



MOTIVES FOR UNIVERSITIES ENGAGING IN THE LIVING VALUES PILOT PROJECT

The motives for the pilot universities varied greatly. They are summarised below.

The Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (Egypt),

The AASTMT decided to engage in the pilot process to be able to monitor its own values and its related practices, and to distinguish and enhance its effectiveness and other internal processes. It wanted to make sure that all core values are relevant and exist and to increase its world ranking and to improve its reputation.

The University Politehnica of Bucharest (Romania),

UPB was gearing up for a major milestone in 2018 when it celebrated 200 years of technical tertiary education. The 200-year anniversary represented 'a great opportunity' to restate its values and to reaffirm its identity in the local, regional and international higher education landscape.

The decision to participate in the *Living Values Pilot Project* was based on the need to achieve the following goals:

- To identify the values profile of the institution
- To guide the development process of the university
- To enhance the engagement of the academic community in order to promote the values and principles of the university
- To encourage effective exchanges between UPB and MCO members

The leadership team of the university considered it important to engage all the staff in the institutional project. The involvement in this project would provide contexts to share opinions, ideas, needs and interests and to reinforce the culture of communication and openness. It believes that effective working relationships are critical to university success.

The University of Campinas (UNICAMP) (Brazil),

Unicamp wanted to help bring values beside facts to reorient the goals of the institution.

Participation in the Living Values project was seen as providing an opportunity to check that the University was in tune with society, supporting its cultural, scientific and technological development.

It wanted to check the integration of the three main academic activities: preparation of highly qualified human resources, advancement of knowledge and the contribution to the society where it is inserted (teaching-research-extension tripod). It wanted to check its guarantee to the students regarding exercising citizenship and providing adequate conditions for personal development.

It wanted to know how much the internal Unicamp community considered its values. It wanted to clarify how much of the demands and values of the ever-changing society were affecting Unicamp goals and policies. It wanted to check whether the university's autonomy allowed the university to move forward in terms of its interaction with the Internal and external community and identify the scope of its contribution to society, beyond offering a large number of graduates and scientific publications.

While it has processes that clearly define its mission, principles and values it could not assess how many students, faculty members and staff were conscious of these elements when choosing Unicamp. It wanted to reach out to potential candidates from different origins but did not know if they seek its underlying values and opportunities, the prestige of the institution, its gratuity or a combination of all these.

Besides these intrinsic aspects, the international agenda on sustainable development goals, the recent sociopolitical national environment, and the growing focus on social accountability, specially taking into account the condition of Unicamp as a public, and free-for-tuition charge state institution, demanded a revision of the values underpinning its internal policies.

The participatory process of revising if the defined values are live and practiced by all groups, at all levels (students, faculty members and staff), was seen as being able to bring to surface important debates and align expectations which may help reorient Unicamp directions and its mission on education, research, and extension to society. In this sense, the pilot project of Living Values by *Magna Charta Observatory* provides a unique opportunity and was perfectly timed to help advance this relevant discussion.

Glasgow Caledonian University (UK),

A big drop in employee engagement in 2011 following a large-scale organisational restructuring process was a serious cause for concern. While the aim of realigning departments and subject disciplines was to enhance productivity and effectiveness in pursuit of our goals it was seen, in some areas, to have had the opposite effect. In hindsight it appears that the scale and scope of the changes coupled with a lack of staff connection to the rationale for those changes, had a serious negative impact on employee engagement: this was clearly reflected in responses to engagement focused questions in the 2011 GCU staff survey.

The university recognised that while its Mission and our Strategic Vision described the **Why** and the **What** of its organizational narrative it was missing the **How**. The university values at the time had limited connection to the University mission and

very few people knew what they were. It was clear that the University had to go back to its staff and students and identify our organisational values from the ground up.

The University of Mauritius,

The motive for participating lie within the increasingly interwoven and interacting fabric of the society within which universities operate. No university can claim to be totally immune from external pressures and occasionally there will be attempts, (sometimes subtle, sometimes more blatant) which will challenge the university's autonomy. The UoM has experienced at least one such serious case in the past when external influence tried to undermine an internal organizational restructuring and the then Vice-Chancellor resigned in protest in January 2012. Upon pressure exercised by the academic staff through articles and interviews in the press, government appointed an external, independent Visitor to investigate and make recommendations on consolidating the University's autonomy. Following the Visitor's recommendations, the initial restructuring with the appropriate adjustments was put in place, and the Visitor in his Report, also acceded to the staff's request for the UoM to become a signatory of the MCU.

As a publicly-funded university it felt the need to remain forever watchful and mindful of such pressures. The incident provided the initial motivation for our signing of the MCU, and now our active participation in the Living Values Project is another mark of our continuing commitment to the fundamental values of Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom.

Whilst the above external factors provided the initial impetus for our signing up to the values enshrined in the MCU, we also saw in the Living Values Project, the possibility of using it as an external catalyst which could help us consolidate the above values and furthermore promote some other specific values of importance to us.

Stockholm University (Sweden)

The overall motivation was threefold:

- a) ensuring that fundamental and institutional values become an integral part of the central strategy and become better anchored in the university as a whole;
- b) to get input bottom-up to the top-down process of forming a strategy;
- c) to serve as a way to bench-mark internationally in the strategic work with fundamental and institutional values.

The University of Tasmania (Australia)

It was 6 years since the University's Statement of Values had been endorsed and the University had become a signatory to the MCU and the pilot offered a timely opportunity to review the Statement of Values and better understand the role it and the MCU played at the University of Tasmania.

It was a time of transition and cultural change for the University. The Vice-Chancellor had announced his move elsewhere. A new VC took up the post during the project. The project offered an opportunity for systematic reflection.

Ethical leadership is a theme and practice that threaded through the new VC's career and is central to the new leadership culture and approach to management he is introducing to the University. The 'cascading conversations' that have been initiated recently within the University, in the first instance to guide a new strategic plan, were emblematic of this. These collegial, locally-led, institution-wide conversations have been underpinned by three key questions, each with a strong values component.

1. Do we want to be a place-based University that is globally connected or do we want to be a University cast in the global model?
2. Do we want to continue in a growth model or adopt a right-size approach to our future?
3. What are the parameters (for example, those of equity, quality and regional presence) we are committed to in the delivery of higher education in Tasmania?

While any discussion about strategy has implicit values, what is notable here is the methodology, which is intended to be used for all matters of university-wide significance. With the key elements of our Statement of Values being brought to life through the process, it could be suggested that we, at the University of Tasmania, are experiencing "living values" as we participate in these conversations.

DJL (ed)

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