THE NEW WAVE UNIVERSITY
A PRELUDE TO MALAYSIA 2020

2nd Edition

Foreword by
MOHD NAJIB TUN ABDUL RAZAK
Minister of Education, Malaysia

Edited by
GHAZALLY ISMAIL
MURTEDZA MOHAMED

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Over the past century, technology has created a tremendous impact on our economy and has inadvertently forced us to re-examine our higher education system. Two crucial improvements are necessary in our education system: first, to ensure that people are technologically literate and develop a high level of thinking skills by using new approaches to develop and implement the curriculum; and second, to humanise the learning environment by using natural learning processes that involve social, active and collaborative approaches.

The fragmentation of knowledge with the compartmentalisation of subjects having little perceived association to relevant learner experiences needs changing. All these call for a paradigm shift in education and training—from the factory model of the industrial age to the social critical thinking model of the global information age. Personal qualities such as honesty, integrity, acceptance of diversity, ethics, critical thinking, working in harmony, adapting to change, conflict resolution, etc. need to be dealt with in the curriculum. Individual differences and cultural diversity can be used to enrich and strengthen the learning environment, thus developing tolerance, acceptance and a better understanding of the world. Cognitive development must therefore become the vehicle to develop these personal qualities.

In developing an appropriate educational system for the 21st century, based on the aforementioned model, the spectrum of issues that need to be closely examined remains as varied, if not much more complex than that of the traditional model. This book, therefore, should serve as fine reading material for harnessing views on teaching-learning, quality assurance, human resource, research, and other relevant and interrelated elements, addressing the needs and strategies for the restructuring of higher education in Malaysia and globally.
PREFACE

GHAZALLY ISMAIL
MURTEDZA MOHAMED

There are earthly things more splendid than a university. In these days of broken frontiers and collapsing values—when every future looks grim, and every ancient foothold has become something of a quagmire—wherever a university stands, it stands and shines; wherever it exists, the free minds of men, urged on to full and fair inquiry, may still bring wisdom into human affairs.

John Masefield

The definite form universities in Malaysia ought to take in dealing with the realities of the 21st century is a subject of immense interest. This new form must be moulded by the desire to be contemporary, forward-thinking and societally relevant. To meet new needs and situations amidst our complex and dynamic nature of higher education today, the emergence of the new wave university is simply inevitable. It is a pre-requisite to realising Malaysia’s Vision 2020.

This book advocates a re-examination of the many pressing and critical issues facing our universities. The chapters are intended to assist academics, educators and policy-makers in a process of critical reflection of the outcomes and effectiveness of our practices in providing higher education to the present generation in relation to the demands of an industrialised Malaysia 2020. Topics have been selected from a variety of areas important for this critical reflection.

The first chapters stress the priority of recognising, managing, adapting to and directing changes as an initial crucial step in developing a responsive new age university. In the subsequent chapters, the focus shifts to the quality issues in higher education, and the last chapters pull together case observations, analysis of local scenarios and new impera-
tives of Malaysian universities so as to attain viability and competitiveness. These include their research and development (R&D), human resource development and foresight on the use of electronic technology and innovative "product" packaging as an alternative instructional mode to enhance the teaching-learning process.

Universities of the 21st century must be prepared and able to deal effectively with three basic perspectives confronting them.

**Managing Change:**

**Means of Coping with New Conditions and Challenges**

Changing and adapting are two essential requirements for survival and growth. Universities generally operate with no great sense of urgency and, by their nature, are more conservative and protective. Here, inertia reigns and valuable traditions and *status quo* are jealously guarded against disturbing change. Thus, many academics respond to change with anxiety because it involves redefining value and transforming the "academic culture" of the university. But universities today are confronting daunting new challenges as they enter the early years of the 21st century. They are forced to grapple with these pervasive changes in order to meet the demands of the times: the relevance of their study programmes to societal needs, their role in social, economic and political activities, etc.

The real challenge for a new age university is to remain contemporary. It must preserve what is most valuable in its tradition, while at the same time introducing the changes required by a dynamic society entering the 21st century. Universities must ask which changes they must take, rather than whether or not changes will be required. Meaningful change is much more than merely cosmetic. Significant change must involve innovation, that is, the purposeful action taken to accomplish something new. To achieve this, universities must create environments that encourage innovative thinking and risk taking.

