RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Professional Managers in UK Higher Education: Preparing for Complex Futures

Interim Report

Celia Whitchurch
King's College London

Leadership Foundation
for Higher Education

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INTRODUCTION

The Leadership Foundation commissioned 12 research projects in 2005 in order to address the needs of leaders, managers and governors within the higher education sector. These substantial projects will be used to provide an empirical base for new programmes and enrichment for existing programmes, projects and publications. It is hoped that the wide dissemination of the findings from this new research will help to raise awareness of the value of leadership and leadership development; and deliver practical advice and information to the higher education sector.

Some key themes have been identified which link one or more individual projects together:

*   The future context and shape of leadership, governance and management in UK higher education.
*   Development of leaders, senior managers and staff: investigating good practice in leadership development and succession planning.
*   Leadership, governance and management in practice: evolving roles and changing structures (e.g. leadership for quality teaching; leading research; leading strategic partnerships).
*   Leadership and performance.

The core values of the Leadership Foundation *(International, Cross-sector, Equality & Diversity)* are variously reflected within the research projects and through these themes. An additional piece of research focusing directly on 'gender balance' has been funded by the Leadership Foundation and its dissemination will be carried out jointly with the project leader at Glasgow Caledonian University.

Research and Development Series
The Research and Development Series provides the Leadership Foundation with a tool to share the results of our research projects across the sector. The Series will publish literature reviews, interim reports, progress updates and, when completed, the final reports from a number of the research projects. We will also 'publish' various outputs from the research on our website. This first edition presents an interim report and a short progress update, both examining the changing roles of senior managers and administrators.

Professional Managers in UK Higher Education: Preparing for Complex Futures is the first part of a major study by Celia Whitchurch of King's College London. It considers the changing professional roles and identities of an increasingly diverse group of staff, and the implications of these for leadership and management development in the sector. The study seeks to relate these changes to the developing knowledge environment in which higher education institutions are operating, and to compare perceptions of "administration" and "management" in the literature with the understandings of professional staff currently working in universities. It will give particular attention to the cross-boundary roles and identities that are emerging, not only between functional areas, but between professional and academic roles.

At the end of this report you will find an introduction to an upcoming research project being undertaken by David Llewellyn from Harper Adams University College. This study aims to analyse and determine ways in which the Secretary of the governing body may influence the work of the board and the institution. It will investigate, among other issues, how the Secretary learns about, adopts and/or adapts governance guidance and how far accepted models of higher education governance, which focus on the roles played by the Chair and Vice-Chancellor/Chief Executive, may need to take account of the influence of the Secretary on board practice, decision-making and institutional accountability. The final report will be completed towards the end of December 2006.

Please visit the Leadership Foundation website research pages at www.lfhe.ac.uk/research/projects/ for updates and further interim news about all the research projects as it becomes available.

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PROFESSIONAL MANAGERS IN UK HIGHER EDUCATION: PREPARING FOR COMPLEX FUTURES

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SUMMARY

Professional managers in UK universities represent an increasingly diverse grouping of staff. As boundaries blur between academic activity and the contributory functions required to deliver that activity in mass higher education systems and markets, their roles have become more fluid. Quasi-academic territories are developing, in which professional managers' activities converge and overlap with those of academic and other colleagues. As a result, existing definitions and descriptors, based on outmoded concepts of "administration" and "management", no longer provide clear understandings of professional identities and potentials. As the university is transformed from a community of scholars into a "community of professionals" (AUT, 2001), the concept of knowledge management may assist in explaining the changes that are occurring, and in preparing professional staff for uncertain and complex futures.

INTRODUCTION

This interim report provides a starting point for the empirical part of the study, the terms of reference of which are to consider:

- Changes in the nature of the roles performed by professional managers in higher education, in the light of developments in institutional contexts and structures.
- Changing career paths and patterns, and likely future directions for such staff.
- The outcomes and effectiveness of existing management development provision.
- Likely future leadership and development needs for professional managers, in the light of the above.
- Lessons that might be drawn from international comparisons.

The review seeks evidence in the literature: of current understandings about the roles and positionings of professional managers in contemporary institutions; of movements that might be occurring in these identities;

and of the implications of this for future career paths and professional development. It also considers any lack of clarity or gaps in the literature that the study might aim to rectify.

Defining "professional managers"

A central problem for the study is the lack of precise definitions or terminologies for staff in universities who are not classified as "academic". This is particularly so for professional managers, who are increasingly heterogeneous as a group, and could be said to be in a state of permanent transition. A range of descriptors are in circulation, including "manager", "administrator", "non-academic staff", "academic-related staff", "professional staff" and "support staff", all of which are used in different official classifications.

This lack of clarity around terminologies is compounded by a "black hole" in official data about the composition of professional staff groupings. Whereas the Universities Statistical Record collected data about "Academic-related Staff" in the pre-1992 sector (there were no comparable statistics for the polytechnic sector), no information was collected about professional managers and administrators in the combined sector between 1992 and 2003. Data collection recommenced recently, and there is now one set of data for 2003/04 compiled by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2005). The lack of longitudinal data, and of stable definitions over time or across sectors, make it difficult to be precise about numbers of staff, to assess whether they might have increased or decreased over time, or to make like-for-like comparisons between institutions. These difficulties seem to be at the root of wide-ranging perceptions in the literature about the roles and potentials of professional managers and, therefore, of what their development needs might be.

For the purposes of the present study, three possible sources of data were reviewed, the Bett Report (1999), a Higher Education Staff Development Agency (HESDA) Report on the higher education workforce (2002), and the HESA statistics (2005). It was concluded that the HESDA

Report, which is based on the Labour Force Survey for Spring 2001, provides the closest definition for the target group of the study. Its definition of administrators and managers encompasses "registrars and administrators of educational establishments" and "personnel, training and industrial relations managers", distinguishing them from contiguous groups such as academic managers, teaching and learning professionals, information and communication professionals, and technical and clerical staff.

The HESDA Report calculated that there were 38,000 staff in the "managers and administrators" category in higher education, and that this represented about 8% of the workforce. This corresponds to a rough estimate of 7-9%, calculated from figures in the Bett Report, and an estimate of 7.4% calculated from the 2003/04 HESA statistics. Further details of the composition of administrative groupings were given by Compton (2001), who provided data for the Association of University Administrators (AUA). This breaks down the "managers and administrators" grouping into specialist and generalist staff. Details of the calculations made from these reports are given in Appendices 1-3.

In this study, the term "professional managers" is used to capture those people performing generalist roles, such as student services or departmental management, and also those in specialist roles, such as finance and human resources. It includes career administrators, though not staff on clerical grades (although the latter could include people who might in future move to a professional or management grade). However, as the polarisation of "academic" and "non-academic" work breaks down, and academic and organisational agendas coalesce in various ways, there is increasing overlap between the functions and identities of professional staff in higher education, for instance in areas such as quality and widening participation. As a result, "hybrid" or "multi-professional" identities have emerged in what might be termed "quasi-academic" fields of activity (Whitchurch, 2006; 2007, forthcoming). These staff demonstrate the ability to cross functional boundaries, often performing translational and interpretive functions between different constituencies, within and outside the university.

For instance, hybrid identities can arise for staff who:

- Have academic credentials such as masters and doctoral level qualifications.
- Have a teaching/research background in adult, further or higher education.
- Work in multi-functional teams dealing with, for instance, the preparation of quality initiatives or major bids for infrastructure funding, which require the co-ordination of technical, academic, and policy contributions.
- Undertake tasks that in the past would have been undertaken solely by academic staff, such as offering pastoral advice to students, speaking at outreach events in schools, or undertaking overseas recruitment visits and interviews.
- Undertake quasi-academic functions such as study skills for access or overseas students, or embedding action on disability or diversity into the curriculum - such functions may involve skills in teaching or research and development, even though the staff concerned might be categorised as "non-academic".
- Provide an expert, interpretive function between academic staff and external partners in relation to, for instance, the marketing of tailor-made programmes, or the development of research spin out and business partnership.

