Chapter 6
Managerialism as Collegiality: The Impossible Conjuring Trick?

Introduction

The two previous chapters retained the analysis of the collegial tradition within the British context but broadened the focus beyond Oxbridge. Inasmuch as this chapter retains the dominant British interest (extending the scope beyond England and Wales, thanks to the inclusion of the University of Edinburgh) it complements the two previous chapters. However, given the ubiquitous spread of the managerial ethos in higher education, it is impossible to retain a narrow research parameter. Therefore, at least within the analytical section, the net will be cast more widely.

The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, building on the 1988 Education Reform Act, brought together – while continuing to differentiate between – two sectors of higher education in England. In 1992 the public (mainly polytechnics and colleges of higher education) and the university sectors in England were amalgamated and placed under the auspices of the Higher Education Funding Council for Education. However, in spite of this apparent creation of a unitary model, an important binary difference was retained – the new (post-1992) universities (notwithstanding many assertions of how they valued their distinctive heritage and identity, swiftly acquired the university label) were designated as Higher Education Corporations. The state determined the structure of their mode of governance (for the precise implications of the legislation, see Bargh et al., 1996: 23–24; Pratt, 1997: 291–294; Thorne & Cuthbert, 1996: 172–173), whereas the governance of existing universities was for the most part guided by their own charters.

The distinction reflected the fact that new universities had emerged out of a tradition of local education authority surveillance and they had experienced limited control over their own development in comparison to the formal autonomy exercised by most pre-1992 universities. If the managerial ethos is interpreted as the reshaping of forms of institutional governance and administration in a manner that undermines donnish dominion (to use Halsey's phrase), then it follows it is less relevant to focus the analysis upon the new (i.e. post-1992) universities and to concentrate upon those universities where apparently it once held sway. The empirical base for this chapter will therefore be drawn from the pre-1992 universities and

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more particularly from those universities that have revamped their organisational structures while reaffirming that their dominant decision-making bodies are their lay-dominated councils. This chapter will examine developments at the Universities of Birmingham, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Nottingham and Southampton on the pragmatic grounds that in recent years these five institutions have received considerable publicity in the higher education press for the revamping of their organisational structures. It is important, however, not to overlook the fact these case studies simply represent examples of a very prevalent trend.

An important additional point is that the decision to reconstruct as Higher Education Corporations the governance of those institutions that before 1992 were under the umbrella of the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) can be interpreted as a deliberate attempt by the government of the day to demonstrate its willingness to shape the new model of higher education. If, however, the pre-1992 universities, in spite of not being obliged to operate within the same legal framework, are in fact moving in a broadly parallel direction in terms of their modes of governance, what does this tell us about the purposes and values that underpin how they function?

The chapter is structured around three central themes: an entwining of the analytical interpretation of the managerial ethos with the historical context within which it took root in the United Kingdom, the presentation of institutional change at the five universities that form the empirical core of the chapter and a conclusion that presents an overview of the challenges of these development to the collegial tradition, posing the question 'whither collegiality'? It is possible to interpret this interest in disparaging terms: 'What we have had is a lament for the past and a romantic reminiscing over a lost era based mainly on two higher education institutions, not nearly 150' (Dopson & McNay, 1996: 29). However, it should be possible to explore one of the important trajectories of change in higher education without being accused of lamenting the past or engaging in romantic reminiscing. While Oxford and Cambridge are undoubtedly the two most significant collegiate universities, the concept of federalism, around which that collegiality is centred, has a much broader appeal. Moreover, the claim that the goals of higher education can only be delivered effectively through structures and procedures infused with collegial values has had a significant impact across the whole spectrum of British higher education, including the post-1992 universities.

Contextual Considerations: Historical and Analytical

Just as it is impossible to pinpoint when the collegial tradition could be said to have taken root in British higher education, or even when Oxford and Cambridge could be fairly described as collegiate universities, so it is equally difficult to date precisely the implanting of the managerial ethos. In their authoritative *Power and Authority in British Universities* Moodie and Eustace claim that by the 1970s the University Grants Committee was already becoming more dirigiste: issuing guidance to universities on their distribution of the block grant, inviting bids for the funding of projects

in designated areas and pushing for the growth of student numbers in particular disciplines (Moodie & Eustace, 1974, 170–172). By the early 1980s the UGC, in its *Strategy for Higher Education into the 1990s*, stated its intention to use its funding resources to encourage universities to 'tackle the problem of small departments', urged university councils 'to ensure that hard decisions are faced and choices are made', exhorted vice-chancellors to exercise leadership and expressed the belief that universities should examine their machinery of government to ensure effective decision-making and promote a climate of change (UGC, 1984: 39–40).

Increasingly the universities were operating in an environment that both restricted their room for manoeuvre and placed more demands upon them. The former limited the scope of institutional autonomy while the latter stimulated the expansion and professionalisation of their administrative personnel. It is widely recognised that the publication of the Jarratt Report (*Report of the Steering Committee for Efficiency Studies in Universities* – CVCP, 1985) represented a key stage in the push for more effective administrative structures and, albeit to a lesser extent, for more streamlined models of governance (this was to come more forcefully at a later date). Writing in 1987, Geoffrey Lockwood, a member of the team that produced the Report, conveyed the sense of impending change that was about to refashion 'the management of universities'.

