

The Foundation for Management Education.

Input for the inquiry into Business-University Collaboration.

The aim of the FME is to work at the interface of Business and Business Schools on issues of relevance in management development and education and other areas of common concern and interest. Formed originally to be the platform for the start of the UK Business Schools it has over the past forty years funded the development of many initiatives linking academic outcomes to business requirements to the tune of some £20m endowed by Corporate donation. Of particular current interest are the importance of inspirational leadership and the concept of action learning in the furtherance of organisational productivity and prosperity and we are currently funding research activity in these areas, which will have a direct feedback to Business. Therefore it would seem highly appropriate for the Foundation to be included in the list of contributors to this inquiry albeit that our field of activity and expertise is limited to the Business school arena of University life.

There is clear evidence that the biggest issue at odds between the two parties in this context is the issue of relevance. There are many drivers for this situation. On the one hand, the Business Schools are seen as the "cash cows" of a University. They are often tasked by their parent Institution to drive up degree programmes and to increase student intake as a means through which the University can compensate for the annual reduction in Government funding at the undergraduate level. Consequently Business and Management is both the fastest growing and most lucrative aspect of University education. This concentration on degree programmes forces the Schools to be highly prescriptive in their approach and the validation and accreditation of programmes becomes a first priority rather than concentrating on programme outcomes which reflect the intrinsic needs of both business and student.

Research activities are also tuned to the career aspirations of the academics rather than to the empirical requirements of business. Although many research projects are of the highest quality the projected audience will tend to be other academics who access the "refereed journals and publications" that score highly on the RAE assessment ladder. These in turn fuel career progression rather than the more pragmatic world of work.

Business on the other hand tends not to use the Business Schools in a partnership arrangement for the furtherance of organisation development. Whilst it is true that many many organisations have "milk round" arrangements with Business Schools for the recruitment of their graduate intake, the sponsored development of middle managers at MBA level or for executive education, there is little real engagement with schools to provide life long learning strategies for internal management development, to influence the programmes content and how they are taught. There is very little opportunity for the practising manager to play a part in the delivery of courses and it is often the case that when academics are engaged specifically on

Company run programmes they will be unable to bespoke their input to specific requirements.

A major issue in the Business/Business School conundrum is that many organisations find the Business School world remote and difficult to tune into. In truth there are probably too many Business Schools with far too much diversity in terms of quality and it is well accepted that there is a dearth of quality faculty within the UK Schools is well accepted.

The Foundation's contribution to the recent CEML report highlighted the potential shortfall in the number of management teachers over the next ten years. This was estimated at being a minimum requirement of 30 recruits each year in order to service the present structure of undergraduate, postgraduate and post-experience management education.

In order to assist in meeting this demand the Foundation has set its future funding plans to focus on the recruitment of new management teachers with an emphasis in discovering those having relevant business experience. However, this of itself exposes the divide between Business and Schools because a career in academia is driven by research expertise. Schools are therefore seeking candidates with a strong research pedigree rather than placing at least equal importance on the issue of relevant workplace experience.

The Government through HEFCE could greatly assist here through the development and acceptability of "Teaching Fellowships" which could be utilised to effect the transferability from business to academic careers. The ESRC could also be persuaded to alter its rules regarding the RAE such that Business Schools are not penalised for employing good teachers who are not research active.

It goes without saying that the FME, from several years of experience, would be very pleased to be involved in the development of a national management teaching fellowship scheme.

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14.5.03

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