The term "professional manager", therefore, incorporates all such people, some of whom who might see themselves as moving into academic management roles, for instance, a pro-vice-chancellor post with a portfolio such as administration, quality, or staffing.

The study does *not* target those academic staff in more traditional academic management roles, such as deans or pro-vice-chancellors, who would be more oriented towards academic leadership of their peers, and who would see themselves as maintaining an academic profile with a view to returning to full-time academic work. This is because such staff are the focus of other Leadership Foundation projects, and because there is already significant leadership and management development provision for them. Therefore, when references are made to "professional" staff, this refers to professional administrators and managers, so as to differentiate between them and academic managers such as deans and pro-vice-chancellors. It is not, however, intended to imply that other categories of staff in universities are not also professionals in their own right.

A note about "administration" and "management"

Movements that have taken place over time in the use of the terms "administration" and "management" have contributed to the instabilities around terminologies and understandings. The identities of contemporary professional managers derive in part from roles played by a relatively homogeneous cadre of administrative staff in the pre-1992 sector, whose prime purpose was to support collegial decision-making by academic colleagues, from whom they were clearly differentiated. Thus, early commentators viewed a university's supporting infrastructure as its "academic civil service" (Sloman, 1964; Lockwood, 1986) or "academic administration" (Shattock, 1970). There was a clear boundary between what was seen as "the Administration" and academic activity, whereby administrative staff were seen as "serving" not only academic activity, but the academic staff themselves. While the term "academic administration" is used sometimes to describe those activities that are not teaching and research (for instance, Barnett, 1993), it tends increasingly to refer to registry and secretariat functions, whereby administrators act as "guardians of the regulations" (Barnett, 2000: 133). One legacy from the "administrative" tradition is that administrative staff are seen as a source of continuity (McNay, 2005: 43).

Shifts away from "public service" modes of operation can be dated to around the time of the Jarratt Report in 1985:

"Administration, which had been largely seen as record-keeping, committee servicing, accounting, stewardship of the university estates and ceremonials was suddenly faced with severe managerial problems requiring managerial solutions."
(Hayward, 1992: 2)

The Report highlighted what were perceived as shortcomings in collegial decision-making processes in dealing with hard decisions arising from the resource constraints experienced in the 1980s (Jarratt, 1985; Middlehurst, 1992; Middlehurst et al., 1992). Scott (1995) notes a consequent "upgrading of managerial capacity", in which corporate and strategic planning initiatives driven by professional administrators and managers were "one of the most significant but underrated phenomena of the last two decades", so that:

"a managerial cadre began to emerge, ready to support a more executive leadership, in place of the docile clerks, who

had instinctively acknowledged the innate authority of academics".
(Scott, 1995: 64)

Kogan (1999), also, acknowledges the emergence of more "developmental" roles concerned with "developing the 'personality' of the institution by promulgating it effectively in the external environment."
(Kogan, 1999: 275).

Thus, as administration has evolved into management:

"administrators position[ed] themselves in an expanded role as managers having authority over a broader domain of organizational decision-making, as well as in representing the organization's purposes and priorities to the environment".
(Gumport and Sporn, 1999: 132)

As the term "management" gained currency, ideas and understandings of "administration" became less well defined. The term "administrator" could extend from low-level clerking or processing roles to very senior, decision-making positions, with a range of generalist and specialist functions in between. The situation was further obscured by the fact that those who had begun their careers in an environment of "public administration" responded to the shift towards "management" by becoming adept at managing while appearing not to do so:

"…becoming more chameleon-like – changing his or her spots to fit into and make a contribution to changing management teams and structures, and the different skills and attributes their academic and other colleagues bring to the table …"
(Holmes, 1998: 112)

This kind of mobility led to a situation whereby "management" co-existed with "administration" and collegial forms of decision-making, so that:

"…good university management means recognising and distinguishing what is best left relatively 'unmanaged' from what must be firmly managed".
(Holmes, 1998: 110)

Those who continued to regard themselves as "administrators", therefore, showed themselves capable of a kind of multi-vocality, speaking with different voices demanded by the context (Whitchurch, 2007,

forthcoming). Such a shrouding of "management" by "administration" also reflected a continued equivocation about the term "management", attributable to "a highly resilient anti-management culture – even amongst managers" (Archer, 2005: 5).

Notwithstanding these ambiguities, it has been suggested that the term "administrator" no longer reflects contemporary roles and should be discarded (Lauwerys, 2002). Lambert (2003) noted that a rebadging has taken place in some institutions, whereby terms such as "professional services" have been adopted (Whitchurch, 2005). It is significant in this connection that the HESA definitions (HESA, 2005) group "administrators" with "library assistants, clerks and general administrative assistants", specifically in terms of non-graduate staff. This contrasts with the traditional "academic-related" grades in the pre-1992 sector, which were restricted to a graduate entry to a civil service type of administrative cadre, and illustrates the change of meaning that has taken place around the term "administration". Likewise, HEFCE (2005a: 19), drawing on the HESA data, combines managers in a category with other types of professionals ("Managers and professionals"), and administrators in a category with clerical and other support staff ("Support administrators").

Diverse perceptions and understandings

The fluidity around terminology is reflected in the diverse perceptions and understandings about professional managers to be found in the literature. While the academic literature centres round the relationship of professional staffs to academic identities and agendas, the practitioner literature focuses on a continuing process of professionalisation, and the "grey" literature tends to highlight contractual and workforce issues. However, while all three literatures point to a changing profile for this group of staff, little empirical work is available to describe the precise nature of this, or the implications for career and management development.

Academia and management: a troubled coexistence

One connecting thread for professional managers is their relationship with academic colleagues and agendas. This is reflected in the academic literature, which invariably positions professional staff in relation to academic roles and identities (see, for instance, Trowler, 1998; Henkel, 2000; Prichard, 2000; Becher and Trowler, 2001). Not only is the concept of "management" poorly defined and understood, but it has also been contested as being antithetical to academic cultures and ways of working.

On the one hand, perceptions of "administrators" tend to undervalue their knowledge, responsibility and personal agency:

"The change agents might not be fellow academics but administrators or other purveyors of what academics would regard as generic or relatively low level knowledge".
(Henkel, 2000: 252)

Likewise, Prichard (2000) instances senior academic managers who are dismissive of professional staff because they see them as uncomfortable with the requirement to take responsibility and manage:

"They… only administrate if there is somebody telling them what to do."
(Vice-Chancellor; pre-1992 university) (Prichard, 2000: 127) and
"The service people provide services and are therefore subservient… They are not initiators or developers of the institution."
(Pro-Vice-Chancellor, post-1992 university) (Prichard, 2000: 190)

On the other hand, perceptions of "managers" (as opposed to "administrators") have also been portrayed in a negative light, particularly in the body of literature critiquing "managerialist" approaches to the delivery of academic agendas, whereby management is seen as something that is controlling rather than facilitative. Professional staff may be perceived by academic colleagues to be aligned with the policies they have been charged with implementing, whether or not they have been responsible for creating them. These policies may be generated internally, such as the restructuring of departments and research groupings, or externally, such as quality audit. Professional managers may also be regarded as agents of government in imposing unwelcome requirements upon the academic community. In this they become identified as perpetrators rather than interpreters of government policies (Parker and Jary, 1995; Prichard and Willmott, 1997; Deem, 1998). Thus, for instance:

"the Research Assessment Exercise… renders senior academic and administrators more explicitly accountable as supervisors and organisers of academic labour, responsible for 'performance' which is measured in largely quantitative terms."
(Prichard and Willmott, 1997: 297-8)

A further preoccupation (for instance, Halsey, 1992; Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Ramsden, 1998; Trowler, 1998) has been the perception of a transfer of power from the academic community to those with management responsibilities (academic *and* professional managers), implying a clear separation of agendas between managers and rank-and-file academic staff.

