pressures

The preceding web of political and economic changes, of the interaction of state and market pressures, is located within the context of a range of important social developments, which, while driven by economic and political forces, also represent a response to cultural change. These are forces that have had a significant global impact and to which the universities can respond with greater discretionary authority.

Undoubtedly the most important and widely experienced change is the expansion of higher education, and most national systems have mass or even universal undergraduate participation rates. The United States is no longer the sole exemplar of mass higher education, with several countries having higher rates of participation. In many societies experiencing higher education is almost part of the rite de passage into adulthood for middle-class youth. And this has been accompanied by state-sponsored widening participation initiatives, programmes to ensure that 'drop-out' rates are minimised, the expanding entry of under-represented social groups and even the introduction of the idea of lifelong learning.

In spite of this almost universal expansion it is still possible to identify within most systems individual institutions that have an elevated national, even international, prestige. It can be argued that the expansion of higher education, including the founding of institutions embracing different forms of higher education, in fact protected prestigious institutions because increasing student numbers could be accommodated elsewhere in the system. This is not to say that the elite institutions did not also augment their undergraduate numbers but rather the issue is comparative expansion rates.

Even if the sustenance of elite institutions and the arrival of mass systems are complementary trends, the issue of what happens to the collegial tradition within the new mass model is problematic. If, as we have argued, an interactive learning process designed to educate critically aware students is central to the collegial tradition, the question is whether this can be sustained in a mass system. Moreover, what happens to those broader experiences (higher education as elite socialisation) that were part of the package of attending a collegiate university? Assuming that the colleges can control the size of their annual intake of undergraduates (in part through the foundation of new colleges and the fact that the sheer physical confines of existing colleges may even militate against expansion), then presumably it will be easier to sustain established traditions.

The experience of higher education has always meant different things to different students but mass higher education has undoubtedly sharpened its polarisation.

There is a range of variables that will impact strongly upon the interaction between students and the universities, of which the following are the most important:

full-time or part-time students
balancing university commitments against wider pressures (for example from family or employment)
residence on campus or commuting/distance-learning students

The issue then is how the university responds to the contrasting intensities of interaction thrown up by these differences. It can still stress the values of a liberal education as well as a commitment to an interactive teaching process, which can be reinforced both by strong structures of pastoral care and by institutional socio-cultural activities. But how meaningful these facets of collegiality are for those students who have to establish pragmatic relationships with the university, or even in some cases maintain merely tangential connections, is another matter.

Within this fragmented social context contrasting interpretations of what it means to be a student have emerged. It may well be that dimensions of the collegial tradition from the perspective of many students are marginalised or even irrelevant. It will be interesting to see how significant a place is given to the undergraduate teaching experience in the plans of those governments attempting to create world-class universities. The emphasis to date has been upon funnelling considerable resources into selected institutions that appear to be in a position to compete effectively in terms of fulfilling a high-quality research agenda. The question of the student experience rarely figures. However, not all is lost. In the United Kingdom there is a growing concern that the quality of mass higher education leaves much to be desired but, as yet, there is limited progress on how to address the issue. Interestingly, in the Netherlands – under the guise that all students should experience an education that is tailored to their needs – there has been a tentative step towards a measure of differentiation within the mass model. But it has taken the familiar path of constructing demanding programmes for the more gifted students (for example, by establishing honours colleges – Kaiser & Vossensteyn, 2009: 177). It appears to suggest that if the collegial tradition is to survive within the context of mass higher education then it will do so by providing avenues of escape for some students. So collegiality becomes an experience confined to elite universities rather than a defining characteristic of higher education.

However, even within the collegiate universities the values binding student to college and university do not necessarily conform to any immutable idea of collegiality. It is impossible to deny the increased importance of standardised measures of pre-university academic success in determining undergraduate recruitment, the role of the collegiate universities in forming – or at least enhancing – social networks, and the significance for the individual of elite higher education as a form of symbolic capital. The college as an active force for shaping values and character appears to be in decline. Nonetheless, the demand for places at the collegiate universities from well-qualified applicants continues to be high, and those universities that foster residence in college testify to its significance in sustaining buoyant

student enrolment and satisfaction with the university. In these terms collegiality appears to be a mutually satisfactory deal with benefits to the student, the college and the university. While the intensity of the collegial experience may have lessened (tutors no longer take reading parties to the Lake District or actively participate in inter-collegiate sporting activities) and its impact is different, there still appears to be sufficient returns to make residence in college a worthwhile experience.

