

Chapter 8

Engagement and the Idea of the Civic University

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8.1 Introduction: The Current Context for Civic Universities

In an increasingly challenging environment, Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) across the world find themselves under threat from increased global competition for students, while governments expect more intense excellence in research resulting in improved national economic growth. Yet, at the same time funding models are being transformed and politicians seek to reduce the sector's reliance on public funding: Universities are under pressure to collaborate with industry and become more enterprising. Consequently universities are formulating new ways to address 'real world' issues with academic staff adjusting to an environment where knowledge is diffused across many actors and groups, in which innovation through co-creation with strategic partners is perceived as an essential element of university activity.

Developing academic enterprise beyond the means currently employed has become a real endeavour for a group of progressive civic universities, of which Salford is part. Such 'academic enterprises' can maintain the enthusiasm of academics through thoughtful team design and support that reflects the requirements of both the individual academics and the teams around them. Thus, HEI activity can now look very different from what it once did; it remains rich in values, yet relevant to end users, adding real value to society and providing major contributions to university's strategic partners. Today, such enterprising developments can be heightened, both positively and negatively, through the global outreach afforded by the information society (Castells 1996).

In exploring the notion of an enterprising university it is necessary to place it within a philosophical and historical context. Essentially there is a dialectic between those who argue higher learning is an end in itself, a selfish activity to develop one's own knowledge, often connected with pure research and is associated with Lao-Tzu, Aristotle and Newman. By contrast Confucius and Plato argued that learning is about integration of the individual within society, and by extension is linked to

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applied research. The centrality of research to a university's identity was originally theorised by Jasper (1965) and it was not criticised until Kerr (1973) showed that the view that a university should be useful to society explicitly emerges. Even he accepted that a modern university had multiple purposes, acknowledging that what he described as the multiversity, could become over-loaded with meaning.

Therefore, the concept that a university should face outwards and engage, rather than focus on training the individual to be a better citizen or for assimilation into society, is under-theorised and thus has not developed a clear discourse that has attracted a sufficient number of supporters. Consequently, the dialectics of liberal v vocational, individual v socio-economic or elite v mass have continued to dominate any conversation about the future of higher education (cf. Allen 1988). Given this, the time now seems ripe to pose the question of how do creatively engaged universities emerge, develop these kinds of engagements further and can academics accept that this is a beneficial activity?

8.2 The Origin & Growth of 'Civic' Universities

The advent of the civic university paralleled the industrialisation of the nineteenth century. While the medieval universities were predominantly based in agrarian locations and concentrated on theological matters, civic universities developed in the emerging manufacturing cities and initially were focused on explorations of science and technology. Both types of institution reflected and served the prevailing social and economic powers of the era in which they emerged; it is this responsiveness to these prevailing powers to which we refer when we describe universities as 'enterprising'. The process followed a broadly similar pattern across industrialising economies, although for the purposes of this chapter we restrict our discussions to England, one of four (the largest) elements of the UK higher education system.

8.2.1 *Civic Universities Serving Prevailing Forces of Industrialisation*

The original civic universities were Manchester Victoria, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield and Liverpool in the late nineteenth century, followed by Bristol, Newcastle, Nottingham, Southampton and Reading in the early twentieth century. Although different in many ways the civic universities had two shared characteristics. Firstly, they had their origins in pre-existing vocationally based educational establishments; and secondly, they were symbols of civic pride, most obviously at Birmingham where the university formed part of Joseph Chamberlain's construction of municipal politics and institutions. Acquiring university status was the proof of regional authority and, in Chamberlain's case, autonomy from existing award granting institutions.

But this project of creating strong regional universities did not only include powerful local political actors, but also involved entire local elites in financially

supporting and promoting 'their' universities. This embeddedness in their locality was part of their ontology and although there was some attempt to ape elements of Oxford and Cambridge, this was not an exercise in duplication. Neither was the state involved in their formation, certainly for the first wave universities, which predated the first Treasury grants to universities. Their primary focus was to support the local economy and society through research, training and the pursuit of excellence. In effect, the civic universities wanted to take the finest parts of Oxbridge but replace their perceived hidebound tradition with a commitment to economic and social progress. The civic universities regarded themselves as modern universities and institutions of modernity (Holmes 2001).

But this noble sentiment contained an unresolved, and potentially irresolvable, contradiction. Being products of the Enlightenment the civics had commitment to universalist concepts of science, knowledge and truth. This universality contributed to stretching the connections between the universities and their place until they sometimes appeared as aliens in their own community. This is not to say that civic pride diminished: Rather, institutional mutuality of the formative period evolved into an admiration by local elites of the prosperity of a favoured child. Under such circumstances, the notion of an embedded university identifiable through its activity in a physically located place was replaced in popular imagination as a location for tensions between 'town and gown', something Oxford and Cambridge had long experienced.

Compounding this process was the relatively small pool of academics, most of which were for reasons of necessity drawn from Oxbridge or other civic universities. This increased conformity concerning the role of the academics with the concept of the disinterested observer, beloved of Enlightenment culture, became the dominant identity. In such an unpropitious environment, it was unsurprising that academics, and by extension universities, left aside the everyday concerns of their cities unless they contributed to universal knowledge. Certainly, there was in this era no English equivalent of Chicago University's urban sociology research.