The polarisation of academic and management domains has been picked up in a number of studies. Middlehurst (1993: 190) notes "clear fault-lines… between, for example, academics and administrators, staff and 'management'", and Rowland (2002: 53) "fracture or fault-lines" across staff groupings. In an Australian context, McInnis has highlighted the impact of this perceived shift on relationships between academic and professional staff:

"What we have now is a new level of underlying tension between two groups of 'professionals' within the universities with the old (academics) perhaps losing ground in authority and status, and the new (administrators) making strong claims for recognition as legitimate partners in the strategic management of the university."
(McInnis, 1998: 171)

Negative constructions of both administration and management may account for an ambivalence about devolving tasks to dedicated managers, despite the fact that academic staff are overburdened (Henkel, 2000; Prichard, 2000):

"…academics want to govern themselves but they rarely want to manage; they are often poor managers when they do manage; and yet they deny rights of management to others."
(Dearlove, 1998: 73)

The same point is made in a US context by Lewis and Altbach (1996: 256-7), and in a Norwegian context by Gornitzka et al. (1998: 42). This low confidence in professional staff would seem to derive from a lack of respect for "administration" as being weak and ineffective, combined with a lack of trust in "management" as being over-controlling. Overcoming these perceptions, even if they are outmoded in contemporary institutions, is, therefore, a key task for university leaders and managers.

The situation is made more complex by the fact that, despite evidence that professional administrators and managers build up valued local relationships, for instance with a dean or head of school (Gornitzka et al., 1998; Bolton, 2000; Hare and Hare, 2002; McMaster, 2005a), this value is not necessarily reflected when they are considered collectively. Thus, the concept of management can become abstracted from that of the individuals performing the function, so that managers collectively are referred to simply as "management" (as in Henkel, 2000: 253). There would appear, therefore, to be a dissonance between implicit (local and personal appreciation of value) and explicit (public expression of value) understandings. Furthermore, there is not always common understanding between academic and management colleagues about what may be a valued local relationship. For instance, in an Australian context, McMaster (2005a: 135-6) found that whereas five of fifteen deans interviewed described their relationship with their faculty manager as one of partnership, no more than five faculty managers used that term, viewing their role as a "support function".

There is also evidence that professional managers can be subject to conflicting identities. If they adopt a service mode, they may be regarded as "docile clerks" (Scott, 1995: 64), but if they contribute to decision- and policy-making, they may be perceived as being overly powerful. Such tensions may arise also in Clark's (1998) "core" and "periphery" model. If professional administrators and managers pursue an agenda supporting the interests of their academic colleagues in the "academic heartlands", they are at risk of being accused of "going native" by their colleagues at the centre. If they pursue a corporate line, they may be seen as prioritising what are perceived as managerial concerns by academic colleagues (Whitchurch, 2004). It has also been suggested that professional administrators and managers are positioned increasingly out-with institutional structures, with the implication that they are not signed up to institutional agendas, or integrated within the university community:

"a national (and international) cadre of mobile and unattached senior managers without loyalty but with their own (not an institutional) portfolio – the new portfolio successional career managers…"
(Duke, 2002: 146)

Nevertheless, within the "managerialist" literature there is some recognition of a fluidity in the positionings of professional staff. For instance, Prichard notes a

"reconstruction of identities and relations" (Prichard, 2000: 29), whereby academic administrators may share common ground with rank-and-file academic staff in opposition to an overly "managerial" stance by academic managers:

"a 'state of hostilities' has tended to exist… between the ascendant managerial knowledge practices and those embedded and variably subordinated… academic and administrative knowledge practices."
(Prichard, 2000: 199)

Thus, Prichard sketches a scenario in which there is alliance between academic managers and service managers, on the one hand, and academic staff and academic administrators on the other (Prichard, 2000: 201). He portrays service managers (for instance, directors of resources or facilities) as delivering improved institutional performance against declining resources, and academic administrators as maintaining day-to-day working in the field (or "academic heartlands" (Clark, 1998).

The contestation of administration and management in the academic literature, and the lack of any reference to leadership obligations on the part of professional managers, suggests that a revisioning of their roles is overdue:

"The discussion on administrative issues is often made unnecessarily simplistic and confusing either on account of the lack of a more fine-tuned vocabulary or on the political character of the terms… There is especially a need to overcome the prevailing simple dichotomy of administrative versus academic staff."
(Gornitzka and Larsen, 2004: 456)

Such a revisioning would recognise the increasingly interpretive roles being undertaken by professional managers, and the development of:

"creative managers able to mediate between… various interests".
(Bargh et al., 2000: 16)

It would also go some way towards redrawing:

"the often contrasting academic/professional and managerial/administrative paradigms found in the modern university".
(Bargh et al., 2000: 113)

The professionalisation process

The practitioner literature gives an insight into the perceptions of administrators and managers themselves during a process of professionalisation, for instance, via the establishment of dedicated postgraduate qualifications, a journal, a Code of Professional Standards (Skinner, 2001), and the development of a body of knowledge associated with the policy requirements of the sector (Allen and Newcomb, 1999). Carrette (2005) characterises higher education management as an "emerging" or "post-emerging profession", whereby entrants to the profession are almost all graduates and increasingly postgraduates, and have membership of a professional body or bodies (such as AUA or specialist bodies such as the British Universities Finance Directors Group). This process of professionalisation has occurred also in Australia (Dobson and Conway, 2003), the US (Rhoades, 1996; Rhoades and Sporn, 2002), and elsewhere in continental Europe (Gornitzka et al., 1998; Gornitzka and Larsen, 2004; Rhoades and Sporn, 2002).

Descriptions of the impact of the professionalisation process have been characterised by an essentialist approach to professional identity, for instance, via the definition of prerequisite knowledges and skills (Allen and Newcomb, 1999). Although Allen and Newcomb note the increased heterogeneity of that group of professional staff undertaking management functions, they express a concern that:

"increasing fragmentation will militate against a unified administrative service."
(Allen and Newcomb, 1999: 39-40)

Likewise, the AUA Code of Professional Standards promotes an "integrated set" of core values and characteristics (AUA, 2000). These approaches do not, however, fully take account of the increasing diversity of professional managers as a grouping, and the fact that identities are increasingly built across multiple zones of activity, rather than comprising core elements that are inherited or adopted on the assumption of a particular role or position; thus, a "project" rather than an "essence" (Henkel (2000: 14), drawing on Giddens (1991).

There would, therefore, appear to be significant issues around the interpretation of professional identities by practitioners themselves, as well as in the perceptions

offered by the academic literature. While moves from "administration" towards "management" have been acknowledged in the practitioner literature, fuzzy boundaries between "administration", "management", and academic work have not been pursued. There has, rather, been a focus on a perceived marginalisation of professional staff. In an Australian context, Szekeres (2004) bases her claim that administrative staff are "invisible" on a lack of understanding as to what their roles involve and how they relate to contemporary institutions, and in the US, Johnsrud reports "the fear of speaking out" among "support professionals" (Johnsrud, 2003: 109). In the UK, it has been suggested that professional staff have been defined largely by what they are not (as "non-academic" or "support" staff):

"They are 'threshold people' who fall on or between the boundaries of categories, a 'liminal' status, which social anthropologists argue, carries implications of both marginalisation (Leach, 1996; 35), and power (Douglas, 1996, Turner, 1969; 86)".
(Gornall, 1999: 48)

Conway (2000: 15) picks up these points referring to "… the hybrid nature of roles, the duality of being valued and invisible, …diverse backgrounds and aspirations". She throws down a challenge, which the present study will begin to address:

"… it is probably time for 'a wider re-think about boundaries, constituencies and names'. Whatever term is chosen, it will be more important to define that term carefully and place it very clearly in the higher education lexicon than to worry too much about the exact words used."
(Conway, 2000: 15)

The challenge is one of both definition and perception:

"…there is little recognition beyond administrators themselves that a definable occupational grouping exists. The existence of administrators with qualifications equal to those of a university's professors is a new phenomenon, and not all these "super administrators" are simply academics who have transferred from academe."
(Dobson and Conway, 2003: 125)

However, this comment assumes that it is possible to achieve a "definable occupational grouping", and does not take on board the increasing fluidity around management roles across the university, or the emergence of increasingly multi-professional identities (Whitchurch, 2006; 2007, forthcoming).

