Academic Freedom and the Well-Managed University

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Higher education is poised to become one of the biggest and most lucrative industries in the new knowledge economy. Can Australia's universities adapt and change without sacrificing academic freedom?

Australian universities are not what they used to be. In what follows I will draw upon my 42 years continuous experience as a participant-observer in Australian and international higher education, including senior involvement in the management of three universities in three Australian States, as well as involvement as a student and/or academic in four other Australian universities.

When I arrived at the University of Melbourne in March 1958 to study Law and Arts, the then Vice-Chancellor, the late Sir George Paton, welcomed us with the words: 'With you lot here that brings the total number of students at the university to 6,000, which is far too big for any university. The sooner they start that Monash University of Technology, the better.' Or some such similarly welcoming words.

In those days only one faculty at that university had a quota, the Faculty of Medicine. That quota had been introduced only recently, and its introduction had been a matter of great public controversy in the city of Melbourne. Up until that point matriculating gave you the right to enter any programme at the university for which you met the academic prerequisites. That generally meant obtaining four passes in four subjects in the matriculation examination conducted by the University of Melbourne at the end of Form VI (Year 12). In some cases, there were specific prerequisites among these. For example, medicine and science required certain mathematics and science courses to be passed, while to enter the Bachelor of Arts one had to have passed a language other than English. If selected for Arts, you then had to study a foreign language at university level for at least one more year.

Today, it is possible to graduate in Arts from any Australian university that offers the degree, which is almost all of our 39 universities, without ever learning a word of any language other than English. This is not a change imposed by government. It is a change imposed by the universities themselves, in their attempts to capture a greater share of the BA market, which is, overwhelmingly, the largest undergraduate market in Australia to this day.

Within a few years of my arrival every faculty had a quota, with Commerce and Arts the last to come into line. This meant that passing certain prerequisite subjects at the matriculation examination no longer ensured entry. On top of the matriculation examination, there was a competitive selection procedure, the result of which meant that matriculation became a misnomer for the examination, which was accordingly re-named the Higher School Certificate, to be succeeded by the multi-purpose Victorian Certificate of Education.

The move to quotas was not welcomed within my first alma mater. Indeed, the Faculty of Arts, which seemed to have held out the longest, preferred on principle to accept overcrowded classes and skyrocketing student to staff ratios, to denying a place to a matriculant. Eventually they too succumbed. It is ironic, given the origin of quotas and the attitude then prevailing, that today Australian universities boast about how hard they are to enter. Only a small number—Central Queensland University is one, Victoria University of Technology and the University of Western Sydney are two others—pride themselves on their accessibility.

As for Sir George Paton's declaration that, in passing the 6000 enrolment barrier in 1958 the University of Melbourne had become far too big, less than 30 years later

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an enrolment of 8000 was widely touted as the minimum viable size for an autonomous Australian university, and 2000 as the minimum for a non-specialist constituent campus.

In 1958, Australia had eight universities and two university colleges. Today Australia has 39 universities, of which two are private; a 40th, also private, is being planned for Cairns. When the West Committee, established in 1997 to conduct a Review of Australian Higher Education Financing and Policy, tried to get a sense of how many universities Australia should have, the only rule of thumb it picked up was that a developed country has roughly one university for every half million people. On that reckoning, Australia currently has neither too many nor too few universities. However, with most developed countries now envisaging universal or near universal higher education by the Year 2020—a goal the West Committee also considered appropriate for Australia—the idea of a 'right' number of universities needs to be placed in a quite different context, as we will see.

The imminent global revolution in higher education distribution and delivery

Twenty years out

Australia ('the West Review'), the UK ('the Dearing Review'), New Zealand (the current Government White Paper), Germany, Italy, France, Korea, and many other nations in the developed and developing world have completed, are conducting, or are proposing major reviews of higher education. There is uncanny agreement on the following points:

- Higher education will be universal or near universal within 20 years
- Higher education will be entered and re-entered at multiple points in the lives of citizens
- Higher education will increasingly be international in focus and delivery
- Higher education providers will be expected to demonstrate they meet increasingly robust standards of quality assurance
- Higher education will not be provided on a universal or near universal basis on anything approaching the current level of taxpayer costs per graduate

The classical campus-based research-intensive university environment will not be replicated to anything like the extent necessary to provide loci for the anticipated massive growth in higher education. Such 'traditional' university campuses will diminish in relative higher education significance and possibly in absolute number. In short, what the French call the 'massification' of higher education will be achieved with much lower taxpayer funded unit costs per graduate, and in ways in which the delivery of an academic award (degree, diploma, certificate etc.) is increasingly detached from the culturally rich, research-intensive traditional university campus. In general terms, the common expectation is that universal or near universal higher education must be achieved in developed countries through a total public investment level which is not significantly greater in real terms than the present level.

