



REPORTS FROM WORKSHOPS HELD IN SALAMANCA

Session 1 – Values based leadership

The evidence and subsequent discussion were based on report from the University of Tasmania

Introduction by David Lock:

This featured an example from the British University in Dubai, where the first topic at the inaugural meeting of academic staff was: ‘What should the values of the University be?’ This was significant as the staff came from several different countries, the university would face novel situations and not all the regulations had been finalised. Hence values would serve to guide university approaches and responses. It worked well.

Pilot presentation by Dean Munday

The pilot site provided evidence from two VCs. Original responses: enthusiasm, scepticism, fear. But all the voices were accepted.

- The University of Tasmania changed VC during the project - which provided an opportunity to reflect
- The pilot project was implemented under two VCs, which marked a change of attitude, but the focus on values continued – albeit not in the form recommended by the guidelines.
- New culture of *trust* – the University is *living* the values
- Trust is a priority, a *critical* value; this enables to invest in people and their skills
- Showing the values of the University is an important tool both for selecting staff and engaging with external stake-holders
- Implementation: “cascading conversations”, creation of a new narrative
- Values not only words and ideas but realized in real life
- Monitoring: discussion with individuals and call for participation. Creating a strategic forum, to continue the project in the future
- Experiencing living values by the personal example of the leader; this creates joy in participating in values-based leadership

- The whole exercise is conceived as a *work in progress* and should not be “petrified” in strategic plans
- One of the topics in the discussion was around the question: what is more important, the implementation of values or inserting new values in the existing set

Session 2 – Engaging the students

(There was no pilot present, and the participants were not many – and only two students. Because of this Eva had to make a long introduction, which practically was based on her experience as an ambassador in two Universities)

Introduction by Eva Egron-Polak: The pilots should involve all the stake-holders and certainly students, despite this being difficult. Student involvement in the issue of values is **very** important. In the two Universities she visited students did not engage until the very end. So we should think of ways for them to get involved and engage.

- It is not that the students have no interest, but their not involvement seems to be due to the fact that the discussion is quite abstract
- It should be explained to them what the values mean in reality, and when we do this, they respond and engage. They need the right “interface”
- When you translate values in practical questions, they respond
- (a student from Brazil) Social problems can make students to engage. It is in the hands of the students to guide the University into useful values
- (in Brazil) it is important for the University to show the value of opening-up access
- Many Universities have values but do not live their values. If the students were asked “Do we live our values” they would engage more
- The students are different groups. We have to connect with their “spaces” and discussions and put the right questions
- We can engage small groups, not large, and focus on practical things
- The students can be allies of the University if you explain to them what the values mean
- The students are frustrated when they suggest something and then nothing happens. The decision-founded process should be very clear to avoid frustrations
- The discussion about values in one University was very enthusiastic because it was different from the usual topics (ie budget, program, audit)
- What are our expectations from the students? We have to know that before taking further steps and asking questions
- List of values with guidelines can be very useful

- A student from Macau talked about the value of social responsibility and the need for Universities to create new areas of opportunity and keep student talent
- The project is about encouraging Universities to *live* the values, not *talk* about them.

Session 2.4 - Engaging with the Strategic Planning process

(How did a focus on values integrate with formulating and implementing the strategic plan and related academic and administrative processes, how did it facilitate change, what worked and what didn't.)

Notes from the workshop session 2.4 held in Salamanca on 17 September 2018

Facilitator: John Davies

Pilot sites:

University of Stockholm – Astrid Soderbergh Widding

University of Tasmania -Dean Munday

Rapporteur: David Lock

Introduction

Strategic planning is a practical mechanism for embedding institutional values into decisions about the future and a series of organisational functions. Fundamentally it ascertains 'where the university is now', 'where does it want to be' and identifies the gaps and how they are to be filled.

Strategic planning can help institutions to position themselves based on their identity with a view to achieving sustainability. It can contain a profile of institutional programmes, student competences, internationalisation, its stakeholders and how it engages with them. It can include a series of operational strategies, including finance, other resources, administration and other functional plans.

The discipline and process of strategic planning can be as important as the actual plan which results from it as it engages people from the university in the cycle of planning. It can affect individual and departmental behaviour towards the achievement of institutional goals.