Change involves careful planning and should not be left to chance. A successful change can only last to benefit the university and the academia if it is supported by proven strategies for implementing and sustaining change. Managing change is thus going to be a subject of immense importance in the 21st century.
Quality and its Assurance:  
The Education Agenda of the 21st Century

The overall capacities and qualities of Malaysian universities are critical to achieving the country's vision of becoming an industrialised nation by the year 2020. To ensure the contributions expected of them, Malaysian university education should be of high quality in all its endeavours. Universities must deliver programmes of the right quality and to customer satisfaction. Their R&D functions must be strengthened to meet economic needs.

Within the industry, the quality movement has not only affected the performance of every stratum of the workforce but has also changed the relationship between fellow workers and their clients. The incorporation of the quality approach in universities however is not going to be easy. Academics tend to act autonomously and independently, and occasionally are loners or mavericks. Their allegiance tends to be to a discipline or subject rather than to an institution.

Therefore, in any attempt to transform the work philosophy of academia, universities must have a well-defined mission with a diversity of goals and objectives. Each academic unit then will have the responsibility of developing its own quality assurance mechanism to fulfil the requirements of the university's quality standards.

Honouring Traditions while Building the Future

With the ever-increasing awareness of "knowledge is the key to survival", Malaysian universities must continue to play the traditional role of strengthening the capabilities of doing good science. We need basic knowledge produced through performing high-quality basic research in various disciplines. We need the skills to apply this knowledge and to communicate it between the scientists and the people. We need to continuously update knowledge and skills. These are the basic perspectives needed to deal with the realities of the 21st century.

The critical importance of higher education to the economic development of the nation is now widely recognised. To meet the needs of the people in the contemporary world, a prime goal for a university is the development of competence: competence to develop the innovative capacity of industry, competence to simulate the vitality of university’s
own R&D, and competence to participate and contribute to national economic development.

High-quality basic research at universities and high-quality industrial development work are prerequisites for one another. Therefore, in dealing with the realities of the 21st century, it does not involve abandoning tradition. To neglect the traditional function of the university would be neither desirable nor possible. But it does involve transcending or reformulating tradition to deal with the new realities. The university’s role must therefore focus on people in society, on the service of university to society and on meeting the complex and varied needs of people in the contemporary world.

To meet and manage these changing roles of Malaysian universities also spells the need for increased expenditure in providing sophisticated instructional support, in building scientific and technical competence and in increasing and stimulating R&D activities in universities, public agencies and industries. The question remains: can Malaysia afford it? Perhaps a far more relevant question is whether we can afford to support the growth of our universities in accomplishing this transition, that is, facilitating this transition process with the intention of delivering the opportunities and the “goodies” expected of them.

To answer this, several conclusions from studies carried out in the United States can be highlighted here to drive home the point in favour of continuing high investment in developing and harnessing educational resources. In 1986, the National Commission on the Role and Future of State Colleges and Universities concluded that “Ignorance is costly—it is the passageway to a disastrous fall from which America may never recover”. In 1988, Senator Paul Simon pointed out that the costs of not educating disadvantaged young men and women for careers and jobs alone is over US$255 billion a year in productivity, welfare and expenses related to crime prevention and the criminal justice system.

Education is thus a major contributor to economic growth in the United States. Although similar types of studies have not been carried out in Malaysia, the answer seems clear that “university education helps to create the wealth that finances it”.


Malaysia must continue to increase support for its universities to assume the new role in meeting the social, economic and political needs of the 21st century; for not to do so can only result in national disaster.
CONTRIBUTORS

Dr Harry Gray has worked in higher education since 1966 as a teacher trainer and, since 1970, as management trainer and consultant specialising in education and public service management. Most of his present work is with the UK Employment Department, but he has a number of other clients in the United Kingdom and overseas. He is a member of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) working party on management development for senior academics in universities, and a founding member of CHECC.

Professor Ghazally Ismail is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in charge of research and services. He has had vast experience as a university administrator and an effective manager of scientific research and development. His research interests include many aspects of microbiology and immunology, and he has published extensively on nature education and conservation of Borneo's flora and fauna.