> Whether it be Jarratt, the UGC, or the overseas markets, the effects have been the same. The managerial systems at the institutional level are becoming more explicit, more capable of internal differentiation, able to generate an increased speed of response to outside stimuli, more internal evaluation, and better external projection of the university's values (Lockwood, 1987: 103).

It was obvious which way the wind was blowing. However, the historical perspective is complicated by the fact that, although by the 1980s the universities may be entering a new era in terms of how they were managed, with respect to their governance they were returning to the past as the authority of senates declined and councils, invariably with a majority of lay members, re-asserted their role as the supreme policy-making body, with overall responsibility for directing the future development of the university. It can, therefore, be plausibly argued that the period from approximately 1945 to 1985 – perhaps excluding Oxford and Cambridge – was a unique period in the history of the governance of British universities (Bargh et al., 1996: 5–7; Shattock, 2002: 236).

The analytical issues associated with the emergence of the managerial ethos can be defined reasonably precisely, although they generate conflicting interpretations. First, there is a need to distinguish between its two components: institutional governance and institutional administration. However, while this may be a meaningful analytical distinction in reality the two functions are invariably closely entwined. The primary purposes of the structures of governance are to assume overall responsibility for institutional strength, with a strong focus on the solidity of the financial base and control of the policy-making process. However, these goals can scarcely be achieved without the aid of an effective administration – both how it is structured, its mode of operation, and the quality of its personnel. While there may be many inputs

into the policy-making process, invariably university councils will be influenced by the advice that percolates through to them from the administrative structure. Furthermore, without effective implementation even appropriate policy decisions are likely to fail. Finally, policy decisions are often little more than broad-brushed strokes and it is how they are implemented that gives them their real meaning. It is important therefore to see governance and management as two interacting forces, which do not necessarily complement one another on all occasions.

So far in this chapter we have used interchangeably the concepts of university administration and university management. The research focus has to be directed at changes in structures, modes of operation and the balance of authority between the various interests as they manoeuvre to shape the values and purposes of the university. But language is far from unimportant because its use is reflective of subtle variations on all these fronts. If the discourse is that of chief executives, senior management groups, line managers and middle management we know we are in a very different world from one in which the references are to vice-chancellors, principals, heads of departments and colleagues. But we need to move beyond the discourse to dissect how institutions actually function.

A great deal of the pertinent literature on the functioning of universities is as much about advocacy as it is about describing, analysing and theorising. It presents a model of what is seen as good practice, with the implication (admittedly with the occasional cautionary notice) that if universities wish to be successful this is a path they should at least consider, if not follow. This is clearly exemplified in the voluminous literature of two eminent figures in the field, Burton Clark and Michael Shattock.

Shattock has addressed the question of how successful universities should be managed (*Managing Successful Universities*, 2003; *Managing Good Governance in Higher Education*, 2006). The not unreasonable assumption is that successful universities will want to perpetuate their success and good governance and management are necessary prerequisites to achieve this. However, the more interesting question, that is not addressed, is *how* important to sustaining institutional reputation is good governance? Indeed, Shattock has made a sharp attack on 'the cosiness' of Cambridge, 'which weakens accountability and results in a serious loss of authority in carrying out the essential legal requirements of corporate governance' (Shattock, 2003: 107). So, perhaps we are to conclude that at least in certain respects Cambridge is governed ineptly but it would be difficult to deny that it is a successful university.

Equally important is the assumption that there is a consensus underlying our understanding of what is a successful university (Tapper & Filippakou, 2009: 55–66; Palfreyman & Tapper, 2009: 203–218). Of course it is possible to attach importance to particular measures (rankings in the world league tables, the outcomes of 'student satisfaction' surveys, how British universities fare in the research assessment exercises, the strength of institutional financial balance sheets – to name but a few) but whether such measures amount to 'success' is highly debatable.

In parallel fashion Burton Clark has presented a model of institutional success that is underwritten by good governance – it is the entrepreneurial university

(*Creating Entrepreneurial Universities*, 1998; *Sustaining Change in Universities*, 2004). The institutional characteristics that are essential to the creation of the entrepreneurial university are its

strengthened steering core
expanded developmental periphery
diversified funding base
stimulated academic heartland
integrated entrepreneurial culture

As with Shattock's work, the problem is that we are still faced with a particular (essentially implicit) understanding of success (the case studies are self-evidently successful institutions) and there is little attempt to test out alternative explanatory hypotheses. The methodological weaknesses (in particular the complete absence of a comparative dimension, that is the failure to incorporate institutions that embraced the entrepreneurial path but apparently are still failing or institutions that prosper in spite of not following the assigned road to salvation) are disguised by the appeal of the thesis – that in troubled times it is possible for universities to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and turn around their fortunes. One is reminded of Michael Rutter's very influential *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children* (1979), which shifted the explanatory responsibility for educational failure from the wider society and state policy onto the schools themselves, in particular their management forms and styles of leadership.

Given its incorporation in a research field that has always embraced a strong policy advocacy theme, it was always to be expected that the analysis of the governance and administration of higher education would show a clear measure of prescriptive bias. In this case it is reinforced by the fact that the pressure on institutions to change was considerable, that the advocates of change were eminent persons in the research field and with at least one closely associated with an institution that was widely considered to be successful. Perhaps, most importantly, was the evident commonsense embedded in the message and the clarity of its presentation. But what makes for effective policy advocacy is not the same as presenting a cogent intellectual argument, a fact that is too often overlooked in the field of higher education research.