Complementing the civics were the 'plate glass universities' of the 1960s (including the seven Robbins-era institutions of East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Sussex, Lancaster, Warwick and York, later joined by 13 others including Salford). In contrast to the civic universities, these institutions were created as a national policy response although they soon adopted their own identity. Nevertheless, they followed the civic universities' culture of academic as disinterested observers, and from their creation there was an acknowledgement that they would be detached from their location. This detachment from the community along with a greater concentration on liberal arts and the disinterested academic culture meant that the 'plate glass' institutions were in many respects less local than the civics (Rich 2001). However, these incipient institutions resisted this impulse and some of them acquired engineering and physical science departments (though some of these were later closed), as well as serving their regional economy and industry.

The most significant part of the sector was to resist this culture of academic identity as disinterested observers were the polytechnics. These higher education institutions saw themselves as no less 'modern' institutions than universities, but being explicit in acknowledging the value of their longstanding engagement with industry, the

local political state and their immediate neighbourhood (Gledhill 1999). For the polytechnic sector, the commitment to applied research and broadening the access to higher education was not a pragmatic response but part of their philosophy and identity (Pratt 1997).

For the sake of completeness, it is necessary to mention higher education colleges, who typically had a narrower disciplinary offering than polytechnics, but whose roots lay in meeting skills' needs of particular sectors or occupations, making their commitment to application equally part of their philosophy. In today's UK higher education landscape, civic universities are seen as the 'benchmark' of the system, with an emphasis on maintaining standards. The sector fragmented following the conversion of the polytechnics to universities after 1992, which placed pressure on the maintenance of universal quality which is harder to sustain.

8.2.2 Adaptation of Civic Universities to Post-Industrialisation

For institutions created to serve the interests of industrialisation, civic universities have proven remarkably well-adaptive to the emergence of a post-industrial society in England. Funding cuts in the early 1980s and a steady dwindling of the units of resources until 2002 forced the civic universities to alter their management styles and re-discover their connections with their cities. At one level, this has been about being a large employer, sometimes the largest after the local authority, and their contribution to the local economy through students' expenditure. To achieve this, universities have realised that a prosperous and attractive city helps student recruitment and thus universities have sought to create virtuous cycle of university–civic relationships, with students as the driver of that cycle.

The university as a key local economic driver fits within an emerging narrative of the importance of the knowledge economy that most of the large urban cities in England adopted as their exit from their declining manufacturing heritage. In this way, the university could be regarded as the mills of the twenty-first century, exporting their product (knowledge) globally but reinvesting locally. Unlike transnational corporations, a city's political leaders can be confident that the university, bearing the city's name, will not relocate to a place with cheaper labour. In England, the civic universities with their roots in municipality are the embodiment of this place bound 'stickiness', and their very existence serves to heighten the image of the city in which they are located.

One of the values of the civic university has been in being resistant to particular dogmatic ideologies and purposes of a university (Maskell and Robinson 2001; Barnett 2003), and certainly in the last couple of decades, to the alluring notion of the entrepreneurial university. The essence of Barnett's argument is that universities thrive where they are able to syncretise the various ideologies present in universities within a 'super complex university'. Barnett develops a critique of the ideology of the entrepreneurial university, but one ideology which, at the same time, is pernicious and needs to be controlled and restricted. Using a hypothetical entrepreneurial

university Barnett details the dangers that would be associated with placing the needs of enterprise at the core of a university's institutional mission.

The requirement to serve the market, and by extension the needs of the client, would gradually undermine the capacity of a university to undertake critical discourse and replace it with 'non-dialogical' communication. Ultimately, this would alter the university's epistemology by subtly changing its purpose towards Mode 2 knowledge production (Gibbons et al. 1994; Nowotny et al. 2001), which creates a recursive quality. In such a case the pursuit of truth is given a 'pragmatic tinge' and academic identities are, at least partially, constructed by the market and the entrepreneurial university ultimately dissolves 'into the wider world, with its activities, identities and values indistinguishable from the wider world' (p. 70). The university 'surrenders its integrity' (p. 71) and follows the call of others. For Barnett, the endpoint of the idea of the entrepreneurial university is of an institution transformed by and becoming part of the market, with whatever left after the process unable to be described as a university.

Nevertheless Barnett feels that entrepreneurialism may be beneficial because it can act to challenge the status quo within universities and forces academics to communicate beyond academe. Barnett chooses to dodge the question of how a university could take this poison without suffering those consequences, restricting his explanation to saying that it can be contained within a super-complex university.

There is little doubt that an entrepreneurial university is an ideological construct, which could challenge existing practices within the sector. It must be conceded that civic universities have never been entirely disinterested observers, but through their medical and engineering activities, they have been pulled out into the real world, and many have indeed embraced entrepreneurship. Implicitly, Barnett, along with Maskell and Robinson, present the concept of an entrepreneurial university with two challenges:

1. Can an independent and critically discursive space be maintained while working with and for market actors?
2. Can entrepreneurship be managed, is it too powerful an ideology to contain?

It is these questions that the University of Salford has wrestled with as it has sought to establish itself as a durable institution, come to terms with variable levels of support from the state, and exploit and reinvent the institution's history and culture of extensive engagement with industry for the contemporary era.