The falling price of knowledge

There are few, if any, uncontentious economic laws. One of these admittedly contentious laws is that, in the long run, prices trend downwards. Certainly this is plausible in the case of commodity prices, especially those for commodities which are renewable or substitutable such as particular foodstuffs. The main impediments to downward trending are regulatory, e.g. licensing, artificial entry barriers, protectionism, quotas, government sanctioned union preference etc. These not only decelerate downward trending, but generate geographically disparate pricings unrelated to quality (fitness for purpose) or worldwide supply and demand. These can generate local price upswings. The removal of domestic and international regulatory barriers—deregulation, privatisation, tariff and quota elimination, de-privileging unions etc.—contributes to a world price equalisation more closely attuned to quality, and worldwide supply and demand.

Although as scholars and researchers we may squirm at the suggestion, knowledge is a commodity in the classic economics textbook sense. Trade in knowledge has always been difficult to regulate, and the growth in public literacy, expanding penetration of the Internet, along with new forms of low cost knowledge storage (e.g. CD-ROMs), have made it even more so. If we look at the prices of knowledge-intensive products (e.g. electronic goods, computer hardware and software, mobile phones) and information transfer services (e.g. telecommunications) the overall downward trend, a trend which is accelerating, is evident. Older forms of knowledge storage and information transfer (e.g. books, postal services) are becoming progressively uncompetitive in price, and are surviving only through public subsidy (e.g. legally sanctioned postal service monopolies) or, if profitable, as more carefully crafted niche occupiers.

Falling prices of storage and transfer make the price of knowledge more purely dependent on the value assigned to the intellectual property itself, rather than the value added by its mode of containment or transfer. The continuing rapid expansion of knowledge is steadily

reducing its half-life per item, resulting in a similarly rapid depreciation of its stored value. To summarise, in general terms the price of knowledge, reflected in knowledge-intensive products, and the price of information transfer, is trending downwards.

However, there is one major anomaly. While the price of knowledge, as reflected in knowledge-intensive products, is falling, it is not falling as reflected in knowledge-intensive services. The prices of professional services in knowledge-intensive areas such as medicine, law, accounting and financial services generally, for example, are not falling. One reason is that these are among the more highly regulated areas of service provision, with high artificial entry barriers and stringent domestic licensing conditions, generally not internationally transferable. Another, to which I now turn, is that the price of access to knowledge-intensive qualifications has actually been trending upward, and this qualification 'purchase price' is also reflected in the pricing of professional services.

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The rising price of access to knowledge-intensive qualifications

In the US, tuition fees at most major public or publicly supported private universities have been rising at a significantly faster rate than inflation for nearly two decades. In Australia, overall university operating costs per graduate appear to have risen steadily in real terms ever since the Federal Government assumed de facto responsibility for higher education in 1974, though the data necessary to demonstrate this rigorously is difficult to manage. The point is costs have not fallen, and this is anomalous.

The reason why this is so is now becoming more clearly understood. Last century, English philosopher and economist John Stuart Mill wrote of what has become known as 'the wool mutton paradox'. A farmer who wants to take advantage of rising demand for wool decides to run more sheep. As a result, the farmer also produces more mutton. But there may be no comparable rise in the demand for mutton, so in taking advantage of rising wool prices, the farmer contributes to a fall in mutton prices. The net consequence could well be that increasing the sheep run actually makes the farmer worse off!

Traditionally, universities meet rising demand for particular awards by appointing academics who not only teach, but also conduct research in the area of the awards in question. There may be no comparable demand or need for such research, so a significant extra cost is incurred without any benefit directly justifying that cost. Similarly, expanding a university's capacity to meet demand for particular awards, unless accompanied by an equivalent reduction in its capacity to service other awards, imposes additional ambient costs on the university (physical facilities, counselling, sporting, cultural and recreational amenities, landscaping, etc.)

