

If we discount its early antecedents in academies and monasteries, we may say that the university emerged in the late Middle Ages. This peculiar institution has grown to become one of the pillars of our society, so enduring and adaptable as to seem eternal.

From the very outset, universities have enjoyed a high degree of independence from state interference or other external pressures. They have been 'secular seminaries', in which students and professors enjoyed privilege and prestige within a protected environment. Both aristocratic and meritocratic, they have served to entrench ruling classes while admitting new and even revolutionary ideas to emerge and be tolerated. Wherever tyranny rules, the university is a prime target for suppression.

The great change of recent times has been the explosive growth of the university sector. What was once offered to the privileged or talented few is now considered to be the birthright of all. Everyone can aspire to enlightenment, or at least a degree. This trend now extends even to the Ph.D., a relatively modern German invention. The doctoral thesis is a venture into the unknown, which tests the potential and limitations of an individual, and is as unsettling as Freudian analysis.

But the present and planned increase of the Ph.D. roll is not advocated or demanded by our politicians in terms of personal development. Rather, it is part of the process that is the subject of the present volume. The university is seen as an engine of knowledge production, much of it by the research student (who may go on to play the same role in industry), and that knowledge is seen as supporting economic development. The university has met the market.

How far back should we trace the present tendency to bring the university into active engagement with the world of commerce and industry, just outside its walls? Certainly the Victorians debated it, and the relative value of pure research in relation to applied science ebbed and flowed in the minds of the Greeks.

Perhaps 1964, not 1968, when the unrest spread to Europe, could be chosen as the year in which modern universities began to lose their innocence, with turmoil in Berkeley, California. As the students of the University of California protested against the intrusion of outside influences, their President was pondering policy from a different perspective. Clark Kerr had the year before published a book¹ which seemed dry and joyless, but we must now admit to be prophetic. It introduced the concept of 'the multiversity'. He conceived the university as a knowledge producer, selling that product into society. Kerr's vision has now become a reality.

The market is not a comfortable place: success and failure beckon daily in the pages of the *Financial Times*. There can be no free lunch, even at High Table. Its pulse rate is very high in comparison with both the stately progress of a full university education or the tortuous progression of a difficult research project.

Universities have reacted to this challenge by taking on more and more of the characteristics of a corporation: strong hierarchical

¹ Kerr, C. (1963) *The Uses of the University*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA

control, strategic planning and a preoccupation with the 'bottom line'. This accelerating trend has penetrated to the heart of our most sheltered cloisters. It is a profound change with many implications²⁻⁴.

Essential to any management or moderation of change is a close understanding of its nature and consequences, hence the present volume. It is based on a meeting in Stockholm arranged in early November 2007 by a collaboration between the Academia Europaea and the Wenner-Gren Foundations. It contains contributions from participants in the Conference, both theorists and practitioners, with a particular interest in the interface in question.

In editing the volume, we have been able to group the articles in four parts. In the first section, *Setting the scene*, Sir Brian Heap from Cambridge leads by asking where modern universities are heading. His chapter is followed by analyses by one of us, Lars Engwall, and Richard Whitley from the Manchester Business School regarding the characteristics of universities and their possibilities to act strategically. Finally, Ulrich Teichler from the University of Kassel dwells on the question of what the 'market' means for universities.

Building on this introduction, the second section, *Markets for ideas*, presents three chapters on scientific competition. It starts out with an account of the German Excellence Initiative, with its focus on the competitive allocation of research resources, by Matthias Kleiner from the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft). His contribution is followed by two chapters on IP (intellectual property). The first of these chapters, by Joseph Straus from the Max Planck Institute in Munich, deals with the conflict between academic freedom and IP, whereas the second chapter, by Eoin O'Neill from Trinity College Dublin, reports on his experiences of handling IP issues in Ireland.

While the second section deals with markets for ideas, the third section, *Markets for collaboration*, focuses on the mechanisms that lead to collaboration and exchange between universities and industry. First Günter Stock, from the Berlin–Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, provides arguments for the need to create partnerships between different kinds of public institutions and between public and private institutions. In the following chapter, by Kevin Cullen from the University of Glasgow, we are offered an analysis and empirical examples from Scotland regarding KT (knowledge transfer). Stephen Hagen from Bristol then goes even further, arguing that there has been and should be a movement from technology transfer to knowledge exchange. This view is further elaborated on in the chapter by Yrjö Neuvo, a former Nokia Research Director, where he makes a case for the mutual dependence between industry and universities.

Needless to say, these contributions stimulated reflections and discussions at the Conference. Expressions of these have here been gathered

² Bok, D. (2004) *Universities in the Marketplace. The Commercialization of Higher Education*. Princeton University Press, Princeton

³ Hersh, R.H. and Merrow, J. (2005) *Declining by Degrees: Higher Education at Risk*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York

⁴ Lewis, H.R. (2006) *Excellence without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education*, Public Affairs, New York

in the fourth section of the volume, entitled *Concluding perspectives*. First, Eddie Holt from Dublin wonders what the general public thinks about the increasing linkages between universities and markets. In doing so, he provides some words of concern for universities regarding their future legitimacy. Then Thorsten Nybom from Örebro University presents some historical perspectives on academic freedom, and argues that the present focus on the autonomy of universities is mere rhetorics. Finally, Linda Wedlin of Uppsala University concludes the volume with a chapter in which she, on the basis of the Conference, the contributions to the present volume and her own research, discusses the process and limits of university marketization. In doing so, she points to three general features of the process: (1) social rationalization; (2) changes in regulations and (3) commercialization. She also identifies two specific developments: i.e. efforts to close the gap between universities and to develop universities into strategic actors. Her analysis leads to three fundamental questions, which are likely to remain significant after the publication of the present volume. What are the forces behind the development? How far can the process go? What are the potential adverse consequences? Wedlin argues that the development of universities is part of a more general process of marketization in modern society, and that there are counterbalancing forces.

Although the authors and participants in the Conference have expressed differing views, there are also a considerable number of points of consensus. Some of them may seem to tend towards the sceptical. It is therefore important to keep in mind that an academic is often defined as “one who thinks otherwise”. A constructive scepticism, embracing modern methodologies and ancient truths, is surely what we need if we are to salvage what is best from the old university and integrate it with the new.

It should not be denied that the participants in the Conference, as well as the authors of the present volume, at times seem indignant. Nevertheless, they also seem to feel that our institutions will ride the present wave of commercialization successfully in the end, as they have survived much worse in the past. As the dangers of too great or too comprehensive a trend towards marketization become evident, some individuals and institutions may take steps to mitigate the process. More than ever, there is a case for creating academic enclaves whose independence is protected (for example, by substantial endowments). Then we would find, encapsulated within the university, a microcosm of its former self, devoted to the disinterested pursuit of truth, whatever its consequences.

The Conference took place at Wenner-Gren Center, Stockholm, Sweden on 1–3 November 2007. Our warm thanks go to the Wenner-Gren Foundations for their generous financial support of the Conference and of the surrounding practical arrangements. Special thanks to the Scientific Director of the Foundations, Professor Bertil Daneholt, and the Administrative

Assistant, Maria Helgöstm. We also thank the Secretary General of the Academia Europaea, David Coates, and his colleague, Teresa McGovern. Finally, we are very grateful to our colleagues in the HERCULES group within the Academia Europaea for their support in planning the Conference.

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