Rather than fitting professional staff into existing categories, therefore, there appears to be a need to find new ways of understanding and describing their contribution. This would assist the sector in addressing issues around leadership, management and governance (HEFCE, 2003; 2005a; 2005b) arising from the extension of professional activity via more fluid working patterns; a reconfiguration of professional knowledge as applied to higher education; and evolving partnerships between different sets of professionals across the university community.

Raising awareness of the professional workforce

Increasing attention to workforce development, as institutions position themselves to deal with mass higher education systems and markets, means that professional staff have begun to appear in their own right in an expanding "grey" literature. The Dearing Report (1997) represents an early attempt to describe the identities of what were defined in Supplementary Report 4 as "administrative and support staff". However, the Report reflects a confusion about the roles and identities of "administrators and managers" in that institutions were asked "not to include the names of senior staff or managers" in their nominations for focus groups of administrative and non-academic staff (Supplementary Report 4, Appendix 1, paragraph 5). This implies that "administration" and "management" can be distinguished on the basis of the seniority of post-holders and, foreshadowing the HESA definitions (HESA, 2005), that whereas "administration" once conferred the ethos and values of professional staff in public service environments, it now more often than not refers to routine clerical tasks.

While the Report puts up a marker for administrative staff, it bases its view of them on a small sample of eight individuals, within a wider sample of thirty-two, that also includes technical, computing and library staff. Nevertheless, the categorisation of these groups of staff into *niche-finders, subject specialists* and *new professionals* is an attempt to reframe ideas about an increasingly heterogeneous group of staff. *Niche-finders* "fell into" higher education, and became "long-servers" who carved out their

own space; *subject specialists*, who were more highly qualified than *niche finders*, entered higher education because it gave them an opportunity to pursue their professional specialism; and *new professionals* placed more value than the other two groups on using their expert knowledge to develop new roles, and were concerned to enhance their future career pathways. The significance of the Report is that it recognises that roles have changed as a result of, for instance, information technology, business approaches, and the greater involvement of non-academic staff in the planning and delivery of teaching.

While the Bett Report (1999) focused on pay and conditions of service, it was the trigger for the Higher Education Role Analysis Exercise currently being undertaken in the sector, bringing into the public arena issues of role content and comparability for professional staff. HEFCE (2003: 1) also, in launching its Leadership, Governance and Management Fund, expressed the need to increase "esteem and recognition" for the management function, and Lambert (2003: 95) noted "traditional and out-moded perceptions of …administrations". However, these points were not picked up in the 2003 White Paper (DfES, 2003), suggesting that understandings at an official level remain patchy and uneven. While these reports have put down a marker about changes that are occurring, they do not provide a comprehensive redrawing of the workforce "map", or take on board crossovers between administrative, management and academic territories. Thus, the type of approach taken in a report on the human resources function for the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) (Archer, 2005: 4), which begins to acknowledge movements across management fields, might be usefully extended to other groups of staff. The report demonstrates, for instance, a shift of emphasis for human resources staff from being administrators who undertake the operational aspects of a personnel service to being advisers on strategic and legislative matters. This in turn impacts on academic and professional line managers across the university, who are absorbing operational human resource functions.

Furthermore, a report by the AUT, on the contribution of "academic-related" staff to the delivery of higher education, provides detailed examples from a survey of both academic and professional staff on the kinds of areas in which academic and professional staff are working collaboratively:

"Administrators are involved in a range of activities related to student learning, including teaching, preparing learning materials, participation in quality assurance, monitoring courses, and supporting students in difficulties."
(AUT, 2001:8)

This statement is corroborated by comments from respondents as to how and where transitions are occurring across the boundaries of functional areas, and the report, therefore, begins to provide an evidence base, including examples of professional staff who teach, mentor students, and write course material. It is somewhat ahead of its time in suggesting that universities are "becoming communities of professional staff, not just communities of scholars" (AUT, 2001: 19). Thus, a "professional pluralism" has been added to the "academic pluralism" and "social pluralism" described by Scott (Scott, 1997: 9).

Notwithstanding some recognition in the "grey" literature of changes in workforce profiles, the picture that emerges of professional managers remains partial, and has not yet been fully conceptualised, for instance, by HEFCE (2005a and b). It is suggested, therefore, that further work is required, not only to improve definitions and categories, but also to acknowledge the increasingly complex layerings of professional identities within the university.

The changing university community: transitioning management and academic domains
Despite the fact that clear distinctions between academic and management activity remain deeply rooted in some quarters (see for instance, Fulton, 2003; Yielder and Codling, 2004), other commentators are beginning to recognise that the delivery of extended academic agendas in complex environments can only be achieved through equally valued, but different, contributions from a range of staff. Duke (2003), for instance, suggests that:

"Breaking down disciplinary barriers, and also enhancing collaborative teamwork between classes of workers (administrative, professional, academic, technical) is one side of new management. It is required by and grows with the external networking on which universities depend to play a useful and sustainable part in networked knowledge societies."
(Duke, 2003: 54)

In furthering institutional agendas in a diverse environment, support for networking, an understanding of institutional cultures, and a linking of internal and external considerations "must be addressed by 'management' in a much wider sense than can be exercised by top leadership alone." (Duke, 2003: 54).

This view echoes that of Gumport and Sporn (1999). They regard it as imperative that professional managers "stay attuned to multiple environments" in "sustaining institutional legitimacy", and "functioning as interpreters" (Gumport and Sporn, 1999: 128 -131). To this end, partnership between academic and professional staff is beginning to be acknowledged, as well as a crossing between fields of activity:

"What is often forgotten is that over the past few years there has been increasing traffic across the administrative-academic divide. Some academics move into administration, and many administrators have higher degrees."
(Bassnett, 2004: 3)

This process is exemplified by team working between academic and professional staff in preparations for external audit and assessment, the assembling of bids for external funding, and projects such as Investors in People.

While it has been noted that academic staff are beginning to occupy different spaces in the university (Barnett, 2005; Henkel, 2005), the generation of new space for professional staff has not been fully documented, although there is evidence that moves from a service orientation to partnership working are leading to the emergence of new types of professional manager (Whitchurch, 2006; 2007, forthcoming). These include: people who develop niche functions, such as marketing, in a higher education context; people who promote themselves as "professional managers", with the aim of being able to move between institutions on a management track as well as on the basis of an accredited specialism; and others who see themselves primarily as "project managers", with the mobility to move out of higher education if they so wish.

In Australia, also, there has been recognition of a growing "mixed economy" of activity in universities, leading to a "post-collegial, post-managerial form of university community" (Marginson and Considine, 2000: 250).

Marginson and Considine also suggest that non-academic staff are under-represented in terms of having a voice in the institutional community, although they "are just as capable of sharing commitment to the institution and its work as are academic staff" (Marginson and Considine (2000: 251). Likewise, Taylor (2007, forthcoming) promotes the idea of a "creative commons" that reflects universities as sites of "super-complexity" (Barnett, 2000). He suggests that academic identities are no longer constructed solely in opposition to "the forces of corporatism and managerialism", and that that they should become more "context specific assemblages". As part of this process they would incorporate traits such as "networking, laterality, hybridity, flexibility, multi-tasking and media capab[ility]" (Taylor, 2007, forthcoming). Such qualities are similar to those described by Whitchurch (2006; 2007, forthcoming) as arising in more project-oriented, multi-professional ways of working among professional staff.

Similarly, in the US, Rhoades calls for professional staff to become embedded in the community of governance and decision-making:

"…we need to expand academic democracy beyond tenure-track faculty and senior administrators to include contingent faculty and managerial professionals. Faculty are not the only professionals on campus; the number of non-faculty managerial professionals is growing rapidly. Increasingly, they participate in institutions' basic academic work, and like faculty, they have important expertise about the academy to contribute in shared governance. In short, we need a more inclusive, democratic academic republic."
(Rhoades, 2005: 5)

What appears to be required, therefore, is a more sustained picture of professional managers' membership of and contribution to the university as a community of professionals.