What is more problematic is the impact of social change upon the relationship of academics to the collegial tradition. Within the non-collegiate universities if collegiality is defined essentially in terms of control of academic affairs then this should not present a substantial problem, although there is always the possibility of the development of a self-perpetuating inner-cadre dominating the key decision-making bodies. But at the level of the department, the research centre, the laboratory, the honours college or even the graduate school, we should be sufficiently close to the academic face to sustain collegiality – in effect it is the label that best describes how a group of professionals go about maintaining and enhancing their key functions. But within the collegiate universities, embraced by – perhaps encumbered by – a wider understanding of collegiality, the situation is very different.

Historically Oxford and Cambridge were bastions of male privilege with a few women's colleges as more recent foundations. How much the change in the gender balance has impacted upon male privileges is a contentious issue but the colleges are now all co-educational institutions with approximately equal numbers of men and women undergraduates as well as a significant representation of women tutors. Inevitably this will affect the social life of a college. It may still represent an experience in elite socialisation but its inherent cultural values (although not necessarily its forms) had to change. The increased presence of women has been matched by a declining number of unmarried dons, many of whom lived in college. The social obligations of married tutors (or those with partners) will be very different from those who are unmarried. Moreover, although at both Oxford and Cambridge there are designated graduate colleges, there has been a serious attempt to incorporate the graduate students into the wider collegiate system. Thus colleges provide at least a social base for graduate students (who are selected by the departments) through the creation of middle common rooms.

Therefore, in a comparatively short space of time the colleges have become a very different mix of social ingredients. The issue for the college tutors, those with obligations to both college and university (as at Oxford) or even those who have a college allegiance even though they are full-time employees of the university (as at Cambridge), is how much of their time and energy to devote to the wider aspects of collegiality. This is an especially sharp issue given the changing academic culture in which research output is more critical both in determining university income and in shaping individual careers. In fact the colleges have been able to respond flexibly to these pressures. They are in a position to steer their own course of action and have less need to accommodate counter-institutional pressure. This is broadly parallel to the response of universities (in most national systems) to market pressures – it may be a question of 'Hobson's choice' but it is your choice!

In view of the flexibility built into this scenario it is unsurprising to see a range of institutional responses. College tutorial teaching has been sustained for many years by the employment of tutors (including now, not surprisingly, graduate students) who hold neither a college nor a university post – a considerable irony in view of the fact that central to the reforms of the latter half of the nineteenth century was the assertion of control over teaching by the college fellows. The employment of part-time tutors (paid on an hourly rate) is not only cost-effective but also helps to put a cap on the teaching obligations of fellows. It is possible to expand your numbers and so alleviate the pressure of larger student numbers while still increasing your fee income. More significantly, it helps to reinforce the preservation of tutorial teaching ('supervisions' rather than 'tutorials' at Cambridge), and – significantly – it also enables teaching fellows to spend more time on their research. Moreover, there is no reason why part-time tutors should be less effective – even if less experienced – teachers than college fellows. The continuing commitment to tutorial teaching (Oxford's 'jewel in the crown'), which some would see as central to the collegial tradition, is thus, at a price, sustained.

Like teaching, participation in governance, assuming administrative responsibilities and imbibing in commensality can all be time-consuming tasks for research-committed academics with family obligations. In each case the accommodating measures are both obvious and widely replicated. The fellows cede their responsibilities for governance to college councils/executive committees while retaining their formal sovereignty over the development of the college (perhaps discussing and agreeing upon policy options at scheduled meetings composed of the fellows as a body). The colleges increase their administrative expertise, including delegating some key responsibilities (for example, investment decisions and the restructuring of endowment portfolios) to private firms. The idea of a college fellow (and John Maynard Keynes springs to mind), or even a professional bursar alone, determining investment strategy is frankly absurd. There will still be posts to fill and committees to run but for some fellows these may present welcome opportunities to diversify your career and possibly augment your income.

In the context of bachelor dons living in college along with colleges committed to playing an explicit role in elite socialisation (with the chapel, the reading parties and inter-collegiate sports providing a range of examples) commensality was an important part of college life. In its current form, although it may still be attractive for both dons and students, it clearly makes less demands of both parties. Fellows, particularly those with college tutorials to teach, may find it convenient to lunch in college while attending only the occasional dinner, especially those held to commemorate special occasions (the gaudies). They may enjoy listening to evensong in the college chapel without in the least feeling that they are assisting in the making of English gentlemen. Undergraduates may come to feel a sense of collegial loyalty but how committed they may be to the multifarious activities sponsored by the collegial system is another matter.