8.3 Salford Exemplifying Progressive Civic University Practice

8.3.1 Salford's Early Heritage

The University of Salford's history dates back to the high water mark of the Industrial Revolution in the Victorian era, with the government of the day introducing grants for the teaching of science. Pendleton Mechanics Institute, a mutual improvement society, founded in 1850, and Salford Working Men's College, founded in 1858,

originated to help transform the local industrial world by educating young artisans, and others, in the scientific and artistic branches of their trades (Gordon 1975). As noted above this kind of education differed from what was offered at existing universities. The new institutions in Pendleton and Salford began the process of developing towards an engaged university within the city serving common good, both in terms of industry and for the citizens.

By 1896 these two originating colleges had merged into a single entity, known as the Salford Technical Institute, combining their deep manufacturing knowledge, and enabling a sound and thorough engagement with Britain's leading industrial manufacturing base in the North West. The zeal for good technical capabilities was such that local industrialists like Sir William Mather set up a committee for the new institution to provide 'special knowledge and advice' from its industrial partners. This recognition of the necessity for close links between industry and technical institutions may now seem obvious to us all; as Gordon (1975) points out 'that it was a far-sighted decision . . . that even as late as 1956, out of 195 such Technical Institutions, 131 still had no advisory Industrial Committee'.

This close and continuing engagement between Salford Technical Education and its industrial/business community undoubtedly contributed to an extraordinary local and regional transformation, helping Salford become internationally renowned with respect to its engineering, science, technologies and its skilled workforce. In 1921, this resulted in the institute receiving Royal Letters and becoming known as the 'Royal Technical Institute, Salford' and was ready

to provide for the County Borough of Salford systematic instruction in those branches of knowledge which have a direct bearing upon the leading industries of the district. (RTI 1896)

The Royal Technical College, Salford was notable for insistence on practical work and workshop practice, which continues today in the present university, as well as the fact that some 83 % of all students came from within the Salford borough. The institution continued to develop, receiving College of Advanced Technology status in 1960, and full university status, in 1967. While its academic status increased, the University of Salford never lost its roots in the local community and its deep working practices with local business and industry. As Salford University's first chancellor, HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh recalled, "Salford is a university with 'its feet firmly on the ground', willing to help local people do better for themselves, in 'work, rest and play'".

Nevertheless, despite contributing to the science and engaging developments during the 1970s, in 1981 the university's future was threatened by extensive (43 %) cuts in state funding. Mrs Thatcher, the Prime Minister of the day, had seemingly begun to question the role of engaged universities like Salford; highlighting the precarious intellectual support. Salford was forced to survive through its considerable entrepreneurial spirit, which enhanced its engagement in its local community, notably with local industry. Professor John Ashworth, its new Vice Chancellor at this crisis time, led Salford towards financial viability by reaching out further into local business and the community.

Ashworth's vision was to break down the traditional barriers between academe, and business and the community, engage all partners in a two-way flow of knowledge and 'know how' towards collaborating through trans-disciplinary working. Not only was Salford to be a progressive civic university, focused towards its city-region, it was also to be friendly, approachable and able to solve real world problems in a cost-effective way. It strove to develop the best facilities, knowledge and skills, for the real world, especially locally ensuring sustainable and effective implementation. Words and phrases like 'capability', 'relevance' and 'coincidence of purpose with industry' characterized the developing university of the time and provided it with a rich 'vision to the wider market, which then beckoned' (Brandon 1999).

8.3.2 CAMPUS—An Example of Building Engagement Relationships

The Campaign to Promote the University of Salford (CAMPUS) was formed by a group of its supporters in community, industrial and business sectors as a response to 1981's financial crisis. Some 200 firms of all sizes alongside a range of public sector organizations, set up CAMPUS as the first business club of its kind in higher education. Its intention was to send a signal to government of the importance of Salford University to local business and communities. Each firm paid a subscription—in return for which they could draw upon seminars, technical support, social events, advice and updating on issues, or work with specialists in the university to best help with problems, research and training. Some of this work, for example training, was customised to meet the needs of a particular company. CAMPUS was created not only to help save the university, but also to help its own members grow and prosper. Records of that time indicate CAMPUS members felt it was one of the few friendly and capable, 'real world' universities able to use its academic skills to creatively engage with these businesses and industries to help them survive and flourish.

Undoubtedly one major benefit of CAMPUS membership for companies derived from the opportunities it provided to network informally with professors and decision-makers, acquire student placements, benefit from graduate recruitment; and the ability to influence local developments. It operated largely in a responsive, rather than proactive, mode, primarily seeking to build long-term relationships between CAMPUS members and the university, rather than as a tool for marketing the university's commercial expertise to local businesses. Such an organisation creates strong social relationships that build bonds and lead to more worthy 'real world' explorations by any university and furthermore new opportunities for development beyond the obvious.

Salford also developed its own company, known as Salford University Business Services Ltd (SUBS), which engaged academics from Salford (as well as elsewhere) on business planning and problem solving. By the end of the 1980s, its turnover had reached around £ 10 million per annum; the university had also developed one of Britain's first business parks and a venture capital company. For about a decade,

this company produced extra income for the university and the staff involved at a time when this was comparatively rare. This activity functioned through making participating academics ‘street-wise’ and ‘business aware’ so they could add practical value to university teaching and research.