From the perspective of this book, what is most interesting about the writing of both Shattock and Burton Clark is their own interpretation of their work in relation to what we have called the rise of the managerial ethos. Burton Clark has written:

> 'Entrepreneurial' is an embracing but pointed term for referencing the attitudes and procedure that most dependably lead to the modern self-reliant, self-steering university. When we also stress that entrepreneurial action comes in collegial as well as personal forms – nailing the flag of 'collegial entrepreneurship' to the masthead – we are at the core of the complicated business of changing universities in the early twenty-first century (Clark, 2004: 7).

The five dominant characteristics of Burton Clark's entrepreneurial university are an interesting mix of structural change (the strengthened steering core), cultural change

(integrated entrepreneurial culture) and agency (the stimulated academic heartland and expanded developmental periphery). But to use the term 'collegial entrepreneurship' is to do no more than apply a descriptive label. What is the character of academic entrepreneurship that makes it collegial? It is hard to avoid the conclusion that a political game is being played, one designed to persuade the opponents of change (or more likely those sitting on the fence) that the traditional culture is being reconstituted not abandoned. Thus, collegiality is the self-reliant, self-steering university with the central steering core (invariably a small, appointed senior management group) and the stimulated academic heartland (heads of departments and schools as constituting a middle-management stratum) with at the top of the apex the most stimulated and financially rewarded of all – the vice-chancellor as chief executive).

Shattock has criticised official attempts to impose (or rather to steer universities towards adopting) prescribed models of governance and administration. Writing as long ago as 1997 he noted:

> . . . the Committee of University Chairman (CUC), of which I am Secretary, issued a note of Advice on Governance to all universities and followed it up with a *Guide for Members of Governing Bodies* issued in June 1995. The CUC was at pains to emphasize that it had no powers, constitutional or otherwise, to compel universities to implement its recommendations and it has taken the line in its evidence to the Nolan Committee that voluntary action by universities acting autonomously is very much preferable to legislation or other government action (Shattock, 1997: 18).

Moreover, he has been keen to stress that there is no one model that will fit all universities. Therefore, it is acceptable to issue guidelines but not to impose a straitjacket, and thus his opposition to the recommendation of the Dearing Committee, which did 'not seek uniformity' but did propose 'a code of practice on governance and, as part of that, we think that, as a general rule in the interests of effectiveness, membership of a governing body should not exceed 25', and when membership exceeded 25 the university should 'show good reason why a larger body is needed for its effectiveness' (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997: 25–26). And it goes without saying that the more dirigiste tone of the subsequent *Lambert Review*, which offered the carrot of 'a significantly lighter-touch regulatory and accountability regime to well-run universities' (Treasury, 2003: 103, Recommendation 7.5), would also be an anathema.

What we see, therefore, in the work of Shattock is the attempt to construct a balancing act (parallel to Burton Clark's 'collegial entrepreneurship'). As autonomous institutions, universities need to define their own structures of administration and governance but, nonetheless, there are some general guidelines that are worth following if the university wants to be successful. Consequently,

> Successful universities try to keep the powers of governance in balance – they appoint able and forthright laymen because they value the contribution they can bring, they develop strong corporate leadership where the vice-chancellor leads an effective steering core which is accountable to but maintains a close dialogue with a senate or academic board which reflects the views of a vibrant academic community. They encourage academic leadership

> at all levels and a full participation by the academic community, or a representative part of it, in the decision-making process (Shattock, 2003: 108).

It is not surprising to see the clear overlap with Burton Clark's model of the entrepreneurial university given the prominent part that the University of Warwick played in the construction of that model and the fact that Michael Shattock was a long-term registrar of that university.

What is of particular interest is that the debate between the 'official' literature (we have quoted from the Dearing Report and the *Lambert Review*) and the 'academic' literature (as represented by Burton Clark and Shattock's work) demonstrates that the managerial ethos – like collegiality – is a contested concept. Both concepts can be said to have acceptable and unacceptable manifestations in the eye of the beholder. For Dearing and Lambert the stress is upon structure and for Shattock and Burton Clark the focus is upon culture. Both parties emphasise the importance of leadership but a distinction is drawn between leading from above as opposed to leadership that engages in inclusive consultation. And Goodhall has attempted to demonstrate that 'research universities' need to be led by distinguished scholars because this will influence their research performances (Goodhall, 2009, 55–78). The contemporary importance attached to leadership roles in the United Kingdom is symbolised by the creation (operational since 2004) of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Regardless of the particular emphasis of those who would reform the governance and administration of higher education (either via modifications to structure, culture or agency – and invariably a range of changes is proposed), the issue is whether any variant of the managerial ethos, either in its soft or hard form, can be said to interact smoothly with the collegial tradition. In effect Shattock and Burton Clark appear to be proposing a middle way (and for supportive interpretations, see Dearlove, 1997; Palfreyman, 1989) in which collegiality, entrepreneurial activities and the managerial ethos interact constructively. The central issue for our book is whether this is a strategy that resurrects collegiality or one that buries it more deeply.

