

LEADERSHIP INNOVATION
EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Leadership
Foundation**
for Higher Education

HIGHER EDUCATION
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FOR ENGLAND

**Leadership, Innovation, Excellence in
Higher Education**
**A joint conference by Hefce and the
Leadership Foundation**

Ewart Woodbridge CBE
Chief Executive
The Leadership Foundation
for Higher Education

It is really marvellous to be running this conference in collaboration with Hefce and in fact it reflects a wider collaboration because only yesterday a number of us who are on a strategic group overseeing the LGM fund were working in the new context of us working in partnership with Hefce, so all about collaboration and partnership.

A very warm welcome, obviously, to those who are presenting on their LGM projects and also to our Fellows, a very warm welcome to you, not just congratulations to you all for having reached that point on the fellowship project but also to those fellows who are not here, it has been a tremendous exercise. I think that it can bring fame and fortune to some of you, in the sense of taking on that Fellowship project to a wide range of dissemination opportunities and of course you will remember that Professor Stephanie Marshall of the Leadership Foundation published a book, covering the first of the cohorts of our fellowships and she has just told me today that she says she is not going to become rich as a result of it. In the States, our counterpart in the States, the American Council of Education want to promote this there as well.

So it is all about dissemination and it is all about sharing and what I want to do, I am really here to do two things. I am here in a little while to introduce and chair this session with Lord Bilimoria. But let us move through one or two things. These are really reflections on our work, it was actually, today is the 24th of January, this is an important birthday for me because on the 24th of January, four years ago I started in this job and the organisation started and four years on we have obviously achieved quite a lot and I wanted just to reflect on some of these things, some of you who have been to events will have seen these slides before. But it is really to bring them up to date and to reflect on them.

The first thing to reflect on is how we have stabilised the kind of services and developmental processes that we work on for you and with you. It really comes into four work streams. The first of course probably the biggest area of work which is the development of individual leaders. Last year I said at this conference that for the first time there was now a fully integrated development process for leaders in higher education, from middle levels through to vice-chancellor and that has been built on in the last 12 months because we have moved on from simply having programmes which relate to particular levels in the system and we are branching out into other areas. We, of course, have the programme on research team leaders now. We launched last year Leading Teaching Teams. With AHUA, the registrars' organisation, we launched 2020 as we call it, very much a developmental programme for those who are registrars. We have a programme with the academic registrars and the one I like which has the best acronym which is SCALP, which is we developed for aspiring deans of medical schools and we think that is a very appropriate acronym, which is actually Senior Clinical Academic Leaders and Ed Hillhouse is in the audience here and thank you for coming and it was great to work; it was a good example of working with a key professional partner, academic partner in the sector working with key stake holders and developing a really interesting programme. So that is what is happening on individual leaders. On TMP

we really are pleased that the overwhelming majority of appointments of vice-chancellors are alumni of our programme now and this is a completely voluntary programme. So and that has meant that we have now increased the number, the through put to 60 people a year on that programme.

The second area strength in the capacity of leadership that is also growing particularly in terms of customising our programmes to institutions but also a lot of work in relation to organisational development and change and developing of senior teams and last year we worked in 43 institutions in that capacity and what is nice is when the LGM process, Hefce's LGM scheme and us come together. So one of the most interesting projects which was published during the autumn of last year was the one by José Chambers, one of our longstanding supporters and in fact associate of ours, assistant vice-chancellor of Winchester University, on organisational development in higher education. It is great to see the LGM process working together with our own.

Fostering professional learning networks is really important and I have mentioned some of the examples already like with AHUA and like with the Council of Heads of Medical Schools and so on and that is an important area of developing learning opportunities because it cuts across institutions, it cuts across the centre.

And the fourth area on research we have kind of reached a turning point because we commissioned nearly a million pounds worth of research in the first three and half years and all that is coming together at a summit which we are holding in February and I would love to give you a promotion to come to it but actually it is full and this showcases all our research; and I mean it is all available on the web but we are very pleased about that interest that, because we felt that as well as being practitioners in leadership development, we must have a properly commissioned evidence base as well. So that is the way it is developing.

Many of you may have seen this before and I am not going to talk to this slide because it is in our booklets and it is something that I have spoken about before and it continues to be the framework of 15 leadership challenges driving change in HE. I would only say two things about it and I think that one starts to see clusters of these. I see a cluster, in terms of the ones, in fact in a recent, again Hefce meeting, the steering group on workforce development, someone, an HR director there was saying that he was thinking that we ought to look at the issues that institutions are obsessing about and if you look at that there are clusters here and one of the clusters here is all about fees, funding, market positioning, brand, competition and collaboration is definitely a cluster. There was a cluster clearly around the kind of societal and social agendas and sustainability and it is clearly a cluster around student numbers and access and widening participation. But what I, in my view what that, what is happening to that is that they are all important but the pressure for change is intensifying and so that is all I really want to say on that, it remains the thing that informs our work and the other aspect

that informs our work is, well, what continues to be the priority of development issues in response to that change agenda.

That continues to be the sort of pecking order, succession planning seems to be still a crucial issue, not who's to be the next vice-chancellor but who are the people who are, we need to be working out who will be leaders at middle and middle to senior levels and have we got a culture that really is working on that?