In general terms, the price of access to a knowledge-intensive qualification at a traditional university campus includes a significant subsidy to the generation of new, but not necessarily valuable, knowledge in the area of that qualification, and to the maintenance of the general physical and cultural ambience of the campus.

The rise and rise of the 'for profit' university

The fastest growing sector in US higher education at present is the private 'for profit' sector, the best known exemplar of which is the University of Phoenix, listed on the Nasdaq Index. It is imperative we all understand that higher education worldwide is in the early stages of vertical disintegration as an industry. The for profit providers have recognised it is possible to provide perfectly creditable access to awards without directly incurring any costs associated with research, most ancillary services, and virtually all of the ambient characteristics of the traditional university campus.

Campus distribution is modelled on that of the cinema chains, with preferred sites in leased premises in major suburban shopping centres. The campus amenities are the amenities (food court, creche, gymnasium etc.) of the shopping centre. Working professionals in the relevant discipline areas, which are only those for which there is high market demand, generally provide academic support to high quality, commissioned, resource-based, learning materials. 'Moonlighting' academics from traditional university campuses, some of them 'star' names, are widely employed on a fee-for-service casual basis.

Timetabling is geared to customer convenience, with high utilisation of Saturdays and Sundays, as well as early morning on-the-way-to-work classes. Staff remuneration may include bonuses for independently moderated, excellent student results. To the surprise even of the providers, students are prepared to pay more for convenience-based delivery than the tuition fees at traditional university campuses.

Publishers and software corporations (e.g. Microsoft) are also now creating their own for profit university subsidiaries, to obtain a further yield on the vast assets they hold in the form of intellectual property. Ironically most of these have been supplied to them free by university academics, whose institutions now have to pay dearly to buy their creative output back through journals and other print and electronic publications. Publisher-based universities overcome one of the main challenges to for profit universities such as the University of Phoenix, namely their absence of a research arm. This means that they have no obvious way of ensuring their curriculum is the most current possible given the emerging state of knowledge. Those for profit providers that are subsidiaries of a research-intensive university also overcome this challenge.

In the US, it is widely speculated that the new generation of for profit providers will capture the lion's share of the huge growth foreseen in the transition to massification over the next two decades. Thus a growing number of major and highly respected traditional universities are opening their own for profit subsidiaries, operated on entirely commercial principles.

The 'traditional' university campus

What will happen to traditional, campus-based universities over the next twenty years? Despite the huge increase in demand for higher education, I believe there will be fewer, not more, traditional universities—possibly even fewer than the one per half million of population advised by the West Committee. Their main challenges will be:

- How to reduce costs to become price competitive with the new for profit providers (including the for profit subsidiaries of other traditional universities).
- How to persuade governments, whatever their political complexion, to persist with the level of protection that currently guarantees them a student load at low (albeit rising) direct costs to the student, in a global context in which rent-seeking behaviour is increasingly subject to more rigorous scrutiny, founded in a presumption of international unacceptability.
- How to reorganise work patterns and modes of operation to meet rising student expectations of convenience-focused delivery, while at the same time reducing input costs per graduate.

Those traditional universities that will survive are those which are able to sell the very experience of attending them as worth far more than the equally real value of the qualification obtained. They fall into three groups and comprise:

- Universities from which graduation is a social status passport (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Stanford, Upsala, and Heidelberg) and can therefore survive as high cost high price providers. The commercial analogue is the 'designer label', where vanity purchasers are even prepared to suffer at the margin inferior product manufacture and durability to be seen to be fashionable. Very few, if any, Australian universities are in this category, once social status is seen as extending beyond the 19th century provincial values embraced by the self-appointed social elites of Australia's capital cities.
- Universities that gain acceptance for the view that they are precious and prestigious national heritage assets, and should be publicly protected/subsidised accordingly. The first university in each of the mainland Australian States (the two Royal Charter-based Universities of Sydney and Melbourne, and the Universities of Queensland, Adelaide, and Western Australia) could well mount this argument. It might also be argued for the research-focused Institute for Advanced Studies within the Australian National University. None of the other 30 public universities in Australia fall into this group. Corporate state countries such as Singapore and South Korea will take this approach with their major institutions, as will the Republic of China.
- Universities that, by a combination of unprecedented cost containment, subsidies from highly profitable activities, and a level of private personal and corporate philanthropy hitherto presumed unachievable in the Australian higher education sector, are able to deliver a 'traditional' university experience in a price competitive way. However, we must be mindful of the fact most, if not all, the 30 public universities in Australia not included in the 'precious and prestigious' category will most likely draw precisely this conclusion! It is surely impossible that all, or even most, should succeed.