A radical interpretation of this process of change is to be found in the Deem, Hillyard and Reed volume, *Knowledge, Higher Education, and the New Managerialism: The Changing Management of UK Universities* (2007), which claims that much of the new managerialism in the delivery of public services in the United Kingdom has been driven by the steady entrenchment of neo-liberal policy values: 'Both Thatcherite-style "market-Managerialism" and Blairist-style "modernizing-Managerialism" . . . have achieved discursive supremacy and, at least a substantial degree of ideological legitimacy and organizational control within global and national power structures. . .' (Deem et al., 2007: 5). These shifts in 'underlying core ideological commitments and cultural values' become, so the argument proceeds, the key to drivers of change in higher education. This takes us beyond the analysis of institutional behaviour back into the wider pressures for change in higher education that we considered in Chapter 3. But it is worth picking up on the main themes as they relate to the governance of universities.

It is critical to locate the drivers for change in their historical context (Tapper, 2007: 9–26) and to be sensitive to the fact that there is a considerable gap between the ideas that drive policy forward and the process of policy implementation. It is this gap that provides the room for institutional manoeuvring. In terms of the delivery of social policy a new policy consensus emerged out of the political and economic crises that Britain experienced in the 1970s, but it is essential to explore how ideas are translated into policy because it is the translation process that gives policy its substantive meaning. And what one invariably finds is that the political process will reshape the interpretation of the ideas, which may not be to the liking of some of the staunchest ideological missionaries – those in the vanguard of the movement that favours the strengthening of neo-liberal values.

There was a barrage of exhortation in favour of new structures, which ranged from the softly, softly approach of the CUC, through the prescriptions of the Jarratt and the Dearing Reports, and then onto 'the bribery' implicit in the recommendations of the *Lambert Review*. But reform needed to be driven by more than exhortation, no matter how heavy-handed. While universities in the post-1945 period may have persistently trumpeted their autonomy (a strong theme in the work of Berdahl, 1959; Carswell, 1985; Owen, 1980; Salter & Tapper, 1994; Shattock, 1994; Shinn, 1986), nonetheless they had become publicly funded institutions. Consequently, when the nation suffered one of its periodic economic crises, the higher education budget was squeezed with, in the early 1980s, a substantial cut in income. In his 1994 publication, *The UGC and the Management of British Universities*, Shattock has a subsection entitled, *Buckingham and the Government's efforts to reduce state funding of universities*, which follows on immediately from another subsection, *The state takes over the funding of universities*. The juxtaposition is telling. Once the protective shield of the fragile idea of autonomy had been breached, the ability of the universities to resist state pressure was steadily eroded. The 1982 cuts in the university budgets were as much a psychological as a financial blow.

The question was how the higher education institutions were going to manage retrenchment and, for the more farsighted, what steps were they going to take to replenish their incomes (other than to sustain the forlorn hope that if you held on long enough then eventually government policy would change)? Almost at a stroke we entered the age of the entrepreneurial university, the recognition of the need for institutional planning and the careful management of resources. It is not that the role of senates controlled by academics was entirely irrelevant in this context but the major issues confronting universities were now firmly in the domain of university councils. Moreover, the issues now required the steady, precise gaze of full-time professional administrators rather than the partial attention of those taking a furlough from academic duties, while undertaking a light teaching load and attempting to keep their research going. University governance and administration was forced to become serious.

On the heels of the decline in public funding came the new mechanisms for steering system outcomes. The UGC, which had become steadily more proactive since the 1960s, was replaced by the funding councils embodying the new public

management mode of governance. It is debatable whether this made the universities less autonomous institutions (Tapper & Salter, 1995) but it is a model of governance in which the state, through quasi-state organisations, attempts to steer the pattern of university development. The state both establishes a regulatory regime and puts forward policy initiatives designed to shape the pattern of institutional behaviour. The universities need officials who will guide academics through the quality assurance regime, maximise their effectiveness in competing for research income, evaluate whether it is cost-effective to respond to the policy initiatives promoted by the funding councils and provide ammunition for defusing government political pressure (for example, the persistence of the official commitment to 'the widening participation agenda').

What the state has created is a market that it manages. It can vary the rules through which it manages that market, as it has done so for the quality assurance regime, the research assessment exercises and is likely to do so for student fees – with the possibility that if the threshold is raised by a sufficient amount, then a competitive rather than a managed market will emerge. Thus, changes in institutional behaviour have been driven by the new relationship that successive governments have forged between the state and the universities, which – interestingly – has followed the same broad direction regardless of the government's particular political persuasion.

We have a political consensus on the management of social policy that has replaced the broad post-war commitment to the welfare state. It will be critical to analyse how the balance between state steering and institutional entrepreneurialism evolves in the future and what impact this will have upon the character of university governance and administration. An entirely plausible scenario is that universities not only diverge along different paths but also become increasingly fragmented internally – a trend, as we noted, that applies to the University of London.

There is a tendency in the literature (of which the volume of Deem and her colleagues is an example) to blame the recent travails of British higher education on perfidious government policy. However, a more sophisticated perspective would look at the interaction between developments in the structure and culture of the academic profession along with the direction of government policy in order to theorise more persuasively about 'the crisis of the university'. Halsey has commented upon the proletarianisation and casualisation of the academic labour force (1995: 124–146). Both trends are suggestive of structural and cultural developments that are scarcely conducive to the creation of a positive sense of institutional identity, which is vital to sustaining collegiality. Moreover, even the core of the academic profession (the 'tenured' members of the guild) has become more stratified and segmented over time, which runs counter to the idea of a shared and equal membership in a community of scholars.