Market positioning, marketing, coping with change. I would like to do one and one only promotion which is we developed a new series of one-day seminars called the Holborn Series. It happens to take place in Holborn which is why it is called that where we are and the first one on the 21st of February and there are details out there on this sort of sepia orange coloured sheet is on leading and managing complex change and it is just a fantastic set of speakers there, led by somebody who has just recently issued, David McLeod, who has issued a really exciting new book on change called The Extra Mile.

Leadership of teaching and research, fund raising, interestingly there is, some of you may know that there is a new government initiative launched by the previous Prime Minister on voluntary giving. It is a match funding one and when a working group of UUK and Guild HE and I think Hefce were looking at how was this 200 million pounds going to be distributed as matching funding they picked up that a lot of institutions did not feel that they were sufficiently equipped to deal with fundraising of the style that that was suggesting. So there is a gap there. Middle management development is a priority, internationalisation a very fast growing one and governance.

Lots of models, kind of inform our thinking. I quite like that one which comes out of one of the research projects we are about to launch which is the project by Tom Kennie and Steve Woodfield on teams in higher education, particularly on senior teams. What I pick out of that are three things.

First of all leadership is a 360 degree process anyway. I like the word engage, I think engaging is such a crucial issue whether it be internally or externally but the most important thing is that the process starts with managing yourself and the most important thing in leadership often is simply having an awareness of yourself and your impact on others. Which leads me to remind you of our own learning processes. We believe the most important case study is the case study of your own institution, your own situation and being given the opportunity to reflect on that and so action and reflection lies at the heart of our pedagogy whether it be on our external programmes or working inside your institutions.

Engaging with networks is important, people learn well in networks. There are specific skills gaps that need to be met and sometimes they are very basic ones. We had 12 vice-chancellors together at the National School of Government with 12 counterparts from other sectors talking about performance management. I think that was really good, a good 24 hours on a basic skill that is important at all levels. Thinking outside the box that is important too and we take occasionally higher education leaders into other places. We took them into the BBC, we took them this autumn into the London Borough of Lewisham, which was a fascinating process. Just a couple of quotes from our research and I think we are as a sector, and I say this four years on, building on success. We are a successful sector, let us not beat ourselves up, we are good at leadership and management and governance, the issue for us is facing the challenges in the future and are we equipped for that?

But in the research by Tom Kennie and Steve Woodfield, there are some nice comments and sometimes you do find you are surprised by who is doing what in higher education and his, their quotes are from top teams. “I thought as myself as a good team worker, using a football analogy I saw myself as a strong mid-field player, pick up the ball, move it onto someone else in a better position, help move things forward but it didn’t seem to work like that.” This is someone on a senior leadership team in higher education. “Increasingly, I kept being asked why are you giving me the ball, can’t you give it to someone else or why not do it yourself. Increasingly, I recognised my metaphor for team working was wrong and it struck me. It wasn’t a football team I was in, I suddenly noticed that one of the of the team players was running faster and faster round the track, another was trying to jump higher and another was throwing a long pointed instrument as far as he could trying not to hit the others but I wasn’t always so sure about that.” And lots of lovely quotes in that. What matters with our research is bringing the kind of, perhaps I should, the only other one I thought was: “It is called the University Management Team, they changed the name about a couple of years ago because they wanted to make it sound like it was part of the university.”

So the issues from our research are being published as we speak. Team effectiveness is important and when that is published if you read nothing else, read the report by Woodfield and Kennie on team leadership. So practical, so full of examples, we have had Glynis Breakwell, vice-chancellor of Bath University looking at vice-chancellors and what they do but the issue that came out was are we smart enough in the way we appoint vice-chancellors. A very interesting issue for search consultancies there. Role clarity another very interesting one is the one on the role and the nature of the pro vice-chancellor’s role. We have a mess in a sense in higher education in terms of, you might call it the diversity which is a nice polite word, for the way in which the pro vice-chancellor role is done. A lot of the research is about cross sector engagement and partnerships. One that particularly interests me is on the professional career. Celia Whitchurch, Institute of Education, is just about to publish her report on the professional career and in parallel with that and there are people in this room who are involved in this, we have a working group with AHUA, AUA and the UPA on looking at the professional career. Two thirds of the workforce of higher education are professional and support staff and not academics. We need to remember that is a very

important part of the group, of the institution. We have got John Lauwerys who was the registrar for – Southampton University now retired, producing case studies of stories of the career journey. And the other one which is really interesting by Professor Jonathon Gosling is on improving collaborative change management processes. So finally what are the future projects? Well it goes on and some of the, a lot of the future is about refining and developing the ideas from where we have come from over the last four years.

Effective governance is a major one and I am pleased to see senior people associated with the CUC, Andrew Cubie, who chairs the CUC, and David Fletcher here. Governance is a major one and we have nearly a £400,000 programme of work on governance and the effective of governance. Diversity is important and I am pleased that we are collaborating with the ECU, Equality Challenge Unit, on diversity research. The international university is a key issue about building the capacity of UK institutions to respond to international opportunity. I think that another major agenda is the whole issue of business and community engagement and our skills at dealing with that and you might say what a stupid question to end with, but in all of this we constantly have to ask the question what are universities for? When we bring 12 vice-chancellors together with their counterparts from other sectors at the National School of Government this summer we will be posing that question. A number of vice-chancellors want to ask that question. Not that they don't necessarily know the answer, but it is to make sure this whole leadership thing is not about simply being like business and like being managerialist. Universities are hugely complex organisations and we have to ask, we must at no point in this process throw some very important babies out with the bath water. We have to say what are universities for in the widest sense, whilst making them very sharply focused businesses.