Professor M. Zawawi Ismail is the founding Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak upon whose vision UNIMAS was developed and progressively transformed into a contemporary university with a forward-looking mission. He has served with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, where he gained useful experience in human resource training and development for institutes of higher education.

Michael Carney currently runs his own quality assurance and evaluation consultancy business with clients mainly within higher education. His main focus is helping staff teams develop approaches to quality assurance and to put them into practice. He has had 25 years' experience
in a variety of educational institutions. Amongst his current clients is the University of Leeds, where he has advised the university’s management on its quality assurance procedures.

Professor John Stephenson has been Director of Higher Education for Capability (HEC) since it was founded in 1988 and has been largely responsible for building up its activities and establishing its character and success. He is acknowledged as a leading expert in the development of courses which help students become capable and flexible lifelong learners as well as being knowledgeable specialists.

Professor Geoffrey Wain has taught and researched extensively in the field of Mathematics Education at the University of Leeds. He is currently with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), where his major responsibility is to devise a series of training modules and procedures for the academic staff of UNIMAS in quality assurance of teaching and research.

Professor Zahran Halim is the Director of the Institute of Software Technology, at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. He is a Professor in Information Technology and has been responsible for the development of IT infrastructures and research activities on campus currently.
I firmly believe that any organisation, in order to survive and achieve success, must have a sound set of beliefs on which it premises all its policies and actions. Next I believe that the most important single factor in corporate success is faithful adherence to those beliefs. And, finally, I believe if an organisation is to meet the challenge of a changing world, it must be prepared to change everything about itself except those beliefs as it moves through corporate life.

Thomas J. Watson, Jr.

Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.

John F. Kennedy

A Period of Unprecedented Change

There can be no one working in Higher Education (HE) today who is not aware in some measure that tremendous changes are taking place in the forms and structures of higher education. In the last two or three years, changes have occurred of a magnitude never previously experienced. Yet most people share in only a part of the action and it may be difficult to comprehend the whole diverse yet increasingly coherent picture. This chapter will try to place these changes in context and to indi-
cate what are perceived to be some of the major changes. A prediction of the key themes as reorganisation settles down and the different initiatives accommodate to one another will be described.

It is quite clear that there has been a major shift in HE from being delivered by individual institutions which exist or coexist in separation from one another to their being perceived as a national system perhaps with regional identities. Already Further Education (FE) is in the process of absorption into HE so that all post-sixteen education will fall under the same banner, even if there remain different funding bodies and mechanisms. It is more than probable that there will be an amalgamation of the government departments dealing with employment training and education (Employment Department and Department for Education). If that is not the government’s intention, then it ought to be. In any case, FE and HE are already considered as part of a single garment and FE will be subsume in every mention of HE in this chapter.

**Location and Presence**

There is an increase in the number and variety of locations used for HE. The Open University is not the only institution to use several disparate campuses. There are also many courses provided by HE institutions on a custom designed basis for large employers including giant corporations like the British Airways and the public sectors such as the United Kingdom’s Health Service. Some industries and employers run a variety of programmes with one or more Higher Education institutions such as the EDAP (Employee Development and Assistance Programme) programmes in the United Kingdom. Such arrangements are likely to increase in both quantity and variety.

**A National Service**

The reality is that HE is now being recognised as a service industry, a national public service that is delivered in a variety of ways for a number of clients, customers and stakeholders. It is a considerable change from the time when HE was selective and elitist and when the students were considered to be subordinate to the needs and desires of lecturers and both to the institutions. Indeed, the reversal of roles as to who serves
whom is almost complete and this threatens the sense of identity of both lecturers and the managers of the institutions.

It is also coming to be recognised that the purpose of HE is not to process students or even engage in teaching and research. There is a more fundamental and critical process that constitutes the core mission of the institutions both individually and collectively. The core task of universities is the development of intellectual capital. That is, to provide an added value to knowledge through partnership with a variety of co-partners and clients. The development of intellectual capital is a collaborative activity through which everyone benefits and the public stock of intellectual capital is enriched.

**Unpicking Research and Teaching**

One consequence of these new activities and emphases is that there will be a greater differentiation among functions and a newer function of integration. This will happen in different terms, unlike in the past when the integration of research with teaching occurred only in the head of the lecturer. There will certainly be a rise in the number of graduate and undergraduate schools and the setting up of research institutes and networks, making a three-dimensional organisation where once there was only a unitary complexity. There will also be a recognition that there may be competing functions in education, training and research; an argument that will continue for a long time and never be quite resolved.