While Oxbridge may be perceived to be at the very pinnacle of the British academic establishment, for the individual academic this may be of little comfort unless she/he has reached the summit of her/his individual career trajectory with institutional standing offering more status and comfort than professional recognition. But for those who remain professionally ambitious then meetings, voting on the issues

of the day, committee membership, holding a minor office or even simply being involved may be too much of a burden to bear. You may want to make a contribution but this can be done by establishing a powerful disciplinary identity through research rather than a forceful collegial presence. Undoubtedly state policy, incorporating the espousal of neo-liberal values and practices, has played its role in this process of change, but it is also important to examine the wider dynamics of professional development, that is those social forces – including the evolution of values within the academic profession itself – that have brought about this situation.

'Old' Universities as 'New' Universities: The Managerial Revolution in Action

In a concise article on organisational change in the academic structures of British universities, John Hogan has written: 'Particularly noticeable has been the reorganisation of a number of large civic universities. Birmingham, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Nottingham and Southampton have all reorganised a large number of departments into a smaller number of schools' (Hogan, 2005, April 2: 55). This section of the chapter will focus on the governance and administration of these five universities, although the extent of system-wide change means that these are essentially case studies of a much broader process.

In terms of the formal structure of governance the picture is one of continuity with a wide measure of overlap between the five universities. In each case the Council (known as the Court at Edinburgh) is the governing body:

> The Council is the University's supreme governing body, responsible for setting the strategic direction and policies governing all aspects of the University's activity (University of Birmingham, 2009a, March 26).

> The Court takes all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the institution. The Court is required to regularly monitor its own effectiveness and the performance of the University, its planned strategies and operational targets (University of Edinburgh, 2009a, March 26).

> Council is the supreme governing body of the University. It is specifically charged with the management and control of the University's finances and property and with reviewing the work of the University (University of Newcastle, 2005 July 18, Minute 88: 1).

> The University's governing body is the Council, which meets five times a year. The Council approves the strategic plans of the University and is ultimately responsible for its finances, buildings and staff (University of Nottingham, 2009a, March 26).

> The Council is the governing body of the University. It is ultimately responsible for the overall planning and management of the University... (University of Southampton, 2009a, March 26).

These are comparatively small bodies of some 20 members composed of a majority of laypersons with one taking the chair. The vice-chancellor (principal at Edinburgh) is an ex-officio member who is occasionally labelled as the university's chief executive: at Edinburgh the Court has the responsibility 'to appoint the Principal as chief executive...' while at Southampton the Council delegates '... authority to the Vice-Chancellor, as chief executive and accounting officer...' But everywhere

he or she is supposed to demonstrate the quality of leadership, and those lower down the pecking order are expected to be equally proactive.

Although court or councils may be the primary governing bodies, *academic* authority resides in senates, although in some cases this may be subject to the jurisdiction of council:

> The Senate has delegated authority from the Council for regulating and directing the academic work of the University in teaching, examining and research... (University of Birmingham 2009b, March 26).

> The Senatus Academicus is the senior academic committee in the University of Edinburgh and meets at least three times per session (University of Edinburgh, 2009b, March 26).

> Senate is by statute, the supreme governing and executive body of the University in all academic matters (University of Newcastle, 2005, July 18, Minute 88: 2).

> The academic authority of the University is the Senate... Its responsibility is to direct and regulate teaching and examinations, and to promote research (University of Nottingham, 2009a).

> The Senate is the University's primary academic authority. As set out in the University's Charter it is the role of the Senate subject to the Statutes of the University and the control and approval of the Council to "regulate and superintend the education and discipline of students and of undergraduates of the University" (University of Southampton, 2009b, March 26).

The authority of the senates is not therefore expressed uniformly in quite the unequivocal terms as the powers of the councils. They are composed of the academic members of the universities (a combination of those who have membership as of right and members elected by different faculty groups) and have a token student representation. They are much larger bodies than councils and usually meet more infrequently with the vice-chancellor (principal) as chair. Although, as we have argued, the change in the relative balance of power between councils and senates is essentially a consequence of the broader contextual pressures, the differences in the size of their respective memberships and frequency of meetings probably helped to reinforce the shift once the process had commenced.

There is also the interesting question of precisely what senate's academic authority means in practice. Over time degree programmes offered by universities inevitably change. In recent years considerable publicity has been generated by departmental closures with some pressure to ring-fence certain disciplines (the so-called STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and mathematics). While university senates may discuss such issues it is difficult to see how they can act as an effective decision-making body especially in view of the concomitant financial questions. However, this is not to say that in certain circumstances grassroots faculty opposition to academic change cannot be effective, as the failed attempt to terminate the teaching of chemistry at the University of Sussex demonstrated (or to provide a bolder example, the failed merger of University College London and Imperial College). But this is far from saying that senates retain the ability to exercise effective long-term control over the academic development of a university. One swallow does not make a summer; neither do two.

Therefore, in terms of the formal structure of governance, these snapshots are not especially remarkable. The really significant changes are in the academic

organisation of the five universities – the structures through which they deliver their academic programmes. Hogan's article focussed upon the trend towards merging the array of departments into a smaller number of schools, a process that Taylor encapsulated under the title *Big is Beautiful. Organisational Change in Universities in the United Kingdom: New Models of Institutional Management and the Changing Role of Academic Staff* (Taylor, 2006: 251–273). This is a remarkable development given that some 20 years ago Lockwood (one of the gurus of the managerial revolution) could write, 'The elementary particle of academic life is the individual faculty member, but the academic department is the primary unit in the structure' (1987: 92).