Further Australian university mergers and takeovers, by no means confined to other Australian institutions, will be very attractive. The main barrier is regulatory; the State and Territory legislation under which all our universities operate, and the Federal regulatory environment attached to access to Federal funding. While it is abundantly clear that a multi-campus university is not a lower cost operation than a single campus university, a single, multi-campus university is certainly a much lower cost option than the equivalent number of free-standing universities.

An alternative to mergers is assignment of major assets and administrative processes to a specialist asset management and management services corporate, that can provide these services in a customised way to many

universities. This allows each university to retain its distinctive mission, and its intellectual, social, and cultural ambience—in short, its character—without maintaining a separate administration.

Plainly, the challenges for universities in Australia can be summed up in two phrases: visionary leadership, and effective and efficient management. So far as leadership is concerned, there are many competing definitions and I have no wish to enter the fray. Suffice it to say that, whatever else it involves, modern university leadership must result in the management of the present from the perspective of the future.

The future, as I have described it, is not well-known within the body of Australian universities, though it is understood by a growing number of Vice-Chancellors. The reaction of most academics with whom I have shared this picture of the future, especially in the older and larger universities, is not to proffer a refutation but to go into denial. This denial of what I have argued is inevitable almost certainly reflects much of the genuine despair among Australian academics, and goes directly to the essence of the management challenges faced by Australian university leaders.

University management—the way things were

The 'Golden Age'

Do you remember the golden age? This was the age in which Australian universities were managed by the academics themselves, through democratically elected committees, over which the Vice-Chancellor ultimately presided as a benign chair. All academics were able to do research in their chosen field, and could usually get the necessary funding from their home department. With few exceptions, academic freedom prevailed—meaning academics could speak out on any issue on which they felt strongly, without fear or favour. They could even criticise their universities, but as most decision-making was collegial, this was rarely necessary as decisions could always be reviewed within the collegiate committee structure.

No, I don't remember it either. What I do remember, when I first entered Australian universities as an undergraduate in 1958, a postgraduate research student in 1964, and a lecturer in 1965, is quite different. I remember a set of academic departments headed up by what were known as 'god professors'—a reference not to their divinity, but their omnipotence on all matters to do with their discipline, and their apparent lack of any accountability to those who inhabited their creation.

I remember a Professorial Board in which these professors routinely gathered in largely secret deliberation. I remember that the most powerful single individual in the university was neither the Vice-Chancellor nor, singly or collectively, the individual academic, but the Registrar. It was the Registrar who managed the business of the Council, the business of the Professorial Board, the relationship with government, and the matters requiring determination by the Vice-Chancellor.

I remember academics living in terror at the capriciousness of some of the professorial decisions, and their make or break potential impacts upon their careers. I remember departments that never hired a Roman Catholic, in one case because of the fierce Protestantism of the professor's wife. I remember that only a minority of academic staff had doctorates, or were recruited with doctorates; in the faculties of Arts, Law, and Commerce, any higher degree at all was considered both unnecessary and unusual. And I remember that virtually every female presence, when not expressly excluded, was by way of remarkable exception, and typically excused with a gratuitous amateur psychopathological explanation.

I also remember that some of the professors were wonderful teachers, highly consultative in decision-making, and passionate, eloquent advocates for the advancement of their staff and students, as well as their discipline. Some were not. And if your professor was not, there was little you could do about it. This is not antiquity. It prevailed to the end of the third quarter of the 20th century.

Unfortunately, just as the Australian academic community has little understanding, not to say acceptance, of the industrial revolution in higher education that is already unfolding, its understanding of the history of the Australian academy, of which most have only comparatively recent (post-1975) personal experience, is by the same token a highly fantasised, romantic one. I say this not by way of criticism. After all, the quality of Australian academics is generally high, as is their level of commitment to their discipline and their students. They are neither recruited for, nor expected to possess, any special knowledge of institutional history or the industrial outlook for their field of labour. Study after study, here and abroad, confirms that the first loyalty of most academics is to their discipline, their second loyalty is to the organisational unit which is the primary home to that discipline (and its students), then to the discipline unit's host School or Faculty, and way out the end, to their current university. Note that I am speaking not of infidelity, but of a much lower level of comparative fidelity than would be normal among employees in many other sorts of organisation.