McMaster (2005a) provides a starting point by examining what she terms the "diarchy" of administrative and academic domains, through her empirical work with faculty deans and managers in four different types of Australian university. She identifies three forms of relationship: "nested" (47% of pairs), "conjoint" (41% of pairs) and "segmented" (12% of pairs). The first two represent different types of partnership, and the "conjoint" partnership, particularly, reflects a move to more flexible

working arrangements. The McMaster study suggests that, within traditional institutional arrangements of deans and faculty managers, individuals are moving around administrative, management and academic domains. The study does not, however, go so far as to describe the emergence of independent roles that cross academic, management, and quasi-academic boundaries.

Rhoades (1996; 1998) has made some progress in this direction by identifying a group of staff that he describes as "managerial professionals", who:

"engage in activities related to producing quality education, entrepreneurial revenues, research and students … [and are] increasingly central to academically capitalist universities".
(Rhoades and Sporn, 2002: 16)

They are associated particularly with those areas of the university involved in activities arising from "academic capitalism" (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997), such as quality assurance, fundraising, and research enterprise. Furthermore, Slaughter and Rhoades suggest that these professionals are natural allies of their academic colleagues, in that they "are experiencing the same pressure and internal shift of orientation that academics are experiencing in terms of the commodification of research and education" (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004: 295). Although commentators such as Rhoades, and more recently Sharrock (2005), point to modified understandings about the identities of professional managers as members of a more integrated higher education "project", these remain to be followed up:

"We should develop a fuller understanding of … managerial professionals' daily lives and everyday practices – "thick descriptions" of their work … Further we should explore the social relations among these non-faculty professionals, and between them and faculty. The professional and political terrain of colleges and universities is far more complex than our current categories allow for. Such terrain has direct implications for how we can better organize our work and collective efforts."
(Rhoades, 1998: 143)

On the one hand, there has been some acknowledgement that:

"in the most successful universities management is very much a partnership between those who have come up via a professional route and those through a purely academic career, and there are crossovers of personnel at various levels".
(Shattock, 2000: 34)

On the other hand, this process has not been analysed using empirical data, for instance in terms of ways in which professional managers transition academic and management boundaries, or how they are creating new working territories. The present study, therefore, will aim to make this process more explicit, and to illustrate how professional managers are constructing new spaces by moving from retrospective roles, in which they are "keeper[s] of the community memory" (McNay, 2005: 43), to roles in which they are increasingly active agents:

"University administrators are in general not in a settled and 'comfortable' position. Their functions and roles seem to be continuously negotiated and defined."
(Gornitzka and Larsen, 2004: 469)

The emergence of "knowledge managers"
The concept of knowledge management may help in exploring the diversification of professional roles, which now go beyond a single division into "generalist" and "specialist" staff. Individual managers are increasingly likely to be focused on a project or series of projects, rather than occupying roles oriented towards institutional processes or structures (Whitchurch, 2006). This reflects the fact that:

"the university of the future will be as much (perhaps more) 'distributed' than 'core'".
(Scott, 1997: 13)

This is likely to involve:

"the replacement of 'bureaucratic' careers by flexible job portfolios".
(Scott, 1997: 7)

Posts are being created that cross boundaries between management and academic activity (Middlehurst, 2000; 2004; Whitchurch, 2004), and these roles are difficult to place within prescribed boundaries, either in relation to their knowledge base, their task portfolios, or their identity vis-à-vis other professionals. This has implications for the

potentials, professional development, and career futures of the managers concerned.

In the contemporary university, rather than relying solely on knowledge legitimated by accreditation, by apprenticeship, or by length of experience, professional managers are developing knowledge that is "a mixture of theory and practice, abstraction and aggregation, ideas and data". (Gibbons et al., 1994: 81). In this scenario, a simple dichotomy between academic and management activities no longer holds:

"A more accurate account might emphasise the growing interpenetration of academic and managerial practice within higher education. In areas such as continuing education, technology transfer and special access programmes for the disadvantaged there is no easy separation between their intellectual and administrative aspects … academic values and managerial practice have been combined in unusual and volatile combinations."
(Gibbons et al., 1994: 84)

Thus, the literature on knowledge management may assist in the search for new descriptors and understandings of changing professional profiles, and ways in which these might be harnessed to best effect by the higher education system, which has become "a network of knowledge-based institutions in a state of continual flux" Sharrock (2002: 178). In this context, Gibbons et al. (1994), in their arguments about the significance of "Mode 2" knowledge for contemporary working environments, suggest that:

"the job of senior managers, while retaining earlier responsibilities, has gradually shifted over the past decades from managing internal resources to managing the boundary … managers in higher education are beginning to operate in similar mode. They must become active partners in a very complex knowledge producing game. A crucial element in this game is the ability to move back and forth between environments, which are at one moment collaborative and at another competitive."
(Gibbons et al., 1994: 65)

However, the dualities inherent in being a professional manager involve not only understanding when collaborative and competitive modes need to be brought into play. They also involve the ability to acquire technical knowledge, and to make professional judgements, *at the*

same time as being able to apply and reconfigure this knowledge in relation to time-limited projects. In the same way as "the real academic unit has become the course or research team" (Gibbons et al., 1994: 71), the locus of management has shifted from formal arenas such as planning and resources committees to multi-functional project teams, in which academic and management knowledges coalesce. An increased focus on project management and delivery is evident in discrete, one-off projects such as applications for programme or infrastructure funding. It is also evident in large, extended projects involving the bringing together of a stream of functions associated with, for instance, the management of students, business enterprise, or human resource development. For instance, the "student management project" incorporates contiguous areas of activity such as marketing and recruitment, widening participation, registration and progression, pastoral care, disability and equal opportunities, careers advice, and alumni relations (Whitchurch, 2006).

Thus, knowledge managers must demonstrate the ability to adopt "a receptive view of uncertainty" (Tsoukas, 2005: 288), applying "narratively organised knowledge", which complements "practical reasoning and historically based know how" (Tsoukas, 2005: 243). They understand the different discourses at play in the "appreciative system" (Tsoukas, 2005: 178) that comprises an organisation, and perform an exploratory function in building successive discourses. They also "invent new codes in order to understand what previously was only marginally understood" (Tsoukas, 2005: 293). In this way they are not only building bridges, but also reconfiguring ways of seeing the whole picture, becoming actors in an organisation's understanding of itself, rather than agents of preconceived "rules and resources" (Giddens, 1991).

The concept of hybrid professionals originated in the IT industry to describe the movements of specialist knowledge workers between their knowledge base and management roles (for instance, O'Connor and Smallman, 1995). It has also emerged elsewhere, for instance, Fitzgerald and Ferlie (2000: 278) note a growth in multi-lateral roles carrying professional and management responsibilities across the public sector, including the NHS and the civil service. While there has been consideration in the wider literature of the increased involvement of, for instance, lawyers and doctors in management, the

movement of managers in the other direction has not been similarly addressed. This is particularly relevant in the case of universities, where boundaries between academic work, and the contributory functions required to deliver that work, are blurring. For instance, Poon (2005) reports an increasing tendency for people recruited into research administration to have doctorates and/or a research background, reflecting "the increased complexity of research administration" (Poon, 2005: 6). Staff in this field need to understand the research process as it relates to both staff and students, including a rapidly changing funding environment, knowledge transfer and research training activity. It is likely, therefore, that doctoral level qualifications and experience will become a requirement in this area in future.