University of Stockholm

The University had engaged in the Living Values piloting process at a time when a revision of the strategy was needed and it wanted a parallel process as a context for identifying Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It wanted its strategy document to be

an expression of core values, ethics and student inclusion. The Living Values process contributed to the planning process both in terms of informing process and content.

The strategy formulation process was previously top-down. It was described as 'a rapid process' which the VC was not happy with and a reality check was needed. Would the strategic plan survive a bottom-up process?

Through the Living Values pilot project, the plan was discussed at all levels of the University and a large number of reports were produced. The process identified diverging views, and there was disagreement with 2/3 of the institutional values. It pointed to where action was necessary. It served as a 'unifying process'. Staff found that they shared a vision. The Living Values project had provided 'over-arching' guidelines against which progress could be compared; i.e. a reality check. The planning process is still work in progress.

(More details of the University's experience can be found at <http://www.magna-charta.org/resources/files/living-values-reports/stockholm-university>)

University of Tasmania

A new strategy was being drawn up. A new college model was being implemented.

The Living Values project was used to engage staff in appreciative enquiry through participative processes such as workshops, 'open space', 'strategic forums' etc to respond to themes. 'What are your experiences of the university at its best regarding xxxx?' 'What sort of university do we want to be?' 'What size do we want to be?' would be typical questions.

The new strategy was to be part of a 5-year cycle. The university wished to engage with internal and external stakeholders. The process was led from the top through a strategy team, generated 'honest and frank communications' and focussed on a limited number of values. It elucidated that some aspects of the University's operations were impediments to its success (e.g. casual and short-term staff).

The Living Values process had been found to be 'very powerful in practice' and had enabled a 'shared purpose across the university' There is evidence that it has been influential in reconceptualising mission, vision and positioning and it might be anticipated that the values will inform practice in regional engagement and related functions, priorities, programmes, HR and supporting governance.

(More details of the University's experience can be found at <http://www.magna-charta.org/resources/files/living-values-reports/the-university-of-tasmania>)

Points from the open questions and discussion session

The Living Values project can be contextualised for individual universities. It is not prescriptive. Participation is a voluntary decision. It is designed to empower

institutions – not restrict or limit them. This is appropriate given the spectrum of different types of universities with different missions.

Values can be an elusive concept. Defining them can be challenging. The notion of ‘principles’ is also relevant. ‘What makes us the institution we are?’ might be a useful question. Differences of opinion are common.

The *process* of discussing values can be as valuable as the actual values selected.

Values need refreshing from time to time. The impetus for doing this can vary from a crisis, to a change of leadership or revision of a strategic plan.

A small number of memorable values (such as ‘kindness’) makes it more likely that values will be lived.

Living your values is a complicated process. Different values may be appropriate in different units of the university. Feeding back to staff on successes and challenges in living values is essential. Exhibitions can be used for this. Shared pride can result.

Values need to be embedded. This can be done via a ‘beacon’ approach or a ‘cascade’ approach. They can be embedded in the strategic plan, the supporting plans and the operations of the university.

The adoption of values should not give rise to a bureaucratic approach.

The notion of ‘trust’ (rather than ‘suspicion’ or ‘control’) is important if values are to have maximum effect.

Administrative staff values can vary from those of academic staff (which suggests that all staff should be involved in the process of identifying values).

Values can take different forms. ‘Strategic values’ (to be critical, innovative etc) ‘Over-arching values’ (academic freedom etc), ‘Operational values’ (equity, justice, tolerance, etc) etc (Other typologies are available.)

Are staff getting tired of strategic processes? Are 3-year plans better than 5-year plans? The budget cycle should be connected to the planning cycle.

The strategic planning process should be bespoke and achieve the active involvement of internal and external stakeholders. ‘Off the shelf’ strategic plans are unlikely to deliver results.

The UN SDGs are examples of values that might be picked up in university strategic plans (but an appropriate selection from them – not all of them).

The development and embedding of values is a journey. The Living Values project is work in progress in all of the pilot institutions. Stages of it should be re-visited periodically.

Involving students is a good idea. The possibility of creating a new generation of students that will be more responsible to society could generate change.

In some situations, the 'top team' might find it useful to stand back and let the process be run by a project-led middle management team.

University committees should make reference to values when making/justifying decisions.

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