Is this a problem? To my mind, it is not. I see no merit in trying to change the typical academic fidelity framework, and enormous productivity advantages when

their first loyalty is to their discipline. These are the people who are least likely to become committee drones, creating and maintaining artificial internal process work and then expecting it to be rewarded as a substitute for excellent teaching and research when the promotion season rolls around. On the contrary, the intent of these observations is explanatory, not judgmental. The bewilderment, anger, frustration and despair truly felt by so many Australian academics at what they see happening within their universities, and what Professor Tony Coady has called the 'cool war' commonly running between academics and university management and administration, is articulated through statements about the university, and universities in general, which are typically unhistorical and ignorant of the potential impact of the imminent industrial revolution. This is not to deny the reality or the sincerity of their feelings. It is to stress the extent to which they are mislocated.

It is worth noting in passing that academic despair is by no means confined to Australia. Consider the following: 'Years of shaving funds from the university system have undermined the university experience . . .students today are paying more money to sit in crowded classes in poorly maintained buildings. They have less contact with (tutorial) assistants, not to mention professors, more multiple-choice exams and shorter written assignments because there aren't enough faculty to read them.' That's Tema Frank writing about Canada, in the Canadian higher education journal, *University Affairs* (February 2000).

The Democratic Age and its aftermath

The age of the god-professor went into sharp decline from 1968, until its total disappearance from Australia by the mid-1970s. The year 1968 was, of course, the year of the Paris student revolutions, spreading quickly through western Europe and North America, and soon finding a presence in Australia. There had already been a major change in student culture in Australia, beginning about 1964. That was when admass for the first time penetrated the student culture of Australian universities. By 1967, a significant fragment of cutting edge, international pop culture, driven largely from Britain and the US, had been overlaid by an anarcho-communist libretto, and grafted on to a strongly promiscuous sex and drugs message. This was shaping a new generation of student radicalism in Australia, much of it directed at our most fragile of public institutions: the universities.

Within Australian universities, there was rising pressure for greater participation by students and staff in decision-making. To a large extent this was a perfectly legitimate response to the excesses of the age of the god-professor era. Notwithstanding its populist genesis in the unedifying milieu of the western pop cultural revolution mentioned above, in reality the democratisation of Australian universities was generally and genuinely an improvement, with unprecedented transparency and a profoundly refreshing series of new inputs from very talented people into the decision-making process. Deans and heads of departments were elected. Professorial Boards were opened up to become Academic Boards or Senates, often with half or more of the positions directly or indirectly electorally contestable.

But it couldn't last. It had replaced a system with minimal internal accountability with one in which there was unprecedented internal accountability, but accountability that, quite simply, went in the wrong direction. The accountability of the academic managers and leaders was inward and downward. They were accountable to those who elected them—a constituency comprising most, if not all, of their staff, and a representative group of students.

Yet, the governing body of the university and its principal servant, the Vice-Chancellor, had an accountability that was outwards, through the governing body to government, alumni, and benefactors. The Vice-Chancellor had been placed in an untenable position, for there was no doubt the Vice-Chancellor was accountable to the governing body for the good management of the university. The accountability of the senior managers under the Vice-Chancellor needed therefore to be not inwards and downwards but upwards, to the Vice-Chancellor, and outwards, through the Vice-Chancellor to the governing body and thereby indirectly to all the constituencies to which the governing body was accountable.

By the early 1980s a counter-revolution was already quietly underway, to be accelerated by the reforms enunciated in the Dawkins Green Paper of 1987, prepared by then Labor Minister for Higher Education John Dawkins. These reforms could only be implemented by a strong management structure that, while not indifferent to its internal constituencies, saw its primary accountability in an upward and outward manner, in common with most public and private sector businesses.

Hence the rise of what has come to be mocked internally as 'managerialism'. Coupled with this was the growing expectation by university governing bodies, now universally shared, that their chief executive officers, their Vice-Chancellors, would steer their university in distinctive directions that met with their approval, and optimised their university's financial position as well as its academic reputation. That expectation has required a

strengthening of internal management also, with responsibility and accountability brought more sharply into alignment. Inevitably this has meant a marginalising of much of the pre-existing committee structure where responsibility was simply too diffuse to allow any sort of accountability other than an inappropriate inward and downward electoral accountability. It is tempting to agree with Fred Allen's view of committees, as those organisational forms in which individuals who can do nothing, collectively decide that nothing can be done.