The nature of research will have to be examined very carefully to distinguish between the various kinds of research and scholarship. Particular attention will have to be given to research which is funded by either the institutions or outside bodies. This expensive research must be weighed against less expensive and personal research which individuals and small teams engage in. There will be a question mark about the value given to research when major considerations are sometimes the cost of funding or the procurement of funds to and within an institutional setting.

**The Market Concept**

All of this means that HE will be recognised as functioning in a marketplace, albeit an impure one. The idea of 'marketplace' is useful be-
cause it helps us to understand the negotiated and contractual relationship among individuals and organisations involved in education. The market can be described in terms of the ecosystem or environment of an educational organisation; and environmental transactions can be described in terms of a marketplace. Whether we like it or not, HE, much more than primary and secondary education, does function—and is well able to function—in a market; indeed, it always has. But there are particular reasons why market functioning is important today.

The market concept helps us to describe very clearly the various relationships among the players in HE. It helps us to understand who the clients, customers and stakeholders are; who the contractors are, and what kinds of contract are involved; who are accountable and responsible and to whom; and how financial matters may be arranged and organised. It helps us to understand the nature of provision and who are the providers and why they provide whatever they do provide and whom they seek out and why.

The market concept helps us to understand the nature of HE management structures and administrative procedures. And it also helps to explain the broader structures that support an educational system and how they interrelate with the parts. In fact, many of these are not well thought out, have grown by accident and with little coherent forethought. This is understandable since education is highly complex in its social and economic forms but we are going through a period of unscrambling that still lacks a sound conceptual underpinning.

The Educational Process
It is as much a problem of HE as of other levels of education that most of this chapter is about formal and institutional manifestations. Yet education itself is a personal and even private process, albeit taking place, for the most part, in the company of other people. It may well be one of the fundamental fallacies of the current restructuring of the HE system to see education as a simple matter of institutionalisation; making formal changes in the formal structure. But the recognition of reality will always be at least a subscript to change processes and with luck will achieve a higher and more influential profile. Maybe the reductionism apparent in so much ‘skills’ thinking will help to awaken more holistic
and person-centred views of the educational process. Delivery, development and relevance cannot be sustained solely within an institutional context and there must always be room for freedom of choice in the ways people learn.

**Institutions Within the System**

However, the subject of this chapter is the institutional aspects of Higher Education and the new thinking that is around. Educational institutions have never been managed as coherent entities but the need to think of them coherently has never been greater. If HE institutions are to function effectively within a system—or even a number of systems—they will have to be thought of in terms of corporate entities. The new terms will be permutations of such phrases as corporate management, strategic management, corporate strategy, strategic change management and strategic planning. These all refer to the need to encompass consideration of the organisation in its environment when setting up management processes and structures.

It is quite clear that the terms strategy and strategic management are not well understood in HE, though many will be offended by such statement. Many chief officers of universities, when talking about strategy in a context where offers of money to their institutions were involved, are seldom aware that strategy involves centrality to mission, planning related to key objectives, and flexibility of management processes. Of course, there are historic reasons for this; senior academics who run the HE institutions have seldom been exposed to management decision making in organisations of comparable size and complexity.

**The Management Sequence**

There is a simple sequence for thinking about the management process that goes from politics to policy to strategy to tactics to operations. The best—that is, the most efficient and effective organisations—will link these five elements very carefully in the way the organisation is managed. In HE, though, each of these elements receives attention separately, there is rarely, if ever, a clear linking of them in the ways members behave in their various roles and tasks.
Mission
In many cases, it appears that the mission statement, though it may have taken a long and thoughtful time to produce with much consultation with members of the institution, never fulfils a truly informing role in the subsequent management process. Mission statements are only starting points; they are not definitive statements of future concerns. Missions have to be constantly reviewed and revised as part of the ongoing strategic management process. Institutional evaluation is not concerned with what an organisation declares itself to be going but whether it ought actually to be doing it. Much of the early thinking about audit in HE was based on this fundamental misunderstanding.