So have the departments indeed disappeared? And, if so, what has replaced them? The academic structures of the five universities are in broad terms as follows:

> The *University of Birmingham* has been organised since August 2008 into five colleges: Arts and Law, Engineering and Physical Sciences, Life and Environmental Sciences, Medical and Dental Sciences, and Social Sciences. Each of the colleges is a composed of a number of schools, which in turn list their academic programmes and departments (University of Birmingham, 2009c, March 26).
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> The *University of Edinburgh* (as of January 2009) also uses the term college as the label for the top tier of its organisational structure but has three rather than five colleges: Humanities and Social Sciences, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, and Science and Engineering. The three colleges are composed of twenty-one Schools, which are essentially made up of cognate disciplinary fields. Thus the School of Social and Political Science contains the following 'subject areas': Politics and International Relations, Social Anthropology, Social Policy, Social Work and Sociology (University of Edinburgh, 2009c, March 26).
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> The *University of Newcastle* operates with a model of three faculties: Humanities and Social Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Science, Agriculture and Engineering. Each faculty is made up of a number of schools, research institutes and research centres with the schools combining cognate disciplines (University of Newcastle, 2005 July 18, Minute 88: 3–4).
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> The *University of Nottingham* has five faculties: Arts; Engineering; Medicine and Health Sciences; Science; and Social Sciences, Law and Education. Within the faculties are located academic units referred to as either schools or departments. As is the case with the other universities, the schools embrace disciplines that historically have close links with one another (University of Nottingham, 2009b, March 26).
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> The *University of Southampton* is organised into three faculties: Engineering, Science and Mathematics; Law, Arts and Social Sciences; and Medicine, Health and Life Science. Twenty-five schools are distributed across these three faculties (University of Southampton, 2009c, March 26).

Although departments may not have disappeared without trace, they are now somewhat hidden from the public gaze and it would be difficult to see them – at least in relation to these five universities – as *the primary unit* in the academic structure.

How is this development to be explained, and what are its implications for the collegial tradition in higher education? In relation to the four universities that formed the basis of his research, Taylor makes a number of pertinent points. First, there was the need to improve the quality of the administrative structure by tackling the problem of the inefficient use of resources generated by the presence of small departments and in the process to create a more streamlined organisation. Second, the

development of new interdisciplinary groupings in teaching and research needed to be reflected in (and indeed encouraged by) supportive administrative structures. Third, the changes were a way of demonstrating to outside bodies (in particular government and the quasi-government bodies that distributed financial resources) that the universities were taking the demands for more professional management seriously. And fourth, it was believed that the new models would enable them to engage in more effective market competition, to enhance their competitive edge over other universities – presumably those that had not reformed (Taylor, 2006: 256–260). The implicit expectation was that structural reform would be accompanied by a steady development of an entrepreneurial culture and underwritten by proactive leadership at all levels of the university.

Referencing Shattock (2003) by way of support, Hogan has suggested that we need to take the official line with at least a pinch of salt. He claims that there is an element of 'being driven as much by fashion or received ideas from industry or the public sector'. Moreover, 'it is rare for organisational change to be driven by educational ideas' but rather there is a range of likely random inputs: perception of the lack of success, reaction against previous organisational changes and the desire of a new vice-chancellor to make a mark. But for Hogan, 'the most dominant factor forcing organisational change has been how best to allocate or distribute internal resources'. To this he would add 'concerns about communication' and, significantly, 'the desire to increase the responsiveness of the academic structures to management needs' (Hogan, 2005: 51–52). The clear implication of the last point is that we have been witnessing the unfolding of a power struggle between the different interests that are embedded in higher education institutions. The question around which it is being fought is 'who will govern the university?'

While it is not a dominant theme in the analysis of this struggle, the question of what such changes mean for collegiality has emerged. It cannot be a coincidence that both Birmingham and Edinburgh should use the term 'college' as the descriptive label for the top tier of their academic structures. In an editorial the *Times Higher Education Supplement* remarked: 'Birmingham is striking a blow for time-honoured collegiality, with a nod to the ancient traditions of universities as self-governing communities of scholars' (Editorial, 2007, June 15: 12). But in an earlier cautionary note, Tony Tysome observed: 'But the most radical and controversial proposal relates to the level of power and autonomy that will be delegated to the new heads who will manage devolved budgets and will sit on the executive board with the vice-chancellor' (Tysome, 2007 April 6: 44).

Hogan makes the perceptive observation that the key issue is

> ... whether the universities with an intermediate level, typically a series of faculties, are perceived to have a greater degree of devolution to the academic community or whether the faculties are regarded as mechanisms for exercising even tighter managerial control (Hogan, 2005: 54).

The answer to Hogan's conundrum is likely to be dependent on what resource allocation model is employed. Jarzabkowski (with the London School of Economics,

and the Universities of Oxford Brookes and Warwick as her research base) has argued that

> A centralised RAM is defined in this study as one in which resources are authorised and allocated by the senior management team from a central pool on a zero basis. This method of RAM permits redeployment of resources with strategic priorities at the corporate or overarching university level (Jarzabkowski, 2002: 7).