The need for greater coherence in direction setting and policy compliance has also seen a winding back of two inappropriate forms of devolution, which led to some universities having an unmanageable, quasi-federal structure. Recent history should teach us that universities in the Australian environment cannot be managed as either federations of campuses or federations of faculties. The failed Northern Rivers-University of New England merger, the early decision to abandon a network model for Charles Sturt University, and the recent decision to fundamentally restructure the University of Western Sydney all speak in their own way of the failure of a federation of campuses model.

The move away from devolution to faculties is more subtle. Certainly the decentralisation of many administrative processes and budget management tasks has improved efficiencies generally as well as the quality of local decision-making. However, there are limits. Today, there is a growing realisation that it is not possible to manage an Australian university in a changing, and potentially quite hostile, competitive environment on the basis that faculties or other academic groupings are quasi-autonomous businesses, each of which has to do whatever will optimise its position vis-à-vis its preferred markets, and relative to its competitors.

The managed university and the values of the academy

The transformation of universities into managed entities with upward and outward accountability has led to a strengthening of the senior executive within universities, a layer that did not really exist in easily recognised form in most universities until the mid-1980s. It has also led to the more obvious presence of management tools familiar from the corporate world, such as financial reporting in terms of balance sheet and profit and loss, benchmarking, performance indicators, and performance based reward mechanisms, with less emphasis on the idea of funding individual operating units under such rubrics as 'comparative equity.'

There is a culture within our academic communities that, initially at least, finds such ways of thinking, and the associated language, quite odious. They quote with approval a former Vice-Chancellor from one of the Queensland universities, who—challenged by his governing body about the growing size of the annually reported operating deficit—proudly boasted that 'it proves I am not bottom line driven.' Not only do they find it odious, but this and all the other manifestations of 'managerialism', get the blame for many of their very real discontents. Nor are they impressed when it is pointed out that were Australian universities still operating in the short-lived democratic age, extending at most from 1970 to 1985, their discontents would be much greater, while the situation of those universities that survived would be close to catastrophic.

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The phrase 'university managerialism' has become a voodoo phrase among its critics, much like 'economic rationalism'. As P. P. McGuinness is fond of pointing out, would the critics of economic rationalism really prefer 'economic irrationalism'? One can understand that critics of managerialism would relish the opportunity to roam freely within an unmanaged organisation!

Much of the prejudice, for that is what it all too often is, against managerialism, is based on quite naïve, not to say false assumptions about the world of business, whose corporate culture has supposedly now migrated into the upper echelons of our universities. I continue to be stunned by the extent to which I encounter the assumption that businesses are inevitably ruthless, and have a licence to be ruthless which is not appropriate to universities. When it comes to ruthlessness in getting one's own way incidentally, I am sure there are many in universities with much to teach the business sector!

Of all the objections to managerialism, perhaps the most pervasive is that somehow its values are incompatible with many of the cherished values of the university, and most notably academic freedom. I hope I have said more than enough in what precedes to demonstrate that an unmanaged university—unmanaged in ways that link accountability and responsibility, and that see performance

accountability as ultimately upward and outward—will be hard pressed to survive, let alone flourish, in the emerging environment.

One important element of academic freedom is the freedom of the university to determine those areas in which it will conduct teaching and research. That not only has not changed, but is more likely to be furthered in a well-managed university. The reason is that this freedom has always been subject to the side constraint of financial possibility. One is reminded of Anatole France's observation about equality before the law, '. . . which forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread' (Le Lys Rouge, 1894).

By the same token, poor Australian universities have always been just as free to conduct research into nuclear physics and space travel as the rich have! The fact is that every Australian university is seriously attempting to further broaden and diversify its funding base, and to reduce its dependence on any one source, generally the Federal government. To the extent that they are successful, the capacity to operate as an effective independent judge of those areas in which each will conduct teaching and research can only be enhanced.

Another is the freedom to pursue and promulgate outcomes of research and scholarship even when the findings challenge academic orthodoxy, prevailing wisdom or even the host community's most cherished beliefs and values. It is right to ask of any structure in which university activities take place whether or not it will inhibit or support this aspect of academic freedom. The expressly confessional university for example, however it is internally organised and managed, is seen by some as inherently limiting this dimension of academic freedom. So too is the newly emerging corporate subsidiary university, which from this point of view is just another type of confessional university.