Dawson (1994) touches on this by asking a question to which she does not provide an answer, and which has become more pressing:

"With the development of organisations operating corporately in a market, issues will arise about the development of other specialist management functions like marketing, PR, finance and human resources. How will people in these functions be recruited and managed? What will their roles be in the professional service organizations of the future? And will there be a future for 'general' managers?"
(Dawson, 1994: 17)

Middlehurst and Kennie (1995) provide possible options for consideration, describing the distinction made in some professional organisations between the "professional specialist", the "managerial specialist" and the "professional generalist". Each category provides, and offers credit for, different avenues of career progression and development:

"Such parallel career development routes which give equivalent recognition to both managerial and professional skills are of growing importance; particularly in the 'new' universities within the UK".
(Middlehurst and Kennie, 1995: 122)

Although this observation refers primarily to academic staff who take on management roles, these categories might be helpfully applied to consideration of the multiplying roles and directions available to professional managers, and of the development needs arising from diverse career pathways. It also raises the issue of how management

might be regarded as a "professional" activity in its own right, distinct from either academic management or the activities of professionals who are accredited specialists, such as those in finance or human resources departments.

The idea of professional hybridity has begun to receive attention in relation to higher education. Gornall (1999; 2004), and Gornall and Thomas (2001), use the term to describe the increasing use of contract workers in technological roles who support teaching and learning. Hatanaka (2004; 2005) uses the term to describe managers in universities who solve problems by internalising issues from both academic and management fields. Whitchurch (2006) describes an increasing focus on project management, which has generated "multi-professionals" who move across functional domains and undertake quasi-academic roles, such as delivering study skills sessions for overseas students, or outreach sessions for secondary school pupils. Such people may also have academic credentials (for instance, doctoral qualifications and/or teaching/management experience in the college or FE sectors). Thus, managers are evolving with a facility for "transitioning" between knowledges, who are able to build and apply the expertise that their institutions need to operate in uncertain and complex environments. In delivering cross-boundary projects, professional managers also display the facility noted by Gibbons, to speak in a number of languages:

"Hybridisation reflects the need of different communities to speak in more than one language in order to communicate at the boundaries and in the spaces between systems and sub-systems."
(Gibbons et al., 1994: 37)

These new ways of working are creating extended knowledge networks (Castells, 2000; Henkel, 2005), which are overlaying formal organisational structures. In this changing environment:

"there is clear potential for creating collaborations and partnerships across the boundaries between the heartland and the periphery to meet the needs of new or existing clients and markets and indeed, to create similar lateral relationships and cross-organisational roles between the university and other organisations".
(Middlehurst, 2004: 275)

While overlaps between academic and management domains offer new potentials, however, these have not yet been documented, in terms of, for instance, ways in which increasingly sophisticated knowledge management provides a base for organisational intelligence, capability and capital, as described, for instance, by Little et al. (2002). The study will demonstrate how this is beginning to occur, with consequences for the motivations of individuals, career patterns and pathways.

Preparing for complex futures
As professional managers' roles evolve, and as their membership of a reconfigured university community matures, there are implications both for institutional development and for individuals in the way that they manage their careers. Professional development opportunities are likely to be sought, therefore, that offer a steer to new forms of manager and leader. Thus, one commentator calls for recognition of "the diffusion of authority, the diversity of perspectives, and the distributed nature of action in a university setting". He suggests that:

"a more activist … leadership is needed to reframe the community's basic assumptions and extend its repertoire of responses so that the institution can engage successfully with the new realities".
(Sharrock, 2004: 272)

In the UK there is a well-established tradition of professional development for administrators and managers, both through CUA/AUA (www.aua.ac.uk) and via the former Higher Education Staff Development Agency (HESDA), now part of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. Both have offered programmes for new entrants to university management and for middle and senior managers, as well as one-off seminars on specialist topics and policy issues. Dedicated Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes have appeared in recent years, such as the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme at Bath and the MBA in Higher Education Management (MBA HEM) at the University of London Institute of Education. However, assessment of such courses has tended to be for the purposes of the course organisers rather being undertaken systematically at national level, for instance in relation to the changing role of administrators and managers in the university.

An overview taken by Middlehurst et al. (2001), although dedicated primarily to academic managers, concluded that there were gaps in provision for senior administrators and managers (Middlehurst et al., 2001: 32), although the MBA HEM may be filling this gap. Interestingly, from the point of view of this study, the report points to the difficulty of finding a common understanding for the term "senior manager", or of calculating what the total population might be nationally; and also that "one size does not fit all" for such a diverse grouping (Middlehurst et al., 2001: 33). It is likely that the population of administrators and managers has become more diverse since 2001. Furthermore, the present study will seek to review whether professional development is largely the result of individual initiative and personal investment; whether only a minority of senior managers have formal qualifications; whether there remain barriers to management and leadership development; and whether "softer" skills are neglected.

A compilation of internal and external management development provision for middle managers was undertaken recently as a Leadership Foundation Small Development Fund Project (Coe, 2005). Although this provides a comprehensive database, no qualitative information has yet been developed from the data, for instance, the appropriateness of provision for different types of professional manager; the quality and outcomes of individual programmes; or the comparative value of internal and external provision. Furthermore, the difficulty of defining "middle managers", and the interpretation of this descriptor by different institutions, recurs as a significant issue. Analysis of institutional documentation in the Coe study indicated a greater overall emphasis in institutional programmes on softer, skills-oriented areas such as people and change management, than on harder, more knowledge-oriented areas, such as budget and resource management. Also, most internal programmes appeared to focus on generic management and leadership skills than on contexts and issues specific to higher education, and the majority did not lead to a professional qualification. While 22 institutions offered postgraduate diploma or MBA courses, these were not necessarily dedicated either to middle managers, or to staff in higher education.

McMaster (2005b) provides a recent review of selected management development initiatives in the UK, using a small-scale study for the Association of Tertiary Education Managers in Australia to consider four qualificatory

programmes in the UK dedicated to professional administrators and managers:

- The Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice (Higher Education Administration and Management) at the Open University (administered by the Association of University Administrators).
- The Postgraduate Diploma/MSc in Management (Higher Education Administration) at Loughborough University.
- The Master of Business Administration in Higher Education Management at the University of London Institute of Education.
- The Doctor of Business Administration in Higher Education Management at the University of Bath.

She cites the AUA Certificate (Open University) and the MBA in Higher Education Management as being at opposite ends of the learning spectrum. The former is described as catering primarily for junior to middle grade administrators towards the beginning of their career, with an emphasis on reflective practice. While it is:

"An exceptional vehicle for professional development", initial cohorts were *"expected to make their own path through the self-directed learning maze."*
 (McMaster, 2005b: 2)

(For subsequent cohorts student support arrangements were reinforced.) On the other hand, the MBA:

"has a very strong reputation for combining cutting edge higher education management theory with practical business skills and a holistic approach."
(McMaster, 2005b: 6)

McMaster concludes that the criteria for any award programme for professional development should include:

- Knowledge of key explanations of and research in higher education.
- Understanding of higher education policy and contexts.
- Development of leadership and management skills including specialist business skills relevant to the individual's career path.
- Opportunities for reflection and reflexive practice.
- Recognition and portability of the award.
- Flexibility in delivery to allow part-time study at a pace that fits with work and family commitments.

- Flexibility of content to allow participants to tailor part of a programme to current and future professional needs.
- A cost structure that will enable universities as employers to support the enrolment of their staff.
- Multi-level programme that would be relevant both for staff in early career and for more senior staff.

Against these criteria, therefore, it would appear from the preliminary assessment of provision offered by the Coe study that current UK programmes for middle managers are falling short in making the link between higher education contexts and the functions undertaken by contemporary professionals. Likewise, an assessment in a HESDA project on Leadership, Management and Governance (Mountford and Spiller, 2004), suggests that the benefits of programmes leading to Institute of Leadership and Management qualifications, attended by academic-related and non-academic staff, tended to be in the area of self-awareness and skills development rather than on broader contextual issues at either institutional or system level (Mountford and Spiller, 2004: 9).