The response to social change reinforces the idea of the pragmatic reconstruction of the collegiate ideal. Loyalty is underpinned, as to some extent it always was, by the tangible rewards of belonging to a college. Perhaps this is most clearly illustrated

by those colleges that underwrite some of the housing costs of those tutors who do not live in college. Is this a way of reinforcing commitment to the idea of collegiality (local residence encourages closer interaction with the college)? Or is it a not-so-subtle bribe, which acts as the glue to cement collegial commitment? Or, as seems most probable, is it simply a question of acceptable trade-offs and is it difficult to separate cause and effect?

Conclusions: Threatening Pressures, Institutional Responses and Inherent Tensions

This chapter opened by suggesting there are inherent tensions within institutions that purport to represent collegial values. However, all institutions have to cope with internal conflict as they evolve over time. Moreover, as the collegiate universities have long experience in handling such difficulties, this may be a perfectly manageable problem. However, external developments appear to have an in-built rationale that questions the long-term viability of collegiality as a basis for sustaining institutions of higher educations. We have outlined an interactive combination of political, economic and social forces, sometimes driven forward by complementary state and market pressures, which make it more difficult to sustain a strong understanding of collegiality.

And yet it would be naive to examine the change process without incorporating the part that higher education institutions, and their associated interests, play in accommodating these pressures – by re-interpreting the demands made of them, by deflection through pre-emptive action or even resistance based on the skilful employment of their resources. But it is important to recognise that, while men make their own histories but not in circumstances of their own choosing, so institutions evolve without controlling all the variables that constantly reshape their development. Consequently, there is no master plan with an inevitable outcome.

We have argued that state pressure, because it is reinforced by financial leverage and sustained by an institutional apparatus, poses the greatest threat to the continuation of the collegial tradition. Such pressure so often limits flexible responses from higher education because predominant financial resources underwrite its policy prescriptions. The market invariably permits a wider range of institutional reactions to pressures for change but whether it will elicit policies that are more sympathetic to collegial values is another question, for it may suggest outcomes that are more likely to ensure institutional survival as opposed to the sustenance of collegiality.

The impact upon higher education consequent upon these pressures is indeed substantial. There are four possible outcomes that require special mention because of their particular significance for both the collegiate universities and the collegial tradition more generally. First, there is the tilting in the federal model of governance that shifts sharply the balance of authority in favour of either the centre or the periphery. It is more difficult, therefore, to sustain the equilibrium of power that is a central feature of the collegiate model of governance. Second, there is the

spread of managerial decision-making procedures that are potentially antithetical to the collegial tradition, so embedding a culture of managerialism that erodes collegiality. Third, there is the marketisation of higher education, which leads to financial well-being taking precedence over, if not all, most other considerations. The desire for financial stability (perfectly understandable) becomes an end in its own right. Finally, there are the critical shifts in academic culture (in part driven by the economic, political and social pressures) that undermine the commitment of the profession to collegial values. Collegiality places a value on local reputations, a sense of community, collective ownership and responsibility, and in status terms embodies an egalitarian impulse. The current evolution of higher education runs counter to such values.

The question is how do institutions respond to these pressures? Both the Research Assessment Exercises and the mechanisms of the Quality Assurance Agency require action on the part of the universities and their departments, but within the collegiate universities for many students the most critical teaching takes place within the colleges. Moreover, colleges have played a part in augmenting their input into the research agenda by offering research fellowships. Furthermore, the widening participation policy has to incorporate the colleges given their control over undergraduate admissions. The question, therefore, is whether – regardless of where formal responsibility may reside – the collegiate universities can organise their responses to the external pressure to create a united strategy incorporating the colleges and university. If so, it is conceivable that the external pressure could enhance rather than undermine many of the facets of collegiality.

With respect to market pressures, Oxford and Cambridge, at least in comparison to many other British universities, find themselves in a relatively favourable situation. Many of the colleges have substantial endowment incomes, they remain universities that select rather than recruit students and their pre-eminent market position attracts potential benefactors, and this is without factoring in their appeal to overseas students who can be recruited almost on their own terms. Reputation is a critical asset in securing resources in the market, and undoubtedly the fact that Oxford and Cambridge are major collegiate universities contributes significantly to their worldwide status.