When we turn to the liberal or non-confessional university, it really seems to make little difference what organisational and management structure is in place. On the contrary, much turns on the moral calibre and institutional strength of those individuals who occupy the relevant key positions in the organisation. In the age of the god-professors, there were many stories of professors who actively suppressed results contrary to their own preferred findings, and frustrated the work of those whose were producing them. At the same time, there were other courageous individuals who accepted the personal risks involved in exposing such conduct.

Critical in all this was the role of senior academic managers, deans and the Vice-Chancellor, in ensuring that the truth was uncovered and that those who exposed it enjoyed the institution's protection. Unless those who occupy these positions are imbued with a strong sense of moral responsibility, and possess the courage to act appropriately, it won't matter what structure is in place.

It is important we remember that collegiality and democratic processes have not always proved effective in preserving academic freedom. Those of us who remember the divisive impact of the Vietnam War on universities in Australia and elsewhere will recall many tense meetings in which attempts were made to democratically secure the corporate commitment of first departments, then faculties, then whole universities to condemning Australian and US involvement in Vietnam. The fact that such corporate commitments—in effect a democratically determined confessionalism—necessarily limited academic freedom within the institution carried little weight, because this was 'more important.'

We should also recall that when Dr Frank Knopfelmacher's appointment as a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Sydney was vetoed, essentially because of his work in exposing communist infiltration in a number of academic units at the University of Melbourne, the operation which secured this politically motivated outcome was run essentially through the proper collegial processes and committee structure of the university. Nor should we forget the attacks by fellow academics on Professor Geoffrey Blainey at the University of Melbourne following his speeches and populist articles on Australian immigration policy. These went far beyond academic debate on the merits of his claims but extended to several scholars using their considerable academic status to discredit him as a professional historian, and to make it quite clear that, however well he was doing the job, he was no longer acceptable as Dean of Arts.

My point is not to reopen and rehash these sad controversies but to make two more general points. The first is that when it comes to the maintenance and preservation of academic freedom, academics themselves have not always been on the side of the angels. The second is that, confessionalism aside, it is not the type of formal organisational structure that determines the extent to which values such as academic freedom prevail, but rather the moral integrity and courage of those who occupy the key positions of authority in whatever structure is in place.

Notwithstanding these points, there is no doubt there is a strong view that the managerial turn in Australian universities is suppressing academic freedom. In a feature in the *Good Weekend* (*The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 December1999) Peter Ellingsen quotes 'an insider' as saying: 'Academic freedom? It is getting very

hard to find.' Yet many of the examples given were not really violations of academic freedom at all, but of external authorities failing to support academics whose published views run contrary to their own. Now this may or may not be a good thing in any given case, but it is hardly something for which blame can be laid at the feet of the universities.

Probably the most serious example concerns university codes of conduct which, as Ellingsen puts it, ensure that '. . .academics are . . .prohibited from speaking about anything other than that which the administration deems to be their specialty.' Now I happen to have serious reservations about such prohibitions, as well as the effectiveness with which they can be implemented. But the fact is Australian universities have always insisted that academics have no right to comment publicly, except as ordinary citizens, on any matters outside their area of academic expertise. Whether written or unwritten, such policies have always denied academics the right to use their university rank, occupational position, or address in external communications on other than their area of academic expertise. In no way are they are a product or by-product of managerialism!

Having said that, I actually do believe that there is a role for Australian academics as 'public intellectuals' which goes beyond their narrowly defined area of academic specialisation. US academics seem to play this role quite effectively, and there is something cringing and smacking of an old-fashioned, public service set of values in many of the restrictions that are in place on the rights of Australian academics to speak out from their academic positions. It is something I am trying to change within my own university, but then I suppose that's managerialism!

I hope in what I have said to have convinced you that Australian universities need to be managed as never before if they are to triumph, on behalf of their constituencies, within the industrial revolution now taking place worldwide in the higher education industry. At the same time, the cherished values that are vital for a flourishing, creative, independent, and far-sighted university need not be compromised by a more effective management structure; on the contrary, that structure should exist to make them, and all other things that are important to the university, robust as never before. But in the end, as with all values, it is the moral integrity and courage of the individuals who occupy key positions, whatever the given structure, that will determine how many of today's and tomorrow's universities are truly honourable bearers of that proudly proclaimed name.

Policy