A focused institutional study of the induction requirements of administrative staff in faculties and schools in a post-1992 university developed an in-house "tool-kit" to provide local knowledge, to be combined with the use of internal secondments, exchanges and work shadowing (Fraser, 2005). One of the triggers for the project was the lack of career pathways for younger administrators, and a concern that this was leading to unacceptable levels of turnover. A wider survey of such issues, using a sample of institutions, as well as ways in which local knowledge might be placed in wider professional and sector contexts, would be helpful extensions to this work. The project also illustrates that issues around perceptions of "administration" and "management" persist, in that while the term "administrator" is used throughout, without being defined, the project is aimed at staff who have "Manager" in their title, such as "Assistant Faculty Managers".

There appears to be little exploration in the literature of the availability and benefits to professional managers of other forms of career development, such as action learning sets, coaching and mentoring, secondments and exchanges. These forms of development are likely to be increasingly significant as mobility extends between management and academic domains, between different types of institution, and between higher education and other sectors; and as

multi-professional modes of working become more common. For instance, Poon (2005) found that research managers indicated a strong preference for professional development to be delivered in informal modes, such as "practitioner-networking events" (Poon, 2005: 13). This offered "a prompt response to the changing environment" and "more flexibility on the design of the course in order to address the changes." (Poon, 2005: 12-13).

Poon's findings reflect those of Shelley (2005) that middle managers in universities, including professional managers, prefer:

"an approach based on more individually-tailored work-based development programmes, perhaps including coaching and mentoring…"
(Shelley, 2005: 164-165)

This mirrors findings in the wider context of the professions generally:

"… professional practitioners learn their management and leadership skills mainly in the work context and mainly socially through their working relationships."
(Fox et al., 2001: 26)

The benefits of different forms of development, and how these might be targeted, will be an issue for the study. For instance, Carrette sees formal qualifications as an integral part of the professionalisation process in that they confer "recognition and legitimacy". She sees this as:

"vital, both in terms of achieving credibility within the academic community, and in terms of the (internal and external) perception of the development of the profession".
(Carrette, 2005: 7)

There may be questions, however, as to how far qualifications and other activities do in fact confer "credibility" and "legitimacy", or whether there are other ways in which managers are being accommodated in the university's expanding community of professionals.

Conclusion

As distinctions blur between academic work and the contributory functions required to contextualise that work in global, mass higher education systems, the character of the university as a professional community is changing. It is increasingly difficult to match the locations of professional staff with readings of the university found in organisation charts and job descriptions. While a number of commentators have registered awareness that changes are occurring, the wider implications of these movements for individuals, for institutions, or for the sector, have not been pursued in detail. Carrette suggests that:

"the profession [of administration] demonstrates an increasingly sophisticated level of 'internal' awareness, but this is yet to be fully realised externally".
(Carrette (2005: 7)

However, this would appear to be a profession that is not just emerging, but continuously evolving. As it becomes more diverse, multi-professional and even post-professional ways of working are being assumed (Whitchurch, 2007, forthcoming). A language is required, therefore, that moves away from preconceived ideas of "administration" and "management", and reconceptualises these emerging identities.

The interim report suggests that:

- Official descriptors and categories available to describe professional managers in higher education are inadequate, and a review of these is therefore timely.
- Understandings of the roles of professional managers are unclear, particularly those outside traditional "specialist" and "generalist" categories, or those that cross into academic territories.
- Despite more recent acknowledgement of changes in the workforce, there remain deep-rooted perceptions of "administration" and "management" as being activities disconnected from, and even antithetical to, academic agendas.
- Little attention has been paid to professional managers' involvement in leadership activity, or their development needs arising from this.
- New discourses are beginning to emerge, particularly in the United States and Australia, acknowledging that professional managers are creating new professional space in the university.
- Less formal development opportunities, which contextualise individual portfolios in the broader higher education framework, and are based on practitioner networks, may be the preferred medium for professional managers.

Furthermore, the wider literature suggests that the working lives of professional managers in higher education are likely, also, to reflect generic changes to career paths and patterns, in that:

"…in the future, many professionals will not be able to follow a traditional career path. Changes to their practice will require professionals to learn new skills and enter new disciplines from their original training. In addition, new practices and fields of expertise will result in new professions". (Gold et al., 2001: 77)

Building on the literature review, therefore, the study will seek to provide an empirical base for understanding:

- Emergent forms of professional manager in contemporary higher education, and the nature of the professional space that they are occupying.

- The implications of these developments for management and leadership of professional managers, and management and leadership by professional managers.
- The appropriateness of current management and leadership development provision in the sector, in the light of the changes that are occurring.

Finally, in mapping the repositioning of professional managers, the study will seek to take cognisance of the aspirations and obligations of both individuals and institutions, as well as the realities of competitive environments in which, as Archer suggests:

"Employers seek flexibility and employees seek employability."
(Archer, 2005: 37)

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APPENDIX 1

HESA definitions and data

The Higher Education Statistics Agency began to collect data for administrators and managers as well as for academic staff in 2003/4 (HESA, 2005). It bases its definitions on occupational codings devised by the University of Warwick on behalf of the Institute for Employment Research (Davies and Ellison, 2002). Their categories include "managers", "non-academic professionals", "student welfare advisers and assistants; careers advisers; vocational training instructors; personnel and planning officers", "artistic, media, public relations, marketing and sports instructors" and "library assistants, clerks and general administrative assistants". Thus, professional managers and administrators were not separated out as a discrete category from other broad groupings.

The numbers in each of the above categories are as follows. The figures in brackets represent the percentage of the total higher education workforce represented by each category. Taken together, Categories 1, 3, 3B and 3C represent 15% of the total workforce. Academic professionals (Group 2A) represent 44.4%.

- Category 1: Managers (of all types) (3.4%). The study includes approximately 50% of this category, which would comprising approximately 1.7% of all higher education staff.
- Category 3: Non-academic professionals (8.0%). The study includes approximately 50% of this category, which would comprise approximately 4% of higher education staff.
- Category 3B: Student welfare workers, careers advisers, vocational training instructors, personnel and planning officers (2.2%). The study includes student welfare workers, personnel and planning officers from this group, which would comprise approximately 1.0% of higher education staff.
- Category 3C: artistic, media, public relations, marketing and sports instruction occupations (1.4%). The study includes public relations and marketing staff from this group, which would comprise approximately 0.7% of higher education staff.

A rough estimate of the group targeted by the study is arrived at by extrapolating the approximate proportion of professional managers contained in HESA Categories 1, 3, 3B and 3C. Such a calculation suggests that "professional managers" represent about 7.4% of the total workforce (HESA, 2005: 7).

APPENDIX 2

The Bett Report

The Bett Report grouped Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Staff (APTC) in the post-1992 sector as comprising 22.2% of the workforce. If one makes the assumption that in the post-1992 sector administrative staff comprise something between one third and one-half of the APTC category, this would represent around 9% of the total workforce in the post-1992 sector. In the pre-1992 sector, the report calculates that Academic-Related staff represent 6.9% of the total workforce. This suggests that "administrators and managers" in the combined sectors represent something between 7 and 9% of all staff in higher education.