8.3.3 Contemporary History of the Institution

A further recession in the 1990s, together with further changes to government research funding policy caused the university to rethink its overall strategy. This involved an overhaul of its research structure to encourage greater cross-disciplinary work, more coordinated and central leadership, and the creation of a graduate school. The mission, which was ultimately successful, was to sustain Salford’s high level ‘applications-relevant’ research from Research Council grant income, alongside complementary funding from other public and private sources. This enabled it to remain at the leading edge and maintaining its role as an agent of innovative implementation.

In 1996, the University of Salford merged with an HE college to produce a much larger and more broadly based Higher Education Institution, substantially increasing staff and student numbers whilst broadening its range of disciplines. This important merger was essential in helping the university through a difficult period when the commercial arm started to lose money. Indeed, resources were diverted from research activity in an attempt to maintain SUBS, generating some hostility from academics towards enterprise activities. The question emerged of how could this new institution find new ways to remain true to its roots and place its extensive engagement activities on a sound financial footing.

One of the present authors (Powell) was charged with leading an innovative and radically different integration of the relevant ‘high academic values, skills, knowledge and know-how’ of its staff, with a ‘new dynamic enterprising and entrepreneurship partnerships with business and the community’. Professor Richard Duggan argued that the university was striving to ‘look where everyone else was looking, see what no-one else could see’ and more particularly, ‘do what no one else was doing’ in ways which rewarded itself and its partners. This thrust was to become a third major strand of all university activities, standing alongside teaching & learning and research, developing activities in ways not generally seen elsewhere. These changes predated the Higher Education Funding Council of England’s own interests in a formal Third Mission for universities.

The centrepiece of the plans for Salford outlined by Powell in an internal document ‘The Noble Art of Academic Enterprise’ was the stimulation of ‘Academic Enterprise’. This emerged in 1998 recognising the need for the sort of cultural change that the UK Government would later demand of all universities across the United Kingdom to create real impact for society. Salford’s desire at this time was for its academics to enhance their enterprising skill and entrepreneurship, and thereby for them to become respected activities in their own right (Powell 2009).

In order to bring about the necessary change in processes of embedding Academic Enterprise into the university, it was first necessary to develop an internal vision that could be shared by everybody in the institution. The vision which emerged was simply to ‘develop academic opportunities beyond means currently employed, to high academic values, but of relevance to local business and the community’. This represented a return by the University of Salford to its roots, but now embracing twenty-first century priorities and aspirations, where studies relating to business and the community were seen to be worthy of reasoned and powerful academic endeavour.

This vision was represented by a logo showing the strong linkage between the words ‘Academic’ and ‘Enterprise’—the basis for all its future activities in this strand—indicating what was hoped to become an inseparable dipole for this new mode of university working. The team wanted colleagues to embody this by undertaking bold new academic pursuits reflecting their clear academic values, knowledge and capabilities. The Greek ligature Æ was chosen as a short and simple means of naturally representing this strong bond, with key words around the logo showing what was needed to bind Æ together.



Academic Enterprise became the University of Salford’s unique attempt to form meaningful, wealth creating and socially inclusive partnerships with industry, business, the civil and voluntary services and the community at large. The hallmark of the Æ approach lay in opening up the formidable skills and imagination of its staff, developed through rigorous evaluation, on the basis of the highest academic values, to form reasoned specifications for actions in the real world. The emphasis placed upon Academic Enterprise recognised the need to ‘tap into’ the daring of its creative enterprise partnerships to stage-manage novel, yet robust, ideas, innovations, approaches and technologies into actual improvements for all our nation, and beyond. The remainder of this paper reviews the success of Æ and the challenges faced when embedding it into a conventional university setting.

Table 8.1 Income and net contribution of *Æ* over its first decade

Year	Contribution	Income (nearest £ m)
1998–99	Reinvestment	£ 3 m
1999–2000	Reinvestment	£ 5 m
2000–2001	Reinvestment	£ 6 m
2001–2002	£ 1 m	£ 9 m
2002–2003	£ 2 m	£ 16 m
2003–2004	£ 1.4 m	£ 18 m
2004–2005	£ 1.3 m	£ 17 m
2005–2006	£ 1.2 m	£ 17 m
2006–2007	£ 6 m	£ 21 m
2007–2008	£ 2 m	£ 17 m
Total	£ 14 m	£ 129 m

8.4 Academic Enterprise at the Heart of Salford University

8.4.1 *Measuring and Driving Success in Æ*

The strategy evolved in response to a set of external changes, notably the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) embracing the Third Mission and the government becoming more concerned with increasing the impact of research and university. Salford focused in particular on its development of *Æ* as a means of promoting not only better work with industry and commerce, but also with other stakeholders, such as those in civil and voluntary organizations, in the community at large, and, not least, those within the university itself. The vision was to remain a progressive civic university deeply engaged with its city region, developing Academic Enterprise was at the expense of other activities, namely teaching and research. A key driver for this new activity was income growth, in the development of innovative projects that enabled socially inclusive wealth creation for its partners, and itself.