Whereas,

> Decentralised resource allocation is defined as departmental control over budgets, with responsibility for their own strategic direction, income-generation and financial viability. In such a model, departments are able to be locally responsive to strategic initiatives within their discipline and to generate, deploy and allocate their own income streams (Jarzabkowski, 2002: 7).

However, she concludes that, 'These two models are theoretical polarities and it is likely that most universities will operate between the extremes' (Jarzabkowski, 2002: 7).

Although Jarzabkowski's judgement is undoubtedly correct, the direction of change in academic structures coupled with the increased responsibilities of councils and vice-chancellors (academic planning/strategy, financial control, risk management and measurement of outputs against performance indicators) suggests declining discretion for departments (even if they should still exist) or a carefully prescribed discretion rather than wide room for manoeuvre. While this may be interpreted as a purposeful attempt to centralise institutional control, nonetheless it may also be perceived as a rational response by 'the centre' to fulfilling its obligations.

A critically important development, and one that has not received a great analysis in the literature (Deem et al., 2007: 51–53), is the emergence of small core decision-making bodies within higher education institutions. Their significance is dependent not only upon the fact that they symbolise the centralisation of institutional authority (although they do send out this message) but also because they bridge the structures of governance and management. Each of the five civic universities that forms the core of this section of the chapter has proceeded down this route.

> The *University of Birmingham* has a *University Executive Board* (a committee of Council) with the vice-chancellor in the chair. It is composed of those who occupy the most senior roles within the University – besides the vice-chancellor: the vice-principal(s), pro-vice chancellors, heads of the five colleges, the registrar and secretary, the director of finance and the director of human resources (with the possibility of co-opting other members on the recommendation of the vice-chancellor after consultation with the Board and approval of Council). It combines a powerful governance role ('To develop, consider and recommend to the Council or Senate, as appropriate, new and revised University strategies, plans and policies') with an equally potent administrative role ('To take executive responsibility for ensuring the effective communication and implementation of the University strategies, plans, policies and the decisions of the Board throughout the University') (University of Birmingham, 2009d, March 26).

> The *University of Edinburgh* has a *Principal's Strategy Group*, which is convened by the Principal and a membership composed of: the heads of the three colleges; the vice-principal for planning, resources and research policy; the university secretary; the director of corporate services; and the vice-principal for knowledge management and librarian to the University (with other senior members of the University in attendance). 'Its purpose is to

discuss and advise on issues of strategic importance to the University as a whole'. And very significantly 'its role includes considering new strategic initiatives *prior to wider consultation in the University's committee structure*, identifying internal strategic priorities, and ensuring that opportunities for the University are exploited appropriately' (*stress added*) (University of Edinburgh, 2009d, March 26).

The *University of Newcastle* has an *Executive Board* (which is a joint committee of Council and Senate) that, besides the vice-chancellor, consists of six pro-vice-chancellors, the registrar, the executive director of finance and the executive director of human resources. It has both key a policy (for example, directing the University's strategy and exercising 'an integrated overview of the University's policies and resources') and managerial role (for example, ensuring the efficient management of major initiatives and managing key risks) (University of Newcastle, 2009, March 10).

The *University of Nottingham* has a *Strategy and Planning Committee* (a committee of Council), which is chaired by a lay member appointed by Council with a membership consisting of up to five members of council, the six pro-vice-chancellors, the treasurer/chair of the Finance Committee, the president and vice-president of Council, and the vice-chancellor. As its title suggests its main purpose is to formulate and review the University's strategy and 'develop University plans for review by the Council, including academic and other resource allocation and management plans'. It also reviews performance 'in relation to approved strategic objectives and plans' (University of Nottingham, 2009c, March 30).

The *University of Southampton* has a *University Executive Group,* which is described in the following terms: 'A pivotal role in the new structure is played by the University Executive Group (UEG), a joint committee of Council and Senate, which meets monthly. UEG coordinates strategies and policies, develops major initiatives, receives reports from the Executive Committees of Council and Senate, presents financial plans and makes proposals to Senate and Council'. The UEG is chaired by the vice-chancellor and composed of the senior deputy vice-chancellor, the pro-vice-chancellors/deputy vice-chancellors, the deans of the faculties, the registrar and the director of finance. Significantly in a diagrammatic representation of its committee structure the UEG is placed at the very centre of the model reporting to Council and Senate and through them to their committees, while being reported to by the University's organisational infrastructure (University of Southampton, 2009d, March 26).

The 'senior management groups' clearly receive their constitutional authority from powers delegated for the most part from councils (Court with respect to Edinburgh) and senates. This is structural change that undoubtedly will operate somewhat differently in universities with their own histories and cultural legacies. Moreover, it is structural change that delegates considerable formal authority (embracing both policy direction and administrative oversight) to those with leading institutional roles. Thus, the style in which it operates will be determined by how its leadership chooses to go about its tasks with 'top-down' and 'inclusive' approaches at either end of the continuum, and equally its effectiveness will be heavily dependent on the quality of that leadership. Of particular interest is how these new structures interact with those – especially the professors – who have traditionally exercised academic leadership. These are important issues for future research.

Whither Collegiality?