Within the non-collegiate universities the reaffirmation of the collegial tradition can be interpreted as a professional commitment to maintaining academic control of teaching and research with particular reference to their delivery rather than their development. Within this narrow confine collegiality then finds expression in the university's academic institutions – departments, research centres and laboratories. With respect to academic development there will be an interaction between these 'grassroots' component parts of the university and the more centralised decision-making bodies, which may in fact result in a more meaningful and sustainable pattern of growth. The decisions that are determined collegially have to undergo a 'reality check', but in turn this may lead to a re-ordering of institutional priorities. There is a bargaining process in which judgements are made and compromises constructed with the internal decision-making process steered by external pressures. For example, no university research development office is going to back a

departmental research plan with internal resources without taking into consideration, or least forcing the department to take into consideration, the possibility of external funding and the likely impact of the initiative upon the department's subsequent ratings in the research assessment exercises. Indeed, past poor rating may encourage the university to wield the axe rather than support resuscitation.

Oxford and Cambridge face the problem that they embody a more developed understanding of the collegial tradition, which has various dimensions that require their faculty and officers to nurture. We have examined some of the responses to this dilemma but the point remains that commitment on both the academic and professional fronts is required to undertake the obligations that collegiality imposes. It is difficult to say categorically how far that commitment can decline before the broader understanding of collegiality becomes little more than a myth. However, it is not difficult to imagine a scenario in which this possibility steadily becomes a reality.

The Oxbridge dilemma is that they are indeed world-class universities (Chester & Bekhradnia, 2009). While some of the ranking lists (for example, that of the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, now *Times Higher Education*) perhaps place undue reliance on the judgement of academic peers (which almost certainly reflects historical perceptions of reputation), there is a powerful stress upon research output, a stress that is likely to increase. The further problem for Oxford and Cambridge is that they are both universities with broad academic profiles and thus research excellence has to be spread across a very wide range of disciplines. Historically universities with international reputations have had to sustain a range of commitments that have helped to mould their identities over time (recruitment of academically gifted undergraduates, links with alumni, augmentation of endowment income and the perception that they offer high-quality degree programmes that are well taught) but today there is little doubt that the main driver of international reputation is research output (Tapper & Filippakou, 2009).

The question, therefore, that has to be asked is whether research reputation is enhanced by the fact that Oxford and Cambridge are collegiate universities? Or does collegiality in this more developed sense hinder the drive to be at the cutting edge of research? And, if so, is the price nonetheless worth paying? An interesting question to pose is whether the definition of what constitutes 'world-class status' can be changed so that the quality of teaching, more especially of undergraduate teaching, is built into the equation.

Figure 2.1 outlined comparatively the institutional forms and practices of the collegiate and unitary models of the university. What this analysis of the contemporary challenges to higher education suggests is that the modern university has inherent tensions in terms of its central purposes. The pressures for change have made it an increasingly complex institution that has to balance competing goals. In effect, there are conflicting ideas of the university coexisting within the same institutional boundaries, which present us with a different order of potential institutional conflicts from the essentially operational difficulties of the collegiate universities that we outlined at the start of this chapter. This is a conflict of purposes and values rather than the managing of the daily tensions of everyday institutional life.

Access	Selective/competitive	Open access
Purposes	Undergraduate teaching	Research
	Critical thought	Transferable skills
	Elite socialization	Professional training
Means	Honours degrees	Useful knowledge
	Small group teaching	Driven by lectures
Accountability	Professional trust and self--regulation	External control
The Faculty	A 'calling' for tutors	Careers for professionals
Relations to state /society	A critical distance	Fully integrated

Fig. 3.1 The value tensions

Figure 3.1 outlines value tensions rather than consistently clear-cut differences. For example, it can be reasonably argued that an education designed to develop a critical mode of thinking in the undergraduate student inevitably will enhance transferable skills. Moreover, neither list embodies exclusively virtues that all would consider to be desirable, and it can be expected that within all universities different institutional segments will move in varying directions. Departments within universities have also evolved contrasting relationships to state and society, which will dictate where they are located between the polar positions – or even whether they can embrace both polar positions (for example, high-quality undergraduate teaching with cutting-edge research).

The question is what mode of governance best enables the institution to steer a viable path through these tensions, which ensures both survival and a valued identity? And, as Gary Rhoades in his brilliant *Calling on the Past: The Quest for the Collegiate Ideal* observes, the answer will be determined politically but it is a politics driven by ideas: 'The ideas are unstable, political constructions. Yet they create parameters that delimit our discourse and detract from our ability to explore alternatives. Structuralist thinking structures our options and future' (Rhoades, 1990: 532). It was ever thus.