The institution therefore sought, through *Æ*, new sources of funding to add to its traditional public resources. This in turn would enable the university to initiate novel projects, as pilots of a change process, while appropriately redistributing scarce existing resources to developments more relevant for an ‘enterprising university’. Given the experience with the problems of a failing conventional enterprise company, *Æ* recognised the need to integrate its activities into Salford’s normal engagement practices with business and the community, and to make a net contribution to the university. Tables 8.1 and 8.2 show how *Æ* has evolved, in terms of its income, net contribution to the university and its overall outputs.

The statistical evidence clearly demonstrates the extent of *Æ* activity, but understanding how *Æ* has operated, and drawing some lessons from efforts to achieve that success, give a better qualitative understanding of activity, thereby helping the readers anticipate possible futures for an enterprising university.

Table 8.2 Key *Æ* metrics 2007/2008

Number of major new academically enterprising projects	100
No. new spin out/start-up/graduate star-ups companies	200
No. students supported: Students in free enterprise (SIFE)	32
No. students supported: Local people supported projects	250
No. students supported: Enterprise learning modules	>4,000
Patents disclosed	31
Business & Software licenses granted	30
CPD course value for SMEs	£ 100,000
CPD course value for other commercial	£ 137,000
CPD course value for non commercial	£ 545,000
CPD course value for individuals	£ 474,000
New E-learning developments (courses)	50
Value of enterprise-led research activities	£ 3.6 million
Contract research	£ 1.5 million
SMEs Advised	893 million
Other businesses advised	1,283 million
ERDF income	£ 906,000
ESF income	£ 427,000
UK Regeneration Funds	£ 151,000
RDA Programmes	£ 739,000
Other regeneration grants	£ 208,000
Public lectures audience	1,482
Exhibitions audience	46,600
Chargeable performance arts audience	5,294
Knowledge transfer partnerships	38

8.4.2 Salford Binding Communities into Government and Institutions

Etkowitz and Leydesdorff (1997) describe how universities evolved out of a set of bilateral relations with the state and industry towards a series of interlocking tripartite intersections. In this process, there is a delicate tension to be negotiated, between the university becoming marketised and the need to become a communicative actor with a key role in the public sphere (Etkowitz and Leydesdorff 1997; Delanty 2001) This necessitates universities in interacting and blurring the lines with other partners, whilst moderating direct market pressures by engaging with a boarder set of partners and work at the edges of technological and cultural citizenship. Such an approach is by definition complex and necessitating a willingness by all those involved to work outside their hermeneutic and institutional discourses.

At Salford an example of this is the on-going work between a not-for-profit loan company, a mathematician and a sociologist. In 1999 the authors co-wrote, with another colleague, a policy paper recommending a new type of non-profit company to address the problem of affordable credit. They argued that such a service was required because the only providers of small loans (less than £ 1,000) in deprived communities were firms charging interest rates in excess of 200 %. In partnership with banks, government departments, local authorities and community activists, Dayson helped establish 12 of these type of organisations throughout England.

A decade after the start of this process, the most successful of these loan companies, East Lancs Moneyline (*elm*) asked the university if it could create a risk assessment process to inform the decisions made about loan applicants. Conventionally, this would have involved either purchasing a standard loan application assessment software or entering into a contract to design a specified system. However, *elm* wanted a system that allowed for individual discretion by the loan officer and was transparent and fair for the client. They were not interested in increasing profit, rather protecting potential clients from over indebtedness.

This notion of 'preventative credit' was unusual in a sector where the emphasis is on a combination of improving efficiency and reducing lender. The manifestation of this is a proliferation of automated internet loan application processes unable to counsel clients, support those that get declined, or introduce any transparency. The overall result is that citizens, especially those with limited educational attainment, are alienated and potentially excluded from formal financial services and driven back towards informal credit providers. By contrast *elm* were explicit in seeking a system that could be integrated into their face-to-face client interaction and would help guide both the loan officer and the potential client towards the most appropriate financial decision.

Clearly, both social and technological problems and therefore *elm* wanted to work with sociologists as well as computer mathematicians. Working with the AE team within the university, they sought funding under the government's knowledge transfer partnership (KTP) for a post-doctoral researcher to be placed within *elm* for 2 years. Applying for that funding indicated that this was an extremely novel proposition for the KTP funders in two ways. Firstly, there had never been a previous application from mathematicians and sociologists to work together, and there was some scepticism about the necessity of the sociologist's involvement. Secondly, although it was technically possible for voluntary and community sector organisations to be KTP partners, none had to that date applied, and the university had to challenge the funder's assumption that technology transfer to a not-for-profit organisation would not lead to improved profitability (which the proposed technology transfer certainly would).

This example highlights how the university could interact and blur boundaries with its partners, and engage with commercialisation, whilst at the same time leading to social benefit and not necessarily exclusively the marketisation of the university. Part of that comes through the involvement of an NGO, which does shift the discourse away from purely capitalist concerns and allows for other voices and claims to be heard. But a key novel element of the contribution came through the university emphasising a solution involving socially embedded technology, and using cultural knowledge, of the sociologist and *elm*, to ensure the technology's design was compatible with the users. The example also suggests that the university can also be involved beyond communicative and mediating functions. Salford created a space and a platform for the NGO to engage in the public sphere, and is a specific example of Salford's more general approach to $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$, extending social justice through opening up public spaces for a wider range of discourses to be heard.