General Management
If HE institutions are to be managed as dynamic organisations functioning within a complex socio-economic system with conflicting ideological overtones, then there has to be an understanding not only of management but of how management have three major levels which ought to be supported by appropriate administration. These levels are simply top, middle and lower since it is usually convenient to express them in hierarchical terms. In higher education these levels are not well differentiated or articulated or even understood. Often there is not enough freedom or power or resource at any one level for effective management to take place. Yet the concept of ‘general management’ would be helpful in ensuring that the managerial infrastructure, at least, is appropriate to its tasks and the demands of other elements in managing the business of the institution. It is almost certain that there will have to be a reappraisal of general management in the imminent future for HE.

New Constituent Parts
The core problem for all HE institutions is to decide the basis for organisation in terms of subjects, vocations or other activities. Historically, HE institutions have used academic subjects as the informing principle but the former polytechnics, following their FE origins, often used vocational identities. In the last couple of decades, the nature of subjects has crumbled even though academics often like to have a subject discipline allegiance for purposes of personal and professional
identity (often more for the latter than the former) but it is unlikely that this will continue for long. The introduction of Credit Accumulation Transfer (CATs) units, the modularisation of courses, the introduction of semesters and a summer semester, the additional costs of education to be found by students in excess of grants, decreased employment prospects and the attraction of work when it may be found will all conspire together to force a change in the configuration of subjects.

In other words, courses will often be made up of units from different subject disciplines from which students will make selections according to their personal and diverse needs. This "cafeteria" system will enable students to make up study programmes to suit their own needs. And the process of accumulation will continue over a lifetime with different emphases on employment, career and leisure needs. This will cause an open market to develop in courses, and institutions will find it convenient and economic to organise their activities in terms of internal market—internal to the system and internal to the institution. It can be anticipated that the ideas of internal markets will be one of the more powerful ideas of the next decade.

Coalitions and Consortia

There is already a realisation of the need for market orientated organisation and for market opportunities to be seized. Many institutions are in consortium with others for a variety of purposes and at a variety of levels. Franchising of courses is now quite common. Marketing consortia of subject areas (e.g. Business Studies) are also on the increase. Several institutions at the present time have formed a combine or coalition for obtaining funds and increasingly government funding comes in small competitive tranches. Some universities have begun to appoint marketing managers whose role is strategic; that is, they play an integral part in senior management and are not simply selling or publicity adjuncts. There is no doubt that institutions will combine in all sorts of ways to deliver education in a variety of forms and the single independent institution will feature less and less in the general picture.
Operation of Internal Markets

Institutions will begin to look more closely at the unit of delivery. It is unlikely that it will continue to be the department that is the basic operational unit but there will be a progression well beyond the now obsolete matrix form of management. The likelihood is that programmes will be delivered by programme teams, each of which has its own budget and freedom to manage its own affairs in terms of contractual relationship with the institution’s administration and management. Programme teams will be formed specially for this purpose and will be a consequence of a bidding process for funds to fulfil the operational level of a strategic objective of the institution or consortium.

Institutions will be much more streamlined at the top level and the marketing function will determine what programmes are mounted and supported. They will be run by something much more like a board of directors than representative senates or academic boards. And the members of the top management team will have proper sectional control for finance, programmes, buildings, personnel, training, marketing, research, etc. There will be a greater tendency to give power and authority at the point of delivery and much less of an attempt or concern to spread or dissipate responsibility throughout a collective or collegian body. Marketing and the servicing of the market will be a core activity. The key concerns will be cost, price and quality measured in an economic way with due regard for customer satisfaction. In some ways this will lead to a detachment of academic staff from their institution because they will wish to join teams who are delivering programmes for several institutions.

Measures of Quality

To deliver programmes of the right quality and to customer satisfaction, there will be a strengthening of the research and development function. And to do this, institutions will have to deconstruct what has become something of a foggy area in HE research. Clearly, research means a number of different things and institutions will have to be clearer what kind of research they promote. There will be great variations among institutions but they will still be subject to the functioning of market costs, prices, opportunity costs and benefits. The raison d'être for any
form of research will be that it enhances the core activity of the institution, which is the development of its intellectual capital.