There are three plausible interpretations of the future of collegiality in the light of the evidence and analysis that we have been considering in this chapter. The most optimistic is associated with the work of Burton Clark and Shattock. They are

both very conscious of the contemporary pressures that universities face but believe important aspects of the collegial tradition are critical assets in enabling them to respond positively to those challenges. This is the tightrope strategy. On the one hand there is an inevitability about the shifting equilibrium in the balance of power between councils and senates, the numerical dominance of councils by laypersons, the increasing importance of leadership roles and – more especially – the enhanced authority of vice chancellors and the emergence of 'senior management groups'. On the other hand both believe that if universities wish to sustain their 'success' (Shattock) or become effective 'enterpreneurial' institutions (Burton Clark) they can best achieve these goals by adopting strategies that engage their academics. Shattock, therefore, wants to sustain the identity of departments, not impose models of governance but allow universities to evolve in ways that they believe best reflect their needs and encourage leadership styles that are built around consultation and inclusion. Following parallel lines, Burton Clark wants both 'a stimulated academic heartland' and 'an expanded developmental periphery', neither of which seem feasible unless there is an engaged faculty committed to the long-term welfare of the university.

As we have noted, both Shattock and Burton Clark see their strategies as encompassing collegiality but evidently they are more dependent upon the style of institutional leadership and the stimulation of a supportive cultural milieu rather than the formal structure of governance and administration. Our interpretation of the collegial model of governance and administration, while recognising both the importance of leadership style and the need for a supportive cultural context, argued that its sustenance was dependent upon structures that reflected the pre-eminence of 'donnish dominion' with procedures (committees, consensus building, protracted deliberation and – if needs be – a supportive vote from the assembled dons) that reinforced that pre-eminence. In fact it was about power – who had it and how it was exercised. Significantly, neither Shattock nor Burton Clark say much about the distribution and exercise of power. If collegiality survives in the Shattock and Burton Clark models then it does so in a particular form with consultation, exhortation, partial incorporation and tangible incentives as its drivers rather than the exercise of authority.

In 1987 Lockwood had written,

> The Vice-Chancellor needs to have a prominent voice in the selection of key officers.... So he or she can build up a senior management team or cabinet. In that regard the Jarratt Committee's recommendation that the heads of department should be appointed on the nomination of the Vice-Chancellor is both one of its most crucial and one its most controversial suggestions... (Lockwood, 1987: 104).

The problem, as Hogan noted, is that heads of department could then be perceived as incorporated in the management structure of the university (as middle managers), representing not so much the interests of the department and its members to the senior management but as the conduit through which messages from the centre are relayed to the periphery. In fact Deem's research (2007: 113–114, 155–156) shows the ambivalence that many heads of departments (and, although to a lesser extent,

deans) express about their roles. This raises the interesting possibility of universities incorporating different values within their organisational strata (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008, are now up to 'six cultures of the academy'!) with some departments (or research centres) exhibiting greater collegiality than others perhaps dependent upon their disciplinary basis or even the personal styles of their heads. There is also the distinct possibility of a collegial ethos developing within, but not necessarily across, the formal organisational units – research teams within departments, specialised degree programmes within schools or some colleges within a university. The implication is that as the university becomes more infused with the managerial ethos, collegiality retreats to its heartland.

An optimistic interpretation of the change in the academic structures of the five universities examined in this chapter could take the line that this represents a genuine devolution of responsibilities from the centre. Within the overall framework of the university's strategic development, academic units have the authority to sustain and enhance their own futures. Moreover, they have a better chance to do this than in a model where there is central control, especially if they have also made a significant initial input into the planning process. How individual academic units conduct their affairs is a matter for investigation but, so the argument would run, devolution presents a real opportunity for those who believe that collegial values and practices should be maintained. Thus, although collegiality may be retreating to a heartland, its cause could be buttressed by devolved academic structures, thus the heartland is of significant proportions with prospects of expanding rather than small and in terminal decline.

Both the scenarios presented (reformulation and retreat/devolution) could be seen as staging posts on the route to the third interpretation: collegial governance is withering on the vine with a combination of external pressure, changes in the character of the academic profession and institutional connivance coalescing to sap its vitality. The belief that 'big is beautiful' combines with the recognition that 'small is powerful' to create a new world of university administration and governance. So the culling of committees is proclaimed with great enthusiasm and admissions by recruitment (rather than selection) combine with a market-led restructuring of degree programmes to usher in the promised land of the corporate university.

One of the more interesting characteristics of the collegial model of governance is that its inherent frailty is there for all to see – overburdened with committees, cumbersome, slow moving and making equally impossible demands of both rank-and-file academics and would-be institutional leaders. By way of contrast managerialism appears a perfect model of efficiency – small, sleek, fast and purposeful. But it is important to remember that the context within which higher education institutions function is not unchanging. The corporate model of governance, which provided a clear point of reference for the reformers, looks far less inviting in the light of the contemporary financial crisis. Moreover, as Shattock reminds us, it was academics that have tended to blow the whistle on poor leadership and maladministration (Shattock, 1994: 111; 2002: 240). Besides the changing environment within which universities function, the constant presence of institutional politics – as C.P. Snow's *The Masters* (1951) reminds us – is always lurking beneath the

surface (Cornford, 1908; Bailey, 1977). If, as this chapter has charged, we are in part witnessing an institutional power struggle, with a conflict of values – collegiality as opposed to managerialism at its core – then politics will not disappear. Even if one side should appear to triumph that will not be the end of the struggle for no matter how 'small, sleek, fast and purposeful' the resource distribution mechanisms may be the losers will always suspect, or even proclaim, foul play. And, inevitably, circumstances will change.