8.4.3 Salford Emerging as an Enterprising University with Strong Engagement

On the basis of the evidence above, of many small-scale engagement activities through Academic Enterprise, engagement with business and the community can be regarded to have become embedded in its mainstream university life. What was this initially a third strand of Salford's academic activity has now become a primary mission in its own right, and was acknowledged in what was at the time of writing the university's latest strategic plan:

Salford is an enterprising University which transforms individuals and communities through excellent teaching, research, innovation and engagement. (Hall 2009)

Salford sought and progressed towards establishing its own distinctive identity focusing its attention on the task of becoming a leading enterprising university. The strategy acknowledges a need for continuous strategic adaptation to continuously changing external environments. The intention in the future is to judge the success of that adaptation by the extent to which the notion that Salford is an enterprising university fully engaged in its surrounding, and often excluded, communities become taken for granted and an essential, intrinsic element of Salford University's internal and external identities.

8.5 Reflections on Embedding Enterprising External Engagement into University Life

The previous section highlighted the critical importance of creating an easily understandable and consistent vision, driving cultural change and following up on that with relevant implementation strategies to embed the required cultural change. In this section, we reflect on that process in the round, from strategic vision to cultural change. We explore how senior managers creatively lead their academics, and other staff, supporting constructive interaction within the institution; using governance processes to consolidate good practices and remove poor ones; rewarding success, evaluating the quality and level of community engagement; and concentrating resources by setting realistic objectives.

8.5.1 Leadership and Management are the Key

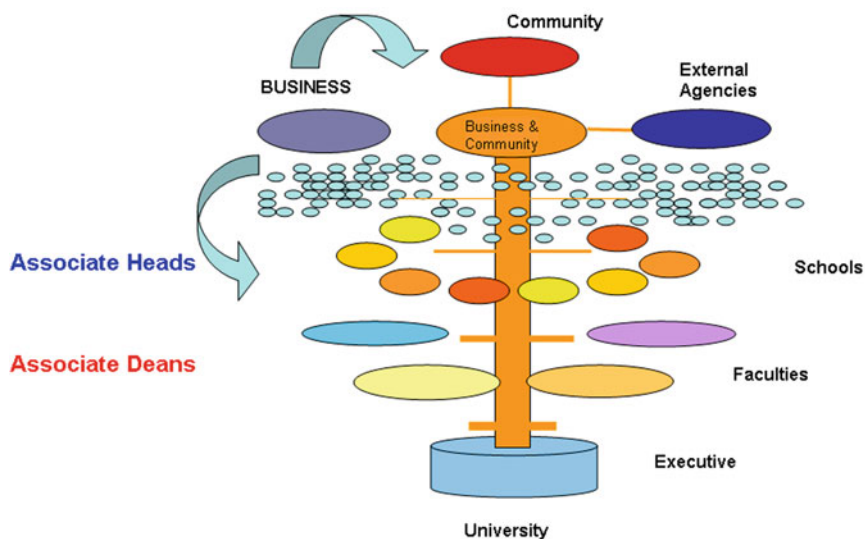
Universities often have an innate sense of conservativeness which deals with the complexity of the tasks they are required to deliver, teaching, research and social service, by creating and adopting 'private frames of reference'. These private frames of reference help the academic community to reach its goals and manage that complexity, but at the same time can be unnecessarily resistant to novel ways of thinking which challenge those private frames of reference, but whose adoption is necessary if the university is to adapt to changing environments. A particular

contemporary manifestation of that problem can be seen in academic resistance to new ways of thinking about excellence, in particular embracing innovation, collaboration or multi-disciplinarity.

At Salford, these tensions manifested themselves at the end of the 1990s when Academic Enterprise was created as part of efforts by senior managers to introduce greater community/business engagement. Academic Enterprise created new challenges for academics, because—as the *elm* example illustrates—meeting an external need typically involves combining different kinds of academic knowledges. Although that might sound straightforward, the reality is that that involves trying to combine conflicting ideas, conceptual standpoints and ways of working. Situations arose which looked radically different from that which any one of the partners understood for themselves. The key to the effective solution was a compromise between academic partners, and it required considerable effort from senior and middle managers to create environments with the space, time and incentives for academics to make these creative compromises without disrupting the external engagement activity.

The diagram below shows how one senior manager depicted Salford’s hierarchy, its leadership and management and relationship to the outside world : She put ‘community’ at the top of the leadership hierarchy, as a focusing element, and also recognised good leadership had to come from all parts of the university. But the situation was not static and there remained considerable resistance from some quarters who sought a reversion to the status quo. It took considerable effort from senior managers and the governing body in communicating the importance of *Æ* in achieving Salford’s strategic vision to ensure that the Academic Enterprise concept was made to succeed. From the outset, it was recognised that ideas for sustainable change would come from all levels in the university, and these needed to be harnesses for the good of all. This belief was underscored by Salford’s own history and culture where engagement and interdisciplinary working were widespread.

Embedded Academic Leadership



In practical terms, this change process involved creating Assistant Deans and Assistant Heads of Schools with specific responsibility for $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$, namely sharing, refining and locally embedding the vision; promoting key ideas by spreading knowledge and good practice; working closely with the core $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$ office to deliver the right encouragement and support; and giving the necessary feedback to the centre to ensure problems were captured and sorted out quickly. These champions were intended to act as *animateurs* who would try to the unexplored connections in the university between ideas and practice with potential for development into new initiatives, as well as picking up on ideas at the grass roots with the potential to achieve more widespread cultural change.