Delivery Mechanisms
The nature of activity within the new HE institutions will be simplified. There will be several levels of activity, each interdependent on the other but containing responsibility and freedom for its appropriate development. At the top will be the board, concerned with strategic development and with working groups to assist in the process. Next there will be an administrative system which will be managed so as to support the strategic level rather than control or subvert it as so many administrative systems do. One of the reasons that this has been so in academe is because of the confusion over the nature of academic and organisational leadership and delegate functions. The third level is location management; that is, the management of the key functional unit of delivery, however that may be determined.

Team management or leadership will become a major concern and staff development will be devoted to that end. Teams in HE are only loosely so; they are more often working groups or collective activities but in the new world of HE they will have to work according to a certain unanimity or else they will fail. Operations management will rest with expert clerical or administrative staff under relevant academic leadership. Lecturers will have more clearly and closely defined jobs to do and they will be able to concentrate on essential activities rather than the current mish-mash of petty administration and ill-defined expectations.

Overall there will be the need for management development and staff training possibly on an Organisation Development (OD) model because that is one of the best ways of linking individuals and organisation. In fact, a key problem will be maintaining the attachment of individuals to specific institutions. Evaluation will be a primary consideration especially for management of information feedback and new techniques for institutional evaluation will be devised that supersede the traditional performance indicators in HE.
Professionalism

Although these changes often appear to be a denial of the whole history of Higher Education development and the death knell of academe, the opposite is in fact the case. Academics are professionals in a number of senses and the new system will reinforce the professionalism of academics. Indeed the new HE cannot survive if there is not an improvement in the regard in which academics are held. But for the system and its institutions to be able to manage academics properly, due cognisance has to be taken of the characteristics of academics.

Ordinary academics will, by and large, exhibit all or most of the following characteristics. They tend to act autonomously and independently and occasionally are loners or mavericks. Their allegiance tends to be to a discipline or subject area and a sub-branch where possible rather than to an institution, even the one that pays their salary. They prefer to work with like-minded colleagues and thrive on networking. Often they know colleagues in other institutions better than colleagues in their own department. They relate in some way to professional associations though of a variety of kinds. These networks and associations facilitate examinership, publications, research applications and job seeking. Ethics tend to be extra institutional and culturally many academics distance themselves from ordinary organisational conventions; for e.g. they like to organise their time in their own way and be at home when it suits them. They are self-directed to a high degree but over-dependent when it comes to looking after themselves commercially.

New Opportunities

Because of these characteristics, it is more than likely that there will arise functional divisions. Some academics will consolidate their work as “academic” in the traditional way but are enhanced by the new opportunities. Others will choose careers as managers or administrators in institutions and system functions such as funding bodies, evaluation boards, etc. Others will develop their consultancy skill. Some will become specialist researchers and others will concentrate on teaching or scholarship. Some will become professional writers. Most will continue to write and publish but in more varied ways than at present. There will be a general move towards academics being freelance rather than institutionally bound and support mechanisms will develop to this end.
Customers
More than ever before, there will be an awareness of customers and clients; a consequence of the recognition that HE is a service industry, and that is where the money comes from. There will be greater involvement of employers as partners in both learning and research. Clients will be both individuals and organisations and academics or their institutions will have to learn new skills of partnership and co-operation. There will be a growing recognition that the key evaluator is the customer, not the deliverer, and more sophisticated ways of ensuring that customer satisfaction and professional values are kept in accord. Questions of high and appropriate quality will be resolved by reference to appropriately identified customers, clients, stakeholders and partners. Government departments will become marginalised as the HE system grows in strength and confidence. Academics will become increasingly skilled at subverting the objectives of funding bodies to the needs of customers, etc. and to the ethical values of the various academic disciplines. This will surprise the politicians who will find academe no longer the supine whipping boy of the 1980s.

Values issues
Already there has begun an interest in values in education, probably as a consequence of so much battering at the hands of critics in the 1970s and 1980s. Academics have not been able to defend themselves in public because HE institutions have seemed to be remote. But HE is opening up to a quite wide clientele and the new consciousness as a public service is beginning to take hold. Universities are a vital part of the economic scenes and they are important economic engines, generating wealth. This role has not been well enough acknowledged but there is already strong evidence of the importance of universities to the local economy. This will certainly grow and as the management skills in universities improve, so will the political influence of academics. If there is to be a new HE, it will be one of the confidence and competence and a necessary strand in the economic regeneration of the country in the 21st century.