The Compton Report – Extrapolation of administrative staff percentages from The Higher Education Workforce (IES, 2001) and AUA membership (2002)

The Compton study analysed the proportion of staff undertaking different fields of administrative work. "Registrars and senior administrators" were by far the largest category at 45%. When translated into broad-brush groupings the percentages are as shown in Figure 1. A rough calculation gives 55% as generalist administrators and 45% as specialist professional staff. A further proxy for the variously defined administrative categories is membership of the Association of University Administrators (AUA) (around 4,500 staff), which was broken down as shown in Figure 2 in the end-of-membership-year survey conducted in August 1999 (AUA, 2002). It is notable that the largest categories of members come from faculties or schools (42%) and central registry (20%). This reflects the fact that AUA membership is biased towards generalist staff, more of whom are in membership of the Association because professional specialists tend to belong to their own dedicated groupings and conferences.
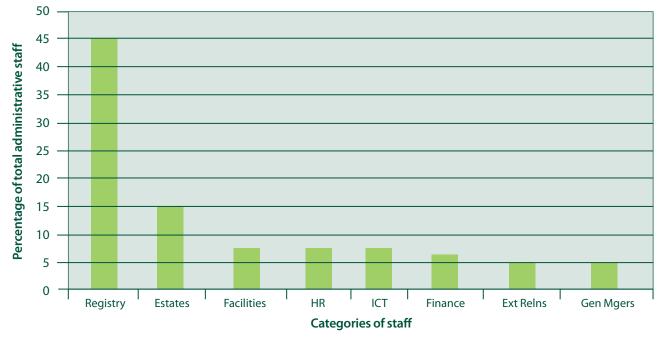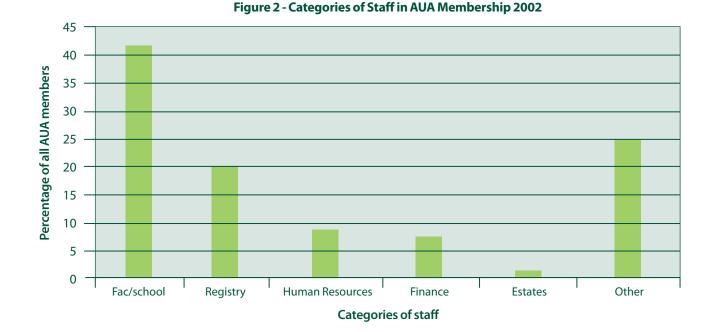
Figure 1 - Administrative Staff Percentages: Compton Report 2001

Figure 2 - Categories of Staff in AUA Membership 2002

THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE HE GOVERNING BODY
TIME FOR A CLOSER LOOK?

David Llewellyn, Harper Adams University College

Governance is firmly on the UK higher education policy agenda as structures are introduced that seek to reduce reporting burdens but ensure that institutions remain 'accountable' for the public funding they receive and 'sustainable' in terms of their future operation. In developing its approach the sector has borrowed heavily from methods adopted for company governance. Techniques such as risk management, governance codes and the 'comply or explain' principle of institutional reporting to external stakeholders are just three examples in the UK that have found their way into funding council requirements or other sector guidance. All are largely process-based and reveal little about 'governing', or the way in which people involved in the work of governing bodies carry out their role. To begin to address this issue, the practice of governing is being investigated in a project on the role and influence of the secretary of higher education governing bodies. This article presents some emerging themes from the study.

In this type of research, access is required to busy people who must agree to share sensitive information or views about the inner workings of their organisation. To date, the sector has been generous both with its time and contributions. An online survey conducted last year amongst the governing body secretaries of 166 universities and higher education colleges resulted in responses from 110 institutions. Follow-up interviews have since been conducted with the secretaries, chairs and heads of institutions of nine institutions of varying sizes, locations and types, to add context to the initial survey.

There are concerns, in some parts of the sector, about the codification of governance and growth of corporatism in higher education, accompanied by a call for approaches that recognise and preserve academic values, institutional autonomy and diversity in our governance (and governing) systems. Institutions recently seeking degree-awarding powers or university title will have understood that 'getting your governing right' is as important as 'getting the right governance'. When Quality Assurance

Agency reviewers attended their governing body meetings, the way in which the governing body conducted its work, the relationships between governing body members and the executive and the governing body's consideration of academic values in decision-making would have been as much under scrutiny as the institution's systems and codes of governance.

Despite the considerable attention recently given to governance processes in both the 'for-profit' and 'non-profit' sectors, and a growing literature on related policy issues in higher education, there has been remarkably little empirical research on the key individuals involved in higher education governing. The last major study in the UK was undertaken in the early 1990s (Bargh et al., 1996), not long after the review of financial governance in the corporate sector led by Sir Adrian Cadbury, the formation of the Committee on Standards in Public Life and around the time of the first of the Committee of University Chairmen (CUC) guides for members of higher education governing bodies (CUC, 1995). More recent studies have looked at, for example, 'effective governance factors' in a small number of universities (Bennett, 2002), governance and decision-making in small colleges (McNay, 2002), and aspects of governance considered to be examples of best practice (CUC, 2004). In the meantime, research on company governance, and in some 'non-profit' sectors, has gone much further, to consider, amongst other things, the working relationships of board chairs, chief executives and other senior managers, the power and influence of non-executive directors and the ways in which boards make decisions.

So, in higher education, who ensures that the practice of governing is conducted effectively? Earlier UK studies have seen the role of leading the governing body's work very much in the hands of the chair and head of institution. There is, however, a growing appreciation of the part played by the secretary as a source of influence, working alongside the chair and head of institution to co-ordinate the work of the governing body, provide

guidance and advice on critical issues and act as a bridge between those who govern and the rest of the institution, including other senior managers.

Of course, much depends on the position of the secretary within the institution. This can range from a senior management post responsible for much of an institution's administration to the occasional examples of those holding external appointments as clerk to the board without other functional responsibilities. There has also been a recent trend to provide a focus for governance and legal issues by the creation of university secretary or head of governance positions that are not necessarily 'first tier' management posts – the secretary and legal counsel role that can be seen in many US universities. Working relationships between the secretary, chair and head of institution are another major factor, bringing into the picture issues of trust, the exercise of power and influence, the ability to maintain a degree of independence from the executive and the knowledge of when and how the governing body should be involved. As one secretary put it, "I'm the integrity chip… able to identify issues that members of the management team are merrily progressing as part of their management roles, and the point at which some intervention of the board may be necessary in the decision making process".

Across the sector, the secretary is largely responsible for 'managing governance' and 'facilitating governing'. These roles seem likely to develop over the next few years. An interviewee suggested that universities and colleges, aiming to keep up in a more competitive world, will need faster decision-making, accompanied by governing that is capable of handling more delegated authority whilst maintaining appropriate lines of accountability. In such circumstances, the secretary will have a pivotal role in helping achieve these aims whilst balancing 'the claims of governors (for efficiency) with the claims of faculty (for time and money), the claims of alumni (for loyalty to tradition) with the claims of students (for the need to change)' (Leslie, 2003). There will also be a need for a much greater understanding of the practice of governing in higher education, across the formal and informal decision-making systems in our institutions. This project is, therefore, a starting point in a potentially large and complex research agenda, which hopefully may encourage, with continuing support from the sector, further empirical research on the practice of governing in UK higher education.

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THE RESEARCH PROJECTS COMMISSIONED BY THE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

Following a rigorous selection process carried out by the Research Advisory Panel and a team of specially appointed referees the following research projects were confirmed in 2005, some are supported jointly with partners. More details about each one can be found on the LFHE website: **http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/research/projects/**

Characteristics, roles and selection of vice-chancellors
Glynis Breakwell, University of Bath

Developing collective leadership capability in higher education: processes, practices and performance
Jonathan Gosling and Richard Bolden, University of Exeter

Gender balance in Scottish Further and Higher Education
Dr Duncan McTavish, Glasgow Caledonian University

The role and influence of the secretary in relation to governing bodies in higher education
David Llewellyn, Harper Adams University College

Professional managers in UK higher education: preparing for complex futures
Celia Whitchurch, King's College London

Human resource management, leadership and performance in UK universities
David Guest, King's College London

UK universities and their executive officers: the changing role of pro-vice-chancellors
David Smith and Jonathan Adams, University of Leeds

Effective leadership in higher education: an analysis of the research literature from other sectors
Alan Bryman, University of Leicester

Becoming the best - an examination of the impact of cross-sectoral career paths and leadership and management development on success as an HE leader
Malcolm Harper, University of Manchester

Departmental leadership for quality teaching - an international comparative study of effective practice
Graham Gibbs, University of Oxford

Leading through time - work-load allocations and their impact
Peter Barrett, University of Salford

The composition, challenges and changes in top team structures in UK higher education institutions
Steve Woodfield, University of Surrey and Tom Kennie, Nottingham Trent University

Higher education leadership of regional and local governance partnerships; learning from good practice
Glyn Owen, University of Lincoln

NOTES

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