These Faculty and School champions were intended to embed $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$ within their home areas, improve communications and deal sympathetically and constructively with local resistance. They became projects' main creative and effective leaders, working with colleagues to perceive 'patterns which connect' $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$ and industrial need, constraints as opportunities for new action, and helped provide the space to promote growth. Along with the $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$ core team they fostered creativity in all members of their team and sought to inspire staff. The intention was that they would be 'hands-ready' rather than being 'hands-on' nor 'hands off'.

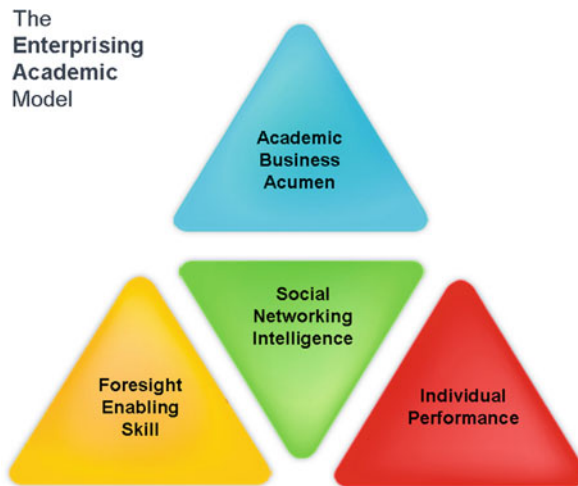
Powell (2010), following Clark (1998) explored how willing academics can be coached to become such leaders. Interestingly, the early findings of this study show that while Salford's academics were 'reluctant leaders', they were much better at leadership than they are at management. In response Salford supported them with suitably qualified project managers to ensure projects were delivered. The key word here is 'support', Salford found that its academics were highly resistant to instruction, which contradicted their notion of professional autonomy, but were willing to be challenged provided it exerted a positive influence on their work. Those project managers who gained credibility were those who were able to work to remove 'unhelpful' bureaucratic, administrative and disciplinary silos.

8.5.2 Governance for Improved Academic Enterprise

The $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$ core team also developed a self-evaluation approach to help academic leaders understand and improve the development of their own academic enterprise teams. The issue that Salford faced was the method of working in externally-focused and trans-disciplinary teams was relatively rare at Salford. As previously noted, those involved, tended to be working in an extremely uncertain environment, trying to create useful solutions. This uncertainty made it very difficult to objectively evaluate the success or otherwise of particular projects. This was a significant challenge for the legitimacy of $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$, which depended on being able to show to staff that collaborative approaches were successful.

The evaluation approach that was developed was then subsequently validated in a joint project with twenty-five British and ten other European universities, entitled the University Partnership for Benchmarking Enterprise and Associated Technologies (UPBEAT). The tool comprised of a matrix of four skill themes for academic

enterprise, namely solution enabling, talent improving, intelligent partnering and new business enabling skill (see figure below).



The evaluation operated by assessing particular projects against the degree of their development; thus, it was possible to have world-class solution enabling with local level new business acumen. This recognised the complexity of $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$ activity and that different aspects would develop at differing stages depending on the project, the partnership and a range of external factors. The tool was validated drawing upon 200 case studies of best practice: It appears that it is the development of ‘qualities and levels of academic engagement’ with respect to these skills that is the most generally relevant and important to the progress of almost all forms of successful academic enterprise; in particular, those which fully engages with its locality, and helping transform communities, business and civil society.

UPBEAT was not solely an external management tool, but also enabled academics to learn how better to interact within their own institution and develop more powerful and lasting relationships with strategic external stakeholders which make a real difference (www.upbeat.eu.com; Powell 2010). In Salford, we have seen how this has been used to drive efficiency and higher levels and qualities of engagement with external partners, leading to continuous improvement in all university outreach. The use of this governance process, monitoring and project management tool has been centrally important to Salford’s success in engagement with excluded communities.

8.5.3 *Rewarding Success*

A third main lesson learned from the Salford case relates to how success is understood, promoted and rewarded by a university. We have already noted the importance of private frames of reference for shaping academic behaviour, and there is an important

interdependence between universities reward structures and policies and the way these private frames of reference evolved. At the start of the process, the emphasis was on coaching academics, by using an earlier template of UPBEAT, to maximise their performance and that of their project and partnership. But as Benneworth (2009) points out creative *'engagement needs entrepreneurial academics, who may do many things at once, and these are precisely the kinds of people who you can't tell what to do If one de-skills and Taylorises one's employment practices in the university, then entrepreneurial academics leave. It ends up with people focused on one task, and so engagement ends up being done by engagement professionals, rather than by people with the subject knowledge'*.

Academic Enterprise recognised problem this *avant la lettre* and responded by ensuring that academics could engage autonomously, whilst at the same time giving strong signals about the kinds of enterprising behaviour which were in line with strategic institutional priorities. In practical terms, this involved allowing academics additional freedoms and opportunities, including:

- The creation of new *Æ* initiatives including the discovery and capture of the possible.
- Marshal resources from a pluralism of funding streams to 'buy-out' staff to deliver any opportunity well.
- Ensure better dissemination and technology transfer through appropriate knowledge management.
- Provide better marketing of the academic potential and opportunities for collaboration.
- Ensure a high utilisation of scarce staff resources; so colleagues now recognise the importance of sharing ideas and the complementarity of interdisciplinary working.

One element of the incentive structure was in publicising those delivering innovative and engaged projects as far as resources would allow. Salford was aggressive in nominating its best projects for external consideration and won: a Queen's Award for Higher and Further Education, *Times Higher Education* Annual Award for Community Enterprise and an Award for the most Innovative Project in the North West of England. A series of regular national and international conference were also developed to showcase achievements to local, regional, national and international audiences.

Arguably, the more important element of the incentive structure in ensuring academic commitment were the rewards available through participation. These were in part financial, but primarily came in terms of status, especially promotion. Over a dozen academics were promoted to professor on the grounds of their proven skills and prowess with respect to enterprise, engagement and knowledge transfer, alongside many more being promoted to Senior Lecturer. Although the demands of the promotion route through academic enterprise are as demanding as for other routes, its inclusion indicates the importance Salford places on academic enterprise. Salford was at the time of writing one of the few HEIs with promotion criteria which permit this, which again signifies the importance which Salford placed on this sort of working.

8.5.4 Realistic Targets

At its inception the *Æ* team established clear growth targets—two major projects per faculty and two cross-university projects in its first full eighteen months in operation—leading to 10 in all. In fact over 25 were initiated, many of which were extremely successful for nearly a decade. Undertaking sufficient numbers of projects to build a critical mass and allow real change and improvement are essential, as is stretching those with greater capacity. However, Salford recognised the practical limits to engagement emerging from academics' existing workloads.

Given that rigorous research and scholarship take time to do well, Academic Enterprise was unwilling to compromise on academic quality as there is no point in developing Academic Enterprise on weak data of inappropriate understandings of the world. By setting realistic and achievable, but stretching, targets Salford was able to concentrate its limited resources on ensuring the selected initiatives were successful. There is no absolute benchmark of what can be eventually achieved. It depends on capabilities of staff and the university, but also whether senior managers are willing to invest time in getting to know their enterprising academics and when to offer support and when to stretch them.

8.6 Conclusion

The headline message from this chapter is that there is no single recipe for developing successful engagements with companies and excluded communities for the good of local cities and city regions. The chapter has sought to present how the University of Salford developed its approach, hoping helps those wishing to have a more engaged enterprising universities. The Salford perspective is that in the context of the knowledge economy, success will only arise from collaborations successfully mobilising interactions between industry, civil society, the state and university.

But Salford's story has also shown that engagement can, and should, include a stronger relationship with a university's local community. For most universities, despite their moves into distance learning and internationalisation, they are ultimately placed within a specific location. Oxford and Cambridge would be lesser institutions if they moved away from their home towns and it is this that the founders of civic universities also understood. They accepted that the pursuit of knowledge would seek universal truths, a process that could not be bound by a specific place. But this does not mean that the university would remain detached for its locale nor should it have minimal sense of community responsibility. Neither should responsibility be limited to the economic benefit to an area. This, though welcome, is a by-product of a university's core activity: the pursuit and transmission of knowledge. The question then raised is to usefully employ this to lessen urban exclusion and improve social well.

Salford's *Æ* approach arose out of universities' attempts to define itself as something more than a research or teaching institution; drawing on its history and converting an existential threat into an innovative interpretation of a university. Once

this was achieved, Salford was able to explore a means to systemise its engagement to produce increased local benefit through supporting firms and drawing on its knowledge capital to assist the local community. While this story is unique to Salford many of the processes involved could be replicated for any institution seeking an alternative kind of identity. To Salford, it was vital to follow a two stage process, creating a vision and then operationalising that vision through a rich form of ‘empowering democratic leadership’, by people passionate in community engagement was essential.

But leadership alone is insufficient to drive through a cultural change: Leadership need be accompanied by a cadre of enthusiastic academics willing to work in different ways within different constellations. Alongside these, it is the need for a form of coaching that understands academic cultures, in the Salford case, it was also necessary to have a group of professional project managers dedicated to ensuring that academics’ visions were realised. What UPBEAT offered in this context was an innovative tool which helped with addressing uncertainty both to create informative governance oversight and used as self-reflective tool for the project team. If governance is to be supportive and not merely controlling it needs to be connected with a reward structure for academics. In the case of engagement, it is important to concentrate as much on status as monetary rewards, in line with the ways that academics construct their motivations. Finally, appropriate ‘stretch targets’ to ensure increasing and higher quality engagement will help manage expectations and allow the concentration of resources.

Both the present authors are now working together, and independently, to ensure their own community engagement develops more deeply, smartly and effectively. Their further studies, building on the work described in this chapter, reveal the enhanced roles universities, and their academics, should now play in co-identifying real problems worthy of collective solution with our excluded community partners, co-creating of sensible solutions with them which are systemically fit-for-purpose in the global knowledge economy, helping them co-produce those solutions and their stage management into the real world, and further ensuring the continuous improvement of all such solutions so they reach more people with more constructive effect’.

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